MEND Islamophobia awareness exhibition guide

mend

Foreword

Sufyan Gulam Ismail
CEO

Events over the last year have been harrowing in the extreme. British Muslims have experienced a sense of vulnerability that in some ways eclipsed the fears experienced in the days and years following 9/11 and 7/7.

The murder of a Muslim grandfather, Mohammed Saleem Khan, by the right wing fanatic and 'race war' enthusiast Pavlo Lapshyn, in April 2013 and the scale and severity of retaliatory attacks on British Muslims after the brutal murder of Fusilier Lee Rigby in May 2013, is a potent reminder of the persisting evil of Islamophobia.

Whether it is the street level thuggery, intimidatory tactics and low intensity anti-Muslim violence of far right movements like the English Defence League and Britain First, or the horrors of bombs planted in mosques in the West Midlands and Islamic centres firebombed and the sophistry of the educated classes, Islamophobia is a problem that manifests itself at all levels of society. It is, in essence and experience, a malign prejudice against the UK's largest religious minority group: Muslims.

Islamophobia is a prejudice which feeds on ignorance and fear to promote hatred and social divisions. It is a prejudice which permeates the many facets of the Muslim lifestyle; personal, professional, and institutional.

It is pervasive, it is pernicious and it is becoming popularised.

Islamophobia has passed a new threshold - one that brings with it new challenges. It is increasingly becoming accepted as an expression of 'legitimate' opinion.

But as our colleagues at the Collective Against Islamophobia in France put it:

'Islamophobia is not an opinion, it is a crime'.

To challenge Islamophobia, we need clear understanding on what it is, on what it feeds and on what we must do together to stop it.

Islamophobia is an issue for Britain and British society as a whole, not for British Muslims or British Muslim communities.

It is our hope that this exhibition will provoke discussion on the disproportionately negative portrayal of Islam and Muslims in the British media, the consequences of these negative representations and the reality of British Muslim community life and achievements.

It is our collective duty to challenge anti-Muslim prejudice wherever we find it. We hope this exhibition generates better understanding of these issues and the work we need to do to eradicate prejudice, in all its forms, from our society.

Contents

Portrayals of Islam and Muslims in the British media

Since the events of 9/11 and 7/7, media coverage of Islam and Muslims has grown exponentially with the volume of coverage increasing more than tenfold according to some studies. Unfortunately, this increase in coverage has been overwhelmingly negative with Muslims regularly portrayed in frames that present them as homogeneous, threatening, and incompatible with Britain's values and society.

This exhibition has been developed to reflect on the media's coverage of Islam and Muslims and the impact these negative portrayals have on Muslim life in Britain. The exhibition also attempts to showcase some of the wonderful contributions British Muslims make every day to our economy, society, politics and culture.

Left:
Shah Jahan Mosque, one of the first mosques in Western Europe.
Built 1889 in Woking, Surrey.
Photo by 'Egmel' (flickr user, 2009).

British Muslims:
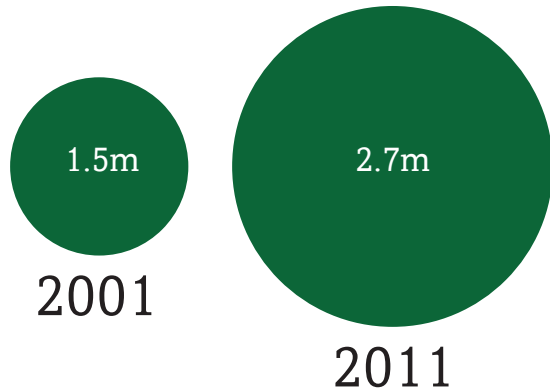## Britain's diverse and growing religious group

Britain's ethnic diversity is growing and Muslims represent one of the most ethnically diverse religious groups in the United Kingdom. Census data from 2001 and 2011, which included a voluntary question on religious affiliation, reflects the growth in the size and diversity of British Muslims.

In 2001, Muslims numbered 1.6 million people. Ten years later, the 2011 Census estimates that there are about 2.7 million Muslims living in the UK, making Muslims the second largest religious grouping in Britain. The pie charts overleaf illustrate the changing ethnic composition of the UK's Muslim population.
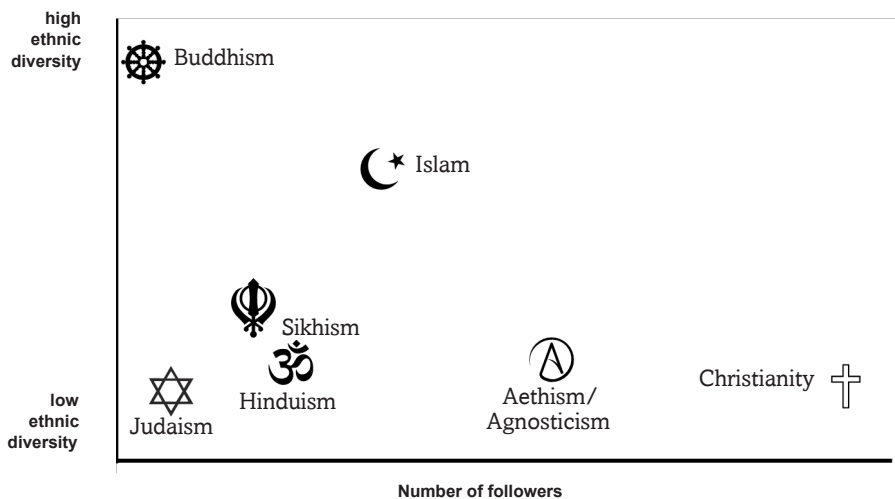
The media's propensity to amplify and exaggerate the size and influence of fringe Muslim groups, like Muslims Against Crusades or Al Muhajiroun, distorts the realities of British Muslim life. By neglecting and negating the 'silent majority' of Muslims and focusing on the provocative few, the media raises unnecessary obstacles to fostering good community relations and social cohesion.

1. Population Growth:

The UK census is the best available source of information on religion in Britain. The census of 2001 and 2011 contained a voluntary question on religious affiliation which

allows us to observe and assess changes to the number, ethnicity, social and occupational status of British Muslims.

1.5m

2001

2.7m

2011

2. Diversity of world religions in the UK:

high ethnic diversity

Buddhism

Islam

Sikhism

Hinduism

Aethism/ Agnosticism

Christianity

Judaism

low ethnic diversity

Number of followers

Islam is the second most diverse religion in the United Kingdom, after Buddhism. In fact, Muslims are almost twice as ethnically diverse as Christian, Jewish and secular/non-religious groups.

The diversity of religions in Britain was calculated by applying the Simpson Diversity Index, a standard method for calculating diversity in biology and ecology, to data from the 2001 census table S104, 'Ethnic Composition of Religious Groups.' The religions are placed based on a score between zero (no diversity) and one (complete diversity).

3. Covering religion: a longitudinal view

Kim Knott and Elizabeth Poole in their study on 'Media portrayals of religion and the secular sacred' (2013) explored the changing volume of media output on 'conventional religion', such as the established church in the UK and other Christian denominations and world religions, and references to 'common religion' (magic, witchcraft, gambling etc), as well as the category 'secular sacred' (ie atheism, humanism and other forms of secular sacred beliefs). The bar graphs reflect the findings of Knott and Poole on the changes in media coverage of religion and the parallel rise in interest and coverage of the 'secular sacred'. The study revealed that references to Islam in the British media grew exponentially from 66 in 1982 to 306 in 2008, an increase of over 400%.

26.5%
references to 'common' religion

40.5%
references to 'common' religion, including magic, witchcraft, luck, gambling, and the 'unexplained'

3.5%
references to the secular sacred

73.5%
general references to religion, including specific world religions

25.5%
specific references to world religions

30.5%
general references to 'religion', without specific mention of a particular one

1982   **2008**

Changes in references to religion, 1982 and 2008

While references to almost all religions increased in 2008, the attention to Islam increased exponentially. The majority of this attention was on 'militant action' and 'extremism'.

Note: *The study looked at three newspapers over two months: The Times, The Sun and Yorkshire Evening Post, and three television channels over one week: BBC1, BBC2 and ITV. TV coverage included the full range of output – drama, comedy, news, sports, fashion, arts, soap operas and advertisements.*

OTHER 20 / 12
Sikhism 13 / 11
Hinduism 35 / 8
Buddhism 43 / 3
Judaism 91 / 108
Islam 66 / 306

1982
2008

5. Breakdown of references to world religions in 2008
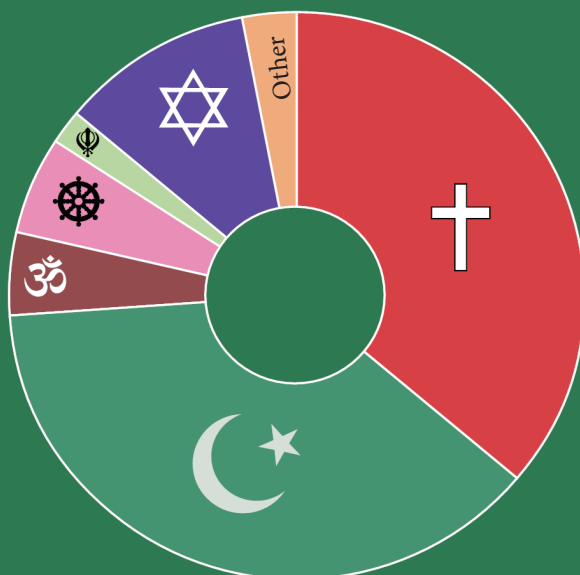
This chart displays the world religions most referred to in one month's newspapers and one week's television in 2008.

In 2008, references to Islam were disproportionately higher than for any other world religion, though there were a similar number of references to Christianity. However, the references to Islam in the media were predominantly negative, framed in terms of conflict, terrorism, and extremism. Islam was also portrayed as receiving preferential treatment by the state at the expense of Christians leading to themes on the 'marginalisation of Christianity' and the 'Islamification' of Britain.[1]
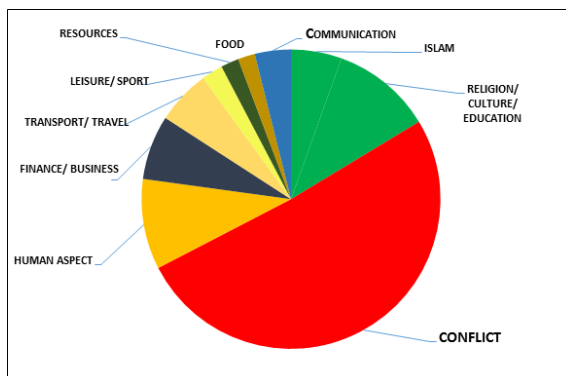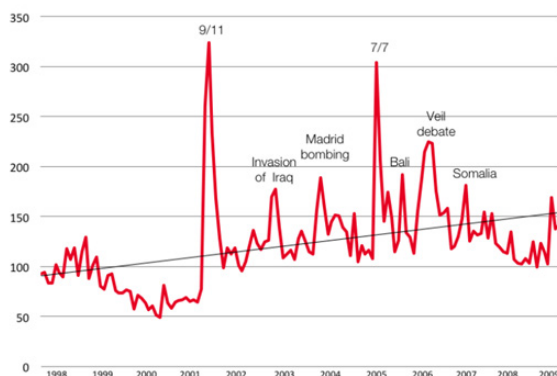
Other

Islam in the British Nationals

Academics at Lancaster University, as part of a study investigating 'Islam in the British nationals 1998-2009', analysed 200,000 articles in the British national dailies containing the words 'Muslim(s)' and 'Islam', 'Islamic', 'Islamism', and 'Islamist', forming a corpus of almost 143 million words.

The research illustrates the growing volume of output on Muslims in the British press.

The graph (right) shows the average number of articles per month on Muslims appearing in the British nationals between 1998 and 2009.

The research also illustrates the degree to which the print media output on Muslims is skewed in favour of negative news frames with 'conflict' accounting for almost half of the topics under which Islam is discussed (see pie chart).

While conflict stories generally tend to attract more coverage than non-conflict news stories, researchers found that when compared to similar corpus data on general news stories, there was 'significantly more reference to conflict in stories about Muslims'.[*]

* CASS Briefings 2: 'Representations of Islam in the British press 1998 - 2009'. Lancaster University: Centre for Corpus Approaches to Social Science (CASS), 2013. p. 4

Muslims as 'the Other'

"

> Malicious generalisations about Islam have become the last acceptable form of denigration of foreign culture in the West.

Edward Said, *Covering Islam*

Analysis of media coverage on Islam and Muslims, illustrated overleaf, shows a glaring tendency among newspapers and media agencies to write about and refer to Muslims in ways that would be unthinkable for other minority groups in the UK, for example, blacks or Jews.

Sir Brian Leveson in his report on the Culture, Practice and Ethics of the Press, concluded that there exists "a significant tendency within the press which leads to the publication of prejudicial or pejorative references to race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or physical or mental illness or disability." [2]

Within this subset, analysis shows "a disturbing willingness among writers in the broadsheet press and elsewhere to indulge themselves in blatantly anti-Islamic rhetoric and argument that would, as they argue, not be tolerated if it were directed against Jews, say, or gay people," according to Professor Stuart Weir.[3]

Part of the challenge to changing the media's portrayal of Muslims as 'the Other' is captured in a recommendation put forward by Lord Leveson in his inquiry report. He argued that a press regulatory body should be equipped "with the power to intervene in cases of allegedly discriminatory reporting, and in so doing reflect the spirit of equalities legislation."

Through constructing Muslims as 'the Other' in media frames and narratives, the media reinforces Orientalist suppositions that Islam is incompatible with Western norms and values, such as liberal democratic attitudes and a regard for social and religious pluralism. This bias and prejudicial discourse, overlooks the successful integration of the vast majority of Muslims in British culture, society and political life.

1. Nouns & Adjectives
most frequently used to describe Islam and Muslims

The frequency of words used to describe or label Muslims are represented in this chart and is based on the broadest study of Islam in British print media. The data reveals an overwhelming tendency to portray Islam and Muslims as a singular and homogeneous community, emphasising traits which connote extremism and conflict. The research confirms findings of a study by the School of Journalism, Cardiff University, displayed on Panel 7, which found evidence of similar negative representations.[4] Lord Justice Leveson stated: "there are enough examples of careless or reckless reporting to conclude that discriminatory, sensational or unbalanced reporting in relation to ethnic minorities, immigrants and/or asylum seekers is a feature of journalistic practice in parts of the press, rather than an aberration." [5]

EXTREMIST	POPULATION	GROUP	MAN	CLERIC	LEADER	COUNTRY	WOMAN	WORLD	COMMUNITY
1,710	1,799	1,837	2,158	2,279	3,217	3,864	4,484	4,928	7,676

2. Seeing the 'Other'
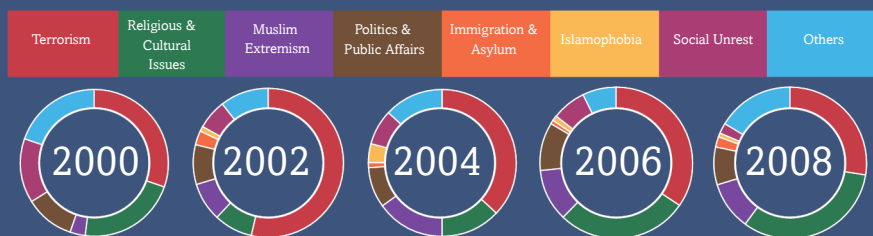## Muslims – as British as anyone else, despite prejudices

61%
of Britons do not believe Islam is compatible with British culture

82%
of British Muslims consider themselves loyal to the UK.[6]

3. Changing Frames on Islam and Muslims[7]

Terrorism	Religious & Cultural Issues	Muslim Extremism	Politics & Public Affairs	Immigration & Asylum	Islamophobia	Social Unrest	Others

2000   2002   2004   2006   2008

'Terrorism' and 'Religious and cultural issues' are the most frequent hooks used in news stories about Islam or Muslims by the British media. Over the period 2000-2008, 'Religious and cultural issues' became the dominant hook, emphasizing 'cultural differences' between Islam and the West, and portraying Muslims as being 'incompatible with British society'. Note that representations of the challenges faced by British Muslims, such as Islamophobia or discrimination on grounds of religion, make up a negligible proportion of news hooks.

(Mis)Representing Muslim Women

Newspapers on both the left and right of the ideological spectrum use the frame of an Islam that is oppressive to women in a further variation on the theme of Muslims as 'the Other'.

The veil or headscarf is the primary symbol used to evidence Islam's 'sexist' or 'misogynistic' nature, portraying the religion as hostile to gender equality and female empowerment.

Muslim women in Orientalist literature are portrayed as being in need of liberation through the introduction of Western norms of secular, liberal democracy. Today, they are portrayed as passive and vulnerable victims of patriarchy legitimated by a 'sexist' religion. The 'burqa', 'niqab', and the 'hijab' are often portrayed as symptomatic of Islam's inability to modernise and of its devaluing of the role of women in society.

More recently, the veil has come to be seen as a symbol of the inability of Muslims to adapt to 'British' culture. The veil is used to symbolize the 'refusal' of Muslim women to adopt British cultural values and is cast as an act of 'cultural resistance'.

In all of this discussion, there is little room for the Muslim woman to represent herself or to articulate different types of veiling as a practice engaged in freely and of one's own volition. The media relies on the obvious case of religious dress to argue the case of Islam's incompatibility with life in Britain. It takes little regard of the fact that a Muslim woman's decision to veil is the natural expression of religious freedoms that are protected in Britain.

choice

obligatory

traditional

veil

undesirable

compulsory
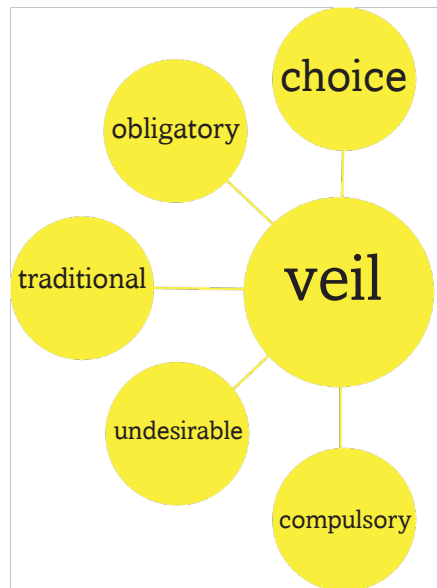
ADJECTIVES:
words used to describe the veil, burqa, niqab, and hijab in broadsheets and tabloids, 1998-2009[8]

In all of this discussion, there is little room for the Muslim woman to represent herself and freely articulate her religious choices. There is little regard for the fact that the choice to veil is a natural expression of the religious freedoms that are protected in Britain.

Newspapers often describe Muslim women through the lens of veiling and covering up. The Islam that these women practice is framed as something backward, oppressive and restrictive. The hijab, niqab and burqa are all painted as Islam's primary symbols of misogyny and are used as tools to deny female agency and promote female disempowerment.

In 42% of press stories the veil and veiling were either described as a form of oppression or an unreasonable demand as opposed to a right or a choice. Common words used to describe the veil and Muslim women who choose to wear it include; 'zombie', 'shroud' and 'dalek'. [9]

Research suggests that women's bodies often become battlegrounds where British values and cultural differences are created and played out. In the pursuit of 'saving' Muslim women from the confines of their religion, issues of violence and gender based discrimination faced by the general non-Muslim and Muslim female populations are sidelined. The non-Muslim British woman is painted as an ideal example of female emancipation whereas the Muslim woman is someone who is trapped by her religion and by Muslim men, who are portrayed as the 'guardians' of religious observance. In more recent debates over British values and national security, the veil in its various forms is seen as a threat to society and a clear symbol of the Muslim woman's unwillingness to integrate and adopt British cultural values.

These debates fails to recognise the Muslim woman's ability to exercise choice and agency; to express her religious identity through the freedoms bestowed on her and her compatriots by the state. The media uses religious dress as an obvious marker of difference to problematise, demonise and, in some cases, insult the very choices exercised by British Muslim women under the right to religious freedom as protected by British law.
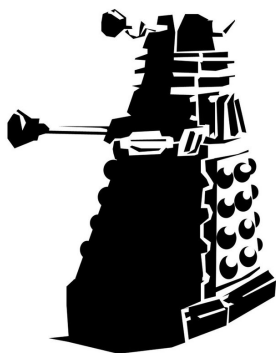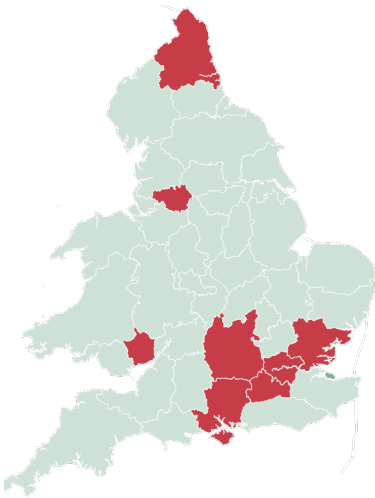

Common words used to describe the veil and Muslim women who choose to wear it include; 'zombie', 'shroud' 'bats' and 'dalek'.

Demonising Muslim Youth

Muslim youth are a persistent concern in the media with stories perpetuating the view of them as potential extremists with an easy susceptibility to radicalisation by 'Islamist' groups.

Terrorism and the implication of universities as places where radicalisation festers has brought university Islamic societies into the media frame with news stories focusing on the 'vulnerability' of Muslim students. This has subsequently had an impact on security and policing with growing perceptions of Muslims as a 'suspect community'.

Young Asian and Muslim men attract particular suspicion from the police and were stopped and searched more frequently than white British men of the same age under the Terrorism Act 2000's Section 44 Stop and Search powers. The disproportionate use of these powers against BME groups led to changes in the Protection of Freedoms Act, 2012 and the introduction of Section 47A. British Muslim youth struggle against perceptions of them as suspicious, with frequent complaints made of the use by police forces of ethnic profiling and religious discrimination in security policing.

Muslim faith schools also face stigmatisation in the British media with headlines portraying them as inculcating illiberal values or teachings that are regarded as incompatible with life in Britain. Media frames which posit Muslim youth as 'segregated' and 'culturally hostile' to British society runs counter to evidence on how well faith schools fare in standards assessment of their teaching quality, examination league table standing and social cohesion.

POLICING:

Areas in England and Wales where Asians are more likely to be searched under terrorism legislation than white Britons.

The 'suspect community' narrative has an impact on younger British Muslims with university students, students of Muslim supplementary schools (madrassas) and pupils in Muslim faith schools all affected by the negative frames on Muslims as 'self-segregating' and wilfully resisting integration into British society and civic life.

Muslims & Violence

The idea that Islam is intrinsically a 'violent religion' is perhaps the most durable of all stereotypes used in media frames in the British and international press.

The horrific events of 9/11 and 7/7 have contributed to the resurfacing of Orientalist myths on violence as an inherent quality in Islam and of Muslims as irrationally disposed to religiously motivated violence. The Danish cartoons episode of 2005 was another event used to reinforce this notion with media coverage often homogenising and prejudging Muslim reactions to world events characterised by 'fury', 'anger' or 'erupting into violence'. The narrative is further developed by the use of so called 'preachers of hate' as the authentic and representative voice of British Muslims.

This trend is resonant in the 'terrorist thriller' film and television genre where counter-terrorism agents frequently hunt down the 'enemy within'.[10] In these dramas, Muslims are frequently portrayed as 'fifth columnists' and citizens who harbour violent intent against their fellow citizens and others.

The idea of Muslims as 'extremist' is reinforced through repetition with characters such as Anjem Choudhary given prolific airtime and column inches to espouse sensationalist claims.

This association of Muslims with violence has in turn engendered widespread feelings of anti-Muslim hostility, suspicion and consequently hate crimes. Social attitudes surveys reveal the extent to which British citizens question the loyalty of Muslims to Britain and express distrust of Muslims in local communities. Results from recent surveys are shown in the exhibition panels 11 and 12.

Anders Breivik: Terrorist?

Far right extremists, like Anders Behring Breivik, who murdered 77 people in Norway in July 2010, are not often classified as 'terrorists' in the news media.

Though religiously motivated acts of terror are the least frequent type of terrorism recorded in the EU,[11] the media's linking of Islam with acts of terrorism buttresses social attitudes which view Islam as an inherently violent religion. The consequences of such mistaken beliefs are evident in hate crimes committed against Muslim persons and property as shown in panels 13 and 14.

Is the word 'terrorist' reserved mainly for Muslims?

Amplifying Extremist Voices

contribution

charitable

excellent

cooperative

active

not newsworthy

Islamist   extremist
oppression
terrorism   violence
undemocratic
radicalization
fanatical
threat   crime
burqa   polygamy
sexism
jihad   anti-British

newsworthy

athletic

non violent

artistic

creative

British

unique

not newsworthy

The above frames are the dominant ones used when framing stories about Islam and Muslims as 'newsworthy'.[12]

The graphic illustrates which 'media frames' are used to describe and identify Muslims in the media landscape and how these frames in turn come to influence popular understanding of Islam and British Muslims.

Tabloid newspapers in particular overwhelmingly focus on news featuring 'radical' Muslims, and feature very few stories about British Muslims going about their everyday lives. The law-abiding Muslim is just not newsworthy! The overrepresentation of a handful of bad characters distorts and obscures the vibrant, multifaceted and creative contributions Muslims make to the UK.

Muslims are one of the most diverse religious groups in the UK. Muslims come from all over the world and speak many different languages. They have different political views and are actively engaged in British politics, economy, academia and civil society.

Focusing specifically on a minority of disaffected Muslims overshadows the positive contributions made by the hard working majority.

Some newspapers have a tendency to over-emphasise the voice and reach of fringe Muslim groups drowning out the more reasoned and sensible voices of the majority. At other times, the media wilfully downplays the 'Muslim' aspect of a person's identity. For example, in all 330,000 words written about Mohammed 'Mo' Farah in sports coverage during the London Olympics, there were only 23 mentions of his Muslim faith.[13]

Effects on Popular Attitudes

The over-representation of Muslims in contexts of violence, irrationality and terrorism has condensed into concrete perceptions that give 'respectability to prejudice'.[14]

This 'respectability to prejudice' is best captured in the anti-Muslim attitudes and politics espoused by far right political parties in the UK, eg the British National Party and National Front, and far right social movements, such as the English Defence League and Britain First.

A growing number of studies have looked at the motivations and sentiments that drive individuals to embrace xenophobic, racist and anti-Muslim beliefs. Among the causal factors found to shape far right attitudes towards Muslims is news coverage which perpetuates myths of Muslims as 'encroaching on British society' or 'undermining British values' or 'refusing to integrate'.

Such attitudes do not stop at the verbal or sentient. As the images below illustrate, a significant proportion of far right members and sympathisers embrace violence as a means to 'protect their community'.

1. Hate and Violence on the Far Right

76.6% of BNP supporters believe that Islam poses a threat to the West.[15]

82% of British Muslims consider themselves loyal to the UK.

64.1% of BNP supporters believe that violence may be necessary to 'protect their community'.[16]

In fact the BNP is more likely to resort to violence against civilians, as no Muslims surveyed agreed that violence was completely justifiable.[17]

Islam in Britain: Fact vs Fiction

Collective representations and diversity

Did you know that Muslims have the largest level of ethnic diversity in their faith group after Buddhists? Yet, Muslims are constantly referred to as a single, homogenous group with little regard for their cultural, ethnic, linguistic and racial diversity. By ignoring the heterogeneity of Muslim communities in Britain, the diversity within Islam is also masked. Valuable African and Asian contributions and manifestations of Islam are sidelined in the pursuit of an erroneous, homogenous representation of British Muslims.

Collective representations of Muslims, through the use of phrases such as 'Muslim world' or 'Muslim community' reinforce homogeneity by treating Muslims as an undifferentiated mass in both geographic and sociological terms. One of the ways in which Muslims are represented as 'intolerant of diversity' is by masking the vivid diversity *within* Islam.

'Alms for the poor'

One of the five pillars of Islam is almsgiving. An excellent example of British Muslim almsgiving is during Ramadan, the holy month of fasting. In Lancashire alone, the local Muslim community raised an astonishing £7 million for charity in 2014[18]. During the entire month of Ramadan, British Muslims raised an estimated £50 million in charitable donations.[19]

According to a poll by donation site JustGiving and polling agency ICM, British Muslims are the largest per capita donors of charity in the UK donating an incredible £371 each, more than all other faith and non-faith groups.[20]

Despite these heartwarming, regular occurrences of charitable almsgiving, there are very few media stories that portray Muslims as generous citizens who give rather than take. The majority of media stories describe Muslims as "begging for alms" or using alms to support terrorism.[21]

Newspapers and their editors are in a unique position of authority when it comes to influencing popular opinion. When the majority of stories that focus on charity and social welfare portray Muslims as 'scroungers', the media is guilty of misusing its power and betraying its role in promoting social cohesion. The media not only influences public opinion through news dissemination, it helps to shape it too.

|	
Muslims	£371
Jews	£270
Protestants	£202
Other Christian	£178
Atheists	£116
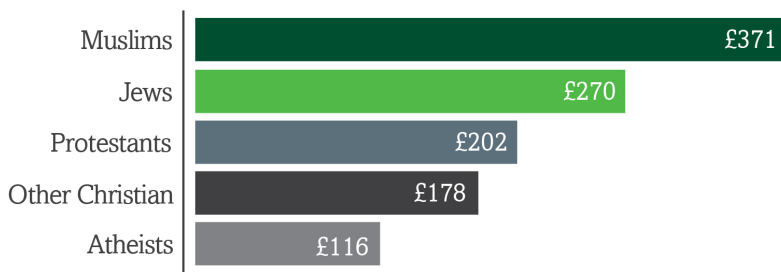
A question of loyalty: Dispelling myths of Muslim disloyalty to Britain

The media regularly creates associations between Muslims, extremism and terrorism fuelling ideas that Muslims are disloyal to Britain and do not wish to have a stake in its prosperous future.

Research has shown that in 1 in 20 newspaper stories, the word 'Muslim' or 'Muslims' can be found alongside a word that refers to 'extremism'. Disturbingly, 'Islamic' appears next to the word 'extremism' 1 in 6 times. Clearly using language in this disproportionate way paints Muslims in a very negative light and provides justification for the idea that Muslims are dangerous, frightening and different to the rest of society.[22]

The fact that these figures were similar pre 9/11, shows the media has a strange and unique fascination with extreme versions of Islam.

Despite these associations, Census and survey data shows that British Muslims are among the most loyal of faith groups in the UK. British Muslims are more likely than other faith groups, except Sikhs, to attest to a 'British-only' national identity. [23]

Percentage of religious group population
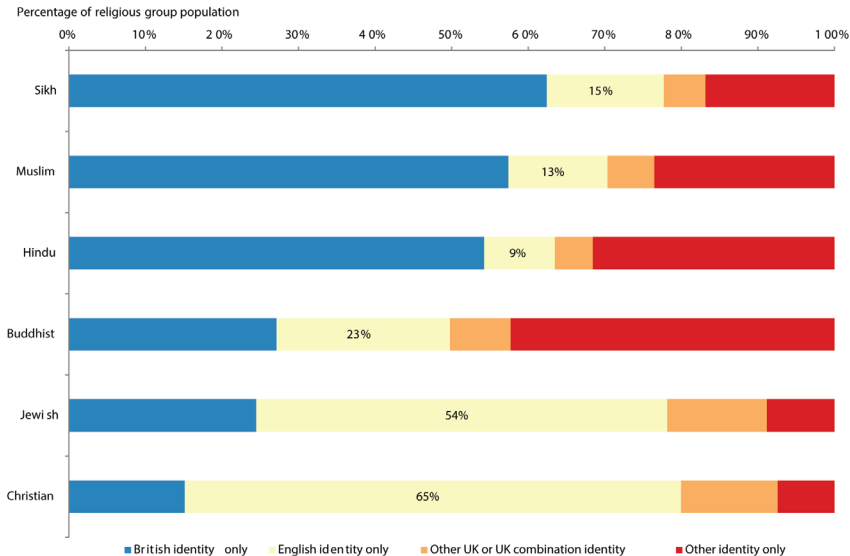
Note: Percent label shown for 'English identity only' to aid comparison across religious groups.

Leveson Inquiry and the battle for better press regulation

What was it?

The Inquiry was principally a response to public outrage over the hacking of murdered schoolgirl Milly Dowler's phone. As the number of hacking stories increased, and public confidence in the media, the Press Complaints Commission and the Metropolitan Police Service dropped, the Prime Minister, David Cameron, launched an Inquiry into the Culture, Practice and Ethics of the Press presided over by Lord Justice Leveson. The Inquiry's scope covered the relationships between the press and the public, the press and police, the press and politicians and proposed recommendations for future policy on press regulation.

Outcomes:

The Inquiry was persuaded beyond any doubt that there was evidence of the press failing to fulfil its responsibilities to the public and failing to follow its own Code of Practice resulting in poor industry practices and plummeting public confidence in the media.

On the issue of the media's representation of Muslims, Lord Justice Leveson concluded:

"The evidence demonstrates that sections of the press betray a tendency, which is far from being universal or even preponderant, to portray Muslims in a negative light."

Mend's contribution to the Leveson Inquiry

Mend submitted evidence to the Leveson Inquiry in written and oral form. We declared our deep disappointment over the fact that the Editors' Code of Practice did not make provisions for "third party" complaints when Muslims as a social group collectively suffer from poor media practices, whether this be the excessive attention granted to fringe Muslim groups, like Muslims Against Crusades, or poor fact-checking prior to publication.

Muslims do not enjoy recourse to redress of grievance because the Code of Practice governs the rights of individuals and not groups. In consideration of the enormous impact on social groups of media coverage that is proven to be inaccurate, inflammatory or prejudicial, the exclusion of "third party" complaints is deeply unsatisfactory and remains a grave deficit in the complaints handling powers and procedures of the industry's chosen successor to the Press Complaints Commission, the Independent Press Standards Organisation (Ipso).

Recognising the inadequacy of the extant arrangement, Lord Justice Leveson recommended, as a means of tackling "discriminatory, sensational or unbalanced reporting" an amendment to "practice and the Code to permit third party complaints."

Furthermore, where apologies are published by newspapers, they are in no way commensurate in scale or prominence, to the original article and therefore offer little or no redress for the damage done by the initial publication. A recommendation advanced by Lord Justice Leveson was for the regulator to possess the power to 'direct' apologies, that is, to determine what form, in size and prominence, they should take. We heartily welcomed this recommendation.

Royal Charter

Two years on from the Leveson Inquiry report, the recommendation to adopt a press regulatory body, underpinned by statute and Leveson-compliant, remains unfulfilled. Mend continues to advocate for the full adoption of the cross party Royal Charter and a Leveson-compliant regulator.

The refusal to adopt the Royal Charter by the press industry comes at a time where there is overwhelming public support for better press regulation. A YouGov poll commissioned by the Media Standards Trust on public opinion of media regulation showed that 70% of respondents felt that they could not trust newspaper editors to ensure journalists acted in the public interest and agreed that after the phone hacking scandal, it was no longer acceptable for newspaper owners and editors to control the press complaints system. Significantly, 79% of respondents agreed that there needed to be "an independent press regulator, established by law, which deals with complaints and decides what sanctions there should be if journalists break agreed codes of conduct.' [24]

Debunking Islamophobic Myths

Myth 1: 'Islam is incompatible with democracy'[25]

According to the BNP, 'the historical record shows that Islam is by its very nature incompatible with modern, secular western democracy.'[26]

Fact:

The majority of Muslims worldwide prefer democratic governance.[27] Research demonstrates a higher confidence in democratic institutions amongst British Muslims than the average for other groups.

55% Public
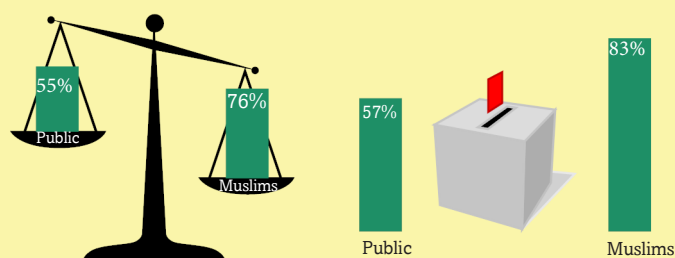
76% Muslims

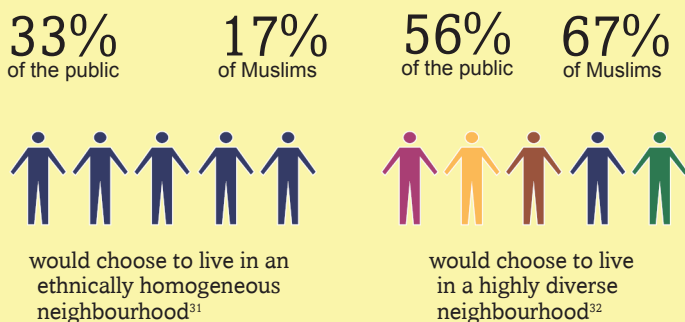Confidence in Judicial System[28]

57% Public

83% Muslims

Confidence in Elections[29]

Myth 2: 'Muslims threaten British culture'

The BNP and others on the far right believe that '[Islamic] dress (burkas, prayer coats, etc.) and religious practices intrude, dominate and drive away [British] culture.'[30]

Fact:

Muslims value respect for difference and diversity, two fundamental characteristics of a plural, democratic society. Research shows that Muslims are more receptive to life in mixed communities than other groups.

33% of the public **17%** of Muslims

56% of the public **67%** of Muslims

would choose to live in an ethnically homogeneous neighbourhood[31]

would choose to live in a highly diverse neighbourhood[32]

Visualising Islam

The following four images, reproduced from Panels 9 and 10, show how the media frames detailed above render Islam and Muslims as 'radical', 'oppressive', 'un-British' and 'threatening' through the use of certain visual images. These pictures bear similarities to the representation of Muslims in photojournalism as well as in TV drama and film.

Does sensationalist reporting of the actions of individual Muslims lead you to conclude that Islam is a violent religion?

Does the image of the veil lead you to assume that Islam is oppressive towards women?

Each photograph typically reflects the visual imagery used by newspapers on Islam and Muslims; broadsheets and tabloids, to film and broadcast media. These photographs and images are framed to reinforce the notion that Islam condones 'terrorism and violence,' and the 'oppression of women'. Similarly, images of a 'monolithic Islam' and symbols of Islamic culture in the British public sphere are used to imply that Islam is 'threatening' British identity.

These two panels attempt to reproduce the tendency of media outlets to represent Islam according to these themes. The predominance of such images and a discourse which emphasises 'conflict', 'violence' and Islam's 'cultural incompatibility' with British values reproduces prejudicial attitudes towards Islam in public debates on immigration, multiculturalism and national identity.

We invite you to reflect on the research and anecdotes, and probe your own attitudes toward Islam and Muslims beyond the imagery and descriptions provided by mainstream media sources.[33]

Do you see Muslims as a singular, homogeneous and identical group of people?

Does the presence of Muslim culture in Britain cause you anxiety and concern?

24

British Muslims:
economic contributions and challenges

1. Muslim entrepreneurs:
   Muslim-owned businesses make a significant contribution to the UK economy

33.6%
estimate Muslim-owned London SMEs[34]

there are over
13,500
Muslim-owned
businesses in London, creating more than
70,000jobs[35]
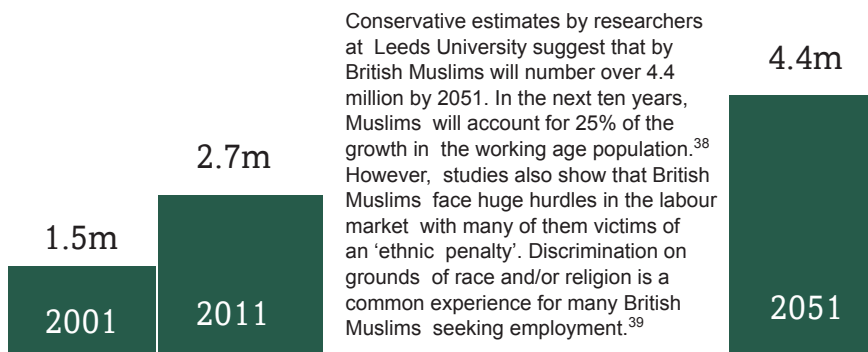
in 2010,
Asian SMEs contributed
£25-32 billion
to the UK economy, according to estimates of Asian SME ownership and gross value added.[37]

34.8%
of BME small-and medium enterprises are owned by Muslims[36]

2. Changing demographics:
Projected growth in the UK's Muslim population to 2051

Conservative estimates by researchers at Leeds University suggest that by British Muslims will number over 4.4 million by 2051. In the next ten years, Muslims will account for 25% of the growth in the working age population.[38] However, studies also show that British Muslims face huge hurdles in the labour market with many of them victims of an 'ethnic penalty'. Discrimination on grounds of race and/or religion is a common experience for many British Muslims seeking employment.[39]

1.5m 2001

2.7m 2011

4.4m 2051

3. Future challenges

36%

of British Muslim women surveyed by the London Development Agency have completed graduate and post-graduate education.[40]

British Muslim women suffer from 'dual discrimination' because their gender and race/faith identities form a double bias. This is particularly resonant in cases involving women who observe Islamic dress. In fact, Muslims face the highest rate of discrimination in the labour market.[41]

Job refusal and promotion blockage[42]

39.2%	38.9%	other 38.1%	33.7%	31.4%	26.7%
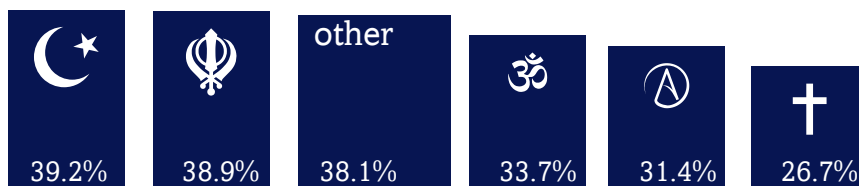
To detect the extent of discrimination faced by minorities, in 2004 BBC Radio 5 Live experimented with applications to potential employers of individuals of ethnic background and white Britons. Almost a quarter of the applications by 'white' applicants received interview offers but only 9% of ethnic applicants received the same response.

Muslims are paid 13-21% less than their White Christian counterparts of equal qualification[43]

Part of the challenge to Muslims looking for employment is institutional. The National Equalities Panel reported that 'The White population gets the best returns in terms of wages for a given level of qualifications – all minority ethnic groups suffer some form of 'penalty'...Muslim ethnic groups [in particular] suffer the largest 'ethnic penalty'.[44] Even when highly qualified, it is evident that Muslims are consistently paid less after controlling for qualifications'.[45]

References

1. Knott, K., Poole, E and T Taira. AHRC/ESRC project, 'Media portrayals of religion and the secular sacred: A longitudinal study of British newspaper and television representations and their reception'. Presentation delivered in London, 27 June 2011.

2. An inquiry into the culture, practices and ethics of the press: report [Leveson] Volume 2, para: 8.52, p. 673. London: The Stationery Office (2012).

3. Foreword in Peter Oborne and James Jones, *Muslims Under Siege Alienating Vulnerable Communities*. Democratic Audit, Human Rights Centre, University of Essex in association with Channel 4 Dispatches (2008), 8.

4. Moore, K, Mason, P and J Lewis. *The Representation of British Muslims in the National Print News Media 2000-2008*. Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies (2008).

5. An inquiry into the culture, practices and ethics of the press: report [Leveson] Volume 2, para: 8.51, p. 673. London: The Stationery Office (2012).

6. *The Gallup Coexist Index 2009: A Global Study of Interfaith Relations*. Gallup, Inc. (2009), 20.

7. Moore, K, Mason, P and J Lewis. *The Representation of British Muslims in the National Print News Media 2000-2008*. Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies (2008).

8. Baker, P. 'All That Dark Material: a corpus-based analysis of Muslim women in the British press.' Presentation for ESRC, 2011.

9. Baker, P. 'All That Dark Material: a corpus-based analysis of Muslim women in the British press.' Presentation for ESRC, 2011. McEnery, T and Baker, P. 'Islam in the British Nationals, 1998-2009'. Presentation delivered at ENGAGE Exhibition Launch in Parliament, November 2012.

10. See Shaheen, J. *Reel bad Arabs: How Hollywood vilifies a people*. Olive Branch Press (2009) and Morey, P and Yaqin, A. *Framing Muslims: Stereotyping and Representation after 9/11*. Harvard University Press (2011).

11. *TE-SAT 2012: EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report*. Europol (2012).

13. Morey, P and Yaqin, A. *Framing Muslims: Stereotyping and Representation after 9/11*. Harvard University Press (2011).

13. McEnery, T and Baker, P. 'Islam in the British Nationals, 1998-2009'. Presentation delivered at ENGAGE Exhibition Launch in Parliament, November 2012.

14. Morey, P and Yaqin, A. *Framing Muslims: Stereotyping and Representation after 9/11*. Harvard University Press (2011).

15. Goodwin, M and Evans, J. *From Voting to Violence? Far right extremism in Britain*. Hope not Hate (2012), 19

16. *ibid.*, 26

17. *The Gallup Coexist Index 2009: A Global Study of Interfaith Relations*. Gallup, Inc. (2009), 39.

18. Lancashire Ramadan donations total £7m, Lancashire Telegraph, 14 August 2014

19. 'Muslim Charities Forum members expect to raise £50m during Ramadan', Civil Society Media, 10 July 2014.

20. Muslims 'are Britain's top charity givers', The Times, 20 July 2013

21. Baker et al (2013) Discourse Analysis and Media Attitudes, the Representation of Islam in the British Press. (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge)

22. Baker et al (2013) Discourse Analysis and Media Attitudes, the Representation of Islam in the British Press. (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge)

23. S. Jivraj. 'Who Feels British?', Dynamics of Diversity: Evidence from the 2011 Census. ESRC Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity, (University of Manchester, 2013)

24. The Leveson Inquiry: The Report into the Culture, Practices and Ethics of the Press, Volume 2, Chapter 6, Paragraphs 8.45 and 8.51. pps 671 and 672.

25. Kumar, D. *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire*. Chicago: Haymarket Books (2012).

26. *Democracy, Freedom, Culture and Identity: British National Party General Elections Manifesto 2010*. British National Party (2010), 5.

27. *Most Muslims Want Democracy, Personal Freedoms, and Islam in Political Life*. Global Attitudes Project. Pew Research Center (2012).

28. *The Gallup Coexist Index 2009: A Global Study of Interfaith Relations*. Gallup, Inc. (2009), 23.

29. *ibid.*, 23

30. *Democracy, Freedom, Culture and Identity: British National Party General Elections Manifesto 2010*. British National Party (2010), 32.

31. *The Gallup Coexist Index 2009: A Global Study of Interfaith Relations*. Gallup, Inc. (2009), 23.

32. *ibid.*, 23.

33. Shaheen, J. *Reel bad Arabs: How Hollywood vilifies a people*. Olive Branch Press (2009) and Morey, P and Yaqin, A. *Framing Muslims: Stereotyping and Representation after 9/11*. Harvard University Press (2011).

34. Greater London Authority. *Spotlight on Asian Business: their contribution to London*. London: Greater London Authority (2007). Estimated by comparing ethnic ownership in Chart 4, page 14 with the religious composition of ethnic groups in the 2001 Census.

35. *ibid.*, 4.

36. IFF Research. *BIS Small Business Survey 2010 Minority Ethnic Group (MEG) led businesses boost*. Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) (2011), 15

37. Regeneris Consulting Ltd. *EBMAN Legacy Report*. Ethnic Minority Business Advocacy Network (2010), 3-4.

38. *Valuing family, valuing work: British Muslim women and the labour market*. London Development Agency (2008), 4.

39. Rees, P et al. 'Ethnic Population projections for the UK, 2001-2051'. *Journal of Population Resarch* (2012), 29: 74.

40. *Valuing family, valuing work: British Muslim women and the labour market*. London Development Agency (2008), 4.

41. Li, Y, Devine, F, and A Heath. *Equality group inequalities in education, emloyment and earnings*. Equalities and Human Rights Commission (2008).

42. *ibid.*, 92.

43. *An anatomy of economic inequality in the UK*. Report by National Equalities Panel, Government Equalities Office (2010), 18.

44. *ibid.*, 234.

45. Li, Y, Devine, F, and A Heath. *Equality group inequalities in education, emloyment and earnings*. Equalities and Human Rights Commission (2008), 92.

About MEND

MEND is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to challenging Islamophobia in the UK and improving British Muslim participation in media and politics.

Since our formation, we have been active in documenting anti-Muslim hate crime, analysing and challenging misrepresentations of Islam and Muslims in the British media, running grass-roots voter registration drives and election awareness campaigns for local, regional, national and supranational elections, as well as contributing to policy consultations on a wide range of policy issues affecting British Muslim communities.

The media plays a central role in framing the perception non-Muslims have of Islam and Muslims. The media also plays an instrumental role in reflecting the diversity of people and viewpoints in British society. At MEND, we take great interest in media plurality and in the media's portrayal of Islam and Muslims particularly.

We believe that irresponsible and inflammatory reporting can have a huge impact on social attitudes towards Muslims, feeding ignorance, hostility and prejudice. We have therefore, campaigned hard alongside other advocacy groups for better print media regulation and industry standards.

MEND was one of very few Muslim organisations that submitted written evidence to the Leveson Inquiry on the Culture, Practice and Ethics of the Press. We were the only Muslim organisation invited by Lord Justice Leveson to present oral evidence recounting our experiences on challenging anti-Muslim prejudice in the British media.

In our written submission and in oral evidence, we stressed the need for a more robust press regulatory system and a tougher industry Standards Code. One that, for example, permits 'third party' complaints. We further argued for improvements such as expediting complaints, a power to impose financial penalties on newspapers and compensation to victims of media stories that breach the Standards Code.

In his report concluding the Inquiry into the Culture, Practice and Ethics of the Press, Sir Brian Leveson recommended the introduction of a 'third party' complaints clause and the introduction of a power to enable the press regulatory body 'to intervene in cases of allegedly discriminatory reporting, and in so doing reflect the spirit of equalities legislation'.

It is our belief that democracy is strengthened by a better regulated media, well-informed civil society and a politically engaged population, especially among minority communities which have hitherto shown lower rates of voting and political participation.

MEND has pioneered a series of workshops on political literacy and media awareness for the grass-roots British Muslim community in order to enhance British Muslim engagement in media and politics. The workshops consist of basic and advanced information on all aspects of the parliamentary system and the political process and on the workings of the media industry.

Through these skills training workshops, we aim to strengthen active citizen participation in challenging inaccuracy, distortion and discrimination in media portrayals of Islam and Muslims and enhance Muslim participation in politics.

To find out more about our work - visit our website: www.mend.org.uk.

If you would like to support our aims, please complete the standing order form overleaf and return it to:

MEND
St Brides Chambers,
8 Salisbury Court,
London EC4Y 8AA

For regular updates - find us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter.

/mendcommunity

Muslim Engagement & Development

mend

Standing Order Form

MEND is a not for profit company that is wholly independently financed. We rely on the generous contributions of those who support our aims and objectives to carry out our important work.

All contributions received will go towards our work on tackling Islamophobia, empowering British Muslims and supporting their efforts to engage more effectively with media, politics and civil society. We welcome all donations, large or small, so please fill in your details below and assist us in our work by pledging a monthly standing order.

Standing Order Form

Name (Dr/Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms) _____

Address _____

Postcode _____   Email: _____   Mobile: _____

Standing Order Mandate

Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS and black ink.

Standing Orders will only be paid if there are sufficient funds available in the account

> MANDATORY FIELDS ARE MARKED WITH A * THESE FIELDS MUST BE COMPLETED IN ORDER FOR THE STANDING ORDER TO BE PROCESSED

*Sort Code:

*Account Number:

*Account Name:

*Branch Name:

*Bank Name:

*Branch Address:

Beneficiary Details:

Bank: NATWEST
Sort Code: 01-30-99
Account Number: MENDUK
Beneficiary Name: 70137943

Amount:

*Please tick the relevant box:

£5	£10	£20	£30	£50	£100	other:
✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕

Authorisation:

Please debit my account accordingly every month until further notice
I confirm the above details are correct. I confirm that the standing order detailed above can be set up on this account.

_____
*Customer Signature

_____
*Date

Please send all completed applications to: St Brides Chambers, 8 Salisbury Court, London EC4Y 8AA | 020 7871 8430 | www.mend.org.uk

29

Cut along dotted line

Islamophobia Exhibition

Free Hire

Do you want to help people understand the impact of Islamophobia on British Muslims?

Hire our Islamophobia Exhibition 'free of charge' for display in mosques, community centres, public libraries etc.

For more information, and free copies of the guide to accompany the exhibition please contact us via email info@mend.org.uk or call us on 020 7871 8430

East London Mosque Photo by 'Diamond Geezer' (flickr user, 2008).

A publication brought to you by

mend