

Manifesto Against Hate 2024



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Why Tackling Anti-Muslim Hate Should Matter to us All?

Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks) remains dedicated to supporting those who face anti-Muslim prejudice, discrimination, racism and Islamophobia. For over a decade, we have documented rises in cases of abuse and violence, documenting the gendered nature of the targeting of Muslim women, how discrimination impacts Muslims in the workplace or education – through to engaging with police forces nationwide on behalf of those individuals who need support because of their targeting. Our research has also helped shape public debates and inform policymakers on a local, regional and national basis.

Tell MAMA has assisted over 28,000 British Muslims on a direct basis.

This means that we have directly worked with over 28,000 British Muslims since 2011 by providing them with advice, support at courts, casework and counselling assistance and through ongoing engagement with public authorities on their behalf. This ‘wrap-around’ service has been in the words of one client,



“a place of calm and support, when I was going through the whirlwind of being targeted because of my Muslim identity. Tell MAMA gave me the chance to log details of my case, they supported me emotionally and they then ensured that I was informed and kept abreast of developments on my case. The Islamophobia (anti-Muslim hate) that I went through undermined my sense of self, but this was restored to some degree by staff at Tell MAMA”.





October the 7th 2023: An Earthquake That Has Shaken us All

Following the Hamas terror attacks on October the 7th and the war on Gaza, we saw record figures of anti-Muslim hate cases for four months, targeting Muslims when in their homes and when using public transport. These are just two examples and other cases involved the abuse of British Muslims at schools, universities and when simply walking down the street.

We also saw a rise in the fears and concerns around the careers of British Muslims who expressed a support for Palestinians or for a future Palestinian state. We need to acknowledge that fears of being 'cancelled' because of support for Palestinians or a Palestinian state were high and many expressed these concerns to us.

It is an undeniable fact that the October 7th attack on Israel and the subsequent war has led to a sharp rise in antisemitic incidents against Britain's Jewish communities. This is not only deeply worrying and sickening, **it also confirms to us that there should be no space for antisemitism or anti-Muslim hate to be present in such significant amounts in our country.** We believe that we must take responsibility for our joint safeties and whilst we all strive to live our lives free from fear and hatred, we strongly urge politicians to redouble their efforts to reduce sectarianism, division and most importantly, to stop trying to 'play off' communities against each other.

Challenges Facing Us

The challenges our society faces, the precariousness of living standards, and rising hate crimes compel us to call on those seeking to form a government to make strong commitments, both in the long and short term, to help bring change. We need strength of leadership at this time and a leadership that speaks up for all communities and one that values all citizens. Such political voices, (by speaking up for us all), truly enhance social cohesion in our country at a time when we have international forces seeking to foment divisions in our country and when we have communities vying against each other for resources.

We therefore live in precarious times. Now, more than ever, we must stand up for the values of pluralism, hard work and the rule of law and we must also collectively embrace a change in perspective. It is easy to talk about what our country should do for us as citizens, but we are all collectively duty bound to also embrace the fact that at this time, we must do all we can for our country's well-being. Our country needs us to act with fairness, impartiality and justice.



Our Pathway for Change – A Manifesto Against Hate

This manifesto is a document that we hope, most political candidates can sign up to. We hope that candidates can make their voices heard in supporting the details in this document, with a view to advocating for these policy proposals going forward.

As described, the last decade has seen significant increases in antisemitism and anti-Muslim hate. It has also seen rhetoric on our streets that has made Jews and Muslims feel as though their safety and security is at direct risk. We have also seen a sharp rise in terrorist attacks – particularly in 2017 – that had the double impact of shaking the social cohesion of our communities, whilst leading to a heightened number of anti-Muslim hate attacks against Muslim communities in cities such as London, Manchester and Birmingham. Muslim communities have, therefore, lived with the multi-variate stresses and pressures of being at risk from terrorist attacks as citizens, and then being targeted by members of the public as though they are somehow responsible for the actions of terrorists who purported to act in the name of Islam. This has then been followed up by caustic opinion pieces in newspapers that questioned the ‘loyalty’ of Muslims, suggested that they were somehow not ‘fully British’ by virtue of their values and linked them to their countries of origin, as though they once again, were to be denied the right to be feel and ‘be British’.

We hope that the proposals below will therefore form the basis for political consideration by candidates, elected politicians, policy makers and ministers in a future government.



SOCIAL COHESION

I. It is a fact that October 7th has fractured Muslim and Jewish relations.

The fractures are severe and deep and it is clear that regional and national interfaith work has fractured and broken down during the last 7 months. There is a real risk that the longer the war between Israel and Gaza continues, the greater the fractures and the deeper the sense of animosity between parts of these communities become. Whilst this animosity may not be publicly expressed, it is bubbling beneath the surface where trust and confidence between both communities is at an all-time low.

It is therefore essential that a future government take hold of this situation as a matter of urgency. This work will fall into the remit of DLUHC (the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) and the Home Office. It is essential that local, regional and a national set of boards be set up where leaders from Muslim and Jewish communities can start to come together and have resource support to plan joint activities which support joint cohesion.

We have to make clear that the Israel and Gaza war has also affected the perceptions of a generation of 14-18 year olds. It is essential that the next government try to address their concerns, listen to and where necessary, gently challenge views that add to division.

Why is this work relevant to hate crime work?

Social divisions between Muslim and Jewish communities have wider implications than impacts on social cohesion alone. There are impacts on extremism, the 'ripple effect' of a contagion effect where other communities start to be drawn into 'taking sides' and in further adding 'fuel to the fire'. There are also deep impacts on hate crime work where the divisions have clearly led to sharp rises in both antisemitism and anti-Muslim hate.

This proposal should therefore be central to the work of the next government.

II. Ministerial engagement with local communities must ramp up.

Ministers appointed to lead up government departments must ensure that they meet with and continue to be as open and engaging with communities as they can be. This helps to reduce the concerns of communities, acts as a direct source of tangible and credible information for ministers and reduces perceptions within parts of Muslim communities, that their voices are not heard.

There is a caveat that needs to be borne in mind. Muslim communities, like any community, have a range of voices and opinions. No singular voice speaks for all 3.8 million British Muslims and this includes at a political or community level. This also underscores why continuous engagement by ministers at grass roots levels is essential and such activities were part and parcel of the work plans of ministers between 2006-2009. Post 2010, we recognised and viewed a demonstrable change in community engagement work by ministers where direct engagement dropped off and this continued to right up to 2024.



III. Developing a Coherent Cohesion Strategy which includes work on tackling hate crimes is needed:

Social cohesion is increasingly at risk given global conflicts, the divisiveness of social media, the impacts of extremism and the polarisation of politics in our country today. A new government must ensure that one of the first pieces of work that needs to be undertaken is a comprehensive review of local threats, tensions and localised disturbances that have taken place in the last 5 years. This work must be led by DLUHC and include local authority leads and councillors, faith communities, civil society groups, academics and hate crime and extremism leads in city and county councils. No longer can social cohesion work be distanced from data around hate crime, and intelligence and information around extremism related activities in local areas.

This work is essential given that historical social cohesion work around developing a comprehensive social cohesion strategy has been disorganised, patchy and largely as a knee jerk reaction to national, (mainly extremism related) events that have happened in the last 14 years.

IV. A Strong Values Statement for the Nation:

Previous government guidance has suggested that British values include the following; *democracy, the rule of law, respect and tolerance and individual liberty*. We have welcomed attempts to provide a national framework by previous governments, of what these values are. They have also underpinned our work in Tell MAMA and how we engage with people, communities and places in our work.

However, in a complex, fast-moving and unstable world, British values need to stand for more than these simple yet important principles. If we are to overcome the community fragmentations that are felt in many parts of our country and which we pick up in our work in Tell MAMA, we need to have a greater range of flexible values that bind us together and which move beyond generic values and concepts. For example, 'fairness' is a value which many people overseas believe Britain and its population espouse. Yet, 'fairness' is rarely imagined and advocated for in the political public discourse today, even though it is something that many in our country would easily subscribe to and see as a unique quality of the British people.

We clearly see that in areas where there are few binding values between communities against that hate and intolerance spikes in response to major trigger events such as terrorism, or even the recent Brexit vote where Tell MAMA measured a significant rise in racism and anti-Muslim prejudice against Black Caribbean, Eastern European and Muslim communities.

¹ These figures reflect focus group work undertaken by Tell MAMA between 2019-2022, where 356 British Muslims who attended workshops and information sessions related to the project were asked whether they had suffered online anti-Muslim hatred and whether they had reported it into the police or Tell MAMA - or not to any agency.



HATE CRIME WORK

I. Social Media Companies Must Be Forced to Develop a Joint Fund for Civil Society Groups Tackling Hate:

We have repeatedly seen the deep social impacts that social media has caused in the U.K. Whilst social media is an essential part of modern life, the downsides of it have rarely been addressed by social media companies unless they have been held to account by politicians across all of the parties.

We know that social media has been a key driver in fomenting anti-Muslim hate and anti-Muslim tropes, (as well as other forms of hate). Far right groups and anti-Muslim activists have used social media platforms to malign Muslim communities, dehumanise them and to target individuals for online and real-world ‘mobbing’ type activities.

Disinformation, misinformation, and platform manipulation remain critical to addressing through educational means, including schemes to improve social media and digital literacy, as platforms prove more reactive in removing and flagging materials as inflammatory and misleading.

Approximately between 30-40% of cases received by Tell MAMA since 2011 have involved online hatred targeted towards Muslim communities nationally. We have assisted over 28,000 British Muslims since 2011 and this gives a sense of the number of people who have been affected by online anti-Muslim hate through social media. Yet, these are only those who have felt confident enough to report in and we believe that there could be a 1:4 – 1:6 ratio, between those who report in anti-Muslim hate and those who do not¹.

The facts are pretty clear. Social media companies continue to profit from advertising revenue and hugely inflated share flotation prices, yet successive governments since 2010 have actively failed to force social media companies into setting up a joint national fund to assist organisations carrying out hate crime work in the U.K. This position cannot carry on and must be addressed by the incoming government. We urge the next government to take tangible steps to address this shortcoming to ensure communities feel that such platforms are safe to use.

We believe that a 5 year fund that is guaranteed by social media companies such as Meta and X, for example, must be enforced through legislation. A failure to comply with this should warrant heavy fines on these companies.

As the Director of Tell MAMA, Iman Atta OBE recently said,

“Social media companies act pretty much with impunity. The impacts of their platforms on the victims of online hate crimes are so significant that we have had clients complaining that they have contemplated suicide, whilst at the same time, no doubt social media executives in California have continued to live in extraordinary wealth. They show us their ‘green values’ of cycling to work, and ‘having shared spaces for creativity’, whilst our clients languish in fear in their small rooms, fearing for their mental and physical safety. We need to seriously hold them to account”.



II. The Politicisation of Hate Crime Work Must Stop:

We are aware of recent cases such as that of Harry Miller (2020),² that have changed the way that hate crime work is recorded. Clearly, this means that there should be more of a focus on recording hate crimes versus hate incidents, and this issue will no doubt be discussed by the incoming government. We within Tell MAMA believe that there are a number of laws that make clear the distinction between ‘free speech’ and criminal behaviour and intent. Indeed, we have followed a common sense approach where possible in servicing the needs of clients whilst also understanding that speech may be offensive, yet not cross a criminal threshold.

Tell MAMA has held onto this fundamental principle of assisting victims of anti-Muslim hate within the laws of our country and with an eye on ensuring that we do not infringe on the rights of those who exercise their free speech.

With this in mind, we hope that the ‘culture’ and ‘woke’ wars and sentiments do not engulf future work around tackling hate crimes. **This work cannot and should not be maligned for the sake of political point scoring. It must stop and the rights of victims should be placed front and centre, rather than attempting to make cheap political capital out of the trauma of others.**

III. Community Administration in the ‘Places of Worship Fund’:

Tell MAMA has previously welcomed the ‘Protecting Places of Worship’ Security Fund³ that has historically been administered by the Home Office. Mosques, churches, gurdwaras and Hindu temples of worship have all had the opportunity to apply to this much needed fund to ensure that they have safety measures in place for their congregations and these places of worship.

Tell MAMA has also worked with numerous mosques across the United Kingdom so that they can get access to the Fund and the advice provided by Tell MAMA has also allowed for mosques to be aware of and be able to administrate applications to the Fund.

Tell MAMA is aware that many mosques have not applied to the Fund because it is administered by the Home Office. Whilst we can understand the decision of the Government to let Home Office officials administrate the Fund, it has nonetheless meant that some mosques have chosen not to access it, whether that be because of existing fears or because of how their congregations may view their actions. So, there has been an impact on the accessibility for some mosques.

We would urge the incoming Government to outsource the application process for access to security funding to a legal entity that is a consortium made up of hate crime reporting agencies working within Muslim communities, as well as organisational leads in companies who provide security infrastructure for public buildings. This community based endeavour would allow for greater access to security funding for mosques at a time when many mosques feel vulnerable to anti-Muslim hate incidents and with more and more prosecutions of anti-Muslim activists and extremists taking place in our courts.

² Harry Miller: Police probe into ‘transphobic’ tweets unlawful <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lincolnshire-51501202>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/places-of-worship-security-funding-scheme>



FAR RIGHT EXTREMISM & PLAYING ON DIVISIONS

I. Political Debates on Immigration/Conflation with Muslim Communities:

Tell MAMA is deeply concerned by political discourse which conflates the highly sensitive issue of immigration with anti-Muslim rhetoric by suggesting that Muslim communities are somehow (wholly) problematic community since they 'cannot integrate'. Politicians and the public have every right to discuss and make their views be heard on this issue, ensuring that such voices do also act responsibly as to not harm others, promote violence, or dehumanise marginalised communities. It is factually inaccurate and anti-Muslim to suggest that 'Muslim communities have a problem with integrating', when so many have successfully integrated into the country, made successful business, ploughed resources back for the social good of others and made huge strides in the fields of economics, politics, science, research, health and the charity sectors.

We therefore urge all political candidates in this election to steer clear of making generalised, inaccurate and wide sweeping comments about Muslim communities which infers that there is something inherently wrong and unique about them. Such dehumanisation also has impacts in the real world.

Tell MAMA will continue to publicly call out such divisive and heavily loaded stereotypical comments.

II. Appointment of A 'Hate Crime' Tsar:

This is a key role in a future government and one that needs careful consideration.

There are numerous 'protected characteristics' to hate crime work such as race, religion and disability. Whilst community engagement needs to be a core part of work between civil servants and ministers in a future government, this means that government officials must reach out to and engage with organisations working on the various strands of protected characteristics.

However, also putting into place a 'Hate Crime' Tsar will ensure that there is an independent specialist who can provide further input between grass roots organisations and government, ensure that hate crime work remains a core part of victim support work done by government and that there is someone who can keep up to date with and continue to shape this complex area of work.

Given that hundreds of thousands of people are affected by hate incidents and hate crimes, it is imperative that victims' voices are advocated for and that future governments remain thoroughly committed to reducing hate and hate crimes numbers in our country.



Summary

The manifesto commitments that we are asking all political parties to make do not include significant pressures on the public purse. In fact, if a future government chooses to pressure social media companies into setting up a community fund for not-for-profits who tackle hate, intolerance and prejudice, then we can safely say that the impact on the public purse may well be close to zero.

However, our proposals in this manifesto are based on a ‘common-sense’ approach to ensuring the balance between free speech, and language or actions that intimidate, harass or target Muslim communities and their institutions with the latter clearly being criminal in nature.

Tell MAMA is the leading hate crime project supporting Muslim communities in the U.K. and measuring and monitoring the numbers of cases on an annual basis.

It is a simple fact that anti-Muslim hate has wide ranging emotional, psychological and physical impacts on people. It also creates a wider sense of fear within Muslim communities and when anti-Muslim activists mobilise thousands of people onto the streets, there are significant reverberations in Muslim communities. These reverberations include doubts on their future safety and security in the U.K, fears around attacks on mosques and vulnerable Muslims and most of all, on visible Muslim women, many of whom have lost count of the number of anti-Muslim hate incidents that they have suffered in their lives.

A future government must therefore heed the dissatisfaction felt in many parts of British Muslim communities. Some of this has been because of a sense that anti-Muslim hate was not seen to be robustly condemned by previous Home Secretaries and where few politicians actively spoke out about it.

Some of the Muslim communities that we have consulted with in drafting this document also told us that it felt that any public condemnation of anti-Muslim hate by ministers in the last government was something that had to be grudgingly dragged out of them because of subsequent community outrage on Islamophobic incidents. This should not be the case in the future.


This ‘Manifesto against Hate’, (anti-Muslim hate), should be a starter for political discussion in a future government of the day. We remain committed to supporting Muslim communities, hate crime work and engagement with future governments and parliamentarians moving forward.

#No2H8

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 **TellMAMA**[®]
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