

Manchester bombing: War on Terror has turned all civilians into targets

Red Flag Editorial Board, May 23, 2017 Thu, 25/05/2017 - 08:58

Red Flag Editorial Board, May 23, 2017

At least 22 people, including young children, have been killed and 59 injured in a suicide bombing which targeted fans leaving a concert at Manchester's Arena on Monday night.

Our thoughts lie with the family and friends of those who died, and also with the survivors suffering from the traumatic injuries and terror of last night's atrocity.

We share in the universal appreciation for the members of the emergency services who risked their own lives to organise medical and security for the victims.

The response of local people who offered comfort and assistance to parents and concertgoers if they were nearby or opened their homes and offered free taxis, demonstrates the basic human solidarity that makes Manchester an example of what is best about Britain's multi-ethnic and multi-cultural communities.

The racist violence and scapegoating that inevitably follows these outrages is the reaction the terrorists want. Islamic State's terrorist attacks are intended to provoke fear and suspicion between Europe's Muslim and non-Muslim populations, and to increase the state-sanctioned anti-Muslim racism triggered by the so-called 'war on terror'.

Last night's atrocity, like those in France and Germany, was a microcosm of the horror that has driven millions of refugees from Afghanistan to Libya to flee their homes and seek asylum in neighbouring countries.

Cruelly, the minority who survive the perilous journey to Europe are often treated as suspects and sympathisers or potential terrorists, despite the fact that virtually all terrorist attacks are carried out by European citizens.

That is why calls for a state of emergency, like that declared in France, let alone calls to close the borders or deport refugees, or drop more bombs on Syrian schools and hospitals, play into the hands of the terrorists and right wing extremists who want to exploit the deaths of innocent people to further their agenda of intolerance and hatred.

Every terrorist attack claimed by the Islamic State is denounced by European governments as an attack on 'our' civilisation, democracy, secularism and women's rights. This racist and offensive 'clash of civilisations' propaganda exists to obscure the origins of Islamic terrorism in Europe and reinforces the treatment of all Muslims as the 'enemy within'.

Our governments didn't care about the rights of women when they armed and backed Osama bin Laden's Mujahideen in Afghanistan during the 1980s, nor is 'democracy' allowed to interfere with the

business of selling weapons to the brutal Saudi dictatorship. So if the UK's enemies hate its 'democracy', they must despise its hypocrisy, too.

The occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, the support for reactionary dictatorships, and repeated military interventions by the imperialist powers have turned swathes of the Middle East into a charnel house; the numbers of victims are measured not in the dozens or hundreds, but in hundreds of thousands in each country.

We are not responsible for the crimes of our government and our government's crimes are no justification for killing innocent people. But that is the dynamic of the struggle we have been thrown into by Britain's desire to control and exploit the Middle East.

So, as long as UK forces remain in the Middle East, terrorising the population from land, sea and sky, then Britain's towns and cities, our country's ordinary families, will continue to make a small but equally tragic contribution to the list of innocent lives consumed by the endless and unwinnable war on terror.

The only fitting tribute to the deaths of people unjustly killed in a war they have no part in is to fight to ensure no more children, mothers, fathers are forced to suffer the same tragedy.

That means fighting to stop our government risking our lives through its militarism in the Middle East. It means contributing to the rebuilding of the infrastructure and economies of the countries our bombs have destroyed.

Above all, it means making a genuine effort for the living, by opening our borders to refugees and opening our communities to help them onto the long road of rebuilding their lives and families.

Source URL: <https://fifthinternational.org/content/manchester-bombing-war-terror-has-turned-all-civilians-targets>