

Debate Pack

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Tackling Islamophobia

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1 Background

1.1 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.¹

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”.² Mr Asim was removed from his role in June 2022.³ As of 9 May 2023, the Government did not “support taking forward work on an official definition of Islamophobia”.⁴

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 2016.⁵

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.⁶ 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.

¹ [HL Deb 17 October 2017 c486](#)

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

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

⁴ PQ 182937 [on [Islamophobia](#)] 9 May 2023

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

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

Critics of it consider that its use panders to what they call political correctness, that is stifles legitimate criticism of Islam, and that it demonises and stigmatises anyone who wishes to engage in such criticism.⁷

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".⁸

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".⁹

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

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

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".¹² 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.¹³

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](#)

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

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

⁹ As above

¹⁰ As above

¹¹ As above, pv

¹² As above, p2

¹³ As above, p1

established an inquiry into a working definition of Islamophobia in April 2018.¹⁴

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”.¹⁵

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.¹⁶

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.¹⁷

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”.¹⁸

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.¹⁹

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

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

¹⁵ As above, p9

¹⁶ As above, p11

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

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

¹⁹ 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”.²⁰

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.²¹

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.²²

1.2

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.

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)”.²³

²⁰ PQ HL11998 [on [Islamophobia](#)] 10 December 2018

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

²² SETA, [European Islamophobia Report 2015](#) (PDF), 2016, p7

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

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.²⁴

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;
- 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.²⁵

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

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

²⁵ [Public Order Act 1986](#), s29J

(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”.²⁶

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.

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.²⁷

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.²⁸

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”.²⁹

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

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

²⁸ As above, para 10.143

²⁹ As above, para 12.110

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.

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](#).

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 Act 2023

The Online Safety Act 2023 received Royal Assent on 26 October 2023. It applies to England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The 2023 Act aims to increase user safety and to improve users' ability to keep themselves safe online. It creates a duty for in-scope platforms to tackle illegal content. Illegal content is that which reaches the criminal threshold. Under schedule 7 this includes the following previously mentioned offences under the Crime and Disorder Act 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).³⁰

These regulations cover certain services through which people can create and share content, or interact with each other (“user-to-user services”); and those through which people can search other websites or databases (“search services”).

This duty requires, under [section 9](#) and [section 26](#), in-scope services to conduct a risk assessment as to the level of risk their users may face in encountering illegal content through their service. A platform must then, under [section 10](#) and [section 27](#), operate proportionate systems and processes designed to minimise the risks of individuals encountering this content.

[Section 10\(3\) of the 2023 Act](#) also requires user-to-user services to operate systems designed to minimise the length of time for which illegal content is present, and swiftly take it down where the provider is alerted to its presence.³¹

Stakeholder responses

Some stakeholders have said that the 2023 Act would not sufficiently reduce online hate crime. These organisations suggest that the exclusion of comments sections and news publisher content from the Act’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 2023 Act 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.”³²

³⁰ [Online Safety Act 2023](#), sch 7

³¹ [As above](#), s10(3)

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

[Hope not Hate](#), an advocacy group which campaigns against racism and fascism in the UK, described the 2023 Act'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".³³

1.3

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 2022/23](#). 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.

³³ 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

Around 44% of religious hate crimes recorded by police in 2022/23 were Islamophobic ^{a,b,c}

Perceived religion of victim	Number of offences	Percentage
Muslim	3,400	44%
Jewish	1,510	19%
Unknown	1,491	19%
Christian	609	8%
Other	469	6%
Sikh	302	4%
Hindu	286	4%
No religion	166	2%
Total number of targeted religions^b	8,233	
Total number of offences	7,756	

Notes:

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

b) Data for Devon and Cornwall Police Force Area have not been included because of issues with their supply of 2022/23 data following the implementation of new force IT systems.

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 2022/23 Data Tables*, Table 4

The data in 2022/23 shows that 44% of religious hate crimes recorded by the police were against Muslims. 19% were anti-Jewish in nature; 8% were anti-Christian with 19% 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.³⁴

Police recorded crime figures do not include crimes that have not been reported to the police or incidents that the police decide not to record as crimes. Data collected through the Crime Survey for England and Wales

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

(CSEW) is seen to provide a better reflection of the true extent of crime experienced by the population resident in households in England and Wales.

However, the size of the CSEW sample means the number of hate crime incidents and victims estimated in a single survey year is too unreliable to report on. Therefore, three annual datasets are combined to provide a larger sample which can be used to produce robust estimates for hate crime. Estimates from the survey were last published in '[Hate crime, England and Wales, 2019 to 2020](#)'

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.³⁵ 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%).

³⁵ 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^a 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
Ethnic group^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
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2
Other ethnic group	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.7
Religion					
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
All Adults	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1

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

Tell Mama statistics

In July 2023 Tell MAMA published a [report](#) on Islamophobia over the decade from 2012 to 2022. The report breaks down instances of Islamophobic hate crime prior to the pandemic and after.

2012 to 2019

In this period Tell MAMA recorded a total of 5,267 offline Islamophobic cases of which 3,812 were verified. Between 2012 to 2014/2015, of verified cases, the figures annually ranged from 135 to 150. In 2015, it increased to 437 due to a ramping up of reporting capabilities by Tell MAMA. The highest number of verified cases in this period occurred in 2017 coinciding with the terrorist attacks in London and Manchester in that year.

During the period in question, the highest proportion of incidents involved abusive behaviour (51%) or 1,997 of verified cases. The second highest proportion involved assault (16%) or 629 verified cases.³⁶

Of the victims throughout this period, the majority have been female due to the extent to which they can more easily be identified as Muslim.³⁷ In terms of perpetrators, the clear majority have been males since 2012/13.³⁸

2020 Onwards

In 2020 and 2021, Tell MAMA recorded a total of 2,013 offline cases of which 1,507 were verified. As in previous years, in both 2020 and 2021, the highest proportion of incidents involved abusive behaviour ranging from 46% to 49%. This was followed by discrimination at 15% in 2020 and 16% in 2021.

Due to the pandemic and lockdowns the largest proportion of verified incidents took place against households or on private property.

Again, in this period the majority of victims were female. Out of 1,481 victims in the two years, 661 (45%) were female and 627 (42%) were male with the rest being a group or family, institutions or private properties or unknown.

Of 1,296 known perpetrators in this period, 752 (58%) were male.³⁹

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.

³⁶ Tell MAMA, [A Decade of Anti-Muslim Hate \(PDF\) 9MB](#), pp67-68

³⁷ Ibid; [p78](#)

³⁸ Ibid; [p80](#)

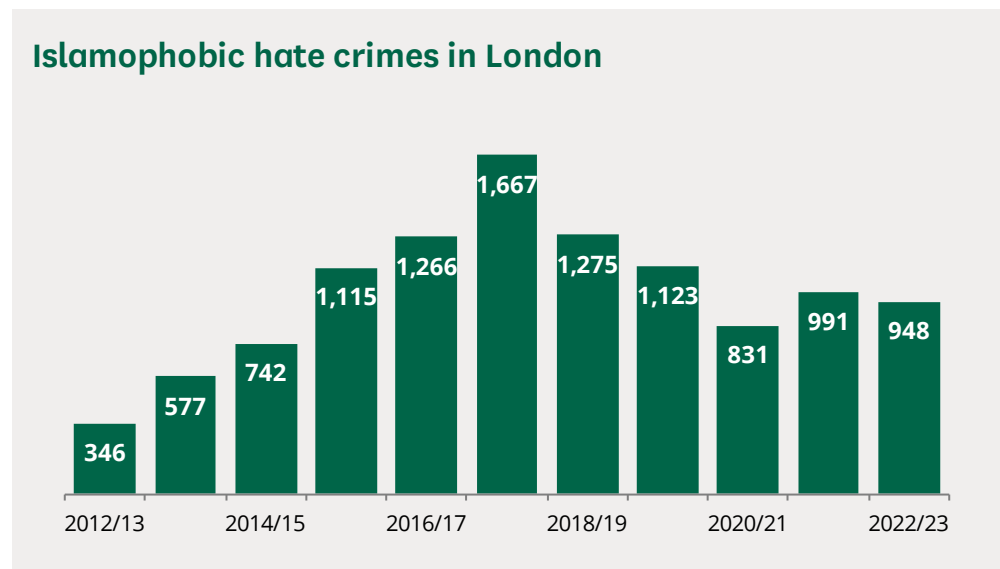
³⁹ Ibid; Figures have been totalled from figures provided between pp95-115

- 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.⁴⁰

Islamophobia in London

According to the 2021 census around 34% of the Muslim population in England and Wales lived in London.⁴¹

Data from the Metropolitan Police shows that 948 Islamophobic hate crime incidents were recorded in London in 2022/23. This represented a 4% decrease on the previous year but was almost three times as high as the rate a decade earlier (346 incidents in 2012/13).



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

1.4

The 2023 Israel-Hamas conflict

As noted by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the [Community Security Trust](#) (a UK charity that protects Jews from anti-Semitism and other threats) and [TeLLMAMA](#) (the Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks group,

⁴⁰ Muslim Census, [Attacks upon Mosques and Islamic Institutions in the UK \(PDF\) 1MB](#), p6

⁴¹ ONS, [2021 Census, Table TS030](#)

also a UK NGO) report evidence that rising tensions in the Middle East can lead to an increase in anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic incidents in the UK.⁴²

Tell MAMA states in 2021 the “most significant spike in the year” in anti-Muslim incidents [occurred during the May 2021 conflict between Israel and Hamas](#), while the Community Security Trust also reported a “significant spike in anti-Jewish hate” [at the same time](#).⁴³

During the 2023 conflict between Israel and Hamas, an increase in [anti-Muslim](#) and [anti-Semitic](#) acts has been reported in the United Kingdom and in the [United States](#).⁴⁴ [Human Rights Watch](#) and the [news-agency Reuters](#) note monitoring data on Islamophobic incidents is less complete for other countries, such as France and Germany.⁴⁵

In the UK, from 7 October to 19 November 2023, [Tell MAMA recorded 895 anti-Muslim cases, both online and offline](#) (these figures are subject to update and revision). It called on those in “positions of influence and public authority to consider how their language risk stereotyping communities and how it may unduly influence discussions online and offline”.⁴⁶

In London, the Metropolitan Police also recorded [an increase in Islamophobic offences and anti-Semitic offences](#) from 1 to 18 October 2023 compared to same period in 2022.⁴⁷ The Metropolitan Police has said that hundreds of police officers are therefore undertaking extra patrols at places of worship, schools and other premises.⁴⁸

[Speaking on 23 October 2023](#), the Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, said the Government has “zero tolerance for anti-Semitism or indeed anti-Muslim hatred in any form. We will seek to stamp it out wherever we see it.”⁴⁹

On 4 November 2023, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, said across the world “Islamophobic and anti-Semitic harassment, attacks and hate speech have multiplied, including in the context of protests

⁴² Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, [Impact Assessment: Economic Activity of Public Bodies \(Overseas Matters\) Bill](#) (PDF), 4 May 2023, pp15-16. In line with reporting by Tell MAMA, this section uses the term “anti-Muslim” to describe the incidents recorded.

⁴³ Tell MAMA, [A decade of anti-Muslim hate](#), 20 July 2023, pp35, 114 and Community Security Trust, [Antisemitic incidents report 2021](#), February 2022

⁴⁴ Tell MAMA, [Islamophobic incidents up by 600% in UK since Hamas attack](#), 10 November 2023; Community Security Trust, [Anti-Semitic incidents—29 November update](#), 29 November 2023; [Why the Gaza war has sparked a wave of antisemitism and Islamophobia in the US](#), Voice of America, 17 November 2023;

⁴⁵ [Muslims in Europe feel vulnerable to rising hostility over Israel-Gaza](#), Reuters, 29 November 2023; Human Rights Watch, [Israel-Palestine hostilities affect rights in Europe](#), 26 October 2023

⁴⁶ Tell MAMA, [Tell MAMA recorded 895 anti-Muslim cases in six weeks](#), 22 November 2023

⁴⁷ Metropolitan Police, [Met response to terror attacks in Israel and ongoing military action in Gaza](#), 20 October 2023

⁴⁸ Metropolitan Police, [UPDATE: Enforcement against those suspected of hate crimes](#), 8 November 2023

⁴⁹ HC Deb, [23 October 2023](#), c603

relating to the [Israel-Hamas] conflict”. [He said he “deplored the rise”](#) and said under international human rights law that “Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence is prohibited”.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ UN Office for the High Commissioner Human Rights, [Human rights chief condemns rise in hatred](#), 4 November 2023

2 Parliamentary material

2.1 Early Day Motions

[Islamophobia Awareness Month](#)

That this House supports Islamophobia Awareness Month, which is taking place this November; recognises the incredible contributions that British Muslims make to our country; acknowledges that anti-Muslim sentiment is far too prevalent in our society; notes with concern that the horrifying Israel-Gaza conflict has led to a rise in Islamophobia in the UK, with Tell MAMA reporting a sevenfold increase of anti-Muslim incidents between 7 and 29 October compared to the same period last year; emphasises the importance of standing up to religious hatred in all its forms; and calls on the Government to ensure that public bodies have the resources and training they need to identify and prevent hate crimes.

08 Nov 2023 | Early day motions | Open | House of Commons | 26
(session 2023-24)

Primary sponsor: Jardine, Christine

2.2 Debates

[Israel/Gaza](#) - HL Deb 24 Oct 2023 - 833 cc514-606

2.3 Parliamentary Questions

[Engagements](#)

Asked by: Rehman Chishti (Gillingham and Rainham) (Con)

Q5. The Government have rightly responded to the shocking and unacceptable rise in antisemitism, and we saw extra funding in the autumn statement. I note that 44% of religiously aggravated offences last year were against the Muslim community, yet in the autumn

statement there was no funding to deal with Islamophobia. The Government's independent adviser on Islamophobia role has been left vacant for over one year. As the Prime Minister knows, we discussed these matters over a year ago, yet no action has taken place. Prime Minister, enough is enough with regards to tackling anti-Muslim hatred. Will the Government now finally take action?

Answered by: The Prime Minister | **Department:** Prime Minister

We will not tolerate anti-Muslim hatred in any form, and expect it to be dealt with wherever it occurs. I actually recently met Tell MAMA, a service that provides support to victims of anti-Muslim hatred, which we have in fact supported with over £6 million of funding since its inception. We are in regular dialogue with it. We have also doubled the funding for protective security measures through the protective security for mosques scheme, and we will continue to do everything we can to keep our Muslim community safe.

29 Nov 2023 | Prime Minister's questions - 1st Supplementary | Answered | House of Commons | 741 cc828-9

Date answered: 29 Nov 2023

[Islamophobia](#)

Asked by: Hussain, Imran

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to his Autumn Statement 2023 on 22 November 2023, Official Report, column 326, what funding he provides to tackle Islamophobia in the UK.

Answering member: Laura Trott | **Department:** Treasury

The Government is committed to the right of individuals to freely practise their religion. That is why in June 2023, building on the work of the Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme, the Security Minister pledged £24.5 million of funding in 2023-24 to protect mosques and Muslim faith schools through the Protective Security for Mosques Scheme, providing security measures like CCTV and intruder alarms. In light of the crisis in Israel and Gaza, the Home Secretary announced in October that the Government will grant an additional £3 million to the Community Security Trust to support Jewish communities in the UK. At the Autumn Statement, the Chancellor announced that this would be extended to 2024-25. The Home Office

has also increased available funding for the Protective Security for Mosques Scheme by 20%

The Government is also taking strides to combat ethnic discrimination and hate crime. Through the Online Safety Act 2023, we are compelling social media companies to tackle discriminatory content posted on their platforms. The also Government provides £300,000 in annual grant funding to the National Online Hate Crime Hub, which provides expert advice to police investigating hate crimes.

28 Nov 2023 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 3468

Date tabled: 23 Nov 2023 | **Date for answer:** 28 Nov 2023 | **Date answered:** 28 Nov 2023

[Universities: Antisemitism and Islamophobia](#)

Asked by: Jarvis, Dan

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of provisions to ensure the safety and wellbeing of (a) Jewish and (b) Muslim students on university campuses.

Answering member: Robert Halfon | **Department:** Department for Education

It has been deeply concerning to see the rises both in antisemitism and in Islamophobia since the 7 October terrorist attacks against Israel. Universities should be welcoming and inclusive environments. Higher education providers have a responsibility to take a zero-tolerance approach to any form of racial or religious harassment. They have clear responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 to adopt robust policies and procedures that enable them to investigate and swiftly address reports of racism.

Given the particularly severe impact on Jewish students, the Secretary of State and I wrote to all schools, colleges and universities, urging them to respond swiftly to hate-related incidents and actively reassure Jewish students that that they can study without fear of harassment or intimidation. On 5 November we published a five-point plan detailing further action to protect Jewish students in higher education, the details of the plan can be found here:

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2023/11/05/how-were-protecting-jewish-students-on-university-campuses/>.

The department continues to engage both with Jewish and with Muslim groups, including the Union of Jewish Students and Tell MAMA, and actively monitors incidents affecting both communities. The department also welcomes the guidance produced by Universities UK, which focuses on tackling Islamophobia:

<https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/what-we-do/policy-and-research/publications/tackling-islamophobia-and-anti-muslim>.

The department has reminded providers of their obligations under the Prevent duty, where they should be working to prevent people from being drawn into or supporting terrorism. Department officials have assessed evidence of antisemitism and racial hatred linked to incidents at English universities. There is an online "Reporting Extremism" form where members of the public can raise concerns to the Department directly. Where concerns arise, officials have reached out to relevant universities to understand what actions they have taken, including reporting issues to the police where appropriate.

16 Nov 2023 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 1569

Date tabled: 13 Nov 2023 | **Date for answer:** 16 Nov 2023 | **Date answered:** 16 Nov 2023

[Islamophobia](#)

Asked by: Owen, Sarah

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has held discussions with the UN on Islamophobia in the period since the UN Human Rights Council approved a resolution on religious hatred in July 2023.

Answering member: David Rutley | **Department:** Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK engaged with the Organization for Islamic Co-operation at the UN Human Rights Council in July and, whilst condemning actions that seek to incite violence, discrimination or hatred, underlined the importance of striking a balance between freedom of expression and Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) in the draft resolution on religious hatred. Ultimately, we could not support the final resolution presented as this balance was not achieved. The issue was also discussed at the UN General Assembly where we reiterated the need for a balanced approach. We will continue to work with our international partners to support FoRB for all.

12 Sep 2023 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 197630

Date tabled: 04 Sep 2023 | **Date for answer:** 06 Sep 2023 | **Date answered:** 12 Sep 2023

[Schools: Islamophobia](#)

Asked by: Morgan, Stephen

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to tackle islamophobia in schools.

Answering member: Nick Gibb | **Department:** Department for Education

The Government condemns and strives to tackle all forms of discrimination, prejudice, and harassment.

Under the Equality Act 2010, schools have a duty to take steps to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations across all protected characteristics, including between people of different religions or beliefs. The Department has published advice to support schools to fulfil their duties under the Equality Act 2010, which is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools?msclkid=9ce22dddcc5d11ec9a0a2d6e2fd0a666>.

As part of a broad and balanced curriculum, pupils should be introduced to different societies, and how different groups have contributed to the development of Britain. This can include experiences and voices of people from all backgrounds. The relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) curriculum has a focus on equality, respect, the harmful impact of stereotyping, as well as the importance of valuing difference. RSHE guidance is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-relationships-sex-and-health>.

Schools are also required to actively promote fundamental British values, including mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs. Actively promoting these values means that any opinions or behaviours that contradict them need to be challenged. The Department publishes information, guidance and support for teachers and head teachers on how to challenge discriminatory beliefs on the Educate Against Hate website, accessible at:

<https://www.educateagainsthate.com>. This includes the ‘Respectful School Communities’ toolkit, a self review and signposting tool to support schools to develop a whole-school approach which promotes respect and discipline.

All schools are required by law to have a behaviour policy which outlines measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. To support schools tackle bullying, the Department is providing over £3 million of funding between August 2021 and March 2024 to five anti bullying organisations. The Department has deliberately focused this grant programme on preventing and tackling bullying of pupils with protected characteristics. This includes projects targeting the bullying of particular vulnerable groups, such as those who are victims of hate related bullying.

14 Jul 2023 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 192640

Date tabled: 05 Jul 2023 | **Date for answer:** 10 Jul 2023 | **Date answered:** 14 Jul 2023

Islamophobia

Asked by: Khan, Afzal

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent discussions he has had with the Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group about trends in Islamophobic hate crime.

Answering member: Dehenna Davison | **Department:** Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

This Government is committed to tackling the scourge of anti-Muslim hatred head-on through a coordinated cross-departmental effort. From ensuring the safety of worshippers in mosques to community engagement and supporting the victims, swift action has been taken to address anti-Muslim hatred and institute safeguards. For example, Tell MAMA has been provided with nearly £5m between 2016 and 2023 to monitor and combat anti-Muslim hatred.

We are taking a broad approach to religious hatred which will develop on the work of the previous Working Groups; seeking the views and perspectives of British and international experts in this field to explore

how religious hatred is experienced by British communities, and how it affects different faiths and individuals. This engagement will explore the breadth and depth of religious hatred and will consider the question of terminology and definitions for hatred across and within religious communities, including anti-Muslim hatred. In line with the practice of successive administrations, details of internal discussions are not normally disclosed.

09 Jun 2023 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 187002

Date tabled: 25 May 2023 | **Date for answer:** 05 Jun 2023 | **Date answered:** 09 Jun 2023

Islamophobia

Asked by: Khan, Afzal

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what progress has been made on developing an official definition of Islamophobia.

Answering member: Dehenna Davison | **Department:** Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

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.

09 May 2023 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 182937

Date tabled: 26 Apr 2023 | **Date for answer:** 02 May 2023 | **Date answered:** 09 May 2023

Islamophobia: International Cooperation

Asked by: Jones, Ruth

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.

Answering member: Mr Andrew Mitchell | **Department:** Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

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.

08 Dec 2022 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 98780

Date tabled: 29 Nov 2022 | **Date for answer:** 01 Dec 2022 | **Date answered:** 08 Dec 2022

3 Media

3.1 Press releases

[Dangers of Misinformation towards British Mosques](#)

Muslim Council of Britain

27 November 2023

[Islamophobia Awareness Month 2023: Confronting Hate in Challenging Times](#)

Muslim Council of Britain

01 November 2023

[Scottish Parliament CPG Report: Scotland needs urgent education reforms to combat scourge of Islamophobia](#)

Muslim Council of Britain

31 October 2023

[Mend Statement: Nick Timothy & The Telegraph Using Gaza War to Fuel Islamophobia at Home](#)

MEND

29 October 2023

[MCB marks inaugural United Nations' International Day to Combat Islamophobia](#)

Muslim Council of Britain

15 March 2023

3.2 Articles and blogs

[Archbishop of Canterbury: We must get rid of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism](#)

Daily Telegraph

3 December 2023

[Antisemitism and Islamophobia 'major drivers' of hate crime, equality body says](#)

The Independent

16 November 2023

[Charities report rise in antisemitism and Islamophobia at schools in England](#)

The Guardian

9 November 2023

[Scotland needs urgent education reforms to combat 'scourge of Islamophobia', report says](#)

Scotsman

31 October 2023

[The Observer view on antisemitism and Islamophobia: there is never any excuse](#)

The Observer

29 October 2023

[Israel-Hamas war hits close to home for Europe's Muslims](#)

Financial Times [subscription required]

20 October 2023

[Countering Misrepresentation: Defending the APPG Definition of Islamophobia](#)

MEND

02 October 2023

['Punched and told to leave Britain': Islamophobia reaches record high](#)

ITV News

20 July 2023

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

The National

29 March 2023

[Muslim group criticises 'unchecked racism' found by Casey review of Met Police](#)

The Independent

21 March 2023

4 Further reading

[‘Islamophobia’ Revisited](#) (PDF)

Hardeep Singh, Civitas

September 2023

[Report of the inquiry into Islamophobia in Scotland: Scotland’s Islamophobia - Update 2023: Education – Media – Gender](#) (PDF)

Peter Hopkins, Scottish Parliament Cross-Party Group on Tackling Islamophobia

2023

[Defining Islamophobia: A contemporary understanding of how expressions of Muslimness are targeted](#) (PDF)

The Muslim Council of Britain

2022

[Report on Countering Islamophobia/Anti-Muslim Hatred to Eliminate Discrimination and Intolerance Based on Religion or Belief](#)

UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief

25 February 2021

[How the ‘Beautiful Game’ Turned to Hate: Why Islamophobia has crept into Grassroots Football](#) (PDF)

Professor Imran Awan and Dr Irene Zempi, Birmingham City University

February 2021

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