

**Debate Pack**

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# General debate on tackling Islamophobia

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# 1

## Background

A general debate has been scheduled on tackling Islamophobia for Thursday 25 May in the House of Commons Chamber. The subject for the debate has been chosen by the Backbench Business Committee.

This debate pack contains information on definitions of Islamophobia, statutory provisions relevant to Islamophobia and statistics on Islamophobia in the UK.

## 2

## Definitions of Islamophobia

In October 2017, Baroness Warsi (Conservative), in the House of Lords, asked the Government whether it had a definition of Islamophobia. Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, then Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Communities and Local Government, replied that the Government was committed to eradicating religious hatred and intolerance. However, regarding a definition, Lord Bourne said:

The Government do not currently endorse a particular definition of Islamophobia. Previous attempts by others to define this term have not succeeded in attracting consensus or widespread acceptance.<sup>1</sup>

On 23 July 2019, the Government appointed Imam Qari Asim MBE, then Deputy Chair of the Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group, to “lead work to propose a definition of Islamophobia”.<sup>2</sup> Mr Asim was removed from his role in June 2022.<sup>3</sup> As of 9 May 2023, the Government did not “support taking forward work on an official definition of Islamophobia”.<sup>4</sup>

Various organisations and commentators have argued that an agreed definition would improve initiatives to prevent Islamophobia. The Government has been urged to adopt a formal definition of Islamophobia, in the same way the Government adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s definition of antisemitism in December 2016.<sup>5</sup>

### Runnymede Trust Definition

In 1997, the race equality think tank, the [Runnymede Trust](#), published the report [Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All](#), which is credited with introducing the term “Islamophobia” to public policy discourse in the UK.<sup>6</sup> The report gave the following definition of Islamophobia, along with a summary of criticisms of the term:

Islamophobia refers to unfounded hostility towards Islam. It refers also to the practical consequences of such hostility in unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities, and to the exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political and social affairs. The term is not, admittedly, ideal. Critics of it consider that its use panders to what they call political correctness,

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<sup>1</sup> [HL Deb 17 October 2017 c486](#)

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [Independent expert appointed to tackle Islamophobia](#), 23 July 2019

<sup>3</sup> Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, [Letter to Imam Qari Asim](#) (PDF), June 2022

<sup>4</sup> PQ 182937 [on [Islamophobia](#)] 9 May 2023

<sup>5</sup> Prime Minister’s Office, [Government Leads the Way in Tackling Anti-Semitism](#), 12 December 2016

<sup>6</sup> All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims, [Islamophobia Defined: The Inquiry into a Working Definition of Islamophobia](#) (PDF), 2018, p 23

that is stifles legitimate criticism of Islam, and that it demonises and stigmatises anyone who wishes to engage in such criticism.<sup>7</sup>

In November 2017, to mark the 20th anniversary of the report's publication, the Runnymede Trust published an updated report, [Islamophobia: Still a Challenge for Us All](#). The report claimed that in the intervening 20 years "anti-Muslim prejudice has grown further and wider".<sup>8</sup>

The report offered three explanations for the increase in anti-Muslim prejudice.

First, an increase in terrorist incidents domestically and internationally since 2001 had contributed to a culture in which "the fear and threat of terrorism can be inflated by Islamophobia, and that Islamophobia can increase in the wake of terrorist attacks".<sup>9</sup>

Second, compared with 20 years ago, "British Muslims are a larger, better organized and more settled community".<sup>10</sup>

Third, there is now more data about British Muslims; "their population, distribution, attitudes and outcomes, in the labour market, education, housing and health".<sup>11</sup>

In the foreword to the 2017 report, Baroness Warsi claimed that to challenge Islamophobia "the starting point must surely be a definition, a mechanism that leads to accountability".<sup>12</sup> The report recommended that the Government should adopt its updated definition of Islamophobia. The report provided both a short definition – "Islamophobia is anti-Muslim racism" – and a longer definition:

Islamophobia is any distinction, exclusion, or restriction towards, or preference against, Muslims (or those perceived to be Muslims) that has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.<sup>13</sup>

## All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims inquiry definition

Prompted by the Government's reluctance to adopt a formal definition of Islamophobia, the [All Party Parliamentary Group \(APPG\) on British Muslims](#)

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<sup>7</sup> Runnymede Trust, [Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All](#), 1997, p4

<sup>8</sup> Runnymede Trust, [Islamophobia: Still A Challenge for Us All](#), November 2017, p5

<sup>9</sup> As above

<sup>10</sup> As above

<sup>11</sup> As above, pv

<sup>12</sup> As above, p2

<sup>13</sup> As above, p1

established an inquiry into a working definition of Islamophobia in April 2018.<sup>14</sup>

The APPG claimed that “no amount of documentation of the evidence of discriminatory outcomes faced by Muslims [...] can satisfy our desire to reverse these results if we cannot begin from the point of an agreed definition”.<sup>15</sup>

Following a “widespread consultation with academics, lawyers [and] Muslim organisations”, it recommended the adoption of the following definition:

Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness.<sup>16</sup>

The definition was supported by a range of Muslim organisations, including the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB). The MCB’s general secretary, Harun Khan, said:

Muslim organisations from different parts of the country and different backgrounds have come together to make a resounding call on our political leaders to adopt this definition. We hope that they all understand the importance of listening to communities, and look forward to their positive response.<sup>17</sup>

However, the APPG report also attracted criticism. For instance, from the National Secular Society (NSS), one of the organisations that submitted evidence to the inquiry. In a letter to the then Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, urging the Government not to adopt the definition, the NSS described it as “vague and unworkable” and that it “conflates hatred of, and discrimination against, Muslims with criticism of Islam”.<sup>18</sup>

Subsequently, in December 2018, the Government was asked, in a written parliamentary question in the House of Lords, about the definition of Islamophobia and whether it:

Consider[ed] Islamophobia to be a form of racism; and if so, whether they will adopt a definition of Islamophobia comparable to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s definition of antisemitism.<sup>19</sup>

In reply, Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth stressed that the Government took Islamophobia very seriously and that it was committed to tackling all hate

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<sup>14</sup> All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims, [Islamophobia Defined: The Inquiry into a Working Definition of Islamophobia](#) (PDF), 2018, p10

<sup>15</sup> As above, p9

<sup>16</sup> As above, p11

<sup>17</sup> Muslim Council of Britain, [British Muslim Organisations Rally for Proposed Definition of Islamophobia](#), 2 December 2018

<sup>18</sup> NSS, [Home secretary urged not to adopt definition of ‘Islamophobia’](#), 9 December 2018

<sup>19</sup> PQ HL11998 [on [Islamophobia](#)] 10 December 2018

crime. He stated, “it is now of vital importance that we hear a range of views on the proposed definition”.<sup>20</sup>

For further information, see Lords Library briefing, [Islamophobia in the UK](#), which was published on 14 December 2018.

## Other definitions

In 2004, the [Council of Europe](#) said Islamophobia was the:

fear of or prejudiced viewpoint towards Islam, Muslims and matters pertaining to them [taking] the shape of daily forms of racism and discrimination or more violent forms, Islamophobia is a violation of human rights.<sup>21</sup>

A section of the definition offered by the [Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research](#) (SETA), a think-tank based in Turkey, in its report on European Islamophobia in 2015, stated that:

Islamophobia operates by constructing a static ‘Muslim’ identity, which is attributed in negative terms and generalized for all Muslims.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> PQ HL11998 [on [Islamophobia](#)] 10 December 2018

<sup>21</sup> Council of Europe, [Islamophobia and its consequences on Young People](#), June 2004, p6

<sup>22</sup> SETA, [European Islamophobia Report 2015](#) (PDF), 2016, p7

## 3 Islamophobia and the law

There is no specific law prohibiting Islamophobia. However, anti-Islamic activity might be covered by more general legislation on hate crime, online abuse, and equalities.

### 3.1 Hate crime policy and legislation

There are three different ways that legislation deals with hate crime motivated on the grounds of race or religion: offences of stirring up hatred; aggravated forms of certain “basic” criminal offences; and enhanced sentencing for offences motivated by hate.

Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) guidance notes that case law has “concluded that persons associated by their religious beliefs may also be part of a racial group”, and that prosecutors should “consider on the facts of each case if the aggravating feature arises from hostility towards a religious belief or a racial group (or a combination of both)”.<sup>23</sup>

See the following CPS publications for full details of the offences described below:

- [Racist and Religious Hate Crime - Prosecution Guidance](#)
- [Public statement on prosecuting racist and religious hate crime](#)

#### Stirring up hatred

[Part III of the Public Order Act 1986](#) criminalises certain acts that are intended to stir up racial hatred. [Part IIIA of the 1986 Act](#) makes similar provision for certain acts intended to stir up religious hatred.<sup>24</sup>

Racial hatred is defined as “hatred against a group of persons defined by reference to colour, race, nationality (including citizenship) or ethnic or national origins”. Religious hatred is defined as “hatred against a group of persons defined by reference to religious belief or lack of religious belief”.

The acts covered by the 1986 Act include:

- the use of words or behaviour, or the display or written material;
- the publication or distribution of written material;

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<sup>23</sup> CPS, [Racist and Religious Hate Crime - Prosecution Guidance](#), last updated March 2022

<sup>24</sup> Part IIIA also covers conduct intended to stir up hatred on the grounds of sexual orientation

- the public performance of a play;
- the distribution, showing or playing of a recording of images or sounds;
- the broadcasting or a programme including images or sounds; and
- the possession of inflammatory material.

There is a “freedom of expression” defence to the religious hatred offences (but not for the racial hatred offences). The defence states that nothing in Part IIIA:

shall be read or given effect in a way which prohibits or restricts discussion, criticism or expressions of antipathy, dislike, ridicule, insult or abuse of particular religions or the beliefs or practices of their adherents, or of any other belief system or the beliefs or practices of its adherents, or proselytising or urging adherents of a different religion or belief system to cease practising their religion or belief system.<sup>25</sup>

## Aggravated offences

Under [the Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#), perpetrators of specified “basic” criminal offences can be charged with an aggravated form of the offence (carrying a longer maximum sentence) if they demonstrated or were motivated by hostility on the basis of race or religion.

The specified offences covered by the 1998 Act include assault, criminal damage, public order offences, harassment and stalking. The CPS says that “monitoring had indicated that these were the most common types of crime experienced by the victims of racially and religiously aggravated violence or harassment”.<sup>26</sup>

## Enhanced sentencing

[Section 66 of the Sentencing Act 2020](#) applies when the court is sentencing an offender for an offence other than one of the aggravated offences under the 1998 Act. Section 66 requires the court to consider whether the offence was racially or religiously aggravated. If so, the court must treat that as an aggravating factor for sentencing purposes and must state in open court that the offence was so aggravated.

## Law Commission project

The Law Commission [conducted a review of existing hate crime legislation](#). Its final report was published in December 2021.

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<sup>25</sup> [Public Order Act 1986](#), s29J

<sup>26</sup> CPS, [Public statement on prosecuting racist and religious hate crime](#), 3 March 2021



One of its recommendations is the consolidation of existing hate crime laws into a single act. This would involve moving the substantive aggravated offences in the 1998 Act and the stirring up hatred offences in parts III and IIIA of the 1986 Act to the new legislation.<sup>27</sup>

The Law Commission also said that there are currently “separate legal tests” for racial hatred, religious hatred and hatred on the grounds of sexual orientation. The report suggested that this be replaced with a single test applying to all forms of hatred:

Under this test a person would be guilty of stirring up hatred if they used words or behaviour intended to stir up relevant hatred; or used threatening or abusive words or behaviour likely to stir up relevant hatred.<sup>28</sup>

The report also invited the Government to “consider further the merits” of establishing a Commissioner for countering hate crime. A Commissioner would provide a “valuable focal point to support efforts to counter the harm caused by hate crimes”.<sup>29</sup>

In April 2023, [the Government responded to recommendation 8 of the Law Commission’s report](#) (PDF). Its response to the other recommendations has yet to be released.

## 3.2

## Online abuse

There are several general criminal offences that could be used to prosecute online Islamophobia. The most relevant are the following:

- [Section 1 of the Malicious Communications Act 1988](#), which makes it an offence to send indecent, grossly offensive, threatening or false electronic communications if the purpose (or one of the purposes) of the sender is to cause the recipient distress or anxiety.
- [Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003](#), which makes it an offence to use a public electronic communications network to send a message (or other matter) that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character; or to send a false message “for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another”.
- Harassment or stalking offences under [sections 2, 2A, 4 or 4A of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997](#).

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<sup>27</sup> Law Commission, [Hate crime laws: Final report](#) (PDF), HC 942, December 2021, para 12.147

<sup>28</sup> As above, para 10.143

<sup>29</sup> As above, para 12.110

The CPS has published guidance on the use of these offences (and others) to prosecute social media communications: [Legal guidance: Social Media and other Electronic Communications](#).

When sentencing for such offences in the context of Islamophobic online abuse, the courts could make use of the enhanced sentencing regime under section 66 of the Sentencing Act 2020 as set out above.

## Online Safety Bill

The [Online Safety Bill](#) (PDF) [Bill 285 2021-22] was introduced in the House of Commons on 17 March 2022. The Bill had its [second reading on 19 April 2022](#). A carry-over motion was approved on the same date. The [Online Safety Bill](#) (PDF) [Bill 4 2022-23] was re-introduced in the Commons on 10 May 2022. The Bill [completed its Commons stages on 17 January 2023](#). For details of how the Bill was amended, see the Library briefing [Online Safety Bill: Commons stages](#) (PDF) (1 February 2023).

The Bill [[HL Bill 87](#) (PDF)] was introduced in the House of Lords on 17 January 2023. [Lords second reading took place on 1 February 2023](#). The Bill began its [Committee stage in the Lords](#) on 19 April 2023.

A key aim of the Bill is to protect users from illegal content. Clause 53(2) defines “illegal content” as “content that amounts to a relevant offence”.<sup>30</sup> Under schedule 7, this would include the following previously mentioned offences under the Crime and Disorder 1998 and the Public Order Act 1986:

An offence under any of the following provisions of the Public Order Act 1986—

- (a) section 18 (use of words or behaviour or display of written material);
- (b) section 19 (publishing or distributing written material);
- (c) section 21 (distributing, showing or playing a recording);
- (d) section 29B (use of words or behaviour or display of written material);
- (e) section 29C (publishing or distributing written material);
- (f) section 29E (distributing, showing or playing a recording).

... An offence under any of the following provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998—

- (a) section 31 (racially or religiously aggravated public order offences);
- (b) section 32 (racially or religiously aggravated harassment etc).<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> [Online Safety Bill](#) (PDF) [Bill 4 2022-23], c53(2)

<sup>31</sup> As above, schedule 7 (4-6)

Broadly, service providers would then have safety duties linked to illegal content. That is, a requirement to take steps to mitigate and manage the risk of harm to service users. This includes using measures to prevent individuals encountering priority illegal content and employing processes that minimise the length of time for which such content is present on the platform.

### Stakeholder responses

Some stakeholders have said that the bill would not sufficiently reduce online hate crime. These organisations suggest that the exclusion of comments sections and news publisher content from the bill's illegal content provisions may create loopholes for online abuse.

The [Community Policy Forum](#), a think tank that explores the issues facing Muslim communities in the UK, released a report in May 2022 examining whether the bill would make online spaces safer for Muslim communities. The authors suggest that the exclusion of comments sections from its provisions: “does not address the immense harms to minority communities that are currently found with such arenas.”<sup>32</sup>

[Hope not Hate](#), an advocacy group which campaigns against racism and fascism in the UK, describes the bill's definition of a “recognised news publisher” as “unspecific” and therefore possibly leading “to a wide interpretation of the terms”. This exemption could then enable “far-right figures” to return to online platforms and “spread misinformation and discriminatory content”.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Community Policy Forum, [The Online Safety Bill: Will it make online spaces safer for Muslim communities?](#), 31 May 2022, p4

<sup>33</sup> Hope not Hate, [MPs are debating the Online Safety Bill- here's why that matters](#), 19 April 2022. A similar conclusion is reached by the authors of the Community Policy Forum report, see pp5-7

## 4

# Religious hate crime statistics

Police Recorded Crime figures on the number of religious hate crimes that were Islamophobic, antisemitic or relate to other faiths are provided in the Home Office’s Hate Crime Statistics 2021/22. The recording of religious hate crime is based on the perceived religious target of the offender. In some cases, more than one religion will be targeted, and in others the actual targeted religion will differ from the intended one.

**Around 42% and 23% of religious hate crimes recorded by police in 2021/22 were Islamophobic <sup>a,b,c</sup>**

Perceived religion of victim	Number of offences	Percentage
Muslim	3,459	42%
Jewish	1,919	23%
Unknown	1,426	17%
Christian	701	8%
Other	403	5%
Sikh	301	4%
No religion	209	3%
Hindu	161	2%
Buddhist	36	0.4%
<b>Total number of targeted religions<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>8,615</b>	
<b>Total number of offences</b>	<b>8,307</b>	

Notes:

a) Data for religious hate crimes where targeted religion has been recorded by the police

b) Metropolitan Police data for perceived religion is currently unreconciled and is undergoing further checks.

c) In some offences more than one religion has been recorded as being targeted, therefore the sum of the proportions do not add to 100%.

Source: Home Office, *Hate Crime, England and Wales 2021/22 Data Tables*, Table 4

The data in 2021/22 shows that 42% of religious hate crimes recorded by the police were against Muslims. 23% were anti-Jewish in nature; 8% were anti-Christian with 17% of offences being recorded as “unknown”.

It should be noted that a substantial proportion of hate crimes described as Islamophobic are directed at non-Muslims mistaken for Muslims. For instance, an FOI request to the MPS disclosed that in 2016, 7% of victims of Islamophobic hate crimes were non-Muslims, while 19% were of unknown faith or had not been contacted to determine their faith.<sup>34</sup>

The Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW) provides data on the proportion of adults by ethnicity and religion who have been the victims of religiously motivated hate crime.<sup>35</sup> The proportion of all adults that have been victims of religiously motivated hate crime in the 2017/18 to 2019/20 combined dataset is 0.1%.

This has remained unchanged from the 2007/08 and 2008/09 combined dataset.

Muslims in the 2017/18 to 2019/20 combined dataset (The latest available) were most likely to be the victims of religion motivated hate crime with 0.8% of Muslims claiming to have been the victims of such attacks. Hindus formed the second most likely religion to have been victims of religiously motivated hate crime (0.3%).

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<sup>34</sup> FOI request to MPS, [Victims of Islamophobic Hate Crime by Muslim/Non Muslim-recorded between 01/01/2016 and 31/12/2016](#)

<sup>35</sup> An explanation on the differences between Police recorded hate crime and the CSEW data is available in [section 3.3 of the Home Office, Hate Crime Statistics, 2021 to 2022 Bulletin](#).

## Percentage<sup>a</sup> of adults aged 16 and over who were victims of religion-motivated hate crime, by ethnicity and religion

England and Wales

	2007/08 & 2008/09	2009/10 to 2011/12	2012/13 to 2014/15	2015/16 to 2017/18	2017/18 to 2019/20
<b>Ethnic group<sup>b</sup></b>					
White	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	0.8	0.1	0.6	0.1	-
Asian/Asian British	0.8	0.9	0.5	0.5	0.5
<b>Black/African/Caribbean/Black</b>					
British	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2
Other ethnic group	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.7
<b>Religion</b>					
Christian	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Buddhist	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	-
Hindu	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.3
Muslim	1.0	1.2	0.8	0.8	0.8
Other	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.2	-
No religion	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>All Adults</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.1</b>

### Notes:

(-) A reliable estimate cannot be produced due to small numbers in the survey

a) This percentage is calculated treating a household crime as a personal crime.

b) Ethnic group is based on the 2011 Census definition of ethnic group which now includes Chinese in the Asian/Asian British group.

Source: Home Office, [Hate Crime, England and Wales 2019/20 Appendix Tables](#), Table 16, 13 October 2020

## Attacks against Mosques

In June 2022 Muslim Census and Muslim Engagement and Development (MEND) published a report documenting attacks on Mosques and Islamic institutions. The report findings were based on a survey conducted of Mosques and Islamic institutions from June to September 2021. 6% (114) of such institutions responded out of what is believed to be 1,800 mosques across the UK. Among the key findings in the [data](#) collected:

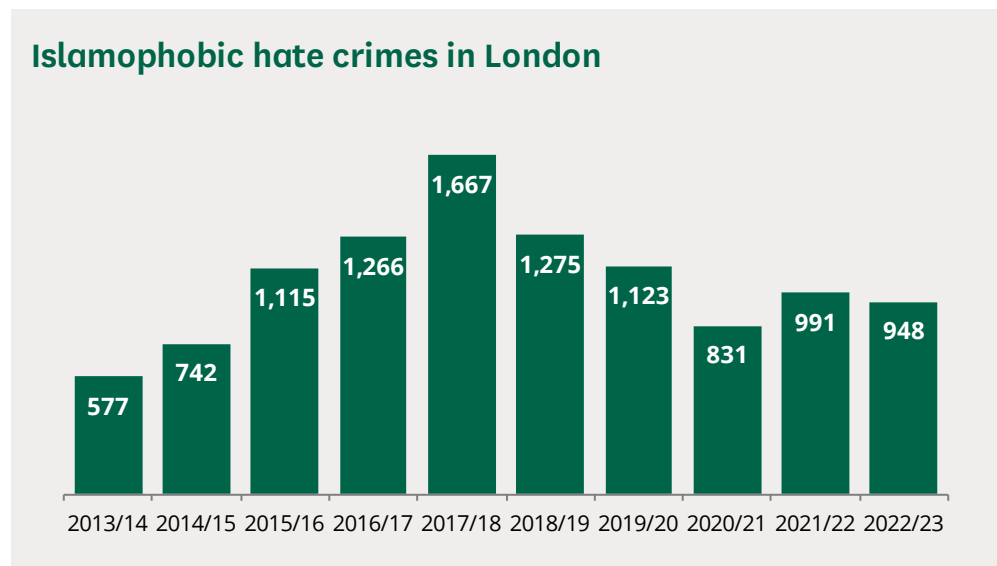
- 42% of Mosques or Islamic institutions experienced religiously motivated attacks in the previous 3 years.
- 17% of mosques experiencing an attack in the previous 3 years had also experienced instances of physical assault.

- 35% of mosques experience a religiously motivated attack at least once a year.
- 15% of mosques saw an increase in attacks during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Of the institutions that experienced or were threatened with an attack, 85% reported these to the police. Only 55% of these institutions were satisfied with the police response.<sup>36</sup>

## Islamophobia in London

According to the 2021 census around 34% of the Muslim population in England and Wales lived in London.<sup>37</sup>

Met Police Data shows that the number of Islamophobic hate crime incidents in London has increased by 174% since 2012/13. The increase in police recorded figures in London can be partly attributed to improved recording by the police. However, since the highest number of Islamophobic hate crimes recorded in London occurred in 2017/18 (1,667), there had been a year on year decline in the number of Islamophobic hate crime incidents recorded up until 2020/21 falling by 50%. In 2021/22, there was a 20% increase on the previous year in the number of Islamophobic hate crimes recorded by the police in London followed by a decrease of 4% in 2022/23.



Source: MPS, [2022/23 Crime Statistics](#), Accessed 22 May 2023

<sup>36</sup> Muslim Census, [Attacks upon Mosques and Islamic Institutions in the UK \(PDF\) 1MB](#), p6

<sup>37</sup> ONS, [2021 Census, Table TS030](#)

## 5

### Press articles

The following is a selection of news and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or the accuracy of this external content.

#### [UK politicians stigmatising Muslims over Islamist terrorism, report finds](#)

Guardian

26 April 2023

Senior politicians must stop stigmatising Muslims by making them feel responsible for Islamist terrorism, according to a report that aims to reset the government's approach to dealing with religious groups.

#### [Islamophobia 'ignored' by bystanders as academic calls for better training to tackle hate](#)

Birmingham Live

31 March 2023

Islamophobia is going unchallenged by bystanders in Birmingham with the public turning a blind eye to hate, an academic has said. Professor Imran Awan, one of the country's leading criminologists, has called for more bystander training to raise awareness of Islamophobic hate crime.

#### [Almost half of young Muslims have faced Islamophobia, polling suggests](#)

Evening Standard

29 March 2023

Almost half of young Muslims have experienced [Islamophobia](#) at work, in shops and restaurants or in education settings, new polling has suggested.

The survey results have been described as “extremely concerning” and “especially prescient” because they come in the same week as Scotland's first Muslim leader was voted in.



[Sheffield Council adopts Islamophobia definition as part of anti-racism action](#)

The Star

29 December 2022

Sheffield Labour councillors have welcomed the city council's adoption of a definition of Islamophobia directed towards Muslims as part of its action to tackle racism.

The full council meeting this month accepted a motion put forward by two Labour councillors on accepting a definition of Islamophobia described by council leader Terry Fox as "the first step to helping deal with the very real nature of Islamophobia".

[Islamophobia 'relegated to Muslim issue', says Bradford author](#)

BBC news

3 December 2022

An annual campaign challenging Islamophobia is not being taken seriously enough by wider society, a Bradford Muslim author has said.

While Islamophobia Awareness Month had just marked its 10th year, Suhaiymah Manzoor-Khan said it attracted limited interest beyond Muslim communities.

Tackling Islamophobia was very much seen as a "Muslim issue", she said.

[Islamophobia defined at South Ayrshire Council meeting as officials strive to tackle racism](#)

Daily Record

8 July 2022

Labour and the SNP have pushed through a motion aiming to define Islamophobia in a bid to tackle racism in South Ayrshire.

Labour leader Councillor Brian McGinley was backed by SNP leader Peter Henderson in putting the motion before the full council.

[Majority of British Muslims say their lives have improved](#)

The Times (sub needed)

7 June 2022

More than half of British Muslims feel that their lives have improved over the past five years, citing more job opportunities, an increasing number of public role models and growing acceptance in wider society.

In a survey of 1,503 British Muslims by Savanta ComRes, respondents said they felt that life was getting better in the UK on 10 out of 12 measures, though they said that discrimination in the workplace had grown worse.

[Union calls for school staff to be trained to tackle Islamophobia](#)

STV News

21 May 2022

A teaching union is calling for more action to tackle Islamophobia in Scottish schools, saying understanding the issue should be integrated into the curriculum.

The NASUWT union says all school staff should be trained on how to tackle Islamophobia and promote equality.

## 6

# Parliamentary material

## Written Questions

### [Islamophobia](#)

26 April 2023 | UIN 182939

Asked by Afzal Khan

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what discussions he has had with Muslim communities on the potential merits of an official definition of Islamophobia.

Answered by Dehenna Davison

Answered 9 May 2023

Anti-Muslim hatred is entirely abhorrent. Such hate has no place in our communities or society, which is why we have funded Tell MAMA since 2016 to monitor and combat anti-Muslim hatred.

As set out previously, the Government does not support taking forward work on an official definition of Islamophobia but instead is working to address anti-Muslim hatred and the unacceptable forms which that takes.

We are considering our approach to religious hatred more broadly, including anti-Muslim hatred, and will be announcing our next steps in due course.

### [Islamophobia](#)

23 November 2022 | UIN 94893

Asked by Apsana Begum

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of trends in the level of Islamophobic hate crime; and if he will make a statement.

Answered by Dehenna Davison

Answered on 1 December 2022

We recognise the huge contribution British Muslims make to public life and we are committed to celebrating and promoting this, but we are not complacent. This Government takes tackling hatred towards Muslims very seriously and

will not tolerate Anti-Muslim hatred in any form. We have supported Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks) with just over £4 million between 2016 and 2022 to support Muslim victims. We will outline our further steps in due course. Hate Crime Statistics in England and Wales are published annually, and the latest data are available [here](#).

### [Islamophobia: International Cooperation](#)

29 November 2022 | UIN 98780

Asked by Ruth Jones

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his international counterparts on tackling anti-Muslim hatred.

Answered by Andrew Mitchell

Answered on 8 December 2022

We remain deeply concerned by violations and abuses of freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) in many parts of the world, including intolerance and hate speech. The UK is committed to working with our international partners to protect the right to FoRB for all through adherence to FoRB-focused resolutions which enjoy consensus agreement, including those led by the EU and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, as well as multilateral engagement through the UN, Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). In July this year we hosted an international Ministerial conference on FoRB, bringing together over 800 faith and belief leaders and human rights actors, and 100 government delegations to agree action to promote and protect FoRB. Ministers and officials regularly raise specific cases of concern with those we believe are not meeting their obligations, and in March this year we led development of an International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance statement ( <https://www.state.gov/irfba-statement-on-the-ahmadiyya-muslim-community/> ) calling out persecution of Ahmadi Muslims.

### [Islamophobia](#)

May 2022 | UIN 3745

Asked by Sarah Owen

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the University of Birmingham's The Dinner Table Prejudice report, published in January 2022, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the rise in Islamophobia cited in that report; and what

recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on tackling Islamophobia.

Answered by Kemi Badenoch

Answered on 25 May 2022

## Westminster Hall Debates

### [Islamophobia Awareness Month](#)

24 November 2021

### [Definition of Islamophobia](#)

9 September 2021

## Oral Questions

### [Islamophobia](#)

7 March 2022 | House of Commons | 710 cc13-14

### [Islamophobia in sport](#)

24 November 2021 | House of Commons | 704 c335

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