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Policy Pledges  
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# MAKE ISLAMOPHOBIA HISTORY

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## Introducing Muslim Engagement and Development (MEND)

Muslim Engagement and Development (MEND) is a community-funded organisation that seeks to encourage political, civic, and social engagement within British Muslim communities through empowering British Muslims to effectively interact with political and media institutions.

Our approach to achieving this involves a combination of community engagement (through education, community events, local campaigns to encourage voting etc.) and advocacy work (involving victim support, submissions to parliamentary inquiries, media analysis, election resources, briefings etc.).

## The Islamophobia Response Unit (IRU)

The Islamophobia Response Unit (IRU) was founded by MEND in response to rising anti-Muslim attacks across Europe and a growing tide of anti-Muslim sentiment. The IRU is a platform for victims of Islamophobic hate crime and discrimination to report and share their experiences and serves as a source of free advice, support, and referral services.

The IRU serves three main functions:

- Data collection and monitoring,
- The provision of free legal advice and police liaison, Provision of basic emotional support,





and signposting to further professional sources of emotional support if required.

## **How MEND Assists Parliamentarians and Policymakers:**

- Providing briefings, information, analysis, and expertise on the issues facing British Muslim communities.
- Arranging opportunities for MPs to engage with their local Muslim communities.
- Conducting research within Muslim communities.
- Connecting MPs to local stakeholders.

## **MEND's Policy Pledges**

MEND's policy pledges are developed and ratified by our National Council. This council consists of the MEND Core Network (MCN) of volunteers and staff. As such, and in accordance with the principles of a representative democracy, our pledges are designed to truly reflect the diversity and interests of our 700 volunteers across the country and the vast number of Muslim communities that they represent. MEND's policy pledges serve as the key basis on which we engage with political parties, parliamentarians, councillors and policy makers. In essence they summarise the key principles, values, and beliefs on which is MEND is founded.

A photograph of a diverse group of people standing in a queue. In the foreground, a man with dark hair and a beard is seen from the back, wearing a grey t-shirt and blue jeans. Behind him, several other people are visible, including a woman wearing a purple hijab and a red bag. A white sign with the text 'NEXT PLEASE' is visible in the background. The image has a semi-transparent dark overlay with a grid of white dots.

*“A healthy democracy  
require agreement.  
Rather, we contr  
social change thro  
issues of mutual  
critical discou  
in which v*

*- Isobel Ingham-Barrow*



Democracy does not  
rest on every issue.  
It contributes to positive  
enough solidarity in  
disagreement and  
dispute on issues  
where we differ.”

Executive Head of Policy, MEND







# Racial and Religious Equality

1. Commit to adopting the definition of Islamophobia produced by the APPG for British Muslims: “Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness”, and apply this definition in conjunction with the guidelines that MEND has produced.”
2. Commit to a review of the 2006 Racial and Religious Hatred Act with a view to strengthening legal protection afforded to religious communities.
3. Implement primary legislation to deal with social media offences and hate speech online and commit to working with social media companies to protect free speech while developing an efficient strategy to tackle hate speech online in consultation with Muslim grassroots organisations.
4. Commit to financing mosque security in a manner that is proportional to risk, in line with what is already correctly provided to Jewish religious institutions.

In March 2019, the world witnessed devastating far-right terror attacks on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, there are few reminders of the danger of Islamophobia internationally that are more poignant. In the UK, the threat of racially and religiously motivated violence is a constant presence in the daily lives of our Muslim communities and urgent action is required to combat all forms of hatred which leave innocent individuals vulnerable to marginalisation, discrimination, and even attack.

Home Office data shows that nearly half of religiously aggravated hate crimes are directed at Muslims.<sup>1</sup> However, the Racial and Religious Hate Crime Act, 2006, contains a disparity between the protections afforded on grounds of race versus the protections afforded to religious groups. The protections afforded on the basis of religion only extend to threatening words or behaviour. This specifically excludes the protection from abusive or insulting words or behaviour that is included under racial hatred. Moreover, there is an added condition that intent must be proven. This makes the burden of proof almost unachievably heavy. The consequence is that only a very small number of successful prosecutions have occurred under incitement to religious hatred legislation.

Furthermore, while the Government commendably provides funds of £14 million per year for synagogues and Jewish schools, the last 'Places of Worship Security Fund' launched in 2016 provided only £2.4 million to be distributed across mosques, churches, temples, gurdwaras, and other institutions. While the Government has recently announced plans to increase the funding available to mosques for security, this must be accompanied by a comprehensive risk analysis in order to develop effective strategies and devise funding plans that are sufficient to address the threats that mosques face.

Meanwhile, Islamophobia on social media remains a consistent challenge, with perpetrators finding comfort

<sup>1</sup> Hate crime, England and Wales, 2018/19', Home Office, October 2019. Accessed: 8th November 2019. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2018-to-2019>

in the anonymity of online platforms. Demos have noted that, between March 2016-March 2017, 143,920 Tweets were sent from the UK that were considered to be derogatory and anti-Islamic – this amounts to almost 400 per day.<sup>2</sup> It is essential that policymakers implement primary legislation to deal with social media offences and hate speech online and commit to working with social media companies to protect free speech while developing an efficient strategy to tackle hate speech online in consultation with Muslim grassroots organisations.

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<sup>2</sup> Carl Miller and Josh Smith, “Anti-Islamic content on Twitter”, Demos, April 2017. Accessed: 29<sup>th</sup> May 2018. <https://demos.co.uk/project/anti-islamic-content-on-twitter/>.





# Youth and Education

5. Commit to prioritising \*PSRE and PSHE within the national curriculum and ensure grassroots Muslim organisations are enlisted to assist in developing teaching materials to educate young people on the dangers of Islamophobia.
6. Commit to supporting academic freedoms and initiatives to decolonise education, whilst giving greater emphasis within the national curriculum to shared histories and the contributions of minority communities in building our society.
7. Commit to developing training programmes for teachers focussed on tackling and addressing bullying based on race, religion, disability, or sexuality.
8. Commit to supporting faith school provisions in the state sector for Muslim pupils and parents.
9. Commit to implementing Shariah compliant student loans to encourage more British Muslim students to attend university.

\*PSRE and PSHE refer to “Personal, Social, and Religious Education” and “Personal, Social, Health, and Economic Education”, respectively.

Islamophobia in the education system impacts Muslim children and their development in a wide variety of ways. From being bullied explicitly in reference to their faith, to being stigmatised and reported to the PREVENT strategy for views they may hold, and to being interminably questioned on their apparent divergence from (thus far ill-defined) “British Values”, Muslim children are struggling to navigate this complex maze. Meanwhile, controversies such as the apparent “Trojan Horse” affair and Amanda Spielman’s recent proposals to question schoolgirls who wear the hijab highlight the obsessive scrutiny and problematisation of Muslims within the sphere of education.

Show Racism the Red Card reports that 83% of teachers surveyed have witnessed racist attitudes or behaviour amongst students, including name calling and stereotyping, and 31% admitted to witnessing racist attitudes or behaviour amongst teachers.<sup>3</sup> The capacity of teachers to deal with bullying incidents is of vital importance. Thus, the Government must dedicate resources in building the capacity of teachers to tackle such issues, including through developing teaching materials to educate young people on the dangers of Islamophobia and other forms of hatred.

Schools are important environments for nurturing and encouraging students’ healthy sense of self, and supporting cultural and religious expression plays an important role in encouraging students to develop a secure sense of religio-cultural identity. As such, simple accommodations for religious practice, such as religious dress and prayer, are highly constructive in supporting student development.

Furthermore, it is important that school curriculums reflect the diversity and shared history of British society. It is only through the decolonisation of education that a truly shared history can be developed and children can be prepared for life in a pluralistic society with a rich culture of dynamic perspectives, interests, and experiences. In creating this appreciation for a shared heritage, minorities cease to be the ‘other’ and, instead, are simply part of the ‘us’.

<sup>3</sup> The Barriers to Challenging Racism and Promoting Race Equality in England’s Schools, report, Show Racism the Red Card, June 21, 2011, <https://www.teachers.org.uk/files/sstrc-barriers-final.PDF>.







# The Labour Market

- 10.** Commit to tackling religious, racial and gendered discrimination in the workplace through targeted interventions at all stages of recruitment, retention and promotion.
- 11.** Commit to the use of name-blind applications and targeted interventions within employment aimed at tackling the 'triple penalty' and improving access to employment for British Muslim women specifically.
- 12.** Commit to supporting employers to recognise and accommodate religious festivals and religious observance within the workplace, including the provision of halal meat, prayer rooms, and flexible work hours during Ramadan.



Studies have shown that Muslims face discrimination at all levels of recruitment, retainment and progression; face high levels of unemployment; and are disproportionately confined to unskilled professions or jobs with limited opportunities for progression.<sup>4</sup>

The Government's Social Mobility Commission cited a number of barriers to success for Muslims in the employment sphere, including ethnic minority sounding names being less likely to be offered interviews and Muslims feeling forced to work "10 times as hard" as their white counterparts in order to achieve equivalent levels of success.<sup>5</sup> Employer attitudes have also been given as a reason for failure to progress in the workplace in research by BBC "Inside Out", which found that CVs submitted under a non-Muslim name were three times more likely to be offered an interview than those with a Muslim name.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, the National Equality Panel previously found that Muslims receive, on average, 13-21% less pay than their White Christian counterparts with equivalent qualifications.<sup>7</sup>

In 2016, the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee stated that Muslim women face a '*triple penalty*' in the employment sphere due to being women, being from an ethnic minority background, and for being Muslim. Employer perceptions of Muslim women have also been revealed in another study, which found that 1 in 4 employers admit to being reluctant to hire Muslim women, due to concerns they would prioritise their family commitments above professional duties.<sup>8</sup>

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4 Roger Dobson, British Muslims face worst job discrimination of any minority group, according to research", Independent, November 30, 2014, accessed June 12, 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/british-muslims-face-worst-job-discrimination-of-any-minority-group-9893211.html>.

5 Anushka Asthana, "Islamophobia Holding Back UK Muslims in Workplace, Study Finds," The Guardian, September 07, 2017, accessed May 10, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/sep/07/islamophobia-holding-back-uk-muslims-in-workplace-study-finds>.

6 Zack Adesina and Oana Marocico, "Is It Easier to Get a Job If You're Adam or Mohamed?" BBC News, February 06, 2017, accessed May 10, 2018, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-38751307>.

7 John Hills et al, *An Anatomy of Economic Inequality in the UK*, report, National Equality Panel, January 2010, accessed May 10, 2018, <https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/28344/1/CASEReport60.pdf>.

8 Siobhan Fenton, "6 Charts Which Show the Employment Barriers Faced by British Muslims," The Independent, August 11, 2016, accessed May 10, 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/muslims-more-likely-to-be-unemployed-than-any-other-social-group-in-the-uk-mps-warn-a7185451.html>.

Furthermore, studies have shown that 1 in 8 Pakistani women have been illegally asked about marriage and family aspirations in job interviews, compared to 1 in 30 White women, demonstrating the levels of preconceived bias and racially and religiously shaped assumptions that Muslim women face.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.





# Media and Broadcasting

**13.** Commit to the full implementation of the Royal Charter on press regulation.

**14.** Commit to the commencement of the second part of the Leveson Inquiry, including an investigation into the prevalence of Islamophobia within the media.

**15.** Support initiatives by the broadcasting industry to promote positive portrayals of Muslims in the media.



The Chair of the Ethics Council at the National Union of Journalists, Professor Chris Frost, highlighted to the Home Affairs Select Committee during an evidence session in 2018 that “one of the best ways to sell newspapers...is to raise issues of fear...pick a group which an ‘other’ group...at the moment a good one is Muslims”.<sup>10</sup>

Studies have also shown that, with 21 negative references to Muslims within the British press for every single neutral or positive reference,<sup>11</sup> the media plays an integral role in spreading prejudice, stereotypes, and xenophobic views of British Muslims. This, in turn, directly contributes to hate crime, discrimination, and marginalisation of Muslim communities.

Meanwhile, the failures of the current press regulator, IPSO, and the Government’s continued failure to fully implement the Royal Charter on Press Regulation leaves little recourse for tackling Islamophobia in the mainstream press. Indeed, IPSO fails to be Leveson-compliant and routinely fails to investigate breaches, fails to demonstrate adequate professionalism in dealing with complaints, and fails to impose punitive damages or order prominent apologies and corrections commensurate with the significance of the story contested.

Moreover, in 2018 the Government announced that it would be scrapping the second part of the Leveson inquiry into the relationship between journalists and the police. The Royal Charter was signed in a cross-party agreement and, therefore, the Government should not unilaterally change a policy that was the product of cross-party and cross-house agreement involving compromises from their opponents. Furthermore, the provisions underpinning the Charter in the Crime and Courts Act 2013 (some of which – including Section 40 - have not been triggered) were passed overwhelmingly by a vote in the Commons<sup>12</sup> and approved in the House of Lords without division.

<sup>10</sup> “Oral Evidence: Hate crime and its violent consequences”, *Home Affairs Select Committee*, February 2018. Accessed on: 19/07/2019. <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/home-affairs-committee/hate-crime-and-its-violent-consequences/oral/78630.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> See Baker, Paul, Costas Gabrielatos, and Tony McEnery. *Discourse analysis and media attitudes: the representation of Islam in the British Press*. Cambridge: University Press, 2013.

<sup>12</sup> “Daily Hansard - Debate”, *Commons Debate, Parliament Publications and Debates*, accessed 10.01.2018, <http://www.publications>.

As such, it is an abuse of Parliament to change policy through non-commencement of legislation, rather than by seeking its repeal.

MEND, therefore, calls upon political parties to commit to the full implementation of the Royal Charter on press regulation and to the commencement of the second part of the Leveson Inquiry, including an investigation into the prevalence of Islamophobia within the media.

At the same time, the lack of diversity within broadcasting and the continued confinement of Muslim actors and characters to stereotypical roles and representations is an issue in need of redress. The lack of inclusive images because of a lack of minority representation within broadcasting results in a vision which neglects segments of society and thus alienates and marginalises minority communities. Therefore, the broadcasting industry needs to be supported in devising initiatives to promote positive and normalised portrayals of Muslims.



# Crime, Policing, and the Criminal Justice System

**16.** Commit to investigating structural Islamophobia within the Criminal Justice System.





As the EHRC noted in a report in 2011, “For many young Muslim men on the streets, stop and search under Section 44 of the Terrorism Act (s44) has become their most frequent and regular contact with the police... Such measures were seen to add to perceptions of racial and religious profiling and discrimination.”<sup>13</sup>

Since 2001, political discourse has led to a climate wherein Muslim identities have become increasingly securitised and viewed through the lens of counter-terror, violence, and threat. This has led to the public perception of a community ‘at risk’. However, in reality, there are a number of structural issues that contribute towards creating the conditions for Muslims, and the BAME population more generally, to suffer from disproportionate representation in the Criminal Justice System. Over the past decade, the number of Muslims in prison increased by over 48%, from 8,900 to 13,200. As such, Muslims make up 15% of the total prison population, while amounting to less than 5% of the general population.<sup>14</sup>

Any examination of the overrepresentation of Muslims within the criminal justice system must take into account cultural stereotypes, socio-economic challenges, and a lack of diversity within the criminal justice system itself.

The “Police Diversity” report prepared by the House of Commons found that there has been a steady increase in the overall proportion of officers and staff who are of a BAME background, particularly since this issue was brought to the attention of the Government in 2013. However, progress remains somewhat slow and there is wide variation between forces and increased numbers of BAME police officers remain overwhelmingly in the most junior rank. The issue of BAME representation at senior levels is particularly problematic. Indeed, the lack of senior BAME representation in the police service affects its leadership, culture, and understanding

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13 Tufyal Choudhury and Helen Fenwick, The impact of counter-terrorism measures on Muslim communities, report, Equality and Human Rights Commission, May 12, 2011, <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/research-report-72-the-impact-of-counter-terrorism-measures-on-muslim-communities.pdf>.

14 “The Lammy Review: final report”, Gov.uk, September 8, 2017, p. 3, accessed 23.10.2017 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lammy-review-final-report>

of the community it serves. Meanwhile, people of a BAME background wishing to develop their careers within the police service often lack role models, encounter barriers when trying to access necessary training and face selection panels which are almost always lacking in diversity.<sup>15</sup>

However, the responsibility for greater representation within police forces lies not only with the police service, but also with communities themselves. Perhaps due to a long history of negative interactions between the police and BAME communities, there is a notorious lack of trust which creates barriers for communities to meaningfully engage with their local police. This is a relationship that requires considerable effort from both sides if it is to be rectified.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

# UK Border



## Passports

Remove your passport from  
wallet or holder. This will help speed  
examination of your documents

# Security and Counter-Terror

**17.** Commit to independently reviewing all counter-terrorism legislation enacted since 2000 with a view to curbing the encroachment of counter-terrorism policies on civil liberties.

**18.** Commit to recognising the role of UK foreign policy in individuals being drawn to political violence.



MEND is of the firm belief that the PREVENT duty should be repealed and welcomes the independent review of PREVENT as an important first step in tackling the detrimental impact of ill-conceived counter-terror strategies that hinder Muslims' abilities to fully enjoy their social, civic, religious, political, and economic rights. However, there are signs that this review may not be truly independent nor wide enough in its scope to examine all of the factors that may lead someone to be drawn into acts of politically motivated violence, including the role of foreign policy in such a trajectory. It is interesting to note that, with the announcement of Lord Carlile as the Independent Reviewer, questions have already been raised about his own independence, given his previous support for PREVENT.<sup>16</sup>

However, PREVENT is not the only area of the counter-terror strategy in need of review. Current counter-terror legislation is centred upon the idea that, because the magnitude of the terrorist threat is too great to rely on traditional post-crime jurisprudence, measures and policies need to exist that pre-empt violent acts of terror. However, due to the inherent difficulty in pre-empting crime, the application of pre-criminal legislation results in an often arbitrary and over-conjectural application of the law, whereby individuals perceived to belong to a community at risk are increasingly problematised and even criminalised on the basis of acts that would not be considered criminal in different circumstances.

As but one example, Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act and the powers to stop and search at ports and airports without "reasonable suspicion" have been a major source of antagonism in minority communities, with the issues of racial profiling and disproportionality resurfacing in studies assessing the impact of the powers on Muslims. The former Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, David Anderson QC previously said that the use of Schedule 7 powers has "given rise to resentment among

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<sup>16</sup> Lizzie Dearden, "Home Office faces legal challenge over appointment of 'biased' reviewer of Prevent counter-extremism programme", *The Independent*, August 2019. Accessed: 13<sup>th</sup> September 2019. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/home-office-legal-challenge-prevent-counter-extremism-lord-carlile-a9083486.html>

some Muslim groups who feel they are being singled out” by authorities.<sup>17</sup> While stopping short of labelling it as discriminatory, he further noted that Schedule 7 detentions and examinations were imposed upon members of ethnic minority groups to a greater extent than “their presence in the travelling population would seem to warrant”,<sup>18</sup> suggesting evidence of disproportionate use.

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<sup>17</sup> Rowena Mason, ‘UK terror law watchdog calls for end to detention at borders without suspicion,’ The Guardian, December 01, 2013, accessed 29.05.2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/law/2013/dec/01/uk-terror-law-watchdog-detention-borders-schedule-7>

<sup>18</sup> David Anderson, QC, The Terrorism Acts in 2011, June 27, 2012, <https://terrorismlegislationreviewer.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/report-terrorism-acts-2011.pdf> accessed 17.06.2019



# Political Engagement

**19.** Commit to proactively engaging and consulting with representative and grassroots organisations within British Muslim communities, including but not limited to Muslim Engagement and Development.

**20.** Commit to recognising that Palestinian activism is a legitimate form of political dialogue and commit to protecting the rights of British Muslims to advocate and support Palestinians' right to self-determination.





While data shows a growing trend of Muslim engagement in the field of politics, there remain significant challenges Muslims face when operating within the political sphere. Ultimately, our political institutions need to reflect the communities they serve and encourage Muslim representation within Parliament. In these efforts, political parties must address structural barriers that exclude Muslims and other minority groups.

Baroness Warsi has remarked that “being a Muslim in public life has been brutal”, adding that “Muslims who engage with politics or any other institutions are to be viewed as suspicious and Muslims who don’t engage are to be treated as suspicious for being separatist”.<sup>19</sup> Adding to this notion of suspicion, Muslim MPs, Rupa Huq and Tulip Siddiq, recently spoke out about being disproportionately stopped by security staff within Parliament and having their credentials questioned, with Huq stating that “Because of our pigmentation we are treated differently”.<sup>20</sup> Seeing high-profile Muslim politicians, including Naz Shah and Sadiq Khan, being subjected to Islamophobic abuse often reaffirms a feeling of disillusionment with the political process, and negatively impacts the aspirations of young Muslims in pursuing public office.

Meanwhile, studies have identified PREVENT as contributing towards a deficit in civic engagement amongst Muslim students; impacting their ability to engage in certain discussions and deterring them from running for elected positions.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, it appears that there are frequently targeted efforts by neo-conservative organisations, such as Student Rights (a project of the Henry Jackson Society), to stifle political engagement of Muslim students by using the language of counter-extremism to demonise Muslim students and societies. As an example, Student Rights frequently directs concert-

19 Homa Khaleeli, “Sayeeda Warsi: ‘Where Are My Grandkids Going to Call Home? What World Will They Grow up In?’” The Guardian, March 25, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/mar/25/sayeeda-warsi-where-are-my-grandkids-going-to-call-home-what-world-will-they-grow-up-in>.

20 “The Londoner: Rupa and Tulip in Racist Security Row,” Evening Standard, May 24, 2018, <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/londoners-diary/the-londoner-rupa-and-tulip-in-racist-security-row-a3847451.html>.

21 “Our Research into the Experiences of #MuslimsInEducation” NUS Connect, March 18, 2018, <https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/articles/our-research-into-the-experiences-of-muslimsineducation>.

ed efforts to demonise Muslim students and Islamic Societies who do not support their neo-conservative world-view and particularly those who are vocal about their support for the Palestinian cause and those critical of counter-terror strategies.

Furthermore, rather than engaging with a broad spectrum of Muslim organisations and voices, the Government has traditionally insisted in dealing with a handpicked minority who already support their policy positions, particularly on issues such as counter-terror, media regulation and Palestine. Consequently, think-tanks and NGOs which do not possess the confidence of British Muslims have exercised considerable influence in shaping public policies, thus resulting in widespread feelings of alienation and frustration amongst Muslim communities. As recommended by the 2017 Citizens UK report, *Missing Muslims*, it is of pressing urgency that the Government reassesses its engagement with Muslim communities and seeks to mend the “broken relationship”<sup>22</sup> by reconsidering its policy of disengagement with credible mainstream Muslim organisations that have the trust and support of British Muslim communities.

Furthermore, pro-Palestinian activists across the UK have often been the target of silencing tactics deployed solely to close down opposing debate and exclude voices which may disrupt neo-conservative narratives in particular. A common phenomenon is for activists to be labelled either as ‘extremist’ or anti-Semitic in their opposition to the human rights abuses of the Israeli Government. While anti-Semitism must never be tolerated and should be challenged wherever it is found, the use of the term as a political tool for shutting down criticism of the Israeli Government devalues the experiences of those who face anti-Semitic abuse on a daily basis. The Palestinian cause is an issue that is of great importance to large swathes of British communities, and there must be a recognition that Palestinian activism is a legitimate and necessary form of political dialogue.

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<sup>22</sup> Citizens UK, *The Missing Muslims: Unlocking British Muslim Potential For The Benefit Of All*, 2017, accessed 05.09.2019, [https://www.barrowcadbury.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Missing\\_Muslims\\_Report\\_full-report.pdf](https://www.barrowcadbury.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Missing_Muslims_Report_full-report.pdf)



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# Minority Rights and Integration

21. Commit to preserving human rights and the protection of minority rights, including, but not limited to, the rights to religious slaughter, male circumcision and the wearing of religious dress or symbols as currently enshrined within UK legislation.

22. Commit to supporting the protections afforded by the EU Equal Treatment Directive to advance protection against discrimination on the grounds of religion to education, healthcare, housing, access to goods and services and social protection, within UK law post-Brexit.



Britain has always claimed to embody a proud history of supporting multiculturalist principles advocating respect and celebration of the multitude of diverse ethnic and religious identities that have lent themselves to a British identity built upon pluralism and collaboration. However, recent years have seen simmering resentments and debates surrounding national identity, security concerns, immigration, and a perceived “ghettoisation” of minorities. These fears have culminated in calls for the UK to reassess its policies towards multiculturalist principles. The result is an increasingly restrictive integration strategy, within which examples of Islamophobic assumptions and institutional racism can be readily witnessed regarding the treatment of Muslim communities.

Consequently, despite the protections afforded by the ICCPR (the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights), the ECHR (the European Convention on Human Rights), and the Human Rights Act,” recent years have witnessed intense public debates that have challenged Muslim religious practice and observance in the UK. Particular public controversy has surrounded the right to halal meat, the building of mosques, the right to access Shariah councils, and the right to religious dress. Such debates also demonstrate how discourse around issues of religious rights can be used as a proxy argument to marginalise minority communities and Muslims specifically. With continued Brexit uncertainty, it is essential that Human Rights are protected as they are currently enshrined within UK legislation.





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