Hate Crime and its Violent Consequences: the Muslim Council of Britain's Submission to the Home Affairs Committee

1. **Introduction**

   1.1. The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) founded in 1997 is an inclusive umbrella body of mosques and Islamic associations that seeks to represent the common interests of Muslims in Britain. It is pledged to work for the common good of society as a whole.

   1.2. The Muslim Council of Britain's affiliate base reflects the diversity of Muslims in the UK, being made up of hundreds of mosques, educational and charitable bodies, cultural and relief agencies and women and youth groups and associations across the UK from a range of ethnic, geographical and theological backgrounds and traditions.

   1.3. Whilst hate crime is prevalent amongst many communities, this document focuses specifically on hate crime against Muslim communities.

   1.4. Muslim civil society has long been alert to the rise of hate crimes. For example in 1997, the UK Action Committee in the run up to the General Elections, described Muslim stereotyping and Islamophobia as "one of the most serious problems in Britain today…the climate of hate and prejudice does no good to the abuser or abused."[1] The MCB in July 2001 drew attention of the then Home Office Minister Angela Eagle to the overlap of racism with Islamophobia.[2] The MCB therefore welcomes the Home Affairs Committee's inquiry into hate crime and its consequences.

   1.5. This submission is structured as follows:
      ● Section 2: Prevalence of Islamophobia
      ● Section 3: Survey conducted by the MCB of Muslim organisations
      ● Section 4: Role of politicians and the media in stoking hostility and recommendations
      ● Section 5: Social media
      ● Section 6: Reporting of hate crime: problems and recommendations
      ● Section 7: Role of civil society organisations in tackling hate crime
      ● Section 8: Recommendations for government

2. **The prevalence of Islamophobia**

   2.1. The term "Islamophobia" is defined as "unfounded hostility towards Muslims, and therefore fear or dislike of all or most Muslims."[3] The term was coined in the context of Muslims in the UK in particular and Europe in general, and formulated based on the more common 'xenophobia' framework.[4]

   2.2. As is clear from the definition, Islamophobia is not about disagreeing, criticising or condemning the faith of Islam. Instead, the concept refers to how that disagreement, criticism or condemnation involves the promotion of stereotypes and mistruths, and is used

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[1] UKACIA, Elections 1997 and British Muslims
[2] http://archive.mcb.org.uk/racism-delinquency-and-islamophobia-muslim-leaders-to-meet-home-office-minister/
[3] 1991 report by the race equality think tank Runnymede Trust
[4] http://crg.berkeley.edu/content/islamophobia/defining-islamophobia

to intentionally promote, encourage or justify discrimination, hatred, bigotry or even violence.[5]

2.3. Professor Tariq Modood notes that "There is not a single racism, but multiple racisms that include colour/phenotype forms but also cultural forms building on 'colour', or on a set of antagonistic or demeaning stereotypes based on alleged or real cultural traits. The most important such form of cultural racism today is anti-Muslim racism, sometimes called Islamophobia.[6]

2.4. The social acceptance of Islamophobia has become one of the major concerns amongst the broad spectrum of Muslim communities, as expressed in the MCB's election document, 'Fairness not Favours' which itself was the product of a wide-ranging survey amongst its affiliates.[7]

2.5. The social acceptance of Islamophobia is borne out by the following polling results:
   ● 37% admitted they would be more likely to support a policies to reduce the number of Muslims in Britain (note this is worse than stopping Muslims from entering the country)[8]
   ● On average, people think that Muslims make up 17% of the population[9], compared to the reality of less than 5%
   ● 62% agreed that Britain would lose its identity if more Muslims came to live here[10]
   ● More than half of Britons regard Muslims as a threat to the UK.[11]

2.6. Such attitudes have permeated amongst the next generation within schools:
   ● 35% of 10-14 year olds agree that "Muslims are taking over our country".[12]
   ● Islamophobia is a particular issue in schools, according to Childline, with young Muslims reporting that they are being called "terrorists" and "bombers" by classmates.[13]

2.7. A large number of Muslim institutions and cemeteries have been attacked[14], including with petrol bombs,[15] attempted bombing and arson.[16] Many more have been the subject of other hate crimes such as 'mosque-invasions' by organisations such as Britain First, threatening letters and pork-related products being thrown at mosques.

2.8. A particularly tragic example is what occurred to a pregnant Muslim lady in August 2016. According to reports, she was verbally assaulted, called a "terrorist" and was beaten up to the extent that she has a miscarriage.[17]

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[5] Islamophobia Today: State of the Nation Report May 2014, Chris Allen. See also See also Robin Richardson's essay, 'Islamophobia or anti-Muslim racism – or what? – concepts and terms revisited'
[6] 'Remaking Multiculturism after 7/7', Open Democracy, 2007
[7] MCB's election document 2015: "Fairness not Favours"
[8] YouGov, September 2012
[9] Average of sample in YouGov, 12-13 January 2015
[10] BSA National Survey, 2013
[11] YouGov poll conducted by Huffington Post, 2015
[12] A survey of 6,000 schoolchildren between the ages of 10 and 14 conducted by Show Racism the Red Card, reported in the Guardian, 2015
[13] Independent, 2014
[14] Tell MAMA Reporting 2014/2015: Annual Monitoring, Cumulative Extremism, and Policy Implications
[15] E.g. Edinburgh Mosque (Edinburgh), Finsbury Park Mosque (London), Zainabiya Islamic Centre (Milton Keynes)
[16] E.g. Al Hira Education Centre; Penny Lane Mosque
[17] Expectant mother lost twins after 'racially motivated' car park attack, The Times, August 2016

2.9. Many individuals have been attacked in hate crimes ranging from online hate crime, verbal and violent assaults to intimidation, and even murder, as was the case with Mohammed Saleem[18]. A few points worthy of note:

- Prevalence of Islamophobia has reached such a point that the vast majority of Muslims know someone who has experienced a hate crime[19]
- Muslim women seem to be particularly targeted, apparently as they are more easily identifiable as Muslims due to the wearing of a headscarf for example[20]
- The attacks seem to spike after major events linked to Muslims, such as the convictions in Rochdale, the brutal murder of Fuslier Lee Rigby, terror atrocities abroad, and Brexit.[21]

2.10. The evidence is unambiguous as to the scale of Islamophobia and its violent consequences within the UK, and this is corroborated by figures from police which also highlight a massive growth in anti-Muslim hate crimes[22].

3. **Survey conducted by the Muslim Council of Britain**

3.1. The Muslim Council of Britain, recognising the importance of evidence based recommendations, undertook a survey of its affiliates in order to provide a quantitative component to its submission. Hate crime was defined as per the definition on the select committee's website.

3.2. Over 100 Muslim organisations and institutions responded to the survey, reflecting experiences of Muslim communities in England, Scotland and Wales. Affiliates in areas as diverse as Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow and London responded along with smaller organisations in Shropshire, Burnley and Lincoln.

3.3. The key highlights of the survey are as follows:
- 95% considered hate crime as being a concern for the members of their organisation
- 64% were aware that someone in their institution had been a victim of hate crime
- 56% of affiliates report a lack of confidence in support the police might offer for victims of hate crime.
- Reassuringly, 72% of respondents felt they had a clear understanding of how hate crime can be reported to the police.

3.4. A recurring theme within the comments was the need for greater, and more accessible, literature to be made available to raise awareness of hate crime, reporting mechanisms and local success in tackling the problem.

3.5. Concerns were consistently raised about irresponsible reporting in the media as being a key driver in causing Islamophobia. Politicians were also singled out as being in uniquely responsible positions to temper, rather than aggravate, community tensions.

3.6. Other qualitative findings from the survey included the need for a renewed effort by local Muslim organisations to reach out to other community bodies, an emphasis on positive

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[18] Mohammed Saleem stabbing: Man admits murder and mosque blasts, BBC, October 2013
[19] E.g. see Sussex Hate Crime Report or report suggesting >90% witnessed negative stereotypes about Islam and Muslims
[20] Over 50% of Muslim women wear the headscarf (Pew Research Center, "European debate the scarf and the veil", 20 November 2006 (greater than Germany, Spain and France))
[21] "Islamophobia on Twitter", Demos
[22] Islamophobic crime in London 'up by 70%', BBC, September 2015

working relationships with local police forces and concerted local attempts to reach out to those most vulnerable to the influences of far-right ideology.

4. **Role of politicians and the media in stoking hostility and recommendations**

   4.1. External factors such as international and geo-political issues (e.g., the rise of Daesh) play a significant role in the growth of Islamophobia.

   4.2. However, the role of political leaders and the media in creating and shaping the narrative and attitudes of hostility towards Muslims should not be underplayed.

   4.3. The actions and words of leading politicians, often shapes the narrative of the country. Whilst most politicians in the UK have not, as a whole, sunk to the deplorable levels of peers in USA or parts of Europe, the actions of politicians at three points within the last two years are worthy of note:
   - **Prior to the General Election**: Nigel Farage said that Muslims want to form "a fifth column and kill us",[23] and that there has never before been a migrant group that wants to "change who we are and what we are." What is disturbing is that whilst explicit statements on race were roundly condemned by the leaders of the main parties, his Islamophobic bigotry was not challenged.
   - **London Mayoral election**: Many supporters of the opponents of Sadiq Khan engaged in unambiguous bigotry, far exceeding the bounds of electioneering, leading to the leading Conservative peer Sayeeda Warsi to say: "there is a simmering underbelly of Islamophobia in the Conservative Party"[24]
   - **EU referendum**: the fearmongering about Muslim refugees entering the country, for example within the "breaking point" poster[25], plays an important role in the current hostility being experienced by many Muslims.

   4.4. A fundamental change in attitude is required to tackle the politicians' role in the growth of Islamophobia:
   - **Public acknowledgement of Islamophobia**: Political will and leadership is required to acknowledge Islamophobia is a serious issue, as, for example, the Board of Deputies of Jews have done in a joint statement with the MCB.[26]
   - **High-profile interventions**: Further to a public acknowledgement, politicians need to take responsibility to counter Islamophobic rhetoric in mainstream politics and make media intervention in specific cases.
   - **Improve usage of language**: avoid using patronising language when engaging with the community; separately, consider multi-agency co-ordination to stop using the term 'Islamic' or 'jihadi' when describing terrorism in line with the Obama administration.

   4.5. Claiming that the media has played no role in the growth in Islamophobia is no longer a tenable position.
   - Research by the University of Cambridge concluded that mainstream media reporting about Muslim communities is contributing to an atmosphere of rising hostility toward Muslims in Britain.[27]

[23] The Guardian, March 2015
[24] https://twitter.com/bbcasiannetwork/status/730793423016464386
[25] Nigel Farage's anti-migrant poster reported to police, Guardian, June 2016
[26] Joint statement - British Muslims and Jews Call for Peace, Wisdom and Hope over Conflict in Israel and Palestine, August 2014
[27] University of Cambridge and Economic and Social Research Council Roundtable held at the House of Lords

● Findings of an Islamophobia Roundtable in Stockholm two years ago showed that the regular association of Islam and Muslims with crime and terror in the media and on the internet is vital to the spread of Islamophobic rhetoric.[28]

4.6. Headlines of national newspapers on topics related to Muslims over the past few years show how an environment of hate and hostility is created[29]:

● **Outright misleading articles** e.g., "1 in 5 Brit Muslims' sympathy for jihadis" (*The Sun*),[30] "Muslims 'silent on terror'" (*The Times*)[31] and "UK mosques fundraising for terror" (*Daily Star Sunday*).[32]

● **Conflation of the faith of Islam with criminality and violence**: e.g., "Muslim sex grooming" or "Imam beaten to death in sex grooming town" (*The Times*), FGM or so-called honour killings (*Daily Mail*)[33].

● **Sensationalism and scaremongering** about the apparent threat posed by Muslims is also widespread. Just look at headlines such as: "BBC puts Muslims before you" (*Daily Star*); "Halal secret of Pizza Express" (*The Sun*); "Muslim vote could decide 25 per cent of seats" (*Daily Mail*).

4.7. Broadcasters, alongside print media, cannot escape responsibility:

● **Terminology**: the decision to translate the terror group's name "al-dawla al-islamiyya" to "Islamic state", whilst not doing the same for "Al-Qaeda", "Jubhat al-Nusra", "Taliban", is an appalling inconsistency and leads to ordinary Muslims being linked with the terror group.

● **Sensationalism**: media groups courted the hate preacher Anjem Choudhury, giving him the oxygen of publicity to spread his hateful views. Such demagogues should never be given the credibility of being called representatives of the Muslim world, as such lack of clarity makes many believe that ordinary Muslims have views aligned with this convicted terror propagandist.

4.8. The Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) set up to monitor adherence to the "highest professional standards" by print media through the Editor's Code[34] has enforced corrections in some cases but has failed to deter such bigotry from being spread for three key reasons:

● **Shortcomings with the Editor's Code**:
   o Clause 1 (accuracy): the IPSO Complaints Committee consider inaccuracy to not be a problem in some cases such as when the point is not "central to the argument", even if it encourages hostility.
   o Clause 12 (discrimination): there is no recourse when groups are discriminated against and abused (such as when Ms Hopkins called all migrants "cockroaches"), despite Lord Leveson's recommendation to the contrary.[35]

● **Lack of appropriate deterrents**: Media outlets should not be able to get away with "clarifications" that do not admit wrongdoing without "due prominence". A

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[28] Report, Roundtable on Islamophobia in Europe, 2014 – by Department for Discrimination Issues, Ministry of Employment, Sweden
[29] Article in Independent has further details
[30] Sun forced to admit '1 in 5 British Muslims' story was 'significantly misleading', Independent, March 2016
[31] Are Muslims 'Silent on Terror'? The Muslim Council of Britain Responds to The Times, MCB website
[32] Daily Star Sunday censured over misleading headline on UK mosques, Guardian, April 2016
[33] Ipso: Mail Online wrong to use 'Islamic honour killing' in headline, Guardian, July 2016
[34] Editor's Code of Practice from IPSO's website
[35] Recommendation 38 from Lord Leveson's report

significantly misleading front page headline needs to be corrected by an equally sized front page apology, together with financial penalties.

- **Unwillingness of IPSO to take action**: no investigation has been undertaken that has led to any media outlet being subject to a financial penalty.

4.9. Recommendations for the media include significantly more than updating the 'Reporting Diversity' booklet as outlined in the government's "Action against Hate" action plan:[36]
- Stronger regulation by a truly independent body with the willingness and ability to deter poor standards within the media, as recommended by Lord Leveson.
- Training for journalists so they "have a better understanding of Islam."[37]
- Greater diversity within the media: less than 0.5 per cent of UK journalists are Muslim, compared to almost 5 per cent of the national population.[38] This lack of diversity is likely to be further magnified at more senior positions. Such a lack of diversity is also noticeable within the media regulator IPSO and its Complaints Committee.

5. Social media

5.1. The scale and scope of Islamophobia on social media such as Twitter is well known, and evidenced most recently by Demos, which catalogued over 215,000 Islamophobic tweets in July 2016 alone.[39]

5.2. Social media companies such as Twitter and Facebook have been accused of "allowing Islamophobia to flourish",[40] as they refuse to remove inflammatory posts due to their rules on free speech. Postings include accusing Muslims of being rapists, paedophiles and comparable to cancer, and even a call for the execution of British Muslims – but in most cases those behind the abuse have not had their accounts suspended or the posts removed.

5.3. The "Country Withheld Content" policy within Twitter allows governments to request information and takedown of posts based on local law. It evolved as a response to government concerns that Twitter provided a platform for breaking local speech laws (e.g. anti-semitic comments in Germany or France).[41] Similarly, Facebook and YouTube can also take down content on behalf of governments.[42]

5.4. The importance of freedom of speech is a core principle. However, it is unclear why hate crime online is treated differently to hate crime in the public space. If required, legislation should be introduced to align social media with hate crime legislation in the public domain, as has been discussed previously.[43]

6. Reporting of hate crime: problems and recommendations

6.1. Despite the huge growth in reported hate crime against Muslims, this figure is understood to be a huge underestimate of the scale of the problem.

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[36] Point 46 in Action against Hate, Home Office, July 2016
[37] Point 47 in Action against Hate, Home Office, July 2016
[38] Research from City University
[39] "Islamophobia on Twitter", Demos
[40] Twitter and Facebook allow Islamophobia to Flourish, Independent, January 2015
[41] Meeting with Sofi Herscher in December 2015, formerly at Twitter
[42] Facebook Complying With 95% of Israeli Requests to Remove Inciting Content, Minister Says, Haaretz, September 2016
[43] Internet trolls face up to two years in jail under new laws, BBC, October 2014

6.2. Further to the police, there are a number of third party reporting agencies, which record hate crime against Muslims, including Tell Mama, Stop Hate UK and IHRC.

6.3. As part of the two-year research project in Leicester on hate crime, the issue of reporting was discussed.[44] It found:
- Very low reporting: 22% reported their experience to the police; low numbers reported through a third-party reporting centre or alternative mechanism; and 63% did not report their experience to the police or any other relevant organisation.
- Reasons shared why victims did not report: they did not think the police would take it seriously; they did not believe the police could do anything; there was insufficient evidence.
- Those feeling isolated are less likely to report hate crimes, whilst those angry at the situation were more likely to report hate crimes.

6.4. 72% of respondents to the MCB survey felt they had a clear understanding of how hate crime can be reported to the police. Whilst apparently reassuring, it is worth noting that respondents are leaders within communities who are likely to be better informed than the broader congregation. This result also demonstrates the need that leaders of these institutions play a role in informing Muslim communities of how to report hate crime to the police.

6.5. The MCB survey also identified real concerns that the police are not supporting victims of hate crimes – a perception that must be addressed.

6.6. Overall, however, attitudes towards the police are positive amongst Muslims, with Muslims more likely to report positive attitudes about the police than those of other faiths, according to an examination of recent scholarly criminological literature concerning British Muslim communities.[45] Whilst there remain areas of concern amongst some communities in their relationship with police forces, the research corroborates the BBC Comres Poll,[46] which showed that 93% of British Muslims believe strongly in the rule of law. This demonstrates there is strong potential for improved reporting to the police.

6.7. The MCB therefore strongly welcomed the government's initiative to ensure hate crime against Muslims are recorded as a separate category by police forces across the country.

6.8. Significant work is still required to tackle the under-reporting:
- **Improve and consolidate the current tools available to report hate crime**: the current national online reporting mechanism for the police (TrueVision[47]) is cumbersome and difficult to use, especially compared to some third party reporting agencies. Whilst in some areas,[48] there is a mobile app to make it easier to report hate crime, this does not exist in others, making the process complicated for the public.
- **Joint campaigns** to encourage reporting by sharing the importance of statistics in policing and marketing the tools available to report (e.g., True Vision) with the support of well recognised and credible Muslim community groups, in the media and public, as well as through mosques and community organisations, proactively tackling the concerns in section 6.3 above.
- **Publicising when crimes are being investigated as potential hate crimes** to demonstrate that hate crimes are taken seriously.

[44] Dr. Steve-Jade Henry's study: "Hearing Hidden Voices Uncovering Experiences of Anti-Muslim Hate"
[45] "Half A Story? Missing Perspectives in the Criminological Accounts of British Muslim Communities, Crime and the Criminal Justice System", study by Julian Hargreaves, University of Cambridge
[46] BBC Comres Poll
[47] True Vision home page
[48] "Mayor launches new app to make it easier to report hate crime", Mayor of London, October 2015

- **Highlight successful prosecutions of hate crime** through social media and community distribution mechanisms to demonstrate hate crime against Muslims is taken seriously
- **Transparent sentencing** to undermine accusations that hate crimes against different communities are treated differently.
- **Clear feedback** should be given to those who report hate crime so that it is clear that their reporting is being taken seriously.
- **Community trigger** where the community is able to demand action if the police fail to investigate hate crime or deal with hate crime.[49]

6.9. Whilst better reporting will help shape the response in different areas, hate crime against Muslims is already known to be flourishing and greater work must be put into tackling hate crime rather than just in its recording.

7. **Role of civil society organisations in tackling hate crime**

7.1. Despite victims of hate crime not being responsible for attitudes that underpin hate crime, civil society groups have an important role in shaping attitudes towards one another.

7.2. The Muslim Council of Britain has launched Visit My Mosque as a means of tackling misconceptions about places of worship for Muslims, and to promote the work that is being done for the local communities by Muslim institutions.

7.3. However, significant further work is required from all communities to build a stronger society. Commendable initiatives exist within all communities but more is required to translate a willingness to engage from some groups into action. Potential support can be improved guidance, sharing of best practice, acknowledgement and highlighting of good work.

7.4. An excellent example of the above is the step taken by the Trade Union Congress to increase awareness of racism and Islamophobia at the workplace, passing this resolution in 2006: "Congress is anxious to counter the growing culture of Islamophobia as another manifestation of racism…Fear and ignorance breeds prejudice and prejudice is undiscerning. Many innocent people suffer as a result. It is every bit as important that we combat racism, fear and prejudice as it is that we combat terrorism…Congress, therefore, calls upon the General Council to encourage affiliated unions to share and promote good practices aimed at countering Islamophobia in the workplace, as part of their anti-racist strategies."[50]

7.5. Despite the real and justifiable concern felt by many Muslims, care must be taken that such Islamophobia does not detract from public participation in the society. Community organisations need to be resilient and be explicit in not only highlighting the problem of Islamophobia, but also the actions that can be taken and are being taken to tackle hate crime.

7.6. Community organisations are at the forefront of facing hate crime and being the support mechanisms for those suffering. At the minimum, community organisations should provide the ability for those who have suffered from hate crime, to gain support from other victims.

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[49] Theresa May speech on defeating extremism, March 2015
[50] TUC decision, 2006

A more complex counselling service and support network requires significant training and where not possible, clear signposting to support services is vital.

7.7. Where the government is willing, Muslim community organisations should engage and support positive government initiatives to tackle hate crime locally or nationally.

7.8. The action of community groups will always be limited, and to eradicate the scourge of hate crime, strong government action is required as highlighted in Section 9.

8. **Recommendations for government**

8.1. The government launched the "Challenge it, Report it, Stop it: The Government's Plan to Tackle Hate Crime" in 2012 but many of the projects undertaken have had limited success.[51] After the resignations of Chris Allen[52], Matthew Goodwin[53] and others because the "government was simply not that interested in anti-Muslim hatred" and "resists real engagement with Muslims", leading to limited action, there have been fears that all forms of bigotry have not being treated equally.

8.2. It is hoped that the new "Action against Hate"[54] plan by the Government will be fully enacted, given it is very laudable with many important initiatives, including:
   ● Providing education materials in resource packs for schools and teachers on hate crime, support projects to tackle anti-Muslim bullying.
   ● Fund to provide protective security measures at vulnerable faith institutions.[55]
   ● Tackling hate crime on public transport through community-led advertising campaigns on public transport and roundtables to devise solutions to ensure public transport is safe for all.
   ● Tackling online hate crime: guidance to police and partners, prosecutors on online hate crime, ministerial seminar on hate to set out an approach, increase awareness of TrueVision for reporting and examining online hate crime.
   ● Encouraging reporting of hate crime: working with Muslim communities to raise awareness of hate crime and how it can be reported.
   ● Improving police response to hate crime: identify training needs with updated policy and legal guidance for prosecutors on racially and religiously aggravated crime.
   ● Improving support for victims of hate crime, including improved referral mechanisms and strengthening the voices of victims and advocates of hate crime.

8.3. There are other hate crime strategies e.g., by the Mayor of London[56] and the Police[57] and all strategies should be aligned for maximum effectiveness, with clear leadership, timelines and accountability for the proposed initiatives. This should include representatives of the police (e.g. a senior police officer with responsibility for Islamophobia appointed by the National Police Council), and government officials.

[51] Challenge It, Report It, Stop It Delivering the Government's hate crime action plan, March 2014
[52] Why I Quit the Government's Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group, Dr Chris Allen in Huffington Post, October 2014
[53] The fight against Islamophobia is going backwards, Matthew Goodwin in Guardian, October 2015
[54] Action against Hate, Home Office, July 2016
[55] Although many have raised concerns at the apparent unequal treatment of all faiths in the provision of such funding(see points 56 and 57 of Action against Hate, Home Office, July 2016)
[56] A HATE CRIME REDUCTION STRATEGY FOR LONDON, 2014-2017
[57] National Policing Hate Crime Strategy, 2014

8.4. The perception within many Muslim communities is that in spite of rhetoric from decision makers, practical steps to combat extremism focus on Muslims rather than those committing hate crimes against Muslims.[58] The reality is that failure "to tackle and take serious Islamophobia can have a detrimental impact on policies aimed at ensuring cohesion, integration, preventing radicalisation, equalities and more."[59]

8.5. Further to the recommendations laid out in the rest of this submission on reporting, social media, politicians and media, the following is a list of suggestions that we believe, will play a powerful and positive role in combating hate crime against Muslims:

- **Engage with Muslim communities** when determining policy related to Muslims. The government's unwillingness to work with elected Muslim community groups is not conducive to community engagement which is key for a successful hate crime strategy.
- **Align strategies** of the police, local mayors and central government in tackling all forms of hate crime equally, ensuring clear timelines, metrics of success, and regular updates on progress made.
- **Update legislation**: protection of discrimination against some religious minorities (Sikhs/Jews) does not extend to Muslims (not a race according to Race Relations Act 1976 (amended in 2000 and 2003). However, given that it is the visible signs of a Muslim that lead to greater abuse rather than the belief system itself,[60] the government should commit to a review of the 2006 Racial and Religious Hatred Act as advised by the Law Commission[61]
- **Commission reports into Islamophobia**: through academic research, evidence-based policy can be developed
- **Education from a young age**: further to the excellent proposals in the Action against Hate action plan, religious discrimination in schools should be tracked as is proposed in USA[62] and the teaching of Islam should become more widespread to remove basic misconceptions of the faith.
- **Develop procedures** to deal with what would happen were there to be another successful attack on a mosque or Muslims in the UK
- **Increase diversity:** promote diversity in public bodies and encourage those from ethnic minority backgrounds to participate in the wider public service (including as governors of schools following the Trojan Horse hoax).
- **Restorative justice:** consider introducing a system of criminal justice which focuses on the rehabilitation of hate crime offenders through reconciliation with victims and the community at large.
- **Training**: better training for police services across the country in identifying and investigating allegations of Islamophobia; training for public sector (NHS, education authorities, local authorities)

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[58] MCB response to Home Secretary Theresa May's new counter-extremism strategy on 23 March 2015
[59] "Tackling Islamophobia", Chris Allen, 2014
[60] Study from Bristol University, 2008
[61] Hate Crime: the case for extending the existing offences, Law Commission, 2013
[62] U.S. to track religious discrimination in schools as anti-Muslim sentiment grows, The Washington Post, September 2016