

On Sunday morning I half-heard a news item about a bombing in Iraq that killed at least 58 people. As I didn't catch the full story, I thought I'd pick up a paper at the newsagents to find out more. However, as I scanned the papers at the corner shop, I couldn't see a single one carrying the item on the front page. Eventually I did discover the story - seven paragraphs on page two of the paper that I bought. Less prominence was given to this dreadful bombing than to an article about divers being able to send photographs underwater!

Now I have no connection with Iraq. I don't follow the Islamic faith, nor am I ever likely to convert. Yet I felt a sense of anger at the trivial way in which this story was reported, so how must a Muslim feel? How must an Iraqi feel?

I know that stories closer to home always generate more interest. It is only natural to look at the incidents from car crashes to coastal floods and think of all the times one has used that road and seen near-misses or visited that seaside resort.

However, we have bought Iraq into our backyard by invading the country. Our country is now inextricably linked with Iraq. Add to that the fact that London has just suffered a similar atrocity - possibly motivated in part by Iraqi war - and I would have thought that news editors in Britain would have considered that a suicide bombing in Baghdad that killed 58 people would have a great deal of resonance with us. Clearly the news editors believed otherwise.

It is decisions like this that drive a wedge between British Muslims and other citizens, by leaving them with the feeling that in this country an Iraqi's life is worth far, far less than a Briton's. This sense of injustice can merge with other sources of grievance, and the danger is that, manipulated by the unscrupulous, it can become twisted into the hatred that perpetrates appalling violence.

We need to root out the clerics who use those feelings of injustice to push others into jihad. Of course, free speech must be protected. We all should have the freedom to criticise whomever we choose, but they cannot be tolerated because they are inciting people to commit acts of violence, to infringe the ultimate human right - the right to life. They should be stopped.

We can also support events - the march in Leicester being a prime example - that show our refusal to allow anyone - be it news editors with a casual disregard for events abroad to terrorists with the calculated desire to destroy - from driving a wedge between people of different faiths and races who are determined to stand united in their condemnation of violence and their support of one another.