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The scene at Bishop Street, Londonderry on Saturday night

Children evacuated from Derry church youth club just minutes before bomb exploded

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Saturday night's car bomb attack on Londonderry's courthouse has been condemned by police as "unbelievably reckless".

Children were evacuated from a church youth club in the area, and hundreds of hotel guests were moved to safety just minutes before the blast.

Shortly before 8pm, officers on patrol in Bishop Street spotted a suspicious vehicle and were making checks when information was received that a device had been left at the courthouse.

"We moved immediately to begin evacuating people from nearby buildings including hundreds of hotel guests, 150 people from the Masonic Hall and a large number of children from a church youth club. The device detonated at 8.10pm," Assistant Chief Constable Mark Hamilton explained.

"At this stage it appears as though the vehicle used had been hijacked from a delivery driver in the Quarry Street a short time before the explosion.

"This attack was unbelievably reckless. Thankfully the attackers failed to kill or injure any members of the local community out socialising and enjoying the best of what the city has to offer."

He continued: "The people responsible for this attack have shown no regard for the community or local businesses. They care little about the damage to the area and the disruption they have caused.

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“The area remains sealed off and church services at St Augustine’s have been moved to St Peter’s and the Cathedral services have been cancelled on Sunday morning as a result.

“We are incredibly grateful for the support and co-operation of the local community and I am appealing to anyone with information to please get in touch with us on 101. Information can also be given to Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.”

Condemning the attack, the Deputy Mayor of Derry City and Strabane, UUP Alderman Derek Hussey, said: “There can be no justification for the planting of a car bomb in Londonderry’s Bishop Street area on Saturday evening.

“Those who carried out this act had no thought for the safety and wellbeing of fellow citizens, much less the hard pressed economy and the impact this will have on the city’s businesses, nor the impression given to visitors to our area.

“These are by their very nature, inherently unstable devices, and history tells us that they can detonate prematurely, whilst being assembled or transported. That of course is of no concern to the criminal elements within our society who undertake these actions in order to subdue their fellow citizens.

“This is nothing less than fascism, where violence and the threat of violence are used to terrorise people and communities, and these people need to be rejected and rooted out from our midst for the good of all.

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Detectives investigating the explosion outside Bishop Street courthouse have arrested two men.

The pair, both aged in their 20s, were arrested in the city this morning, according to police.

“They remain in custody at present,” a PSNI spokesperson said.

Sinn Fein MLA, Elisha McCallion condemned the incident. The Foyle MP said: “This incident has shocked the local community. In particular, there are many elderly residents who live in the area who have been alarmed by this incident.

“Thankfully no one appears to have been injured in this incident. Derry is a city moving forward and no one wants this type of incident. It is not representative of the city. “I would encourage anyone with information about this incident to bring it to the police.”

MLA Mark H Durkan tweeted: “Whoever is responsible for this explosion outside Bishop Street Courthouse in Derry clearly hasn’t got the message that the people of Derry DO NOT want this on our streets. We are trying to move Derry forward and will not let anyone drag us back to the dark days of the past.”

Bishop Good’s response to bombing

The Rt Rev Ken Good, Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, condemned the attack, saying times had changed: “Last night’s bomb attack in the centre of Londonderry was an act

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of utter recklessness which showed a callous disregard for the lives and safety of local citizens and visitors alike.

“It defies belief that anyone would place a bomb on a city-centre street, early on a Saturday evening, so close to people’s homes, churches, an hotel, sheltered accommodation, nearby pubs and a large car park. St Columb’s Cathedral and St Augustine’s Church – where a group of young people had been meeting yesterday evening – have both had to cancel their Sunday morning services while the Police carry out a follow-up security operation.

"I am thankful to all our emergency services for the courageous way in which they responded to the initial explosion and to the subsequent alert. I am extremely thankful that no one was injured – or worse – as a result of last night’s explosion. The people responsible for the attack must be reminded that their methods have been rejected not only by the vast majority of people in this community but by an overwhelming majority of people on this island.

“The attack was wrong. It is indefensible. It should never be repeated. The time has long since passed when such violence should have been consigned to history. I urge anyone with information about the bombing to share it with the Police.”

East Belfast Mission targeted by robbers

East Belfast Mission staff arrived to work on Friday morning and were greeted with a broken door and empty safe drawer. The Mission premises were targeted by robbers

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who used a grinder to force open their doors. The robbers escaped the community café with nearly £2000 in cash.

The award-winning charity was broken into a few months ago, in an attack almost identical to this.

The Reverend Brian Anderson told Belfast Live: "Sadly, this is not the first time we have been targeted. The same thing happened a number of months ago.

"It is a thought that it could be the same people, but that would just be speculation. It's reasonably suspicious that it's happened again in the same way.

"We are a café for the people of East Belfast. Any profit made goes straight back into the community.

"They haven't only stole from us, but they've stolen from the community of East Belfast."

The superintendent of the Mission told how staff have been left shocked but that they won't be knocked.

He said: "Counter staff and myself are cross. Some are very angry at this but we won't back down.

"We recognise that there is poverty in this community and we will continue to love and care for all those in need.

"I would love someone to tell me why they have done this. What good is it doing?"

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After the first attack, the charity upped their security, and now following last night they have no choice but to spend more money on higher levels of security to prevent this happening again.

The money that will be spent on this, is money out of the bank that could be used to continue their work of 'trying to renew and transform East Belfast.'

PSNI Inspector David Gibson said: "It was reported that sometime between 11.00 pm on Thursday, 17th of January and 6.50 am on Friday, 18th of January, entry was gained to the premises and a sum of cash was stolen.

"Anyone with any information about this incident is asked to contact officers at Strandtown on 101 quoting reference number 133 18/01/19.

"Alternatively, information can also be provided to the independent charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 which is 100% anonymous and gives people the power to speak up and stop crime."

Orthodox Syrian Church celebrates 10th anniversary of worship in Cook C of I Church

For the past ten years, members of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, have been celebrating mass on two Saturdays each month in St Michael's Church of Ireland Church in Blackrock, Cork, and also on their major festivals.

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A special celebration was held recently to mark the 10th anniversary.

At a special service in St Michael's Church on Saturday 12 January, their priest Fr Zachariah George, and the Church of Ireland rector, Archdeacon Adrian Wilkinson, lit wicks from a large oil lamp to symbolise their shared faith and ecumenical fellowship.

Later Archdeacon Wilkinson was presented with an engraved glass plaque as a gift to the parish. The inscription reads, 'Thank you for your generosity and support throughout our journey, with deepest gratitude and appreciation from all our members to St Michael's Church, Blackrock, Cork 2019'.

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**A
presentation
to
Archdeacon
Adrian
Wilkinson.**

The large congregation at the service included many young families and children. Afterwards everyone enjoyed a celebratory meal in the Old Schoolhouse beside the church and



there both clergy cut a special cake in honour of the occasion. The parishioners in Blackrock would like to thank the Indian Orthodox congregation for this very generous gesture and they look forward to continuing the journey with them for many more years to come.

The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, more commonly known as the Indian Orthodox Church, traces its roots back to the evangelical activity of St Thomas the Apostle in the

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1st Century. These Christians are predominantly from Kerala State on the southwestern Malabar Coast of India. Quite a number now live in Cork and work in a variety of professions and in business.

Enniskillen Christian Unity Week Service

Each year the Enniskillen Christian Unity Week Service is organised by Fermanagh Churches Forum and rotates around the 4 larger Churches in the town. This year the Service will take place in St. Michael's Parish Church at 7.30pm on Thursday January 24.

The theme of the Service is "Justice, Only Justice, You Shall Pursue" and resources were prepared by Christian ecumenical partners from Indonesia.

The speaker will be Mgr. Joseph McGuinness Diocesan Administrator, Diocese of Clogher.

Traditionally the week of prayer for Christian unity is celebrated between 18-25 January, between the feasts of St Peter and St Paul. Christians are reminded of Jesus' prayer for his disciples that "they may be one so that the world may believe" (see John 17.21)

Episcopalians join in wide range of events to honour Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

Dioceses and congregations churchwide held events over the weekend, from worship services to forums, for Episcopalians and their communities to honour the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

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Attendees are seen during a silent march and rally on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., on April 4, 2018, to mark the 50th anniversary of the assassination of civil rights leader Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

King, whose federal holiday will be celebrated today Jan. 21, was born 90 years ago on Jan. 15, 1929. As a Baptist preacher in Montgomery, Alabama, and Atlanta, Georgia, he was the leading voice and icon of the civil rights movement in the late 1950s and 1960s until his assassination in 1968.

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry marked the holiday weekend by participating in a panel discussion during a King event on Jan. 20 at the Apollo Theater in New York's Harlem neighborhood. "Unsung Champions of Civil Rights from MLK to Today" featured a mix of one-on-one interviews and

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panels focusing on King's legacy and other civil rights figures.

Curry quoted King on "the redemptive power of love" in his much-heralded royal wedding sermon in May. "Dr. King was right," Curry said. "We must discover love, the redemptive power of love. And when we do that, we will make of this old world a new world."

Daylong activities are planned at All Saints Episcopal Church in Pasadena, California, today Jan. 21, including a continuous reading of King's speeches, sermons and writings over eight hours. "Let Freedom Ring" will be held in the church's nave.

The Rev. Mike Kinman, rector at All Saints, said the marathon of readings was an idea he hatched years ago while serving as dean of Christ Church Cathedral in St. Louis, Missouri. It stemmed from his personal tradition of reading from a collection of King's writings and speeches every year on the federal holiday.

"We advertised it as a complement of reflection to the King National Day of Service activities taking place in the community. And people came," Kinman said, recalling the St. Louis event in an online post for All Saints.

"They came for a half hour, for two hours, for the entire day. They read and they listened. School groups came after doing service projects and then had conversations about how what they had done and what they heard were related."

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This will be All Saints' third year hosting a similar marathon of King's words.

January 21 in Christian history

January 21, 1525: Conrad Grebel (Ulrich Zwingli's former protege) rebaptizes George Blaurock, a former monk, in a secret, illegal meeting of six men in Zurich. This meeting is now considered the birth of the Anabaptist movement.

January 21, 1549: In the first of four Acts of Uniformity, the British Parliament requires all Anglican public services to exclusively use of The Book of Common Prayer.

January 21, 1621: Pilgrims leave the Mayflower and gather on shore at Plymouth, Massachusetts, for their first religious service in America.

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