

A kind request to all Imams:

Please dedicate a khutba on the importance voting this General Election, and more importantly voting for an MP who upholds international law, stands for justice and calls for an end to the genocide in Gaza.

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh,

Dear respected brothers and sisters, the last eight months have seen the Ummah go through a trial unprecedented in modern times. Over 37,000 people have been murdered in Gaza with more than 84,000 people injured. The destruction and mass killings have also been witnessed live. The cries of orphaned children have haunted our consciences and left many with sleepless nights. What's even more daunting is that these crimes have only been made possible because of the support of our government.

Over the past few months we have made Dua, given charity, raised awareness on social media, taken to the streets to protest, boycotted and held program after program. We ask Allah to accept these humble efforts but many people ask the question, and rightly so, "what else can we do for the people of Gaza?"

The answer to this question is that Allah has blessed us, Muslims of the UK, with an **opportunity to make a change on the 4th of July** through our vote at the general election.

I'd like to share with you 5 reasons why we as UK Muslims should be actively engaging in the political system and vote on the 4th of July.

1 .Allah has commanded us to stand up for justice.

Allah says in Surah Nisa:

" O you who believe, be upholders of justice" (4:135)

Upholding justice can be manifest and practiced in many ways. Differing places and times provide different opportunities in how we champion justice. Today, we the UK Muslims, have a responsibility to uphold the value of justice. One way of doing this is by voting on the 4th of July.

2. A central concept in Islam is that of commanding good and preventing evil.

“ You are the best ‘Ummah ever raised for mankind. You bid the Fair and forbid the Unfair” (3:110)

By voting, Allah has given us the opportunity of forbidding evil and fulfilling our role as being *“the best Ummah”*.

3. The seerah of our prophet peace be upon him is full of examples of social activism and working for positive change. In fact, many early Makkan verses are full of guidance on virtuous social acts, such as kindness to the orphan, gentle speech, charity and so forth.

In pre-prophethood days the messenger of Allah peace be upon him also took part in a social pledge called “Hilful Fudool”, in which the people of Makkah agreed to protect the weak who come to Makkah as guests. The prophet remarked about this social activism many years later and said:

“I took part in a covenant with my uncles in the house of Abdullah ibn Judan, I would not wish to exchange it for red camels” (Ahmad)

4. Dear respected brothers and sisters, keep in mind that those who do not vote and are able to do so are still engaging in the political system.

Even if one thinks he is being apolitical, not voting also affects the outcome of the elections.

Many a times by not voting, the absence of your vote allows a candidate who is not favorable to your needs to win. The messenger of Allah peace be upon him has said:

إِنَّ النَّاسَ إِذَا رَأَوْا ظَالِمًا فَلَمْ يَأْخُذُوا عَلَى يَدَيْهِ أَوْشَكَ أَنْ يَعْتَمَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِعِقَابٍ

“When people see an oppressor and do not try and stop him it is likely that Allah will punish them all” (Abu Dawood)

We ask Allah to protect us from his punishment.

5. Allah has placed us in a position of Amanah and trust. We have the ability to enact change and use this Amanah as a force for good. Allah mentions:

“ Surely, Allah commands you to deliver trusts to those entitled to them” (4:58).

By voting we are giving those best suited for the job the opportunity to serve the rest of the country, as oppose to those who seek power for ulterior motives.

Dear respected brothers and sisters, after understanding the importance of voting, the next question is, “who should we vote for?”

(Note for Imams: As Masajid are governed by The Charity Commission, Imams should avoid endorsing or disapproving any political party or candidate by name)

In response to this we should keep in mind **2 points**.

1. We should decide our vote based upon principal and morality not upon the particular demographic of the candidate. We should vote for candidates who will stand for justice and human rights and keep our best interests in their actions and policies.

Although it must be acknowledged that it may be difficult to choose a candidate who ticks all the correct boxes. Practically politics is not always black and white and there may be areas where there needs to be an element of compromise.

However, the issue of Gaza has shown us which party and candidate we can trust. The issue of Gaza has revealed those who respect the Law, those who work for Human Rights and those who want peace rather than support war.

Therefore, the actions more than the views of the candidates and political parties on Gaza are important to help us make the right decision. Support a candidate who champions justice, peace; has respect for international law and fights all human rights violations. Therefore, the issue of Gaza should be at the forefront when deciding who to vote.

Friends of Al-Aqsa are also running a campaign called “Priorities Palestine”. If you want more details, visit their website foa.org.uk/prioritisepalestine

2. Another important point is that as a community we should back one candidate to give them a higher chance rather than splitting the vote. The Mimbar is not a place to advocate by name but we should refer to people in our community who are politically astute to guide us in this regard.

Along with this as a community we also need to consider what it means to “win” in an election subjective to ourselves. This would look different in different areas.

Winning in some constituencies may be voting in a preferred candidate. In other areas it may mean preventing the worst candidate from being elected and settling for someone who is “less worse”. In some areas it may be neither of the above, but simply showing our sentiments by shifting the expected results for a particular party.

Before I leave you with one action point for today I’d also like to take this opportunity to remind ourselves that social activism is not limited to politics only. Rather we need to become more active in all sphere of influence. Be it the local council, school governors, work place unions, ISOCS and the list goes on. We need to be in as many positions of influence as possible in order to drive positive change in society.

Lastly, a reminder to ensure we are all registered to vote. The deadline is 18th June which is only a few days away. Please ensure that we are registered by tonight. Visit <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>