

**Statement from Mohammed Kozbar and his Solicitor Jonathan Coad following his successful defamation case against *The Daily Telegraph***

May 9, 2018, London

**Mohammed Kozbar**

I am delighted with the result but regret the lengthy and attritional process that was required to reach to this point rather than the newspaper simply apologising and admitting fault. The Daily Telegraph has been forced to pay substantial damages. However, I felt that a defamation claim was the only option in order to protect my community at the Finsbury Park Mosque from continuing Islamophobic media coverage.

In March 2016 I was falsely portrayed by this newspaper as an individual who supported the use of violence in the Israel-Palestine conflict. This was however not just an attack on me but also my faith community. I was also falsely described as someone who blamed the UK for ISIL. The truth is that I abhor and condemn the use of violence in any situation.

We are living in perhaps the most challenging of times concerning any form of hate crime so it is important to stand up against such divisive wrongdoing. Now that the legal process is over I can focus on my work both for my faith community and the wider community in Finsbury Park.

I would like to thank my lawyer, Jonathan Coad for fighting for me and supporting me during this difficult process.

**Jonathan Coad**

It was my privilege to have represent a man of peace from another faith community, particularly as I am a devout Christian. While there are many responsible elements of the press, the demonising of Muslims in some parts of it is immensely destructive.

Baroness Warsi recently said this; "*In sections of our press it is relentless and deliberate. Steadily and methodically using paper inches and columns to create, feed and ratchet up suspicions and hostilities in our society, driving communities apart and creating untold – and unnecessary – fear and distress.*"

These legal proceedings should never have been necessary. The article should not have been published. The paper rejected Mr Kozbar's offer of modest settlement terms prior to proceedings being issued but refused to withdraw its allegations against him. He was obliged to go to court to have them declared false.