



Statement by Bishop Alan McGuckian SJ in Response to Attack on Stephen Ogilvie and Recent Social Disorder

11th June 2026

My thoughts and prayers are firstly with Stephen Ogilvie, who sustained life-changing devastating injuries in a brutal and horrific attack on Monday evening. I also pray for his family and pay tribute to their appeal for calm as they support Stephen. The quick response of the local community and the statutory authorities coming to his assistance undoubtedly saved his life.

Over recent days, the streets of Northern Ireland and beyond have been marred by riotous behaviour and social disorder targeting family homes and businesses of migrants. People who have lived among us for years as good neighbours, friends and co-workers are now living in terror, for themselves and for their children. So many newcomers make an outstanding contribution to our communities, including our parishes. They are our friends. As a community we must stand in solidarity with them. Coordinated acts of senseless violence and destruction seek only to heighten tension across the community and must be condemned.

Shame on all those who have sought to mobilise, agitate, weaponise and politicise the fear and concerns of others over the last few days. All of us have a responsibility to de-escalate societal tension rather than stoke the flames of racism.

As a society, we also have a responsibility to address the real and tangible community concerns regarding safety and accountability, fears that demand honest, respectful attention. However, the destruction on our streets and the attacks on homes will not resolve any underlying issues, and violence will have to give way to dialogue and engagement. Into this space of meaningful conversation, politicians, community leaders and statutory agencies need to listen and act. In appealing for calm, I also call for support for the police and for community leaders.

As a society, we in Northern Ireland have journeyed too far on the road to reconciliation and paid too high a price in a legacy of suffering to risk retreating into conflict and racial oppression.

I ask that in all our parishes this weekend we pray for healing and peace and that the sacred dignity of each human person be upheld by all.