

# Tayo Aluko

OPEN LETTER TO:

Mayor Joanne Anderson  
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Dear Mayor Anderson,

The two pieces of horrific news that have hit the headlines in recent days are closer to us here in Liverpool than many of us might like to think.

Whatever the history of Afghanistan, the current horror is clearly down to the disastrous decisions of a few politicians – particularly current and previous American Presidents and UK Prime Ministers.

The mass shooting in Plymouth was an act of domestic terrorism that follows the even more devastating one that happened at the Manchester Arena a few years ago. The Plymouth incident is the result of arms getting into the wrong hands, thanks to some serious mistakes made by people who could have prevented it happening. In Manchester, the terrorists were moved to act because of what they saw as unjust and mistaken actions by generations of British politicians.

It is perhaps only by good fortune that Liverpool itself has escaped any acts of terrorism in recent years, but I fear that Liverpool politicians, under your leadership, Mayor Anderson, may jeopardise that by neglecting to take the right and necessary decision to stop the electronic arms fair scheduled for the ACC Arena in October.

A city that is seen to help facilitate the trade in weapons designed to cause oppression, death and destruction in other parts of the world could be seen by people of a certain persuasion as a city deserving of terror being visited upon it. If that happens, you - the city's politicians - will have the blood of innocent Liverpoolians on your hands, in addition to that of the people maimed and killed by the weapons traded in the Arena, a city-owned building.

It may be that the contract to host the fair is extremely lucrative, but meeting the high ethical standards the council has set itself should be a much greater priority. I also understand that it will not be easy for the city to legally extricate itself from its obligations to the organisers of the arms fair. This is an unpersuasive argument, and I, and as I imagine, the majority of the peace-loving people of Liverpool will expect any politicians worth their salt to find whatever means are necessary to ensure that the fair does not happen. If it does, the danger of blood being spilled on our streets or in our buildings sometime in the future will become ever more real and present.

The hands of many mayors past were dirty with the blood of our ancestors as the bricks of this city were being laid. I urge you to show yourself to be different to, and better than them.

Yours sincerely,

Tayo Aluko

To: mayorjoanneanderson@liverpool.gov.uk; letters@liverpoolecho.co.uk