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A DECADE OF ANTI-MUSLIM HATE

Tell MAMA Report

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Tell MAMA Report

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FOREWORD

This ten year dissection of the cases reported to Tell MAMA is probably the most detailed analysis of anti-Muslim hate related to activities in the UK. It includes over **16,000 cases of anti-Muslim hate reported to Tell MAMA, which has served over 20,000 people since 2012**. Tell MAMA remains the leading project serving Muslim communities in order to ensure emotional support, counselling, legal, advocacy, signposting and court attendance for individuals seeking access to justice when targeted by anti-Muslim hate. Tell MAMA therefore provides much needed holistic long-term support for Muslims who have been targeted and who have endured anti-Muslim hate and discrimination.

It is also important to mention that the work of Tell MAMA does not impinge on certain basic human rights but rather upholds fundamental human rights. This includes the right for members of the public to question religion, or even to dislike religion. It is when this crosses into the targeted harassment, abuse or intimidation of Muslims, for being Muslims, that it enters into the sphere of our work and where perpetrators are held to account. This also includes when mosques are targeted by arson, graffiti or in some cases, attacks against worshippers in mosques. We should not and must not forget the Muslim Welfare House attack in June 2017 that led to the murder of grandfather Makram Ali and which was carried out by an individual who thought that they could take matters into their own hands and attempt to murder innocent British Muslims who were observing the holy month of Ramadan at that time. Nor should we forget the brutal murders of two further grandfathers, namely Mushin Ahmed and Mohammad Saleem. Mushin Ahmed was attacked and killed in Rotherham and called a 'groomer' before he was set upon. Mohammed Saleem was murdered in 2013 as he walked back home from praying at a local mosque. His murderer was Ukrainian born racist – Pavlo Lapshyn.

Since Tell MAMA was founded in 2012, there has been a doubling of reported and verified cases when 2021/2022 figures are compared to figures from 2012. This is concerning and could be a combination of better brand recognition with more and more Muslims becoming aware of the services of Tell MAMA, in alliance with awareness of their rights to report in anti-Muslim hate. Yet, there is the very real probability that there are more anti-Muslim reports and we have listed a number of 'trigger events' that have taken place over the last decade that have super-fuelled anti-Muslim bigotry at a street or online level. The threat of far-right terrorism evolves and continues to draw inspiration from the Christchurch terrorist attacks that resulted in the murder of 51 Muslims in 2019. We hope this data provides a wealth of information to social activists, academics, politicians and others who are interested in understanding the drivers of anti-Muslim hate and in supporting the social cohesion of our country.

On a personal note, it is six years since I have led Tell MAMA. I have seen a great deal of resilience within victims, and perseverance by agencies like the Crown Prosecution Service and police who have sought to bring perpetrators of anti-Muslim hate crimes to justice. I have also seen wider members of communities stand up against anti-Muslim hate sending out a strong signal that there are some core values that bind us, one of which is that our country holds dearly the fundamental principle of allowing people to live the lives they want, without fear or being subjected to intimidation. With this in mind, this work would not have been possible without the support of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. By supporting this

work, the Government has acknowledged the need for victims of anti-Muslim hate to be supported and that a signal has been sent to perpetrators that their actions of targeting Muslim communities will not be tolerated.

Finally, I would like to thank wholeheartedly my team at Tell MAMA for their empathy, resilience and commitment in ensuring victims' voices are heard.

Iman Atta OBE, Director

Executive Summary

01

A Decade of Achievements

Over the past decade, Tell MAMA has been leading the debate on tackling anti-Muslim hatred as the key prominent organisation monitoring and recording anti-Muslim hate in the UK.

Tell MAMA measured and monitored a considerable shift in the numbers and cases of anti-Muslim hatred across the UK since we launched in 2012. Within a decade of our work, we remained the leading national organisation specialising in this area, ensuring that over 20,000 people who contacted us received holistic support, advice, support through the criminal justice process, lobbying, advocacy, and signposting, and with the added value of providing free counselling sessions in recent years, we could provide a more rounded emotional support service.

The mainstay of Tell MAMA's client group has been members of the public. The contact by members of the public has been based on experiences that they have had, which they have felt have been anti-Muslim in nature. Tell MAMA has also sought to work with clients to achieve supporting evidence and information to verify that the incidents were anti-Muslim in nature and to ensure that clients get the best support available. This has also backed up a more rigorous verification process within the project by ensuring that the data we present stands up and that, where possible, there are secondary sources of evidence and information which are located and accessed that back up claims made by victims. We also need to stress that victims who report to Tell MAMA are treated with some core principles in the project, which include targeted care, compassion, empathy and dignity.

Tell MAMA is clear that work on supporting victims of anti-Muslim hate and the monitoring of such cases has have to be robust and evidence-based, given that ensuring public confidence in this work is essential. This is also why the support from His Majesty's Government (HMG) has been welcome and has demonstrated a desire to tackle this form of hate through a concerted and co-ordinated effort in partnership with Tell MAMA. Governmental support was, is and continues to remain crucial.

As we have stated, Tell MAMA has assisted over 20,000 British Muslims who have been targeted by anti-Muslim hatred since 2012. The partnership between Tell MAMA and HMG has meant that Tell MAMA has been able to do the following activities, which have further strengthened this area of work and provided better outcomes to victims of this phenomenon. The HMG/Tell MAMA partnership has therefore led to:

- Tell MAMA's consistent engagement and ability to support governmental policy development around hate crime work and in ensuring that civil servants and ministers are regularly briefed on developing issues and concerns in this area of work. For example, Tell MAMA has worked with policy makers in understanding the changing nature of the language of anti-Muslim hate, key hotspot areas, Far-right groups involved in organising anti-Muslim activities and demonstrations, and in working through the spikes of anti-Muslim hate that took place during the pandemic when online and offline cases suddenly peaked as the nation went into prolonged lockdown.

- Tell MAMA is one of two organisations, (the other being the Community Security Trust), which have data sharing agreements with the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) so that police forces and Tell MAMA can assess hate crime spike events, learn from them and work on looking at 'match points' between both organisations around generic trend data. This has also helped in better police understanding of the nature of anti-Muslim hate.

- Tell MAMA delivered training programmes to a variety of police forces on anti-Muslim hate, including (i) the drivers of it (ii) gender impacts (iii) groups fomenting anti-Muslim hate (iv) international triggers of anti-Muslim hate and their effects in the UK (v) the online and offline activities of perpetrators of anti-Muslim hate (vi) risks towards mosques and Islamic institutions and the impacts on social cohesion that are caused by anti-Muslim hate.

- Tell MAMA provides its services to anyone who regards themselves as Muslim. This means that Tell MAMA has taken the approach that sectarianism or intra-Muslim hatred is unacceptable and that our service is open to anyone who regards themselves as a Muslim. (Furthermore, on occasion, Tell MAMA has had reports from Christian, Sikh, and Hindu members of the public around anti-Christian, anti-Sikh and anti-Hindu hate and we have provided the same service to them as to a British Muslim client; this means that at the core of our work – we value people.) Additionally, at a denominational level, our work has been accessed by Shia and Sunni Muslims as well as other sub-sects of Muslim communities including, for example, individuals from Ismaili and Ahmadi communities.

- Regular engagement with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) in helping staff and prosecutors gain a greater understanding of anti-Muslim hatred and its impacts on victims.

- Engagement with tens of local authorities in England through the provision of training on understanding anti-Muslim hate to local authority officers, elected councillors, and community lay members on council committees.

- Ongoing support and engagement with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC). This relationship has also ensured that we acknowledge the practical and political pressures that forces work under and that we have sought to be a resource bank and sounding board for the NPCC on matters relating to anti-Muslim hate, and our ongoing evidence collection helps support the prosecution of perpetrators.

- Tell MAMA is the leading trusted, respected and mainstream confidential third-party hate crime support organisation that is recognised by statutory bodies in England, and whose organisational values are directly in line with core social values that underpin our country. These include valuing difference, respecting the rule of law, challenging divisive and extremist groups, honouring that which binds different communities together and holding the line on supporting people targeted by anti-Muslim hate, whilst delineating anti-Muslim hate from people who hold negative views of Islam and who don't target British Muslims through any form of hatred. Our country's core values allow for freedom to dissent and even the dislike of religion. However, they don't allow for people to be harassed, abused, intimidated, or attacked because of their faith. Therein lies the clear distinction and it is one that Tell MAMA firmly accepts.

- On the international level, across Europe and beyond, the decade of Tell MAMA's work also saw a growing recognition of our work as a model of best practice, with praise from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, the EU Commission and Office for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and for our practical results in recording casework and for the cooperation with Jewish and other community groups across the region.

- In 2014-2015, Tell MAMA and CST's cooperation to combat hate crime within two different communities was praised at an international meeting of States and non-governmental organisations led by the Office for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

- In New Zealand, the **Royal Commission of Inquiry** into the terrorist attack on Christchurch mosques on 15 March 2019 noted that the "Foundation Against Islamophobia and Racism has established an online mechanism for recording hate-motivated offending in New Zealand based on the United Kingdom's Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks) model" in the section on hate crime and hate speech.

- Tell MAMA has deeply valued support for this area of work from many community allies. These have included from Britain's Jewish communities, as well as the range of LGBT+, disability and Traveller and Roma communities and other communities. Without our continued allyship, as citizens and people who have many shared experiences in common, our collective safety and security become weaker. This is why we must all stand with each other, our police forces, and politicians, so that we can send a message that an attack on one community is an attack on all of us.

Lastly, Tell MAMA acknowledges the valuable support from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). This support has been consistent and has allowed Tell MAMA to service over 20,000 British Muslims who have contacted Tell MAMA since 2012. This is a significant number of people, and it also sends out a message that anti-Muslim hate is unacceptable, and that the Government has continued to support work in ensuring that victims of such prejudice get access to justice and are able to move on with their lives. This is essential in ensuring that long-term grievances are not built up and that perpetrators of anti-Muslim hate are also held to account as soon as is possible. Without Government support, this trailblazing work would not have been possible.

Our research findings and recommendations as follows in this report highlight the need for a coordinated approach and partnership work across civil society, governmental departments, police forces, private and public sector to tackle anti-Muslim hatred head on, affirming that there is no place for hate in our society.

Reflections on a Decade of anti-Muslim hate Across the UK

Over the past decade, Tell MAMA measured and monitored a considerable shift in the numbers and types of anti-Muslim hate crimes. Since launching in 2012, we have recorded, supported and assisted over 16,000 cases of anti-Muslim hate offline and online. An 'offline' or 'street-level' case means that the case (ranging from verbal abuse, harassment, discrimination or physical violence) either occurred in person between a victim(s) and a perpetrator(s) or that it involved a form of vandalism, which includes the targeting of Islamic institutions, and the homes of Muslims, or property owned by Muslims, as well as anti-Muslim literature (that includes posted materials through letterboxes to posters or stickers put up in public locations) and hate speech. Cases classified as 'online' occurred on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, or other Internet-based platforms and were verified as having happened within the UK (or targeted someone in the UK) and deal predominately with forms of text-based and visual forms of hate speech.

To better understand the ingroup-outgroup[1] dynamics[2] to gendered forms of violence and abuse, our data capture a wide range of information from those who contact us, including witnesses or those making referrals. However, before going deeper into how each year played out and how specific trends continue to proliferate, we first seek to address and detail the shifting numbers over the decade in their most basic form. Then, looking more closely at the non-numerical trends over the past decade, we note a significant development in the language and discourses used in those years and how the weaponisation of high-profile events is but one, but not the only driver of animus, discrimination and violence towards Muslims across the UK. Despite being years apart, these high-profile events, such as deadly terror attacks at home and abroad or significant political events like the EU referendum vote, continue to spur perpetrators to use event-specific but ideologically similar language (including referring to terrorism, sexual violence, and broader hatred of Islam that speaks of the religion in dehumanising, criminalising language). Moreover, we have noted the evolving nature and effects of news media and social-political discourse related to high-profile events and how this media attention affects public perception towards Muslims and 'Us vs Them' dynamics. Equally, in politics, we have actively called for investigations into anti-Muslim prejudice in major political parties,[3] which includes more proactive steps to help eliminate bias across all levels of political office, especially in the use of social media platforms by elected officials and MPs.

Furthermore, it remains crucial to see that anti-Muslim hate is not just about hate crimes, as they manifest in different forms: situational, discriminatory, criminal, hateful, and structural. We know there are potential obstacles to achieving outcomes for those who face abuse when navigating the criminal justice system or redress for discrimination. Issues range from institutional discrimination, interpersonal prejudice, employment disparities (from pay to employment and promotions), disparities in housing, and healthcare alongside barriers in education that hold young Muslims back from reaching their educational and career potentials. Some change their daily habits and hinder their geographic mobility (including avoiding forms of public transport) due to anxiety, decreased

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1 Brockett, Adrian, Andrew Village, and Leslie J. Francis. «Assessing outgroup prejudice among secondary school pupils in northern England: Introducing the Outgroup Prejudice Index.» Research in Education 83, no. 1 (2010): 67-77.

2 Blascovich, Jim, Natalie A. Wyer, Laura A. Swart, and Jeffrey L. Kibler. «Racism and racial categorization.» Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 72, no. 6 (1997): 1364.

3 Tell MAMA. «We Called for an Inquiry by the Conservatives into Anti-Muslim Prejudice in 2016, It›s Now Time to Deliver.» TELL MAMA. Last modified June 4, 2018. https://tellmamauk.org/we-called-for-an-inquiry-in-2016-its-now-time-to-deliver/. For our 2016 inquiry call see «Labour Did the Right Thing on Antisemitism, Now the Conservatives Must on Islamophobia.» Tell MAMA. Last modified May 13, 2016. https://tellmamauk.org/labour-right-thing-antisemitism-now-conservatives-must-islamophobia/.

confidence, and fears of future cases. Others may feel the need to self-censor their political options, not outwardly express their religious identities, similar to what Mythen et al. (2009) found amongst some young Muslims who were changing daily routines and carrying out 'practices of "self-surveillance" when entering public spaces.[4]

Returning to our work at Tell MAMA, however, the information presented below is not exhaustive. However, it will thematically demonstrate some of the biggest drivers of anti-Muslim hate and discrimination each year to help the public, policymakers, and stakeholders gain a holistic overview of such ebb and flow before the bulk of the report provides data and discourse analysis drawing from our data, news reports and broader academic research. Ultimately, whilst trigger events can shift reporting upwards, the overall baselines remain higher year on year, especially regarding the daily and often ongoing abuses communities experience at home, work, or in public spaces. In response to these ongoing issues,

Tell MAMA evolved its support structures to provide counselling options for those who need it whilst still providing emotional support, advocacy and lobbying.

Below are a series of graphs and tables presenting these ebbs and flows, hopefully presenting a clearer picture of how we recorded anti-Muslim cases throughout the decade. As can be seen, we recorded a steady rise in cases until 2017, when it peaked in the pre-pandemic years, as 2020 saw our most significant peak for verified cases, with 1,318 online and offline combined and a 40.6% increase. In the offline world, we saw a 46.9% increase in cases between 2015 and 2016. This trend continued in 2017 with a 30.6% rise in verified offline reports (N=839), only to fall slightly in 2018 and 2019 (with 745 and 718 verified cases, respectively). Offline cases rose in 2020 to 726 verified cases and continued to rise in the following year, 2021 to 781 verified cases. We will look much more closely into the numbers over the years in our pre-pandemic data review chapter and post- pandemic chapters.

Number of Cases Reported to Tell MAMA 2012-2021

● Total Number of cases reported

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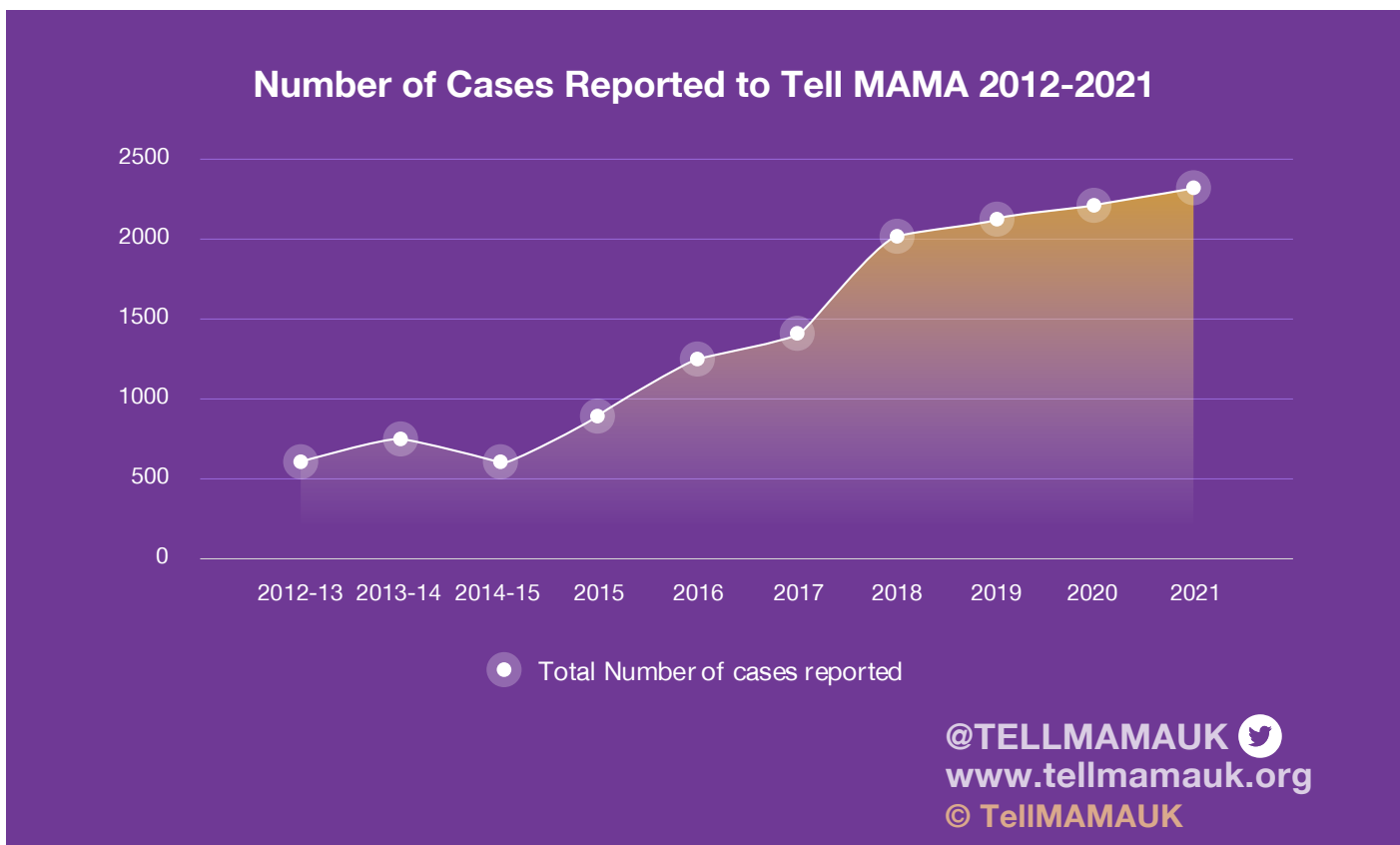
4   Mythen, G., Walklate, S., and Khan, F. (2009). "'I'm a Muslim, but I›m not a Terrorist': Victimization, Risky Identities and the Performance of Safety". The British Journal of Criminology, Volume 49, Issue 6, 736–754.

Verified Tell MAMA Cases (2012-2021)
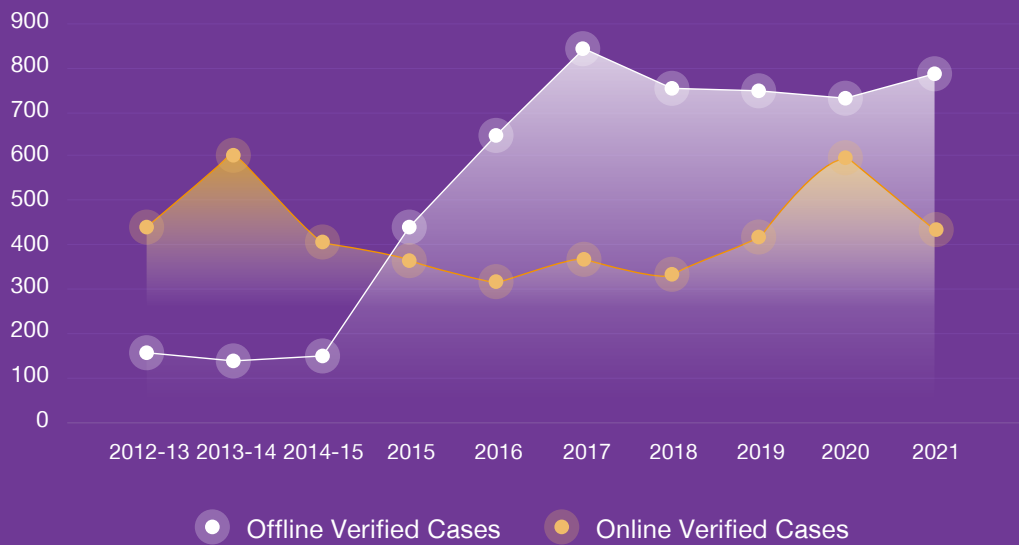
Offline Verified Cases   Online Verified Cases

Verified Tell MAMA Cases (2012-2021)

Online Verified Cases
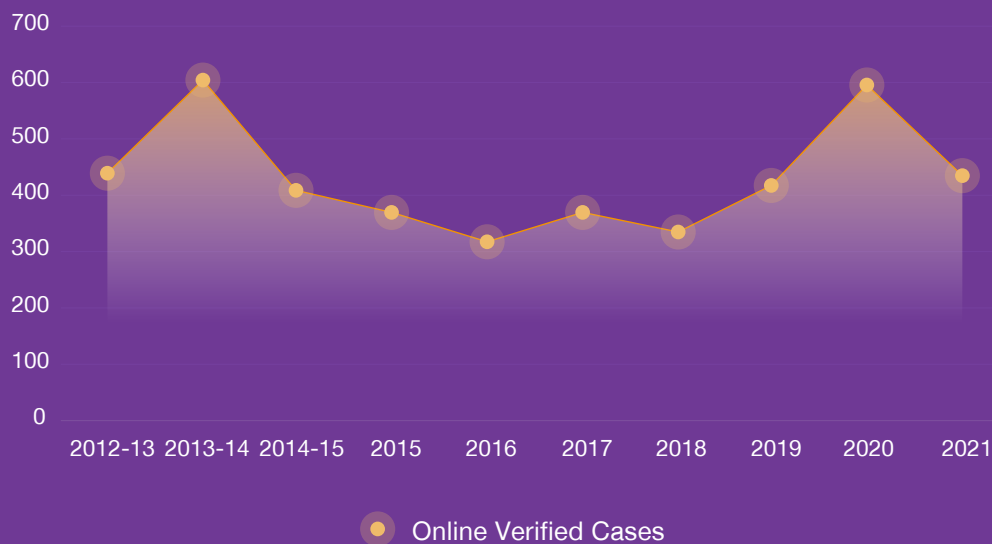
The Presence of the Far-Right 2012-2013

The reporting year of 2012-2013, covering the period between 1 April 2012 - 30 April 2013, was Tell MAMA's first year of activities monitoring anti-Muslim hate across the United Kingdom in a unique academic report. The report aimed to analyse our dataset to provide a quantifiable overview of perpetrator profile, attack type, and location occurrence. The report's conception was also driven by the ambition to examine the under-studied relationship between anti-Muslim hate and the far-right, drawing from the shared expertise of the academics sourced to analyse the Tell MAMA data independently.

The academic analysis verified 150 offline cases. Of these cases, 72 were street-based, 24 took place in Islamic institutions such as mosques, and 17 were in the household, workplace, or school. Language and insults that appeared in these cases include references to 'P**is', rape, paedophiles, inbreeding, incest, Jihad, terrorists, bombs, 'muzzrats'; and various animals, including dogs; pigs; goats, and baboons. Other cases involved criminal damage or desecration to mosques - ranging from placing a pig's head, graffiti, damage to the Holy Quran, broken windows, and a bomb hoax to one verified arson case. That academic analysis highlighted that nearly 1 in four offline cases reported a perceived link to the far-right – a link identified and reported by the victim. Of the 29 cases that reported a link to the far-right, 11 were associated with the EDL, 5 with the BNP, and 1 with the National Front. The academic analysis highlights the most glaring trend from that reporting year and the offline impact groups like the EDL had during that time. Although more impactful in the online sphere of the 2012-13 reporting year, the language used offline that year echoed the narratives of such groups. As we will see, such totalising anti-Muslim narratives continue to proliferate and dominate the type of language used in offline and online anti-Muslim cases for the years to come and up to the present day.

When considering how contemporary forms of digital hate and racism proliferate online, it is crucial to look beyond social media. After all, since the embryonic stages of the internet, racist and extremist hate groups adapted to technological developments to further their hateful agendas online – with some of the earliest identifiable hate message boards appearing in the 1980s, with the infamous white supremacist Stormfront board emerging in the mid-1990s.[5] Therefore, researchers placed an understandable emphasis on the role of an online group and individual-based identity, racist and harmful language online from far-right groups domestically. The analysis focuses notably on the English Defence League (EDL) in their analysis amongst other disparate ideological groups or individuals – a small minority of online profiles had links to overt neo-fascist groups.[6] Two-thirds of online reports (n=429) had tangible links to far-right ideologies, with one of the most reported figures for that year, the academics noted was the activity of the EDL's founder, Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (aka Tommy Robinson), with women identified in almost 1 in five online reports.

Moreover, the report added that the online activity of those linked to the EDL resulted in 21 arrests that year, with some online material making threats of street-level violence.[7] Examples of the racist, dehumanising, and anti-Muslim language online targeted Muslims in racialised ways, overtly racist ways (including the P-word) or in more broadly stigmatising comments linking Muslims to crime and sexual violence or accusing Muslims of belonging to "an evil, satanic" religion.[8] Like with the offline world, we saw how overtly dehumanising language like "musrat" (sometimes written as "muzrat") appeared across 45 online reports in 2012 and 2013, respectively.

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5 Lennings, C. J., Amon, K.L., Brummert, H., and Lennings, N.J.(2010). 'Grooming for terror: The Internet and young people'. Psychiatry, Psychology and Law 17, no. 3: 424-437.

6 Copsey, N., Dack, J., Littler, M., and Feldman, M. (2013). 'Anti-Muslim hate crime and the far right'.

7 Ibid. 22.

8 Ibid. 23.

The Aftershock of Lee Rigby's Murder 2013-2014

In the reporting year of 2013-14 (1 May 2013-28 February 2014), academics analysed our data and verified 135 offline cases, with 40% of cases reporting a link to the far-right, specifically the EDL and BNP. However, the year was primarily overshadowed after two terrorists murdered Drummer Lee Rigby, which caused a significant spike in reported cases to Tell MAMA — a 373% increase in reports of anti-Muslim cases to Tell MAMA. Nearly a fifth of all self-reported cases analysed over the ten months, 1 May 2013 to 28 February 2014, took place in the week following Lee Rigby's murder (127 total between 22 and 29 May 2013, as opposed to 34 reported victims in the preceding week). Put another way: the average monthly figure of 73 cases over the May 2013-February 2014 reporting period – itself inflated due to the post-Woolwich spike in anti-Muslim attacks – rose by 174% in a week. More specifically, three months after Lee Rigby's murder, Tell MAMA recorded 34 anti-Muslim attacks on properties (most notably mosques), ranging from arson to graffiti. Moreover, instances of anti-Muslim property damage rose from 2 in the week commencing 15 May 2013 to 9 recorded for the following week. Below is a dot graph in our 2013-14 report showing the mosque attacks that occurred from January to August 2013, as well as a graph comparing the entire offline cases before and after Lee Rigby's murder can be seen below.

Far-right figures attempted to broaden the extent of anti-Muslim targeting following the death of Lee Rigby beyond the immediate aftermath. For example, then-EDL leaders Stephen Yaxley-Lennon and Kevin Carroll were arrested for obstructing officers in late June 2013 for attempting a march in Woolwich, ignoring prior warnings from the police had warned that anyone attempting such a stunt would face arrest.[9]

The attempts by far-right groups and figures to hijack the tragedy for their anti-Muslim and racist agendas were more examples of manipulating public grief in the hopes of gaining members and financial support or hoping to shift their toxic and harmful language about Muslims into more mainstream conversations online and offline.

In the online world during this year, academics analysed 599 cases, almost half of which (45%) had identifiable far-right ideologies (notably in their avatars or language).[10] A spike in cases rose in the week following the murder of Lee Rigby online, with 97 self-reported cases between May 22 and 29, compared to 15 reports the previous week.[11] Williams and Burnap (2015) theorised that the most extreme forms of hate speech have a "half-life" that dissipates within 20 to 24 hours following the event, but the equivalent half-life of 'moderate' forms of hate speech lingers for around 36 to 42 hours.[12]

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9   Channel 4 News. (2013). 'EDL Leaders Arrested over Woolwich Walk'. Channel 4 News. Last modified June 29, 2013. https://www.channel4.com/news/edl-tommy-robinson-woolwich-far-right-lee-rigby.

10 Ibid. 3.

11 Ibid. 21.

12 Williams, M L., and Burnap, P. (2015). 'Cyberhate on social media in the aftermath of Woolwich: A case study in computational criminology and big data'. British Journal of Criminology 56, no. 2: 211-238.
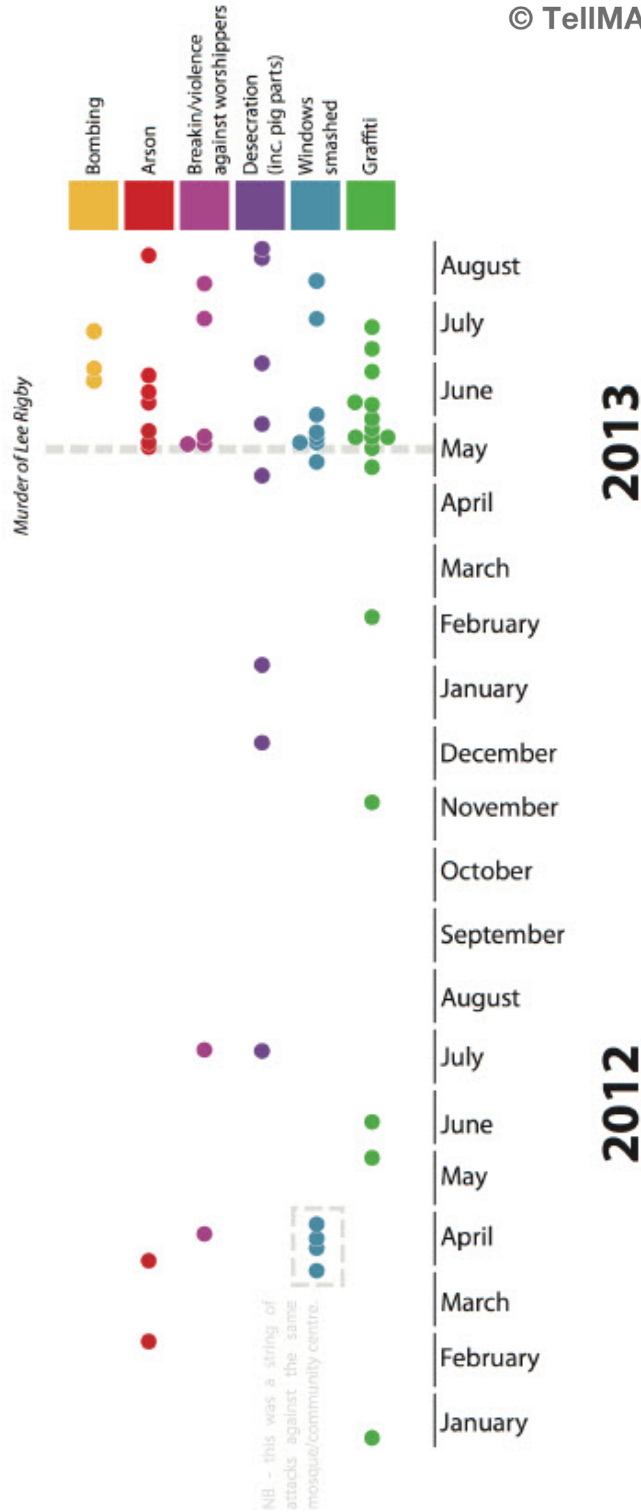
Figure 1. *Attacks on mosques reported in to Tell MAMA between 1 January 2012 - 31st August 2013. On the 9 occasions where a given attack demonstrably involved multiple attack types, both have been listed separately, in order to track the use of individual tactics.*

Understanding the Spike in anti-Muslim Hatred after the Murder of Drummer Lee Rigby in 2013

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Legend: ■ pre-Rigby (15-14-20 on 22nd) ■ Post-Rigby (14-21 on 22nd-29th)
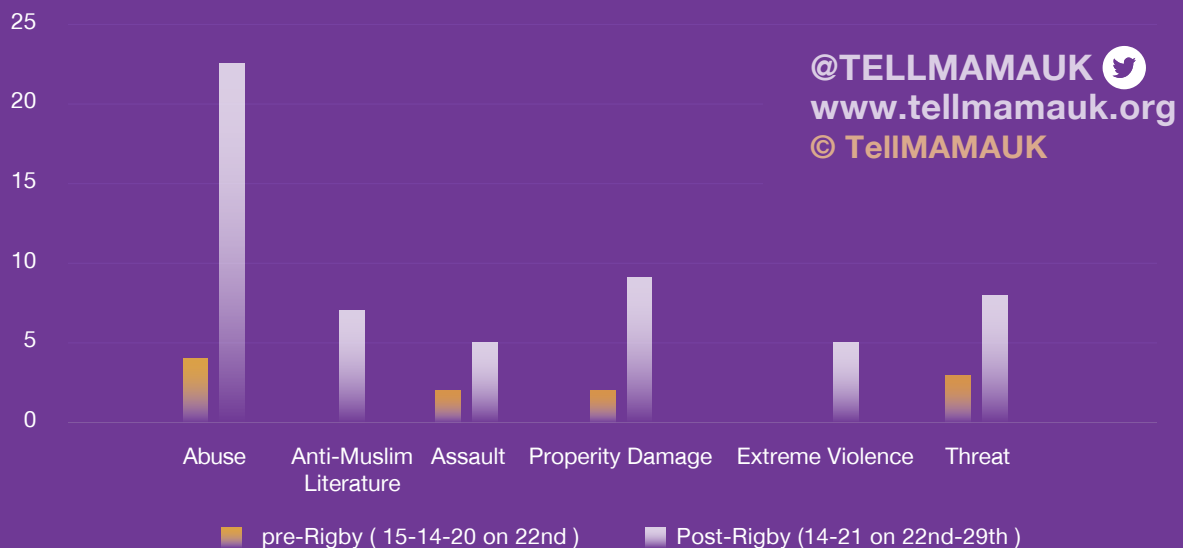
Anti-Muslim Rhetoric in British Social-Political Debates 2014-2015

In the recording year of 2014-2015 (1 March 2014 to 28 February 2015), academics verified 146 offline cases, which were overwhelmingly characterised by abusive behaviour (n=103). During this year, we noted the recognisable but steady increase in the low-level rhetoric of anti-Muslim prejudice, which had been spilling over into mainstream social and political debates and gaining greater traction and political capital as it became a more ingrained part of British political discourse. In the run-up to the 2015 elections, for example, the academics noted that politicians of all stripes had been keen to adopt the language of 'soft' nationalism and the promotion of 'indigenous cultural identity', ranging from ministerial calls for the Muslim community to root out extremism, to MEPs linking Muslim colleagues to known extremists.[13]

The year was also characterised by increasing inter-community tensions from cases abroad, namely horrific terrorist attacks in Paris, Sydney, and Copenhagen, alongside the backdrop of increasing political discussions around immigration and national identity by several mainstream political parties. Following the attacks in the three cities, we noted a mixed range of spikes in the seven days following the attacks compared to the seven days prior. In particular, the Charlie Hebdo terror attacks evidenced the most significant shift. While all cases saw a rise in the reporting of online cases, only the Paris attacks saw an increase in the reporting of cases of offline attacks, with the period following both the Copenhagen and Sydney attacks showing a modest decrease. Below is a graph that displays the spike in cases following these attacks.

Academics coded 402 online cases, with an overwhelming majority double-coded for anti-Muslim literature (n=372) and abusive content (n=385) as 19% contained threats (n=78), with a majority of those identified as flagging such material (whether as witnesses or victims) were male. They added that spikes in anti-Muslim and Islamophobic materials only appeared consistently online.[14]

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13 Tell MAMA. (2015). 'TELL MAMA 2014/2015 Findings on Anti-Muslim Hate'. Available at: https://tellmamauk.org/tell-mama-20142015-findings-on-anti-muslim-hate/.

14 Ibid. 4.

Comparing Reports to Tell MAMA Following International Terror Attacks in 2015

Legend: ■ 7 Day Pre (Online) ■ 7 Day Post (Online) ■ 7 Day Pre (Offline) ■ 7 Day Post (Offline)
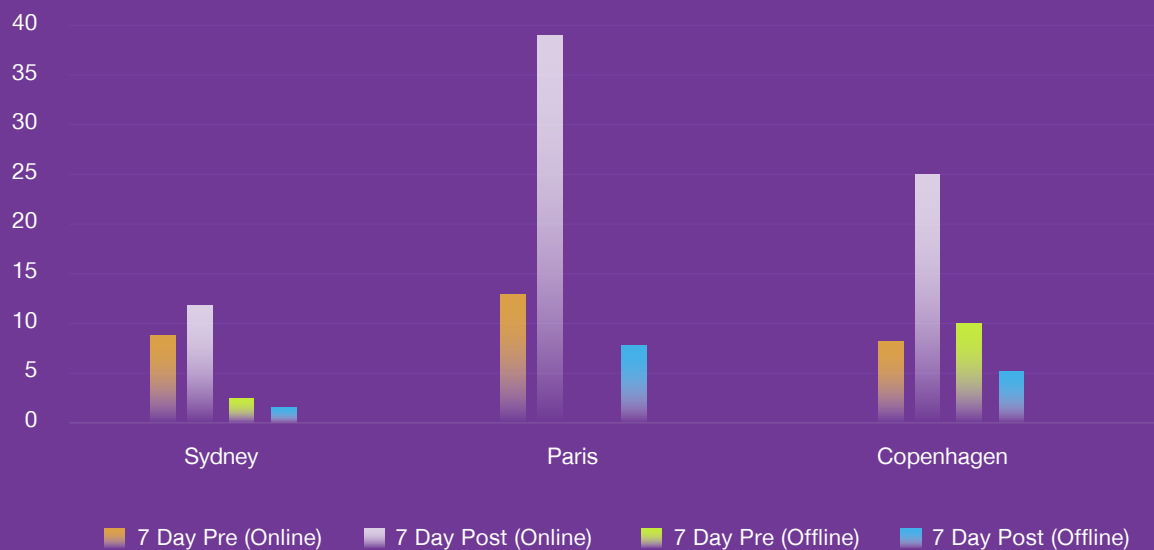
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The Geography of Anti-Muslim Hate 2015

In 2015, we shifted towards writing our analysis over the calendar year, and we recorded a significant increase in offline cases from 146 the previous year to 437 - an increase of 300%, and there was an increase over time in the previous reporting period by 200%.[15] In this report, we highlighted the geographical nature of anti-Muslim cases nationwide, inhibiting the social mobility of Muslim communities, especially when accessing public transport or navigating public areas. Abusive behaviour was by far the most common case category as it made up 50% of cases, as verified cases involving threatening behaviour and discrimination totalled 34 each (or 15% of the total offline caseload). Nevertheless, looking more closely, we noted that abusive behaviour occurred most often in public areas, on the transport network, and in places of business.

This report also marks the year where we gathered more complete data on victims and perpetrators, and with this, we could see clearly how anti-Muslim hate and Islamophobia is overwhelmingly gendered.[16][17] Specifically, we found that women comprised many victims (61%) and men comprised most perpetrators (76%). Moreover, 41% of victims were Muslim women wearing religious clothing (from headscarves to face veils).

Moreover, with a focus on the geographical nature of the anti-Muslim hate crimes, we noted, 'Our data collection on all offline cases demonstrates that public areas, primarily pedestrian thoroughfares, parks, and high streets, nodes of the transport network, including bus stops, train carriages, and platforms, and shopping

15 Tell MAMA (2016). 'The Geography of Anti-Muslim Hatred – Tell MAMA Annual Report 2015'. Available at: https://tellmamauk.org/geography-anti-muslim-hatred-2015-tell-mama-annual-report/.

16 Najib, Kawtar, and Peter Hopkins. «Where does Islamophobia take place and who is involved? Reflections from Paris and London.» Social & Cultural Geography 21, no. 4 (2020): 458-478.

17 Ho, Christina. «Muslim women›s new defenders: Women›s rights, nationalism and Islamophobia in contemporary Australia.» In Women's Studies International Forum, vol. 30, no. 4, pp. 290-298. Pergamon, 2007.

areas are the most likely spaces for anti-Muslim cases to occur. These are areas most frequented by all residents daily. Given that these areas are primary locations of anti-Muslim cases, it underscores that the city, town, or village becomes a risky space where those expressing different forms of 'Muslimness' are most vulnerable.[18] In particular, we used London as a case study to represent the geospatial nature of anti-Muslim hate crimes. Using data provided by the Metropolitan Police (MPS) and our datasets, we could look at the hotspots of anti-Muslim hate crimes in the city at a depth we had not previously explored. We discovered a clear relationship between Muslims as a proportion of the population and the likelihood of anti-Muslim hate crimes and cases.

Nevertheless, more closely, we found that higher Muslim-populated areas in the city themselves do not have a strong relationship with the incidence of hate crime, and the more accessible a given area is by public transport, the greater the risk of anti-Muslim violence and abuse. For example, we found that 84% of all cases in London recorded by Tell MAMA and the MPS occurred within 200 metres of a bus stop, and 48% occurred within 100 metres of a bus stop. The presence of mosques also increased the likelihood of attacks occurring in their respective areas, although its effect on anti-Muslim cases was less significant than public transport.

Beyond the geographical focus of the report, we continued to highlight the event-related nature of hate crimes. For example, victims were referred to as 'ISIS' and had 'Charlie' shouted at them numerous times. Furthermore, this suggests that while spikes are short-term, these cases continue to influence anti-Muslim behaviour throughout the calendar year. However, The most significant spike in 2015 followed the terrorist attacks across Paris on 13 November 2015 that killed 130 people. In the three weeks before the attacks, Tell MAMA recorded 25 anti-Muslim cases. In the three weeks during and after the attacks (from 12 November to 2 December), there were 82 anti-Muslim cases recorded.[19] Overall, we recorded a short-term increase of 328%.[20] We came to a series of conclusions related to the high-profile event and their effect on anti-Muslim hate crimes here in the UK, writing, 'It appears that only the most publicised stories—such as the November attacks in Paris—have the largest impact in terms of short-term spikes of anti-Muslim activity. Smaller events and some political discourse tend to have less of an impact than expected, which tells us that perpetrators are often motivated by their affective and emotional responses to front-page stories involving violence perpetrated by those who identify as Muslims. When these stories are not front-page news or highly visible on social media, they do not have a measurable impact on anti-Muslim cases.'[21] Below is a graph we produced for the 2015 annual report displaying the week-by-week spikes following high-profile events.[22]

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18 Tell MAMA. (2016). 'The Geography of Anti-Muslim Hatred – Tell MAMA Annual Report 2015, p.19.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid. 23.
22 Ibid.

Chart 3.1: offline incidents by week and international events

Legend:
- Vandalism/Criminal Damage
- Threatening Behaviour
- Hate Speech
- Discrimination
- Assault
- Anti-Muslim Literature
- Abusive behaviour

7 January
Attacks by violent extremists claim 12 lives at Charlie Hebdo in Paris.

17 February
Three schoolgirls from London are feared to have joined Daesh in Syria after they ran away from home.

14 February
Copenhagen attacks leave three dead and five wounded, with one Jewish man shot outside a synagogue by an extremist.

13 November
Extremists kill 130 people in coordinated attacks in Paris and claiming alleigance to Daesh.

26 June
38 holidaymakers killed in a terrorist attack in Port El Kantaoui in Tunisia.

3 September
Hungarian Prime Minister, Orban said, 'we do not want a large number of Muslim people in our country' as the refugee crisis in Europe escalated.

23 November
The Sun publishes the controversial '1 in 5 Brit Muslims' sympathy for jihadis' headline.

1 in 5 Brit Muslims' sympathy for jihadis

Chart 3.1: offline incidents by week and international events showing stacked bar data by week from 1/1/15 – 1/7/15 through 12/24/15 – 12/30/15, with a vertical axis scaled 0, 4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28, 32, 36, 40.

In the online world and across social media platforms, many of the cases (n=364) occurred on Twitter (n=207) and Facebook (n=136), with 88% of Twitter reports involving abuse or harassment, as 87% of Facebook cases fell within the platform's rules on hateful conduct. Our analysis found the "most common 'lexical' words include—or words that have contextual meaning in the sample, as opposed to articles such as 'the' or conjunctions like 'and'—are 'Muslim', 'you', 'f**k', 'country', 'Islam', 'mosque', and 'rape'". Case studies of anti-Muslim language included xenophobic calls for the forced removal of Muslims from the UK, with dehumanising terms like "Mudlums" and read, "Islam is a vicious cult. Mudlums have no place in any civilised country! Deport and kill them before they kill you!". The use of xenophobic language towards Muslims (irrespective of ethnicity) reflects what Bleich (2011) argues: anti-Muslim prejudice and Islamophobia function as parallel concepts like homophobia or xenophobia, not as a clinical psychological term.[23]

To capture more of the broader influences on those who posted anti-Muslim hate materials on Twitter, we collected data on whom the perpetrators follow to better understand ideological motivations by drawing information from over 23,752 unique Twitter account holders, which includes non-far-right sources, individuals to mainstream institutions.

The EU Referendum and Event-Specific Language 2016

In 2016, we continued highlighting the overwhelming gendered[24] nature of the cases we record. That year we received 1,223 reports of street-based (offline) and online anti-Muslim cases, with 883 offline cases, they were reported and 642 verified. The year was marked mainly in the UK by the EU referendum (Brexit) and multiple terrorist attacks abroad. We recorded a 475% increase in anti-Muslim cases following the EU referendum vote (from 12 cases in the week beginning 17 June to 69 cases beginning 24 June 2016). Perpetrators of anti-Muslim cases often referenced mainstream discourse concerning immigration and terrorism alongside broader anti-Muslim and dehumanising language in order to abuse their victims. A timeline of the weekly spikes in cases following high-profile events can be seen below, highlighting the extent of cases that occurred directly after the EU referendum.

23 Bleich, E.(2011). 'What is Islamophobia and how much is there? Theorizing and measuring an emerging comparative concept.' American Behavioral Scientist 55, no. 12.: 1581-1600.

24 Selod, Saher. «Citizenship denied: The racialization of Muslim American men and women post-9/11.» Critical Sociology 41, no. 1 (2015): 77-95.

High-Profile Events 2017: Verified Street Based Incidents by Week

Legend: Vandalism | Threatening Behaviour | Hate Speech | Discrimination | Physical Attack | Anti-Muslim Literature | Abusive Behaviour

22 March
Five killed and more than 50 people injured when an attacker drove a car into pedestrians at Westminster Bridge.

22 May
A suicide bombing at the Manchester Arena killed 22 people, including the attacker, and injured over 800.

3 June
Three attackers drove a van into pedestrians at London Bridge, then three men got out and attacked people in Borough Market. Eight people died and 48 people were injured.

19 June
An attacker drove a van into pedestrians outside the Muslim Welfare House in Finsbury Park. One man was killed and 12 others were injured.

15 September
A homemade bomb partially exploded on a Tube train at Parsons Green which caused numerous injuries.

Weekly axis labels include: 02/01/2017 – 08/01/2017; 09/01/2017 – 15/01/2017; 16/01/2017 – 22/01/2017; 23/01/2017 – 29/01/2017; 30/01/2017 – 05/02/2017; 06/02/2017 – 12/02/2017; 13/02/2017 – 19/02/2017; 20/02/2017 – 26/02/2017; 27/02/2017 – 05/03/2017; 06/03/2017 – 12/03/2017; 13/03/2017 – 19/03/2017; 20/03/2017 – 26/03/2017; 27/03/2017 – 02/04/2017; 03/04/2017 – 09/04/2017; 10/04/2017 – 16/04/2017; 17/04/2017 – 23/04/2017; 24/04/2017 – 30/04/2017; 01/05/2017 – 07/05/2017; 08/05/2017 – 14/05/2017; 15/05/2017 – 21/05/2017; 22/05/2017 – 28/05/2017; 29/05/2017 – 04/06/2017; 05/06/2017 – 11/06/2017; 12/06/2017 – 18/06/2017; 19/06/2017 – 25/06/2017; 26/06/2017 – 02/07/2017; 03/07/2017 – 09/07/2017; 10/07/2017 – 16/07/2017; 17/07/2017 – 23/07/2017; 24/07/2017 – 30/07/2017; 31/07/2017 – 06/08/2017; 07/08/2017 – 13/08/2017; 14/08/2017 – 20/08/2017; 21/08/2017 – 27/08/2017; 28/08/2017 – 03/09/2017; 04/09/2017 – 10/09/2017; 11/09/2017 – 17/09/2017; 18/09/2017 – 24/09/2017; 25/09/2017 – 01/10/2017; 02/10/2017 – 08/10/2017; 09/10/2017 – 15/10/2017; 16/10/2017 – 22/10/2017; 23/10/2017 – 29/10/2017; 30/10/2017 – 05/11/2017; 06/11/2017 – 12/11/2017; 13/11/2017 – 19/11/2017; 20/11/2017 – 26/11/2017; 27/11/2017 – 03/12/2017; 04/12/2017 – 10/12/2017; 11/12/2017 – 17/12/2017; 18/12/2017 – 24/12/2017; 25/12/2017 – 31/12/2017

Vertical axis: 0, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, 75

Although we recorded spikes in the number of anti-Muslim cases reported to us following high-profile events, including the EU referendum vote and terrorist attacks abroad, our thematic analysis of the cases revealed a high frequency of references to terrorism, immigration, and the EU referendum. The xenophobic cliché, 'go back where you came from', proved a popular slur, in addition to the narrative that Muslims are 'taking over' the country. In line with language recorded in our previous reports, we observed that perpetrators often said they did not view the victims as British and often told them they were not welcome in the UK. In several cases we recorded in 2016, perpetrators referred directly to the EU referendum, the Syrian refugee crisis, and immigration. Looking at the EU referendum specifically, we noted how perpetrators used the event to legitimise their anti-Muslim behaviour and sentiments, such as fears of an 'invasion' and anxieties around traditional British values being eroded because of immigration. Below are a series of case quotes from 2016 related to the EU referendum that we highlighted in that year's report.[25]

"(I was) at a traffic light when a white male looked up saw me at the wheel (I wear a headscarf) and shouted, 'you f***ing Muslim, f***ing EU out!' This was the night that the Brexit vote happened, so he clearly felt empowered to behave like this. I was fuming inside but chose not to respond to his ignorant comments."

"Days after the EU referendum vote, a Muslim woman described being in a supermarket when two women told her to 'leave the UK' and move to the EU instead as 'we have left the EU now'."

"Non-Muslim woman reported being upset following the referendum result when a delivery driver boasted about voting Leave. In her words, he said "Now we are in control. We can get rid of those Muslims raping children, we couldn't stop them before because of the Human Rights Act."

"A man in a petrol station shouted: 'You're an Arabic c**t', 'You're a terrorist', and 'I voted them out' in a road-rage incident."

"This evening my daughter left work in Birmingham and saw a group of lads corner a Muslim girl shouting: 'Get out, we voted leave'. Awful times"

"My 13-year-old brother had chants of 'bye bye you're going home' at school today. He insisted that it was 'a joke' but it worries me."

"Last night a Sikh radiographer colleague of mine was told by a patient: 'Shouldn't you be on a plane back to Pakistan? We voted you out."[158]

"(A) woman witnessed a man shout at taxi driver 'Brexit, you P*ki.' He was then allegedly assaulted by (the) abusive male."

25 Tell MAMA. (2016). 'A Constructed Threat: Identity, Intolerance and the Impact of Anti-Muslim Hatred , Tell MAMA Annual Report 2016'. Available at: https://tellmamauk.org/constructed-threat-identity-intolerance-impact-anti-muslim-hatred-tell-mama-annual-report-2016/.

Similarly, in many cases reported to us in 2016, perpetrators expressed anger over the perception that immigrants were using resources that should be 'rightfully' reserved for "real Brits" in language that mirrors what some academics define as racialised resentment politics[26] and following the rise of the neo-fascist BNP, the politics of "white backlash."[27] Many cases reported that year also focused on how the perpetrators viewed Muslim clothing as at 'odds' with national and cultural values. As a result, in 2016, we saw a disproportionately high number of victims (38%, n=295) that were Muslim women wearing Islamic

clothing. In the report, we noted, 'perpetrators made specific reference to housing, jobs and allocating public spending from tax money. Similarly, in some cases, they would also blame immigration for the 'current state' the country is in.

In many cases reported to us in 2016, perpetrators expressed anger that their victims were not conforming to perceived standards of behaviour. These comments often focus on Islamic clothing and using foreign languages in public spaces.[28] Here are a few examples we used in the report to illustrate this:

"An aggressive man told a Muslim woman in Islamic clothing, 'you can f***ing do one you P*ki c**t'. When challenged, he made threats to assault her despite the presence of the woman's young child."

"A Muslim woman, who wears the niqab, when out walking alone one evening, was confronted by an aggressive male who said, 'You shouldn't be wearing that here. We don't like it'."

"A Muslim woman, who wears the hijab, was told, 'Foreigner, learn to speak English, go back to where you came from, Muslim c**t.'"

Moreover, that year we received several cases from male victims explaining the specific verbal abuse they received that related to 'grooming' and CSE issues, often calling victims 'paedos' and 'rapists'. As we highlighted in 2016, 'This issue has grown in prominence following high profile criminal convictions of men in Rotherham in 2010 and onwards, bringing into question the 'dangerous masculinity' of British Muslim men. A year earlier, in August 2015, 81-year-old Muslim pensioner Mushin Ahmed was murdered in a race hate attack in Rotherham, South Yorkshire. His killer, Dale Jones, was jailed for life, with a minimum term of 32 years, on 29 February 2016. He attacked Mr Ahmed after accusing him of being a 'groomer' – a clear reference to the child exploitation scandals highlighted in the Jay Report 2014.'[29]

Several of the 2016 cases also referred to Muslims as

responsible for terror attacks abroad, and perpetrators often referred to bombs and explosions in their attacks towards perceived Muslims. We found evidence within our dataset to show how a casual reference to terrorism directed at Muslims could occasionally escalate to more serious, false, and sometimes malicious accusations of extremism or the misuse of safeguarding policies in places of education, including nurseries. One case such study included nursery staff falsely flagging a Muslim child weeks after a family trip to Pakistan as staff became "concerned" about them playing with a slingshot, making a "toy gun" out of Lego or expressing interest in certain cartoon characters. That parental concern and anguish increased that despite no evidence found to substantiate the initial report from staff, it would remain on file and potentially impact them when entering other forms of education or working life.[30]

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26 Winter, N.J.G.(2006). 'Beyond welfare: Framing and the racialization of white opinion on social security.' American Journal of Political Science 50, no. 2: 400-420.

27 Rhodes, J. (2010). 'White backlash,'unfairness' and justifications of British National Party (BNP) support.' Ethnicities 10, no. 1: 77-99.

28 Tell MAMA. 2017). 'A Constructed Threat: Identity, Intolerance and the Impact of Anti-Muslim Hatred , Tell MAMA Annual Report 2016', p.59.

29 Tell MAMA. 2017). 'A Constructed Threat: Identity, Intolerance and the Impact of Anti-Muslim Hatred , Tell MAMA Annual Report 2016', p.60.

30 Ibid. 65.

Such cases conform to the rhetoric that Muslims are a dangerous and existential threat and one that the rest of the public should 'fear'. Our report looked deeper into the psychology of this phenomenon and how academics have approached it, writing, 'This conforms to the 'Retaliation' and 'Defensive' typologies for hate crime identified by McDevitt et al. According to this model, some hate crime offenders are motivated to offend as a reaction to a perceived grievance they feel that they or their group has experienced or to defend their community from outsiders they see as 'threatening' their way of life.[31] Further evidence suggests that in the aftermath of certain terror attacks, and subsequent media coverage, individuals may attempt to retaliate by abusing people they identify as Muslim, usually through their clothing or ethnicity. This occurs because of intergroup conflict, in this instance between the 'in-group' of people considered legitimately 'British' and the 'outgroup' of Muslims, who are constructed as 'being interchangeable and therefore equally deserving of retaliation' for the crimes of a tiny and unrepresentative minority.'[32] [33] [34]

The Shifting Environment of Anti-Muslim Hate 2017

In 2017, we saw several devastating high-profile terrorist attacks in the UK, including the Westminster Bridge attack, the London Bridge attack, the Manchester Arena bombing, the Finsbury Park attack, and the Parsons Green attempted bombing. During this year, Tell MAMA recorded and verified 839 cases of anti-Muslim hate in the offline world. As listed above, we recorded a 475% increase in offline anti-Muslim cases reported in the week following the UK 2016 EU referendum. However, this spike was dwarfed by the 700% increase in cases recorded in the week following the Manchester Arena terror attack on 22 May 2017, with 72 reports recorded seven days after the terror attack, compared with nine reports in the previous week. This year we saw a 56% increase in cases involving discrimination and an 88% increase in cases involving vandalism, signifying a growing trend we are still witnessing today.

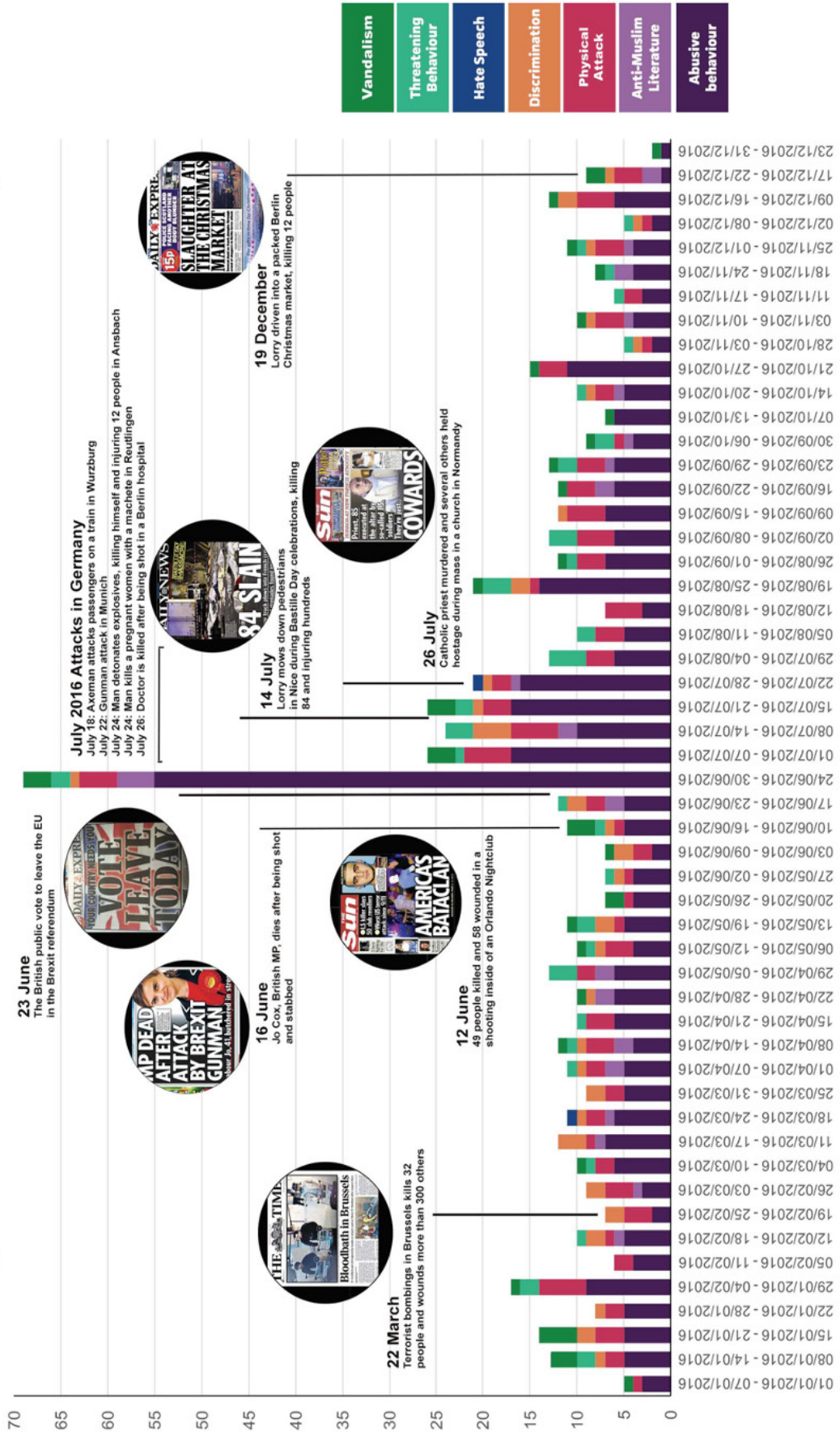A week-by-week timeline of high-profile events and their effect on anti-Muslim cases can be seen below.

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31 McDevitt et al.(2002). '*Hate Crime Offenders'*.

32 Lickel et al. (2006). 'Vicarious retribution: The role of collective blame in intergroup aggression', Personality and Social Psychology Review, p.378.

33 Hanes, E, Machin, S. (2014). 'Hate Crime in the Wake of Terror Attacks: Evidence from 7/7 and 9/11', Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice, 30, no.3, p.247-267.

34 Tell MAMA. (2017). 'A Constructed Threat: Identity, Intolerance and the Impact of Anti-Muslim Hatred , Tell MAMA Annual Report 2016', p.63.

High Profile Events: Verified Street Based Incidents by Week

Legend:
- Vandalism
- Threatening Behaviour
- Hate Speech
- Discrimination
- Physical Attack
- Anti-Muslim Literature
- Abusive behaviour

22 March
Terrorist bombings in Brussels kills 32 people and wounds more than 300 others

THE TIMES — Bloodbath in Brussels

12 June
49 people killed and 58 wounded in a shooting inside of an Orlando Nightclub

Sun — AMERICA'S BATACLAN

16 June
Jo Cox, British MP, dies after being shot and stabbed

MP DEAD AFTER ATTACK BY BREXIT GUNMAN

23 June
The British public vote to leave the EU in the Brexit referendum

DAILY EXPRESS — VOTE LEAVE TODAY

July 2016 Attacks in Germany
July 18: Axeman attacks passengers on a train in Wurzburg
July 22: Gunman attack in Munich
July 24: Man detonates explosives, killing himself and injuring 12 people in Ansbach
July 24: Man kills a pregnant women with a machete in Reutlingen
July 26: Doctor is killed after being shot in a Berlin hospital

DAILY NEWS — 84 SLAIN

14 July
Lorry mows down pedestrians in Nice during Bastille Day celebrations, killing 84 and injuring hundreds

26 July
Catholic priest murdered and several others held hostage during mass in a church in Normandy

Sun — COWARDS

19 December
Lorry driven into a packed Berlin Christmas market, killing 12 people

DAILY EXPRESS — SLAUGHTER AT THE CHRISTMAS MARKET

Week dates (x-axis):
01/01/2016 - 07/01/2016
08/01/2016 - 14/01/2016
15/01/2016 - 21/01/2016
22/01/2016 - 28/01/2016
29/01/2016 - 04/02/2016
05/02/2016 - 11/02/2016
12/02/2016 - 18/02/2016
19/02/2016 - 25/02/2016
26/02/2016 - 03/03/2016
04/03/2016 - 10/03/2016
11/03/2016 - 17/03/2016
18/03/2016 - 24/03/2016
25/03/2016 - 31/03/2016
01/04/2016 - 07/04/2016
08/04/2016 - 14/04/2016
15/04/2016 - 21/04/2016
22/04/2016 - 28/04/2016
29/04/2016 - 05/05/2016
06/05/2016 - 12/05/2016
13/05/2016 - 19/05/2016
20/05/2016 - 26/05/2016
27/05/2016 - 02/06/2016
03/06/2016 - 09/06/2016
10/06/2016 - 16/06/2016
17/06/2016 - 23/06/2016
24/06/2016 - 30/06/2016
01/07/2016 - 07/07/2016
08/07/2016 - 14/07/2016
15/07/2016 - 21/07/2016
22/07/2016 - 28/07/2016
29/07/2016 - 04/08/2016
05/08/2016 - 11/08/2016
12/08/2016 - 18/08/2016
19/08/2016 - 25/08/2016
26/08/2016 - 01/09/2016
02/09/2016 - 08/09/2016
09/09/2016 - 15/09/2016
16/09/2016 - 22/09/2016
23/09/2016 - 29/09/2016
30/09/2016 - 06/10/2016
07/10/2016 - 13/10/2016
14/10/2016 - 20/10/2016
21/10/2016 - 27/10/2016
28/10/2016 - 03/11/2016
03/11/2016 - 10/11/2016
11/11/2016 - 17/11/2016
18/11/2016 - 24/11/2016
25/11/2016 - 01/12/2016
02/12/2016 - 08/12/2016
09/12/2016 - 16/12/2016
17/12/2016 - 22/12/2016
23/12/2016 - 31/12/2016

Y-axis: 0, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70

We presented a series of case studies on each terror attack in 2017 to highlight how such high-profile events led to specific anti-Muslim targeting. Following the Westminster Bridge attack, we recorded several cases that supported the 'defensive' and 'retaliatory' typologies. For example, A student of Muslim background was told on the day of the attack that 'Muslims are the only terrorists" and that "they only seem to be attacking 'us', while in another case, a visibly Muslim woman was travelling on a bus when a fellow female passenger asked if she was 'carrying a 'bomb'. The abusive passenger then pointed at the Muslim woman's headscarf and said, 'People like you were responsible for the Westminster Bridge attack", adding that she was 'scared' that the Muslim woman was going to 'kill' her and before leaving the bus the perpetrator spat on the victim's headscarf. While hours after the terror attack, Christopher Massey, 46, dialled 999 and claimed to have left two kilograms of explosives outside the Southend Mosque and Islamic Trust. Officers attended the scene but found no explosives and traced Mr Massey from the mobile phone used to make the initial phone call, to which h eventually went to court and was given a 12-month prison sentence.[35]

We received dozens of cases in the aftermath of the horrific Manchester Arena bombing that directly referred to the terror attack; in fact, 72 cases in the week following the attack. We noted several of these cases in the 2017 annual report, including one case where a Muslim man was returning home after dropping his children at school when a group of women nearby suggested that they 'should shoot them 'all', while in several other cases, perpetrators appeared to hold Muslim victims responsible for the attack. In one such case that we highlighted, a perpetrator shouted at a Muslim man, 'You' 're Muslim, what's happened in Manchester is all because of you, f*** 'off', days after the attack. We noted that many perpetrators referred directly to some of the victims in the Manchester Arena attack, suggesting innocent Muslims were directly to blame for their deaths.

Although less significant than following the Westminster Bridge attack and Manchester Arena attack, we did note a slight spike in cases following the London Bridge attack, while we saw little to no spike in our offline data set following the failed attack in Parsons Green on 15 September 2017. The murder of 51-year-old Makram Ali and the attempted murder of nine other men outside the Muslim Welfare House in Finsbury Park, London, by the far-right terrorist Darren Osborne in June 2017 also devastated the victims, their families, and the wider community. The attacker immersed himself in far-right content online in the fortnight before his attack, much of which was centred around the notion that Western nations are under assault by Islam, and, in a racist handwritten letter, he had declared that Islam was incompatible with the West, adding that Muslims are 'raping inbred bastards & climb back on ya camels.'[36] So, it should be clarified that this was not an isolated case but a premeditated attack on innocent Muslims due to their Muslim identity and Islamic beliefs. While we did not record a significant spike in offline cases following the Finsbury Park terror attack, we did record several online cases just hours after the attack, which we go into more detail below.

Tell MAMA recorded a 56% rise in discrimination cases (n=78) which, as our annual report for that year made clear: "the work in countering Islamophobia and anti-Muslim prejudice goes beyond just hate crime. Often 'low-level' abuse can be a daily occurrence that shapes the everyday lives of victims significantly, especially when there is a gendered dynamic to the abuse and victims are near their abusers."[37] Case studies we cited included the ongoing bullying of a Muslim woman constantly targeted by a male colleague who made derogatory and discriminatory remarks like "tea towel" about their headscarf. Fearing management would react negatively to their complaint, they did not report the harasser to HR or management.

35 Robinson, E. «Man Jailed After Making Hoax Bomb Threat Just Hours After Westminster Terror Attack.» Echo. Last modified April 25, 2017. https://www.echo-news.co.uk/news/15243150.man-jailed-after-making-hoax-bomb-threat-just-hours-after-westminster-terror-attack/.

36 Dearden, L. (2018). 'Darren Osborne: How Finsbury Park terror attacker become "obsessed" with Muslims in less than a month'. The Independent. Available at: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/darren-osborne-finsbury-park-attack-who-is-tommy-robinson-muslim-internet-britain-first-a8190316.html.

37 Tell MAMA (2017) "Beyond the case: Outcomes for victims of anti-Muslim prejudice." Available at: https://tellmamauk.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Tell-MAMA-Report-2017.pdf

Seeking to understand these group dynamics, especially in workplace environments, help us to understand the paradox of how some individuals can simultaneously hold positive and negative views of minorities and differentiate between racist attitudes and prejudicial behaviours.[38] Consequently, by applying a 'differentialist' model of racialisation, some research shows how excluding others is due to 'essentialised' forms of cultural differences.[39]

Other discriminatory practices or behaviours included the misuse of safeguarding policies in the health service and at a school, which Tell MAMA helped get national attention for in The Times newspaper.[40] Regarding the former, a Muslim family contacted us after social services accused them of going on a routine family holiday in Turkey for "political reasons" after an earlier doctor trip to ensure their young child would be healthy enough to make the trip. The family felt discriminated against because of their Muslim identity, adding that any further GP checks after that flag-up meant they must explain what happened. Despite efforts to remove the false claim from their file, no such outcome emerged.[41]

In the online sphere, just over half of verified cases (52%) occurred on Twitter, and 37% occurred on Facebook (n=133). Before methodological changes in the online data analysis, 80% (n=291) of verified online cases fell under the broad bracket of abusive behaviour. Some extreme forms of anti-Muslim speech included calls for forced removals, attacks on mosques and genocidal violence. Upon further analysis, these account holders had pre-existing racist ideologies and wanted to weaponise the despicable acts of terrorism to propagate group-based violence towards Muslims. Examples of such statements include, "Correct me if I am wrong. All Muslim scum must be gassed", "its

time to bomb the f****** mosques", and "Clear our streets of all those dirty rats".

In 2015 and 2017, respectively, our researchers created network maps identifying broader far-right networks, and a key node identified was the Twitter account @DavidJo52951945, which some experts believed was part of a broader Russian-state-backed disinformation campaign on the platform.[42] Moreover, following the Westminster Bridge terror attack, Tell MAMA supported a Muslim woman caught up in the tragedy and targeted by racist and neo-Nazi trolls who falsely accused them of "ignoring" the injured. Through our service, we published her statement, helping to challenge these falsehoods, which helped make news headlines[43] whilst exposing a fundamental fault line on Twitter about how quickly falsehoods, especially those of a racialised nature, spread, thus risking the safety of those targeted and broader communities. Her statement began:

> "I'm shocked and totally dismayed at how a picture of me is being circulated on social media. To those individuals who have interpreted and commented on what my thoughts were in that horrific and distressful moment, I would like to say not only have I been devastated by witnessing the aftermath of a shocking and numbing terror attack, I've also had to deal with the shock of finding my picture plastered all over social media by those who could not look beyond my attire, who draw conclusions based on hate and xenophobia."[44]

Months later, it emerged that a significant far-right Twitter account responsible, identified as @SouthLoneStar,

38 Terry, Deborah J., L. Blackwood, M. A. Hogg, and D. Johnson.(2000). 'Prejudiced attitudes, group norms, and discriminatory behaviour.' In International journal of psychology, vol. 35, no. 3/4, pp. 222-222. Psychology Press.

39 Balibar, E. (2005). 'La construction du racisme'. Actuel Marx 2: 11-28.

40 Kerbaj, R.(2018). 'Alert over Muslim Boy's Water Pistol.' The Times & The Sunday Times: Breaking News & Today's Latest Headlines. Last modified February 11, 2018. https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/alert-over-muslim-boys-water-pistol-w0hmmjg6b.

41 Tell MAMA (2017). 65.

42 Moore, M.(2017). 'Thousands of Twitter Users 'deceived by Russian Agent'. The Times. Last modified August 29, 2017. https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/thousands-of-twitter-users-deceived-by-russian-agent-david-jones-bv0c2ssj5.

43 England, C., and Pasha-Robinson, L.(2017). 'The Woman Pictured Walking Past Terror Victims Became an Alt-right Meme. Now She's Spoken out.' The Independent. Last modified March 25, 2017. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/london-terror-attack-muslim-woman-photographed-westminster-bridge-help-tell-mama-a7648711.html.

44 Tell MAMA. "The Truth Behind the Photo of the Muslim Woman on Westminster Bridge." TELL MAMA. Last modified March 24, 2017. https://tellmamauk.org/the-truth-behind-the-photo-of-the-muslim-woman-on-westminster-bridge/.

was also part of a more comprehensive Russian-state disinformation campaign.[45]

Following the deadly anti-Muslim terror attack in Finsbury Park, which resulted in the murder of Makram Ali and injured many others, we highlighted how those glorifying Darren Osborne online went beyond the frameworks of hate crime into the realms of anti-terror legislation.[46] One tweet later removed by Twitter read, 'The only sympathy I have is for the van driver. #Revenge', and a far-right inspired Facebook page used the popular '#FinsburyPark' hashtag to spread a meme which read, 'Is this the month of Ramadan or Ramavan?' on 19 June. While a Facebook post reported to us heaped praise on the terrorist, adding

that 'it's about time someone started exterminating them'. And in another, only days after the attack, a Twitter user posted an image of Osborne juxtaposing with the Cross of St James of Compostela, a reference to James the Apostle, the 'Moorslayer', and the ninth-century Reconquista against Islamic Spain.

Our unique research and expertise on the far-right online first made the connection between neo-Nazi groups like the System Resistance Network[47] to the proscribed neo-Nazi terror group National Action years before the Home Office officially designated them a terror group in February 2020 as it did with Scottish Dawn and NS131 in September 2017.[48]

Normalising Anti-Muslim Hate 2018

Tell MAMA recorded 1,282 reports in 2018, of which 745 were verified offline cases. The year saw an 11% reduction in verified offline cases compared to the previous year, but we noted a rise in discrimination, hate speech, and anti-Muslim literature cases.[49]

In 2018, several trending news stories informed anti-Muslim hate in the UK, such as the despicable and

menacing 'Punish a Muslim Day' letter campaign, various high-profile child sexual exploitation trials and subsequent convictions, Boris Johnson's opinion column, President Trump's visit to the UK, and the arrival of new refugees in Europe, while the Windrush deportations, Harry and Meghan's wedding, and Brexit negotiations continue to call immigration and multiculturalism into public debate.

45 Hern, A.(2017). 'How a Russian 'troll Soldier' Stirred Anger After the Westminster Attack'. The Guardian. Last modified November 14, 2017. https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/nov/14/how-a-russian-troll-soldier-stirred-anger-after-the-westminster-attack.

46 Tell MAMA.(2019). 'From Finsbury Park to Medieval Spain: How the Far-right Misuse History.' Tell MAMA. Last modified June 19, 2019. https://tellmamauk.org/from-finsbury-park-to-medieval-spain-how-the-far-right-misuse-history/.
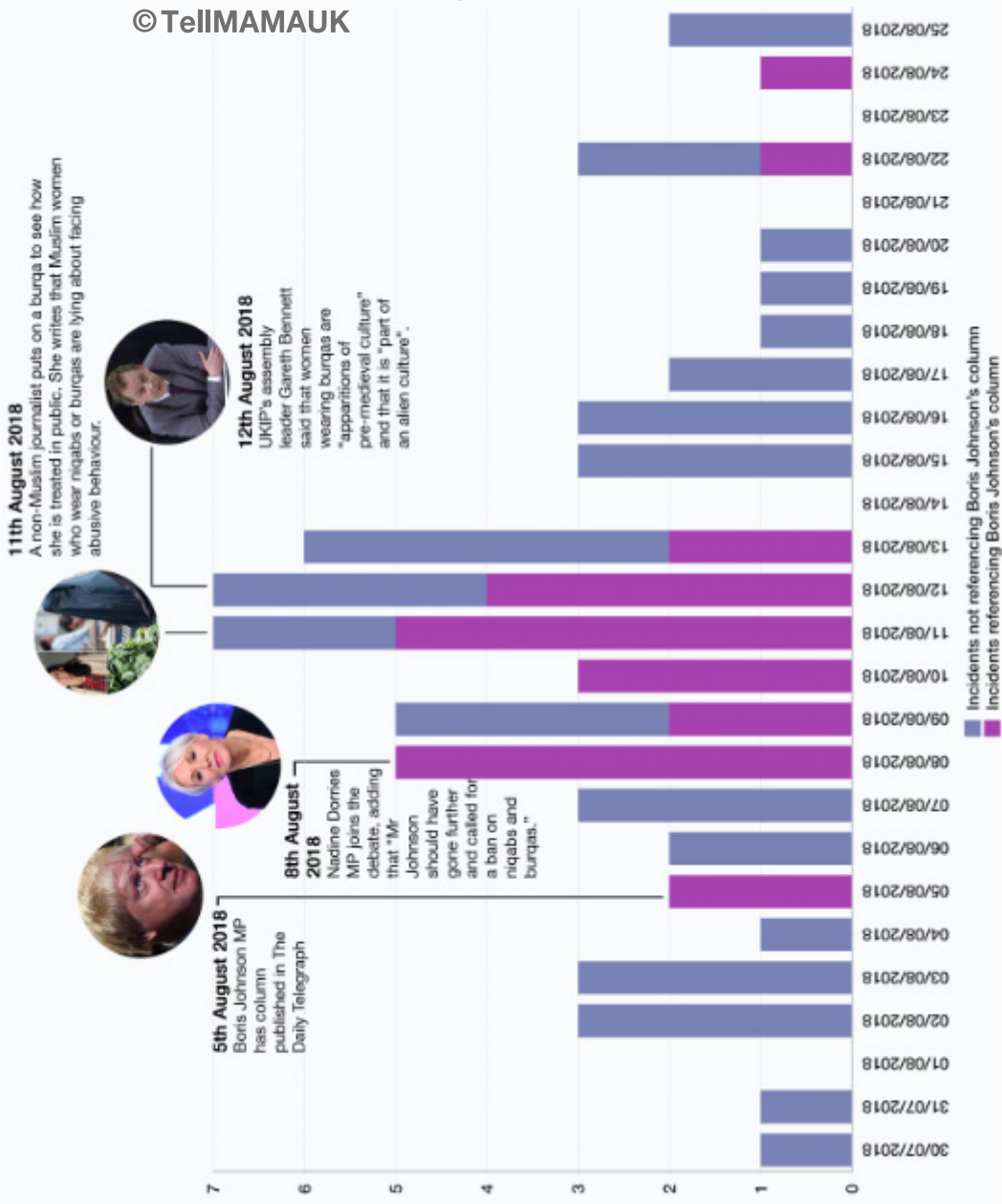
47 Tell MAMA.(2017). 'Will the System Resistance Network Be the Next Neo-Nazi Group to Be Banned?' Tell MAMA. Last modified September 28, 2017. https://tellmamauk.org/will-the-system-resistance-network-be-the-next-neo-nazi-group-to-be-banned/.

48 Tell MAMA.(2022). 'Nazi Alex Davies Guilty of Belonging to Banned Terror Group National Action'. Tell MAMA. Last modified June 7, 2022. https://tellmamauk.org/neo-nazi-alex-davies-guilty-of-belonging-to-banned-terror-group-national-action/.

49 Tell MAMA. (2019). 'Tell MAMA Annual Report 2018: Normalising Hatred'. Available at: https://tellmamauk.org/tell-mama-annual-report-2018-_-normalising-hate/.

Timeline of Incidents Reported to Tell MAMA Between 30th July and 28th August 2018

5th August 2018
Boris Johnson MP has column published in The Daily Telegraph

8th August 2018
Nadine Dorries MP joins the debate, adding that "Mr Johnson should have gone further and called for a ban on niqabs and burqas."

11th August 2018
A non-Muslim journalist puts on a burqa to see how she is treated in public. She writes that Muslim women who wear niqabs or burqas are lying about facing abusive behaviour.

12th August 2018
UKIP's assembly leader Gareth Bennett said that women wearing burqas are "apparitions of pre-medieval culture" and that it is "part of an alien culture".

Incidents not referencing Boris Johnson's column
Incidents referencing Boris Johnson's column

Dates (bottom axis): 30/07/2018, 31/07/2018, 01/08/2018, 02/08/2018, 03/08/2018, 04/08/2018, 05/08/2018, 06/08/2018, 07/08/2018, 08/08/2018, 09/08/2018, 10/08/2018, 11/08/2018, 12/08/2018, 13/08/2018, 14/08/2018, 15/08/2018, 16/08/2018, 17/08/2018, 18/08/2018, 19/08/2018, 20/08/2018, 21/08/2018, 22/08/2018, 23/08/2018, 24/08/2018, 25/08/2018

That year saw two significant spikes occur. The first, in spring, reflected the 'Punish a Muslim Day' letters sent to Muslim homes, institutions, and places of work in March, followed by heightened tensions, fears, and anxieties around the proposed day in April, and the second wave of letters ('Punish a Muslim Day 2') received in May. Tell MAMA received reports of 37 offline cases that directly referenced 'Punish a Muslim Day'. The second and more significant spike occurred in August after the then-former foreign secretary Boris Johnson wrote a column referring to veiled Muslim women as 'letterboxes' and 'bank robbers'. When journalists questioned Mr Johnson on the dehumanising nature of his comparison of women who wear a face veil (niqab) to 'letterboxes', he claimed he was simply talking in the language that the public wanted to hear, forgetting that Muslim women themselves are part of that public and will be affected by his choice of words.

In fact, in the week following his article, cases to Tell MAMA increased by 375% - from 8 cases the previous week to 38 in the following. Of the 38 anti-Muslim attacks in the first week following Mr Johnson's comments, 22 were directed at visibly Muslim women who wore the face veil (niqab) or other veiling practices. We recorded 57 cases in the three weeks following the column's publication, 32 directed at visibly Muslim women. Between the 5th and 29th of August, 42% (N=24) of the street-based (offline) cases reported to Tell MAMA directly referenced Boris Johnson and/or the language used in his column.[1] The nature of the cases varied, with the majority involving verbal abuse. Below is a graph we published in the report highlighting the two yearly spikes.

Anti-Muslim Hatred Cases Reported to Tell MAMA in 2018
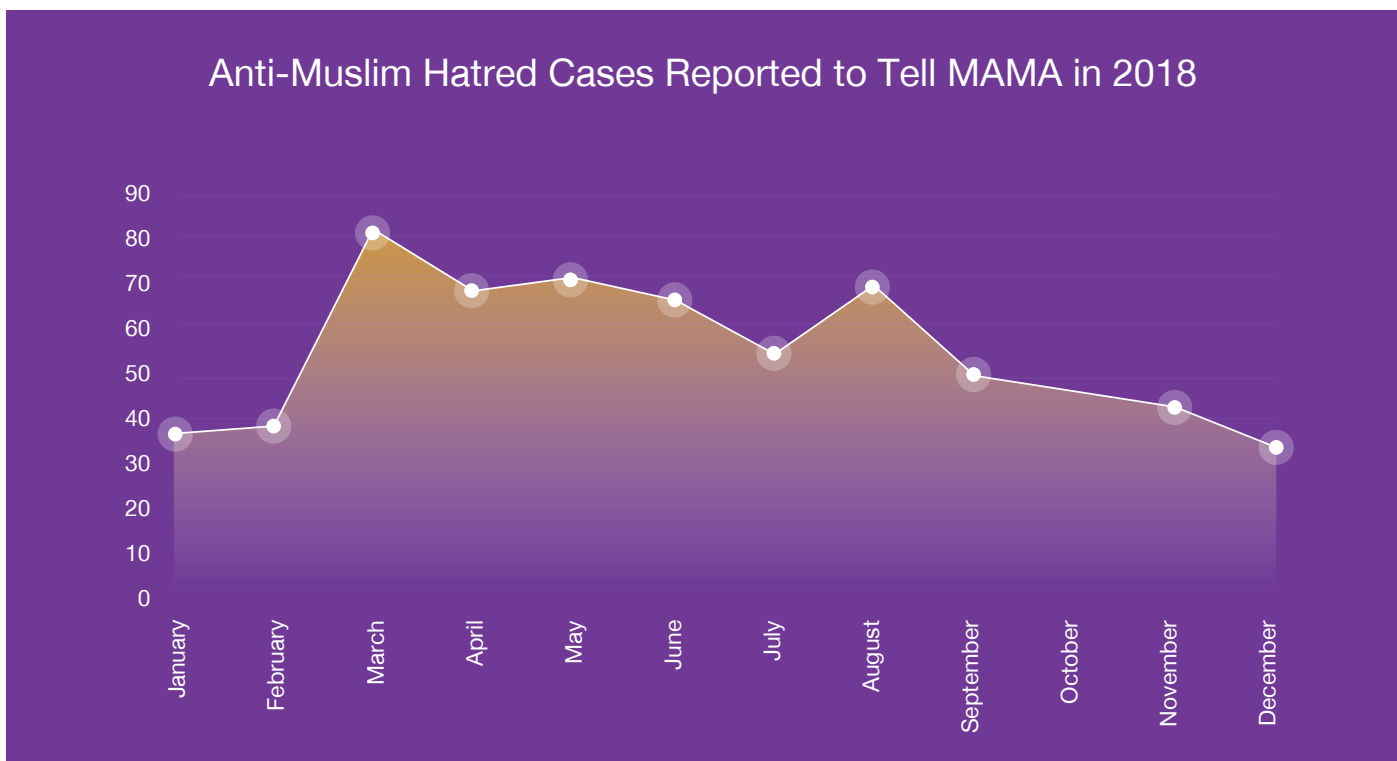
More broadly, the language used throughout the year correlated with previous years, with a heavy focus on terrorism, sexual violence and misogynistic language, general hatred of foreigners, and broader attacks on Islam. In the years leading up to 2019, a variety of cases involving child sexual exploitation by organised criminal groups and networks hit news headlines, including high-profile cases in Rotherham, Telford, Oxford, and Huddersfield, with the latter attracting a great deal of attention from far-right groups and campaigners who accelerated the discussion. The cases also drew attention to the structural failures to tackle sexual exploitation, raising important and complex questions, such as how victims are disbelieved or viewed as 'troublemakers' by those who should believe and support them. However, reducing these issues, as exclusive to Muslim communities, have built problematic stereotypes of innocent Muslim individuals while de-railing and undermining the gravity of sexual abuse and exploitation.

However, in the online sphere, much of the language we recorded yearly went beyond the descriptors we used for many years. Therefore, we instigated a methodological change for the annual reports from 2017 onwards, as Hate Speech had only appeared in a minority of the offline and street-level casework prior, with 2018's annual report significantly focused on the normalisation of anti-Muslim language and animus, as 51% of verified online cases in 2018 (n=168) falling under the new category code, whereas in previous years would sit under Abusive Behaviour (n=96,29%).

1 Ibid.

The Christchurch Attacks Aftermath 2019

As we will explore further in this report, in 2019, we received 895 offline cases, 718 of which were verified by Tell MAMA. However, undoubtedly the most significant point of the year was the horrific white supremacist terrorist attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand, that resulted in the murder of 51 Muslims and the devastating effects it had for Muslims in the UK, but the shocking spike in cases reported to Tell MAMA.

In the week following the terror attacks in Christchurch, cases reported to Tell MAMA increased by 692%, with 12 cases recorded in the previous week (March 8 – 14) and 95 the following week (March 15 – 21).[2] In total, we received 74 cases that made verbal or symbolic references to the attacks in the offline world. Significantly, from February to March, threatening behaviour increased by 225%. The case study examples of threats related to the Christchurch attacks included 'shooting sounds' and 'gun gestures' made towards Muslims and several threats aimed at mosques or other Muslim institutions. While vandalism also saw a spike, with the rate increasing by 163% between February and March. In the days following the Christchurch attacks, witnesses reported graffiti which did not directly relate to the attacks, including swastikas, 'Muslim c**ts', and 'no Islam'. Elsewhere, one instance of graffiti said 'subscribe to PewDiePie', which was referenced in the Christchurch live stream. Below is a graph we published for the report highlighting the severe spike following the Christchurch attacks.

How the far-right Christchurch terror attacks inspired anti-Muslim cases in the UK

— Offline   — Online
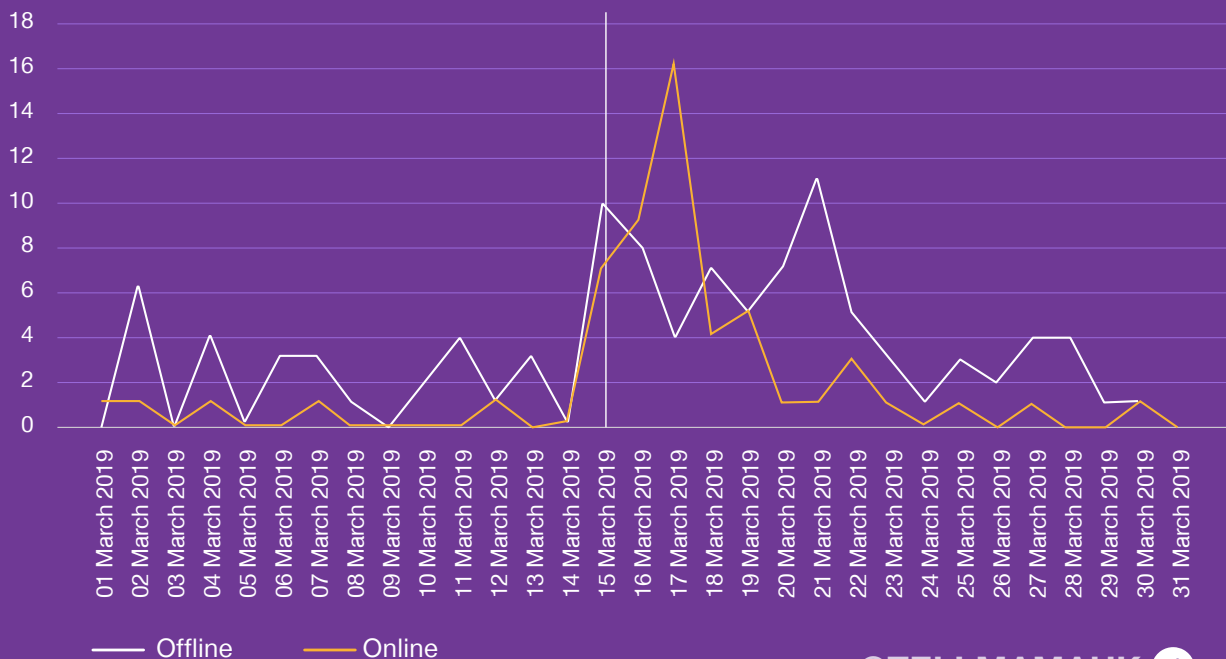
In the week following the terror attacks at the mosques In Christchurch, incidents reported to Tell MAMA exponentially rose by 692%, with 12 incidents in the previous week (March 8— 14) and 95 the following week (March 15 — 21).

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2 Tell MAMA. (2020). 'The Impact of Christchurch Terror Attack | Tell MAMA Interim report 2019'. Available at: https://tellmamauk.org/the-impact-of-the-christchurch-terror-attack/.

As with 2017, in 2019, we saw how white supremacist terrorism domestically (in Finsbury Park) and abroad (Christchurch, New Zealand), respectively, demonstrated how the glorification of the terrorists responsible or attempts at (or calls for) copycat attacks online pose additional issues for the police and security services and the potential culpability of platforms in failing to remove such harmful, criminal materials. In addition, normalised forms of anti-Muslim hate speech online have broader consequences for communities and some of the most vulnerable in our society, including refugees, as the weaponisation of platforms like Twitter enables such agitators to target such groups offline and promote their propaganda online, all whilst pushing totalising and criminalising narratives linking them broadly to criminality and terrorism. Each year we record a small number of cases that call for the extermination, forced interment,

or deportation of Muslims; some show explicit white supremacist and nationalist ideologies (including their use of hashtags,[3] images or statements), but some are more ambiguous, but equally evident in their destructive goals.

We recorded 407 online cases and verified 354 cases (an 8.25% rise on the previous year), with the most significant spike post-Christchurch. Almost two-thirds of verified cases constituted Hate Speech (66.1%), with 59 verified cases of Abusive Behaviour (16.6%) and 44 cases of Anti-Muslim Literature (which can include racist memes, infographics, or other digital materials that incorporate image-based content, totalling 12.42% of verified cases)—just over three-quarters of verified cases occurred on Twitter (78.53%), with over one in five verified cases having taken place on Facebook (23.16%).

Covid-19 Induced Cases and an Evolving Hate Crime Climate 2020

In 2020 we recorded 906 offline cases and verified 726. As we will explore further, the year was overshadowed by the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns across the country. Although we did not record any significant spikes in this time, we received more cases between March and May than we expected, considering the country was in lockdown for a large proportion of this time, making human interaction more difficult, especially with strangers. Notably, this environment contributed to the uptick in household-related cases involving neighbours over several weeks, months, or even throughout the year. Household cases comprised 26% of verified offline cases, making it the highest proportion of cases we have ever recorded. As we highlight in this report, the lockdowns appeared to have acted as a bottleneck for household and neighbour-related cases and created highly stressful situations for dozens of Muslim victims, many of whom were families. Discrimination cases also continued to rise in 2020, making up 14%

of verified offline cases and the second most frequent of any category.

In 2020, online cases totalled 650, with 592 cases meeting the verification standards. Of that 592 figure, 16% fell under the category of Abusive Behaviour (n=95), 10.64% fell under Anti-Muslim Literature (n=63), and Threats fell under a small minority of cases (n=14,2.36%). Overwhelmingly, commensurate with previous Tell MAMA annual reports and research, most verified cases fell into the category of Hate Speech (70.94%, n=420).

During the lockdown months, we routinely published articles debunking far-right falsehoods[4] from those seeking to link Muslims to criminality and supposed lockdown breaches that never existed.[5] Equally, as the main report will highlight, police forces used social media platforms to challenge such falsehoods.[6] In addition, we regularly debunk conspiracies or

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3 Hagen, Loni, Mary Falling, Oleksandr Lisnichenko, AbdelRahim A. Elmadany, Pankti Mehta, Muhammad Abdul-Mageed, Justin Costakis, and Thomas E. Keller. "Emoji use in Twitter white nationalism communication." In Conference Companion Publication of the 2019 on Computer Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing, pp. 201-205. 2019.

4 Tell MAMA.(2020). 'No, the Muslims Praying in This Video Aren't Ignoring the Coronavirus Lockdown. It's Far-right Fake News.' Tell MAMA. Last modified March 26, 2020. https://tellmamauk.org/no-the-muslims-praying-in-this-video-arent-ignoring-the-coronavirus-lockdown-its-far-right-fake-news/.

5 Tell MAMA.(2020). 'Far-right Fakery: Video of Panic Buyers Queuing Filmed 6 Days Before Coronavirus Lockdown Began.' Tell MAMA. Last modified April 20, 2020. https://tellmamauk.org/far-right-fakery-video-of-panic-buyers-queuing-filmed-6-days-before-coronavirus-lockdown-began/.

6 Tell MAMA.(2020). 'Shropshire Police Debunk Malicious Tweet About a Mosque 'ignoring' the Coronavirus Lockdown.' Tell MAMA. Last modified March 31, 2020. https://tellmamauk.org/shropshire-police-debunk-malicious-tweet-about-a-mosque-ignoring-the-coronavirus-lockdown/.

falsehoods[7] about Muslim communities and did so again before nationwide lockdowns occurred.[8]

Across the online categories, we verified 592 cases, with just over 70% of cases (n=420) falling under our category of Hate Speech.

New Trends Becoming the Norm 2021

In 2021 we reported 1107 offline cases and verified 781 by our caseworkers. The most significant spike of the year occurred during the Holy month of Ramadan, following the escalations in Israel-Palestine in May of that year, which saw a total of 56 cases online and offline and marked a sharp rise of 430% compared to the seven days prior to the 8 May, where we recorded 13 reports. Interestingly, household cases remained proportionally high following a unique 2020, with 26% of all cases, highlighting that such cases were not isolated to lockdown environments but were a continuation of them. This consistent rise in household cases throughout the year also possibly marks the beginning of a new normal for anti-Muslim hate crime trends.

We verified 413 online cases for 2021. Hate speech accounted for 51% (n=219) of cases, with broadly abusive materials accounting for 27% (n=116), as a small minority contained overt threats. The ongoing harassment of refugees by far-right groups shows the interconnectivity of offline and online agitations that pose real-world risks to those filmed without consent, including hotel staff. Tell MAMA verified ten reports which contained the racist P-word in 2021, over half of which (60%) referred to the former cricketer Azeem Rafiq as he spoke about his experiences of racism in cricketing. We recorded similar numbers of the P-word directed by perpetrators in the 2020 reporting cycle, with 90 cases involving the racial slur. Much of that racist discourse welded to discussions that demonised and dehumanised Muslim men as rapists, as others made racist expressions wishing that Muslims succumb to Covid-19, demonstrating how, across different years, how those with underlying racist motivations would react to news cycles or find other ways to express these sentiments online, either targeting Muslims directly or speaking about them in broader echo chambers.

Manifestations of Anti-Muslim Hate Online

In preparation for the more comprehensive review of a decade of anti-Muslim hate online, we emphasised the extremes of language – including overt racist and dehumanising language, ranging from the P-word to those comparing Muslims to rats, slime, or other non-human forms because they always existed across each yearly caseload. In addition, of course, Islam is not an ethnically homogeneous faith. However, throughout the lifespan of our work (particularly in the online world), we draw distinctions between how Muslims are spoken of (or spoken towards) online with overt racist language or tropes and through the lens of racialisation (which some academics argue concerns the "cultural factors in addition to traditional, physical markers of race and ethnicity").[9]

The pre-pandemic years of Tell MAMA include data published across various annual and interim reports, including from academics before Tell MAMA began to publish our reports with academic peer review from 2015 onwards. The number of verified online cases for each reporting year varies and in some years we add a note of caution that a drop in online cases broadly in these years reflected the shift in higher degrees of offline and street-level reports, shaped

7 Tell MAMA.(2020). 'How Far-right Fake News Continues to Go Viral on Twitter'. Tell MAMA. Last modified February 5, 2020. https://tellmamauk.org/how-far-right-fake-news-continues-to-go-viral-on-twitter/.

8 Tell MAMA. (2020). 'Katie Hopkins: the Viral Power of an Anti-Muslim Falsehood on Twitter.' Tell MAMA. Last modified February 24, 2020. https://tellmamauk.org/katie-hopkins-the-viral-power-of-an-anti-muslim-falsehood-on-twitter/.

9 Selod, S., and Embrick. D.G.(2013). 'Racialization and Muslims: Situating the Muslim experience in race scholarship'. Sociology Compass 7, no. 8: 644-655.

Mapping anti-Muslim Hatred Online (2012-2019)

Online Verified Cases
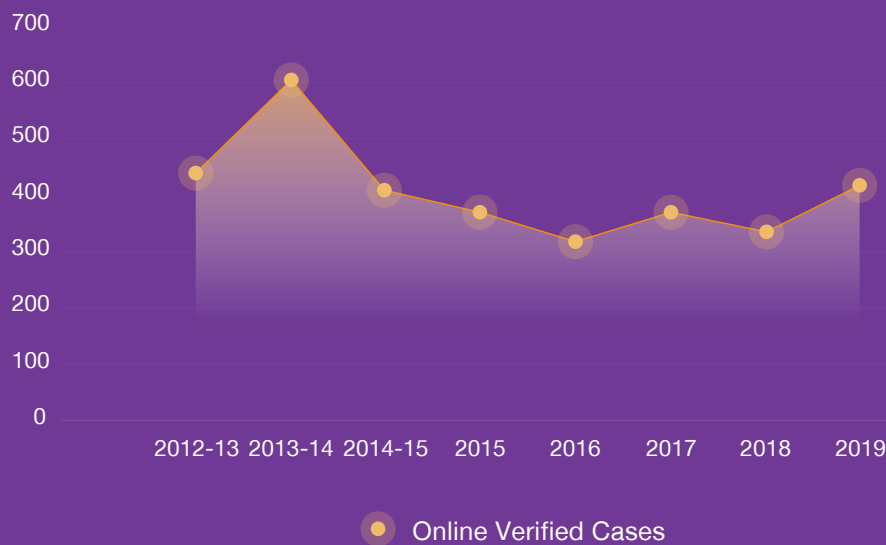
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by trigger events and broadly with rising forms of reports concerning discrimination and structural anti-Muslim bias.

In the online world, we bracketed the pandemic years from early 2020 (following the first national lockdown) to 2021. Thematically, for this reporting cycle, we expand a more comprehensive literature review about conspiracies, dehumanising language, and case studies sent to our service. Equally, another prevalent theme concerned the role of stigma and how the media uses stock imagery in ways that might unintentionally associate specific minority communities with the virus. The broad literature reviews help define, contextualise, and understand the mechanics of conspiracy theories — tracing their origins, how they flourish (pre-internet and in digital forms) and how some conspiracies gain traction from mainstream popular culture and politics. Moreover, we emphasise how racialised forms of conspiracist thinking target ethnic and religious minorities in historical and contemporary forms to help audiences better understand how such ideas do not exist in vacuums. Therefore, we begin with attention to how

contemporary anti-Muslim conspiracy theories to the historical and modern forms of racialisation in parts of Europe, demonstrating how colonial powers like Spain constructed Muslims as a politically expedient racialised group. Such constructions, along with the eventual expulsion of Muslims, would inspire Catholic nationalists centuries later; even if the Reconquista mythologised and sanctified specific individuals, the marginalisation, forced conversions, dehumanisation, and discrimination (as with Spain's Jewish population centuries earlier[10]).

Moreover, racialised forms of othering, as the former, reflects what Rich and Troudi (2006) contend is how race (vis-a-vis racism) exists as social constructions in response to the sociocultural, political, historical conditions from which they emerge—adding that such social discourses bridge identity categories (including culture, gender, ethnicity, and faith) in subtle and complex forms.[11] Regarding othering, an instructive way to consider it is how Ong (1996) demonstrates

10 Roth, N.(1992). 'The Jews of Spain and the Expulsion of 1492'. The Historian 55, no. 1 (1992): 17-30.

11 Rich, Sarah, and Salah Troudi. "Hard times: Arab TESOL students' experiences of racialization and othering in the United Kingdom." TESOL quarterly 40, no. 3 (2006): 615-627.

how class influences racialisation[12] and, in a post-9/11 context, has a gendered context[13] but fundamentally concerns the processes in which an "other" is identified and stigmatised.[14] Alternatively, othering seeks to normalise the essentialised forms of negatively evaluating others through exoticised and stereotyped lenses,[15] consequently inhibiting empathy.[16] Conspiracies about Muslim communities, like other religious or minority groups, pre-date the pandemic in specific ways – including via the myth of "Eurabia", which even found more mainstream acceptance.[17] The abuse of history and the role of collective and cultural memory[18] is crucial in what motivates far-right, anti-Muslim ideologies in popular radical right politics.[19] Couperus et., al (2022) analysed how far-right movements and individuals strengthen their discursive strategies by modifying historical tropes and myth-making[20] with the ultimate aim of rehabilitating and celebrating ethnonationlist community identity models in opposition to social diversity in three distinct ways: idealising, instrumentalising and crucially, whitewashing respective national histories.[21] Other research explores this within the United States[22] as the issue extends to places like Wikipedia and a far-right, pro-fascist bias from certain editors in Croatia[23] that whitewashed fascist violence in the region until Wikimedia acted to ban those responsible.[24] At its most extreme, growing research explores how digital hate cultures sanctify white supremacist terrorists by situating them as cultural figureheads and warriors who populate a more profound historical struggle that engages with, promotes and celebrates such violence in retrospect and hopes of what it will further inspire.[25] An acute example of this appeared in our previous research, as we identified how the Finsbury Park terrorist appeared in far-right propaganda as a "love crusader".[26] Further discussions around this issue in a post-Christchurch climate continue to influence online reports sent to our service and feature throughout the analysis presented in greater depth in the online section of the report.

The figures for the following year marked a downturn compared to the spike the previous year, owing to the gradual reduction of national and local lockdowns, with an overall verified caseload of 449 cases, verified at 431 verified cases. From that figure, 143 verified cases represented almost one in 3 reports (n=64, 29.76%), as over half of the verified cases fell under Hate Speech (n=228, 53%) as just over 47% fell under Anti-Muslim Literature (n=25), with Threats constituting 5% (n=22).

12 Ong, Aihwa, Virginia R. Dominguez, Jonathan Friedman, Nina Glick Schiller, Verena Stolcke, David YH Wu, and Hu Ying. "Cultural citizenship as subject-making: Immigrants negotiate racial and cultural boundaries in the United States [and comments and reply]." Current anthropology 37, no. 5 (1996): 737-762.

13 Nagra, Baljit. "Cultural explanations of patriarchy, race, and everyday lives: Marginalizing and "othering" Muslim women in Canada." Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs 38, no. 2 (2018): 263-279.

14 Paré, Céline. "Selective solidarity? Racialized othering in European migration politics." Amsterdam Review of European Affairs 1, no. 1 (2022): 42-61.

15 Cashmore, Ellis, ed. Encyclopedia of race and ethnic studies. Routledge, 2004.307.

16 Mezzenzana, Francesca, and Daniela Peluso. "Introduction: Conversations on Empathy–Interdisciplinary perspectives on empathy, imagination and othering." In Conversations on Empathy, pp. 1-24. Routledge, 2023.

17 Lee, Benjamin. "A day in the "swamp": Understanding discourse in the online counter-Jihad nebula." Democracy and Security 11, no. 3 (2015): 248-274.

18 Rosenfeld, Gavriel D. "The rise of illiberal memory." Memory Studies (2021): 1750698020988771.

19 Kallis, Aristotle. "The radical right and Islamophobia." The Oxford handbook of the radical right 1 (2018): 42-60.

20 Couperus, Stefan, Pier Domenico Tortola, and Lars Rensmann. "Memory politics of the far right in Europe." European Politics and Society (2022): 1-10.

21 Ibid. 2.

22 Wasilewski, Krzysztof. "US alt-right media and the creation of the counter-collective memory." Journal of Alternative & Community Media 4, no. 1 (2019): 77-91.

23 Yasseri, Taha, Patrick Gildersleve, and Lea David. "Collective memory in the digital age." arXiv preprint arXiv:2207.01042 (2022).

24 Cimpanu, Catalin. "Wikimedia Bans Admin of Wikipedia Croatia for Pushing Radical Right Agendas." The Record from Recorded Future News. Last modified June 21, 2021. https://therecord.media/wikimedia-bans-admin-of-wikipedia-croatia-for-pushing-radical-right-agendas.

25 Baun, Phillip Stenmann. "Memory and far-right historiography: The case of the Christchurch shooter." Memory Studies 15, no. 4 (2022): 650-665.

26 Tell MAMA. "From Finsbury Park to Medieval Spain: How the Far-right Misuse History." TELL MAMA. Last modified June 19, 2019. https://tellmamauk.org/from-finsbury-park-to-medieval-spain-how-the-far-right-misuse-history/.

Mapping anti-Muslim Hatred Online (2012-2021)

Online Verified Cases
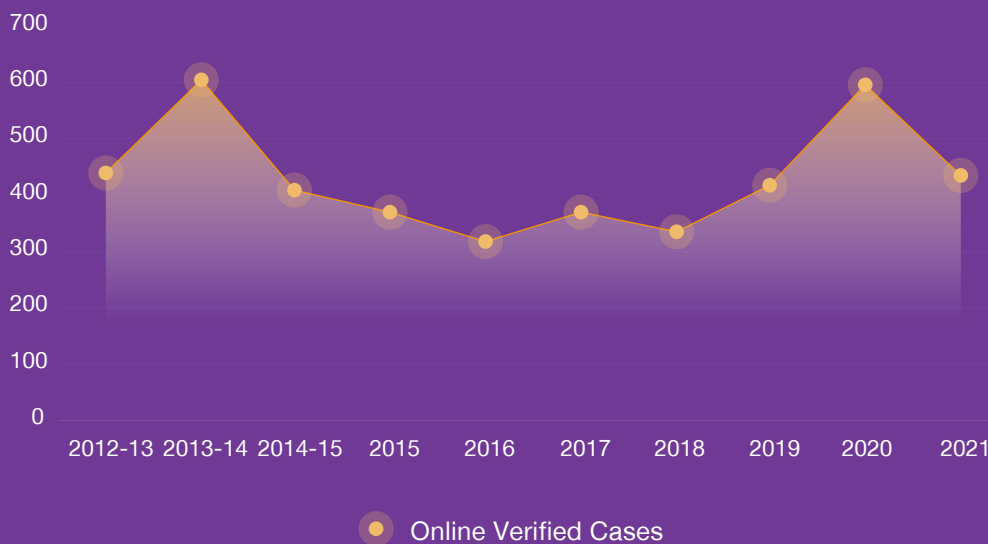
Within the existing legal frameworks, some of the most egregious forms of dehumanising language will fall within grey areas but certainly would breach the terms of most prominent social media platforms. The balance of fundamental speech rights comes with the added responsibility to not harm the dignity of others or promote racial/religious hatred or violence. As with all reports Tell MAMA has published, we provide recommendations for platforms, policymakers, and police forces –from online best practices to engaging communities and taking more profound, impactful steps to provide safer platforms for all.

Throughout the decade, a clear minority of reports concern two overt forms of dehumanising language:

mechanistic (denying the humanity and human traits comparable to machines, including depicting Muslim women as bombs) and animalistic dehumanisation (comparing the outgroup to animals and denying human traits).[27] Nevertheless, several far-reaching studies draw links between conscious, overt forms of outgroup dehumanisation and predictors of support for policies that harm such outgroups[28] to endorsing[29] violence and behaviours (identified as signing petitions against the identified outgroup or withholding charitable donations).[30] For example, Tell MAMA recorded 65 overt examples of the dehumanising term 'Musrat' (and variations, including 'muzzie' and 'muzrat') in 2013 (n=30), 2014 (n=15), and 2015 (n=20).

27 Haslam, N., and Loughnan, S.(2014). 'Dehumanization and infrahumanization'. Annual review of psychology 65, no. 1 (2014): 399-423.

28 Kteily, N., and Bruneau, E.(2017). 'Backlash: The politics and real-world consequences of minority group dehumanization.' Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin 43, no. 1 (2017): 87-104.

29 Kteily, N. S., and Bruneau, E.(2017). 'Darker demons of our nature: The need to (re) focus attention on blatant forms of dehumanization'. Current Directions in Psychological Science 26, no. 6: 487-494.

30 Martherus, J.L., Martinez, A.G., Piff, P.K., and Theodoridis, A.G.(2021). 'Party animals? Extreme partisan polarization and dehumanization'. Political Behavior 43, no. 2: 517-540.

Conclusion

Over the past decade, since Tell MAMA began operations, we have recorded over 16,000 cases of anti-Muslim hate offline and online. Cases of anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia sent to us have evolved owing to the changing social-political and socio-economic climates alongside major trigger events and growing awareness of our services. Yet, the nature of anti-Muslim cases and the language used by perpetrators has somewhat remained the same.

During this ten-year period, we have witnessed a raft of high-profile trigger events that led to spikes in anti-Muslim hate both offline and online. In 2013 we recorded a 373% rise in cases following the horrific murder of Lee Rigby and 34 cases targeting properties such as mosques. That year we highlighted the ability of far-right groups to take advantage of these tragedies and twist them for their own racist agendas, one that we continued to witness throughout the ten years. In 2015 we recorded a series of online and offline spikes following the terror attacks abroad in Sydney, Paris, and Copenhagen. While more specifically, we recorded a 328% rise in offline cases following the Paris terror attacks in November of that year. These spikes highlighted how high-profile international events, especially those highly publicised in British news media, can have significant negative consequences for innocent Muslims in the UK.

Moreover, this trend continued in 2016, following high-profile political events like the EU referendum and terrorist attacks. We recorded a 475% rise in cases following the EU referendum, which showed a worrying development whereby those with Islamophobic, racist, and xenophobic sentiments felt bolstered and motivated by seeing others express anti-Muslim views. The post-referendum spike demonstrated the potential for a rise in anti-Muslim attacks directly resulting from anti-Muslim and anti-migrant rhetoric in the media, politics, and public discourse. In 2017 there was a 700% increase in incidents recorded in the week following the Manchester Arena terror attack and the London Bridge and Westminster Bridge terror attacks.

The following year we noted that debates and discussions on Islam and Muslims from 2018 have accelerated around ideas of cultural and national identity amidst growing exclusionary rhetoric online and in some political arenas. In particular, the self-styled 'Punish a Muslim Day' letters, alongside the opinion piece by Boris Johnson 'Denmark has got it wrong. Yes, the burka is oppressive and ridiculous – but that's still no reason to ban it', created temporary spikes in cases, impacting Muslim communities in various ways. The terrorising letters targeted Muslim households, businesses, and Muslims, particularly those visibly Muslim and targeting Muslim MPs. For the latter, the dehumanising language around letterboxes and postboxes emboldened individuals to target Muslim women in public areas, especially if they wore religious clothing.

In 2019, the white supremacist terror attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand, that resulted in the indiscriminate murder of 51 Muslims consequently created a 692% spike in reports to us, extending to praise of the terrorist on social media or others wishing for similar terrorism towards Muslims in Britain. In total, we received 74 cases that made verbal or symbolic references to the terror attacks in the offline world. The spike agrees with previous reports and findings that the rise of the far-right and white nationalist movements relate to and are mutually implicated in the rise in Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred and that people with racist far-right views feel emboldened to commit anti-Muslim hate crimes based on the successes of other far-right actors.

In 2020 the UK and the rest of the world faced an unprecedented pandemic that completely changed our day-to-day living habits. With that, anti-Muslim hate crime dynamics changed too, shifting from targeting in public spaces being the dominant category over the past decade to household cases now exceeding them. Not only did these cases dominate the proportion of total cases in 2020, but they were particularly challenging because they were often long-term cases from known individuals,

especially neighbours that involved multiple forms of targeting. Due to their nature, these cases were particularly stressful for victims that reported to us, and they highlighted a range of glaring issues in how various authorities, including housing authorities and the police, approached them and were able to help them. These issues continued and further increased into 2021, showing that their pandemic and lockdown conditions were not isolated until 2020 but instead acted as a catalyst for a new normal of housing-related hate crimes.

2020 and 2021 also saw a significant uptick in discrimination cases, particularly those in the workplace and educational institutions. The growing prevalence of these cases in both 2020 and 2021 signifies the institutional realities of anti-Muslim hatred today, one that is not necessarily illegal like more typical anti-Muslim attacks, and yet their long-term damage on Muslim victims is no less significant. As we continue to stress: anti-Muslim hatred manifests in interpersonal forms of abuse, violence and discrimination and manifests at a structural level impacting the education and career aspirations of Muslims and when they engage with the legal system and the health service.

Preliminary data analysis for 2022 shows an upward trend in discrimination cases – in workplaces, within education, the misuse of safeguarding and Prevent policies, to engagements with law enforcement. The numbers, however, remain subject to further review and analysis. However, for the 2022 analysis, we will give due focus to the cost of living crisis and how it exacerbates existing social inequalities – at a time when families face the most challenging choices, where employment or job prospects feel more precarious, we want to make sure that our analysis helps draw attention to these structural issues.

The threat of racist violence and far-right terror towards refugees was, in the year, most acutely felt in the petrol bomb attack in Dover by Andrew Leak,

whose racist worldview and social media activity we profiled in a briefing paper[31] throughout the year, we wrote extensively about far-right terror offences and the ongoing influence of the Christchurch terrorist.

Our analysis for 2022 will continue to show the gendered targeting of Muslim women, including on public transport and in public areas. A high-profile example we had previously highlighted included a male perpetrator who shouted, "You're scum, coming here and taking our jobs," into the ear of a Muslim woman when on the Central line on the London Underground network.[32]

The latter half of the year saw the targeted use of pork products in hate crimes, including dumping a pig's head in an alleyway in the Barton Hill area of Bristol and a pig's head appearing on the roof of a mosque in Stockport.

Against that backdrop was the most recent hate crime data (2021/22) revealed that in two-fifths of incidents recorded by police forces in England and Wales (but excluded Greater Manchester for IT-related reasons), Muslims faced 42 per cent (3,459) of all religiously aggravated offences, with Jewish communities experiencing over one-fifth of all such recorded offences as around just 0.5 of the population self-identified as Jewish in the 2011 Census.

Understanding the varieties of anti-Muslim hate and Islamophobia (from interpersonal to discriminatory), as mentioned above, will continue to shape our analysis for the 2022 report analysis and beyond.

In the online world, to reiterate the conclusions stated in greater depth further in that section, a significant driver of anti-Muslim content online came from the far-right and those pushing conspiracies during the initial lockdowns. Whilst we anticipated a sharp rise in reports due to the unique and trying circumstances the lockdowns presented, the level of reporting and the verified figure for that year (n=592) demonstrated a 170.3% (n=219) rise in verified online cases from

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31 Tell MAMA. "The Tangled Web of Far Right Anti-Muslim Hate." TELL MAMA. Last modified November 4, 2022. https://tellmamauk.org/the-tangled-web-of-far-right-anti-muslim-hate/.

32 Tell MAMA. "Racist Yelled Abuse into Muslim Woman's Ear on Busy Central Line Train." Tell MAMA. Last modified November 15, 2022. https://tellmamauk.org/racist-yelled-abuse-into-muslim-womans-ear-on-busy-central-line-train/.

the previous year. Indeed, the numbers returned to pre-pandemic levels, as outlined in the executive summary section. However, we continued to observe overt racist language in Twitter cases related to the racism scandal in English cricket, the role of the far-right harassment of refugees online and offline, to the degrees of dehumanising and criminalising language about Muslim communities. Ultimately, the changes to platforms like Twitter in allowing banned accounts back and changing how it deals with content moderation especially in terms of racist and dehumanising language, will continue to impact the trust Muslims, and other minoritised communities will have in the platform to uphold fundamental rights for all. We remind the public that Tell MAMA monitors anti-Muslim language across all major social media platforms, and with the rise of new platforms from the likes of Meta, we remind communities of our presence in these spaces and to continue reporting such content they come across.

Recommendations

General recommendations

- Anti-Muslim attacks often occur in busy public spaces. These include shopping areas, in and around public transport networks, roads or highways, restaurants, and other business areas. Perpetrators are likelier to act in spaces where they feel they can act with impunity. Therefore, existing preventative measures, where appropriate, should be utilised, and where such measures are lacking or absent, steps should be taken to address such inadequacies.

- Perpetrators often target victims in vulnerable positions relative to themselves, whether physically or socially; this may be related to age, gender, disability, class, and racial or religious identity, including visibly Muslim people. Muslim women remain the primary victims of anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia and, therefore, adopting intersectional frameworks which foreground the experiences of Muslim communities is imperative for institutions to adequately respond to, eliminate bias, and cultivate empathy and understanding when Muslims come forward to report their experiences, confident that they will receive equal and fair treatment.

- Those in authority, including representatives of law enforcement agencies and civil authorities such as teachers, council officials and employers, should be aware of any potential power imbalance when responding to a report of identity-based abuse or discrimination. Those in a privileged position due to their social status will invariably have an advantage when negotiating their case with the appropriate agencies.

- Individuals with vulnerabilities may need additional support, and therefore, resources need to be allocated within institutions, organisations and private companies to train staff accordingly.

- In addition to formal criminal justice and civil outcomes, informal responses to cases are also important. Victims appreciate and often rely on frequent and accurate updates from the police regarding their cases. However, victims are often not made aware of the process for reporting to the police and what to expect from the process and its potential outcomes. Many victims reported to Tell MAMA to share their negative (though sometimes positive) experiences of interacting with the police. An initial lack of communication is frequently compounded by officers' unsupportive comments and a lack of follow-up. Communication helps victims understand their cases' status and provides them with an invaluable piece of Mind in such challenging and stressful situations.

- In a similar tone, police services and local councils/housing authorities must approach household cases, especially ones involving neighbours or housemates, with awareness and empathy for how long-standing cases of

anti-Muslim abuse can manifest and continue to occur. As we have highlighted in this report, many of the household cases we recorded involved victims feeling let down by their local councils or police forces and frequently felt they were not able to get their points across or even be able present relevant evidence of hate crimes taking place, while perpetrators continued to act with a sense of impunity. It is crucial that victims of household anti-Muslim attacks feel they will be listened to and given the appropriate time to explain what has happened, how it continues to happen to them and their families, and how the attacks make them feel.

- Police forces and the emergency services should continue to lead in educating vulnerable communities on the processes involved in reporting hate crimes, building trust, and cultivating awareness. Within their forces, we recommend that all staff, from call handlers to prosecutors, improve religious literacy, community engagement, and knowledge of services such as Tell MAMA.

- Members of the public should not underestimate their role in challenging anti-Muslim hatred and showing support for victims. If individuals can safely show solidarity with victims during

or following an incident, this can create an environment in which abuse and identity-based discrimination are unacceptable.

- Similarly, we should not underestimate the power of public statements condemning and combating anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia within the media.

- Councils and local authorities should work with third-party and statutory agencies such as Tell MAMA to streamline support for residents when reporting anti-Muslim vandalism such as graffiti or anti-social behaviour, which is verifiably anti-Muslim.

- Media outlets must consider how their choice of language influences broader public discourse. Our research over the past decade and external academic studies show that high-profile events and associated media coverage stimulate public discourse on issues such as terrorism, religious expression and immigration and can legitimise racist, xenophobic and anti-Muslim prejudice. Individuals with underlying prejudice may feel emboldened to victimise those they feel to be deserving of abuse to defend the status of the dominant 'in-group'.

Employers and Businesses

In 2020 and 2021, we received more discrimination cases than any other period in our ten years of recording anti-Muslim hate crimes. In 2020 this made up 15% of total cases; in 2021, this increased to 17%. Often 'low-level' abuse can be a daily occurrence that significantly shapes victims' everyday lives, especially when there is a gendered dynamic to the abuse and victims are near their abusers. Our recommendations include:

- Employers are encouraged to commit to a diversity-led work environment and recruitment that reflect social diversity across the UK. Examples include employers implementing policies such as blind recruitment, outreach and training courses, and appropriate representation

at all levels of management. Efforts to cultivate empathy and understanding of different cultures and religious beliefs must be a focal point for companies, especially during Ramadan and Eid, with more understanding of the importance of dietary changes and the need for time off for religious observance. Creating more equitable working environments can help reduce prejudicial attitudes and foster better staff relationships. Equally, creating space for and allowances for prayer time is another way to create more inclusive work environments. Listen to staff and take their requests with an open mind.

- Pay gaps should be treated seriously by employers and investigated thoroughly and

overcome. While the gender pay gap still leaves women at consistently lower pay, workers of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage also have the lowest median hourly pay of any ethnic group, in the latter case earning 20.1% less than white British workers.[33]

- Employers have a moral obligation to ensure that all employees feel respected and that differences in belief, religious or otherwise, are welcomed, valued, and respected. Moreover, employers and all staff members should be reminded of their liability for unlawful discrimination, bullying, harassment, and victimisation of their fellow employees, members of the public, or customers. In doing so, it may help address issues concerning structural or institutional forms of Islamophobia, where the life chances of Muslims are harmed at the recruitment or career advancement stages.

- Employers must take complaints from staff seriously and make them aware that they can always come forward to raise any complaints without fear of negative consequences on their jobs or social standing at the workplace. Employers must also create an environment where people know internal grievance processes. Moreover, HR officers who are independent and neutral about any underlying and systemic prejudicial attitudes should be made available to employees who have grievances against other

Educational Institutions

Cases in educational institutions jumped from 5% (N=36) in 2020 to 10% (N=67) in 2021, marking the most significant increase we have ever recorded for this category. Many cases in these two years involved discrimination from fellow pupils, teachers, other staff members, or the larger educational institution. Our recommendations include:

- Promoting religious education is paramount to the growth of a peaceful and tolerant society. We recommend facilitating positive dialogue under a broad umbrella of mutuality, an understanding

employees or management.

- Staff should be reminded that anti-Muslim victimisation may amount to gross misconduct and incur subsequent automatic dismissal, which may encourage others to come forward and report abuse and/or bullying that they have received or witnessed.

- Employers should educate all staff about their rights under the Equality Act 2010 and make greater efforts to foster an environment of religious and cultural tolerance which would include reasonable adjustments to, for example, allow staff the time to pray in a multi-faith prayer room or space during work hours.

- Informing employees of their legal rights about workplace discrimination should be considered a priority by employers, and information regarding such rights should be made more readily available, whether through third-party agencies or specialised services which can advocate on behalf of victims and signpost them where necessary.

- Employers should be encouraged to refer their staff who are experiencing bullying or harassment to specialised services such as Tell MAMA, which may help to reduce absenteeism or presenteeism and improve staff retention rates.

which foregrounds the importance of fundamental rights for all.

- While promoting religious literacy outside of formal lessons, for example, visiting faith institutions would promote a more open-minded approach to religious people and practices. Teachers should encourage parents to engage with the curriculum before requests to withdraw their children are made, and teachers should clarify the benefits of such study visits and how learning about other faiths, including Islam, is a way for

33 Women and Equalities Committee (2016). 'Employment Opportunities for Muslims in the UK: Second Report of Session 2016-17', House of Commons. Crown Copyright.

pupils to build empathy and an understanding of others, which will benefit their overall education.

- Teachers must set an example by reminding pupils that bullying, racism, and other forms of hatred will not be tolerated. Setting these examples with clarity may also help victims feel less isolated.

- Teachers must approach sensitive topics impacting our society with sound background knowledge and empathy for differing viewpoints and potentially contentious interactions. These situations can be stressful and confusing for pupils, and teachers must understand their nuances and provide opportunities for healthy discussions. Doing so will create safe spaces that respect people's opinions.

- Educational institutions should do more to accommodate religious role models and foster a teaching environment where students should not fear going to staff for advice and support.

- Proactive strategies tackling discrimination and 'casual' abuse in educational environments require input from specialist third parties and external institutions equipped with the knowledge to educate pupils and staff.

Political Parties

We call on all political parties from the Conservatives, Labour, the Liberal Democrats, the SNP and others, to demonstrate such transparency in their complaints process amidst broader efforts to get more Muslims and under-represented groups into politics across all levels.

We called for structural changes beyond tick-box exercises amidst a more comprehensive cultural change within the parties so that Muslims feel supported and able to progress in party politics as proactive steps to eliminate bias and discriminatory attitudes within party structures at local and national levels towards Muslim communities, refugees and other minorities, with the equalities legislation in mind,

- Parents often mention that their complaints are undermined, dismissed, and not treated with the appropriate attention or respect. Teachers and senior staff members should be reminded of their legal obligations to handle complaints sensitively and should do more to ensure transparency about their formal and informal complaint procedures, mainly if complaints concern staff.

- Schools and educational institutions should provide comprehensive training to their staff or seek expert advice on dealing with identity-based victimisation or discrimination issues.

- Considerable efforts should be made to boost the engagement of Muslim parents in school activities and feel more involved in their children's education.

- Educational institutions must do more to ensure that safeguarding referrals to the police or other agencies are proportional and not misused to build trust and help ensure pupils and families do not feel targeted because of their religious identity.

- The Department for Education (DfE) should engage with specialist support agencies such as Tell MAMA to understand better issues around anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia in educational institutions.

are upheld, as we remind government and politicians of all colours, the importance of responsibility in the language used when discussing major topics as to not stereotype or potentially scapegoat under-represented groups.

Ultimately, confidence in the complaints system is contingent on the fact that it sufficiently deters and prevents further harm and wrongdoing and, therefore, maintaining positive community engagement and transparency helps the public not just how to make complaints but improve trust in the processes and mechanisms.

Online recommendations

- In the pursuit of undoing harm, social media platforms must also help fund or prioritise the mental health and well-being of minoritised groups with improved support services or funding streams for licenced therapists to access broader support –in-person or online. Racism, after all, is a cause of ill health,[34][35] significantly when media consumption of traumatic events online[36] is associated with adverse health outcomes.[37] Platforms may also consider better signposting for support services like Mind or the Samaritans in the aftermath of "trigger events" and general ways to inform audiences about available support.

- Google-owned platforms like YouTube must make more significant efforts to inform audiences about the reporting of hate speech and harmful materials on their platform and be more transparent in their decision-making, ensuring that malicious and vexatious attempts to remove legitimate content allow content creators to challenge it.

- We welcome Google's efforts to de-list far-right websites mentioned in the previous Tell MAMA. However, we caution that more is needed when it comes from ideological-driven sites based in the United States or India, in some examples, push out anti-Muslim disinformation whilst benefiting from the legitimising status of Google News.

- TikTok must build upon its good community-building work with the' #No2h8 campaign', help users report hateful content as videos and hashtags, and strengthen its moderation tools to clamp down on hate speech in user comments.

- Our report showed how anti-Muslim and Islamophobic disinformation campaigns populated significant social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook during the first national lockdowns in 2020. Our research exposed several high-profile examples, debunking them and flagging the content through the appropriate channels. However, Twitter must do more to increase how it allows users to report harmful and misleading content – as, in August 2021, it first announced its limited testing of a misleading reporting function in countries like Australia, South Korea, and the United States.[38] Such a policy change, although long overdue, is welcome; we are one of many organisations that called on such changes years earlier. Previously, we have called on Twitter to expand its "suspicious or spam" functionality to include a function for "misleading or disinformation" and hateful content, including an option to report racist and bigoted acts of disinformation.

- Twitter must tighten loopholes in how those banned for account violations, notably on the far-right, circumvent said bans by creating alias accounts or, in some cases, using the login credentials of friends, allies, or sympathisers. Such actions were evident during the lockdowns of 2020 when notable far-right agitators who presented themselves as "legitimate" news sources by sharing videos and doctored footage went viral on Twitter.

- Facebook must do more to counter disinformation on its platform – whilst fact-checking content works to some degree, more steps are required to disincentivise users who continue to share such harmful content despite the warning that such information is false. Unfortunately, one warning is not always enough.

34 Devakumar, Delan, Sujitha Selvarajah, Geordan Shannon, Kui Muraya, Sarah Lasoye, Susanna Corona, Yin Paradies, Ibrahim Abubakar, and E. Tendayi Achiume. "Racism, the public health crisis we can no longer ignore." The Lancet 395, no. 10242 (2020): e112-e113.

35 Okazaki, Sumie. "Impact of racism on ethnic minority mental health." Perspectives on Psychological Science 4, no. 1 (2009): 103-107.

36 Tynes, Brendesha M., Henry A. Willis, Ashley M. Stewart, and Matthew W. Hamilton. "Race-related traumatic events online and mental health among adolescents of color." Journal of Adolescent Health 65, no. 3 (2019): 371-377.

37 Pfefferbaum, Betty, Sara Jo Nixon, Rick D. Tivis, Debby E. Doughty, Robert S. Pynoos, Robin H. Gurwitch, and David W. Foy. "Television exposure in children after a terrorist incident." Psychiatry: Interpersonal and Biological Processes 64, no. 3 (2001): 202-211.

38 BBC News. "Twitter Tests 'misleading' Post Report Button for First Time." BBC News. Last modified August 18, 2021. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-58258377.

- It remains inconceivable that notable far-right agitators banned on Facebook, for example, benefit from an account and verified status on other platforms like Instagram. Such glaring oversights must be investigated and corrected.

- Newspapers should commit to efforts to help combat misinformation about Muslim communities by ensuring that articles contain the date of publication in the image – a trend we see with the Guardian and the New York Times who include a "from [year]" and "published [year] within the image preview of articles shared on social media. Such proactive steps may help counter or limit the reach of those motivated by anti-Muslim hatred and racialised prejudice in taking stories, sometimes five years or older, to stigmatise Muslim communities. Efforts to tackle falsehoods are a shared responsibility, and newspapers and social media platforms should take the steps suggested. Equally, whilst it will not always stop confirmation bias, it might dissuade some from sharing false or decontextualised information.

Introduction

Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks) is an independent, non-governmental entity that monitors and tackles anti-Muslim hatred, discrimination, and Islamophobia. Our platform provides a secure and reliable way for people across the UK to report cases and access the support services they may need. Those wishing to submit reports can do so via our website, freephone, SMS, WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, and our app for iOS and Android devices. Amidst an unmistakable rise in anti-Muslim attacks, Tell MAMA emerged to provide a nationally coordinated means of reporting and monitoring cases while supporting those affected confidentially and holistically.

We work in partnership with charities, statutory bodies, police forces, and other third-party organisations, and our work involves research, victim support, advocacy, signposting for legal assistance, lobbying, raising awareness, supporting victims through the criminal justice process and offering counselling services. Our team assists victims and witnesses by providing support and referrals to relevant services. While our research team analyse case details to create reports, lobby policymakers, and identify trends around anti-Muslim hate and Islamophobia, both online and offline.

Our annual report for this year is unique in that it takes a retrospective look at the past decade of our operations and the broader anti-Muslim environment. This report has also emphasised the evolving nature of anti-Muslim hate and discrimination in the past decade, the impact of anti-Muslim hate on our communities, and what we as an organisation have monitored and recorded during that time.

Over the years, we have highlighted various characteristics of anti-Muslim hatred while acknowledging the consistent nature of how it manifests. In 2015, we focused on the geographic aspect of hate crimes, particularly their concentration in public spaces. In 2016, the focus shifted towards the intersectional nature of abuse and its disproportionate impact on Muslim women, and in 2017 we looked at the longer-term outcomes of anti-Muslim hate crimes for both victims and perpetrators. While more recently, in 2018, we took a more holistic approach to focus on how anti-Muslim hate crimes and broader hateful narratives towards Muslims and immigrants have been normalised in British social-political discourse, including the influence of news media on prejudices. This report provides an opportunity to explore and reflect on these decade-long understandings and contributions and how anti-Muslim hatred has evolved.

While in many ways, the years 2020 and 2021 show similar characteristics from previous years, such as the type of language used in anti-Muslim attacks, they also mark a potentially new normal for how and where hate, discriminatory actions, and language manifests in the offline world. Never have we witnessed such a significant shift in the dominant location of these hate crimes, with the majority of offline cases shifting from taking place in public places to in and around the household and private property. The most logical explanation for this, as we will discuss further, is the fact that the year 2020 was overshadowed by the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent household lockdowns for the British public, thus creating a climate for those holding anti-Muslim prejudices to interact with their Muslim neighbours more frequently. This trend continued into 2021, and while Covid-19 was still very much present that year, it suggests that these effects may not be a timestamped anomaly to 2020 but rather mark a broader shift in anti-Muslim hate crime going forward. The same can be said for discrimination cases, particularly in the workplace and at schools, which have continued to prosper out of 2020 and into 2021 and 2022.

Tell MAMA has used a reworked version of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism as an analytical guiding tool to help readers understand the

issue, which we feel allows us to demonstrate how anti-Muslim prejudice and Islamophobia manifests in interpersonal and structural forms.

'A certain perception of Muslims may be expressed as hatred or outward hostility towards Muslims. Hatred may take the form of anti-Muslim rhetoric and physical manifestations targeted towards Muslims (or non-Muslim individuals considered sympathetic to Muslims) and/or their property; or towards Muslim community institutions or religious and other related social institutions.'

Methodology

Tell MAMA is, first and foremost, a victim support service. We receive reports from victims and witnesses of anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia. We regard anti-Muslim or Islamophobic incidents as any malicious act aimed at Muslim groups or individuals, private property, or Islamic organisations, where the act has biased motivation or content or the victim experienced abuse, harassment, discrimination or violence due to being or perceived to be Muslim. Individuals who report to us do not have to be Muslim since the racialised nature of hate crime means anyone can be affected. Our caseworkers log details of the cases in our database and then take measures to verify them. Our research team uses this information to identify year-old trends and create reports.

Beyond the quantitative analysis that we do, much of this report draws on qualitative thematical analysis. We analyse the details of the reports given to us, and our research team uses them to inform the reports we publish. We receive many cases from members of the public, third-party organisations, and sometimes news articles.

However, a complex reality in hate crime reporting and casework data is that many anti-Muslim and Islamophobic incidents go unreported for various reasons - which include fear of reporting the incident in the first place, not knowing that services like Tell MAMA are available, mistrust in public services such as police forces, or simply not realising that the incident was worthy of reporting, despite the significant psychological effects that often come as a result of many incidents. We aim that increased awareness of our service and what should be considered an anti-Muslim or Islamophobic hate crime by victims will improve this methodological difficulty. We also occasionally face the difficulty of gaps in our data since those who report incidents to us sometimes cannot disclose all the information or do not consent to share specific case-related details in our reports, which is their right given our confidential service. We strive to include details but sometimes exclude location, incident type, victim and perpetrator characteristics, and keywords.

Tell MAMA places the utmost importance on the views and voices of Muslim communities. We rely heavily on the testimonies of victims and witnesses of anti-Muslim hate and Islamophobia and work to keep their identities always protected. Ultimately, we aim to centre the voices of those who come to us for assistance, to educate the public, lobby for change across politics and public life, and work to promote mutuality and solidarity under a broader umbrella of fundamental rights and coalition building against all forms of racism, hate, and bigotry.

How do we categorise incidents?

How we categorise incidents continues to evolve and change throughout the years of work of Tell MAMA. We regularly review our database criteria and observe trends to decide whether any categories need to be updated. For example, toward the latter half of 2016, we introduced a separate category for 'hate speech', where previously these incidents would have fallen more broadly within 'abusive behaviour' or 'anti-Muslim literature' – this was introduced in online categories shortly afterwards. At the same time, we added discrimination as a category code in our 2015 reporting year, which would have also fallen under abusive behaviour. We felt that this allowed us to analyse and compare current trends in Islamophobia more accurately. Our place and incident categories for this reporting period are detailed below.

Definitions of Street-Based (Offline) Place Categories

- **'Public Area'** is an incident in public, pedestrianised areas, including town centres, parks, or shopping areas.

- **'Transport Networks'** – An incident that occurs on public transport networks, including railways, buses, coaches, trams, the London Underground and stations more generally

- **'Place of Business'** – An incident in a shop, restaurant or other privately-owned business where the victim does not work.

- **'Household or Private Property'** – An incident in or around the victim's or another person's domestic dwelling.

- **'Place of Work'** – An incident in the victim's workplace, including public spaces, if the victim is a taxi driver or police officer, for example.

- **'Educational Institution'** – An incident occurring within a college, school or university the victim attends.

- **'Road or Highway'** – An incident involving one or more vehicles on a roadway or car park.

- **'Muslim Institutions'** – An incident targeting an Islamic institution such as a mosque, cemetery, cultural centre or Islamic school.

- **'Public Institution'** – An incident within a public building, such as a job-centre or council office where the victim does not work.

- **'Hospital'** – An incident in health service buildings, including hospitals, GP surgeries or health clinics.

Clarifications

Tell MAMA often uses "street-based" to refer more broadly to all offline incidents. While this short-hand helps observe trends between offline and online spheres, it is essential to note that not all "street-based" incidents occur on roads and pavements but in the multiplicity of places listed above and appear in a specific incident code. Furthermore, the place category is chosen based on the place of work, which may also refer to another category, e.g., a hospital or educational institution; we record this as a place of work. Incidents occurring at airports, ports, roads, highways, and other transport hubs fall under the category of transport networks.

Definitions of Street-based (offline) Anti-Muslim Incident Categories

- **'Abusive Behaviour'** – Verbal and non-verbal abuse, including comments or gestures targeting an individual due to their perceived Muslim identity or beliefs.

- **'Assault'** – A physical attack ranging from unwanted touching, spitting, or throwing objects to a violent assault against an individual due to their perceived Muslim identity - this has been named a 'Physical Attack' in previous reports.

- **'Threatening Behaviour'** – Direct and indirect threats of physical violence motivated by anti-Muslim prejudice.

- **'Discrimination'** – Denial of access or unfair treatment in various settings due to a perception of Muslim identity or beliefs.

- **'Vandalism'** – Damage or desecration of property motivated by anti-Muslim prejudice, including anti-Muslim graffiti, property damage, or the dumping of pork products or alcohol.

- **'Anti-Muslim Literature'** – Written or visual anti-Muslim content, including letters, leaflets, memes or posters publicly displayed or distributed to individuals online or offline.

- **'Hate Speech'** – Verbal communication delivered to an audience to stir up anti-Muslim prejudice and Islamophobia without directly targeting a singular individual but Muslims collectively.

Anti-Muslim attacks often include multiple types of abuse. Most commonly, a victim may experience verbal abusive behaviour accompanying threatening behaviour and/or a physical attack (recorded as 'assault'). In cases involving multiple types of abuse,

we would categorise the incident based on the most prominent or most serious component of the attack according to the victim's testimony. For example, we received a case in 2020 that involved a young woman being followed, called a 'b**ch', and spat on. This case involved threatening behaviour, abusive behaviour, and assault, so it fell under the most severe category, assault. However, it should also be mentioned that when cases with multiple forms of abuse occur, we may record the more detailed 'specific actions' faced by victims, such as 'unfair treatment', 'injury', and 'damage to property'. Incidents may involve several of these specific actions.

Definitions of Online Incident Categories

- **'Abusive behaviour'** – Verbal and non-verbal abuse, including comments or gestures targeting an individual due to their perceived Muslim identity or beliefs.

- **'Threatening behaviour'** – Direct and indirect threats of harm or violence motivated by anti-Muslim prejudice.

- **'Hate Speech'** – Verbal communication, often non-targeted, delivered to an audience to spread racial hatred, incitement to violence, and broadly promote dehumanising and degrading stereotypes about Muslims and their Islamic faith.

For a report to be 'verified' by our caseworkers, we assess the nature and motivation of the incident, verify that it took place in the UK, and compare the incident date to when it was reported. For example, we may have received a report in 2020 that took place in 2019, and therefore it would fall under the analysis for 2019's data regardless of it being reported in 2020.

In sum, we do our best to record anti-Muslim and Islamophobic incidents to the finest of detail and to develop an accurate timescale of events. In the next section, we will summarise our results from the year and explore our thematic analysis.

Literature Review

02

Anti-Muslim Hate Over the Past Decade: An Evolving Landscape

Literature Review

When Tell MAMA began reporting a decade ago, anti-Muslim hate and Islamophobia had evolved and shifted in many ways, just as the UK's social and political landscape has. Many of the factors influencing anti-Muslim hate a decade ago still very much resonate, including socioeconomic factors, changing political landscapes, and the far-right role in mainstream and non-mainstream discussions and discourses online. For example, in 2014, we published a groundbreaking corpus analysis of how the far-right group Britain First weaponised years of horrific, criminal child sexual exploitation in Rotherham to push broader anti-Muslim ideologies, which we warned, "By exploring discourses used in comments on Britain First posts, a clear line can be drawn from derogatory and abusive remarks to the real threat of violent offline cases."[1] The eventual convictions of those responsible for such crimes mean that some hold Muslims collectively responsible, especially in their offline and online agitations, echoing broader tropes that externalise Muslims broadly as a dangerous "other". Below we provide a brief outline of some of the major talking points of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate issues our work has covered since 2012. Many factors influencing anti-Muslim hate have remained the same. However, others are unique and time-dependent but link with broader Islamophobia trends such as perceived issues with immigration, cultural and religious identity, socioeconomics and how some with underlying racialised biases seek to exploit trigger events like terrorism to propagate hate or call for street-level hate crimes – against individuals and mosques.

However, this section is a non-exhaustive overview of important themes explored in greater depth further into this report. So, to help readers navigate such complexities, we offer a selection of summarised paragraphs to help bookend much larger themes whilst presenting a selected literature review to provide further context and reading. Examples of such academic literature found in this section and further in the report include (but are not limited to) understandings of Islamophobia, the dynamics of hate crime victimisation, conspiracy theories, intersectionality, racialisation, and stigmatisation. Sections dedicated to the pandemic years and discrimination more broadly in our work help audiences to make a better sense of how such biases emerge.

Tell MAMA emerged in a space vastly different from today – including where many police forces did not record anti-Muslim hate crimes under a separate hate crime flag and, as with other minority communities, provided a sensitive, community-centric, and confidential support service to help address institutional mistrust in policing and help measure how anti-Muslim abuse whilst not always criminal manifests in institutional and interpersonal forms. One of the earliest and most critical successes of Tell MAMA was helping to ensure police forces adopted the crime flag and undertook new training on anti-Muslim hate issues – collaborating with other stakeholders and partners like the Crown Prosecution Service to help put the voices of Muslim communities forward to help enact change in the justice system.

A crucial early test for the service came after terrorists murdered Drummer Lee Rigby in May 2013 and saw an increase in cases sent to our service – helping to map, monitor and demonstrate a substantial rise in anti-Muslim abuse and violence along with the targeting of mosques and other Islamic institutions. Therefore, our segway into the literature review begins with a short look at the impact of trigger events on the work of Tell MAMA.

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1   Tell MAMA. (2014). 'Rotherham, Hate, and the Far Right Online'. Available at: https://tellmamauk.org/rotherham-hate-and-the-far-right-online/.

High profile events

Over the past ten years, high-profile events such as the EU referendum, terrorist attacks, and debates around immigration and national identity saw racialised anti-Muslim talking points enter more mainstream political discussions. In our 2015 report, we explored the effects of the devastating terrorist attacks in Europe that year on anti-Muslim hate crime here in the UK, where we observed a substantial spike (a short-term increase of 328%) following the attacks in France in November of that year.[2] That year, we discussed how "perpetrators are often motivated by their affective and emotional responses to front-page stories involving violence perpetrated by those who identify as Muslims."[3] A year later, we explored how the 2016 EU referendum result was a significant trigger for racist and religiously aggravated hate crimes – including a 475% increase in cases in the short term following the referendum, with several perpetrators making specific reference to the result, using it to legitimise their racist and xenophobic beliefs.[4] Much of the language used in anti-Muslim hate crimes related to these events is repurposed by those who seek to position themselves as self-styled vanguards in broader and historical ideological conflicts within Europe. Some place immense focus on Muslim identity and visual markers of religiosity as cultural menaces or securitised risks and include the disproportionate and gendered targeting of women in headscarves and face veils, which we will explore in more depth in our analysis.

International trigger events can also impact anti-Muslim hate crimes and Islamophobia in the UK. The white supremacist terror attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand, in March 2019, resulting in the murder of 51 Muslims, had a devastating knock-on effect on Muslims here. In our 2020 interim report, we explored the short-term spike in cases recorded in the weeks following the attack by looking at the type of language used in several cases related to the Christchurch attack.[5] In total, we recorded a 692% increase in cases in the week following the terror attack, once again highlighting the deeply racist and Islamophobic reactions perpetrators get from high-profile events both in the UK and even abroad, using it as a way to legitimise their beliefs and direct hateful behaviour.

Media framing about Muslims

The 2014/15 analysis touched on the effects of the British news media apparatus on anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant prejudice, writing, 'recourse to anti-Muslim stereotypes in some sections of the press may help entrench negative stereotypes and normalise discriminatory attitudes towards minority communities. In this way, sensationalist reporting via traditional or social media platforms can contribute to an atmosphere of intolerance, where anti-Muslim tropes and the 'inductive tarring of entire communities can flourish.'[67] While in 2018, we continued this examination by highlighting the works of Bleich, Nisar, and Vazquez, who found that Muslims are more often associated with negative views and events than other religious groups in mainstream news media, as well as Ahmed and Matthes, Morey, Yaqin, and Forte,

2   Tell MAMA. (2016). 'The Geography of Anti-Muslim Hatred – Tell MAMA Annual Report 2015'. Available at: https://tellmamauk.org/geography-anti-muslim-hatred-2015-tell-mama-annual-report/.

3   Ibid, p.23.

4   Tell MAMA. (2017). 'A Constructed Threat: Identity, Intolerance and the Impact of Anti-Muslim Hatred , Tell MAMA Annual Report 2016'. Available at: https://tellmamauk.org/constructed-threat-identity-intolerance-impact-anti-muslim-hatred-tell-mama-annual-report-2016/.

5   Tell MAMA. (2020). 'The Impact of Christchurch Terror Attack | Tell MAMA Interim report 2019'. Available at: https://tellmamauk.org/the-impact-of-the-christchurch-terror-attack/.

6   Tell MAMA. (2015). 'Tell MAMA 2014/2015 Findings on Anti-Muslim Hate'. Available at: https://tellmamauk.org/tell-mama-20142015-findings-on-anti-muslim-hate/.

7   Faimau, G. (2015). 'The Conflictual Model of Analysis in Studies on the Media Representation of Islam and Muslims: A Critical Review', Sociology Compass, 9/5, pp. 321-335.

and several other research reports on the topic.[8][9][10] Meanwhile, Nickels et al. (2012) analysed press coverage between 1974 and 2007 in a comparative analysis of how sections of the press framed Irish and Muslim communities as 'suspect communities', with Muslims presented symbolically as a 'threat to British values'.[11] The research concluded that the national press had a "strong tendency to represent Muslim communities as threatening perceived British values, with Irish communities tending to be represented as a threat to the British state".[12]

Throughout the pandemic years, we received cases from the public worried that photos of Muslim communities in general Covid-19 coverage risked singling them as either 'non-compliant' with lockdowns or viewed with suspicion or 'spreaders' of the virus. The online section of the report will explore these issues in more depth.

Structural anti-Muslim Hate in the UK

Anti-Muslim hatred takes many forms, but at its centre is widespread systemic discrimination that affects all aspects of UK society - this includes educational institutions, the workplace, housing, the judicial system, and access to health services, to name but a few. Tell MAMA's 2016 annual report touched on this reality, highlighting that Muslims in the UK at every stage of their lives risk facing systemic discrimination in these institutions, so much so that it 'goes beyond being passed over for roles, and often consists of ongoing 'low-level' abuse and mistreatment met with ignorance from those in authoritative and managerial roles when grievances were raised.'[13] The root causes of anti-Muslim discrimination cannot be pinned down on one singular event but reflect a longstanding history of the marginalisation and othering of ethnic and religious minorities. That said, the turn of the century and major global events that came with it, namely 9/11 and 7/7, severely enhanced the normalisation of anti-Muslim discourse in politics, media, and popular culture, leading to ordinary Muslims being targeted in everyday life.[14] The extent of this targeting is evident in Storm et al.'s (2017) study, which found that British Muslims were treated with the most hostility out of all groups in the UK by all other groups in the UK, supporting Voas and Ling's similar findings from 2010.[15][16]

Extensive research has highlighted the widespread discrimination that Muslim people face in the UK. A 2004 study, for example, found that over 80% of its respondents felt mistreated because of their Muslim faith at some point in their lives, while 8% said they felt they were victims of Muslim discrimination daily.[17] A more recent study by Yazdiha (2019) further highlighted this lived reality, finding that 46.5% of British Muslims in the study had perceived societal hostility towards them based on their faith, and 29.6% had been personally discriminated against within the last two years.[18] Looking more closely at our work at Tell MAMA, discrimination has continued to be a significant category we record, especially in the workplace, educational institutions, and interpersonal acts of discrimination and bias – including viewing

8   Bleich, E., Nisar, H., & Vazquez, C. (2018). 'Investigating status hierarchies with media analysis: Muslims, Jews, and Catholics in The New York Times and The Guardian headlines, 1985–2014', International Journal of Comparative Sociology, 59(3), 239–257.

9   Ahmed, S., and Matthes, J. (2016). 'Media representation of Muslims and Islam from 2000 to 2015: A meta-analysis', International Communication Gazette.

10 Morey, P., Yaqin, A., and Forte, A. (2019). 'Contesting Islamophobia: Anti-Muslim Prejudice in Media, Culture and Politics'. Bloomsbury

11 Nickels, H. C., Thomas, L., Hickman, M.J., and Silvestri, S. (2012). 'Constructing 'suspect' communities and Britishness: mapping British press coverage of Irish and Muslim communities, 1974–2007,' European Journal of Communication, 27(2), 135-151.

12 Ibid, p.147.

13 Tell MAMA (2017). 'Tell MAMA Annual Report 2016: A Constructed Threat: Identity, Intolerance and the Impact of Anti-Muslim Hatred', p.8.

14 Meer, N., and Modood, T. (2009). 'The multicultural state we're in: Muslims, "multiculture" and the "civic re-balancing" of British multiculturalism', Political Studies, 57(3), 473-497.

15 Storm, I., Sobolewska, M., and Ford, R. (2017). 'Is ethnic prejudice declining in Britain? Change in social distance attitudes among ethnic majority and minority Britons', The British Journal of Sociology, 68(3), 410-434.

16 Voas, D. and Ling, R. (2010). 'Religion in Britain and the United States. British social attitudes: The 26th report', 65-86.

17 Ameli, S., Elahi, M., and Merali, A. (2004). Social discrimination: across the Muslim divide. London: Islamic Human Rights Commission.

18 Yazdiha, H. (2019). 'Exclusion through acculturation? Comparing first-and second-generation European Muslims' perceptions of discrimination across four national contexts', Ethnic and Racial Studies, 42(5), 782-800.

Muslims as potential terrorists and security risks.

As we will explore in more depth in the analysis section, 2020 marked the highest recorded number of offline discrimination cases, with 106 cases. Like previous years, these cases occurred most often in the workplace between Muslim staff and their fellow employees or bosses or in educational institutions between students and/or parents and school or

university staff. Often 'low-level' discrimination can be a daily occurrence that significantly shapes victims' everyday lives, especially when there is a gendered dynamic to the abuse and victims are near their abusers (such as workplaces or educational institutions). We will look more closely into how discrimination at impacts such discrimination on those impacted further on.

The process of 'Othering'

Scholars have suggested that since Muslims have lived as a 'minority within non-Muslim societies, being Muslim' has become a topic of politics and identity, where Muslim communities are constructed as 'suspect' in the UK and associated with immoral and criminal tendencies.[19] [20]With that, Muslims have been 'securitised' post-9/11 and have, therefore, been viewed as potential terrorists or particularly vulnerable to radicalisation. Further scholarly work asserts that the 'othering' of Islam vis-a-vis Muslims functions as making them out-groups, as something external to or incompatible with national identity. Thus the nation debates the appropriate 'nature and boundaries of Islam' without any Muslim perspective.[21] Moreover, this can manifest, for example, in calls for banning

Islamic clothing, halal slaughter or fair access to halal-slaughtered foods and places of worship. Beneath this exists an assumption that un-curbed, without restrictions and curbs on fundamental rights, Islam would naturally become violent, unbearable, and at odds with all aspects of British society.[22] [23] Hall et al. have studied this phenomenon in the UK more closely about news media and political discourse, understanding that social and violent othering of minority groups reflected a national identity crisis where fear of economic decline and growing state intervention grew amidst the turmoil of growing unemployment and a shift away from the traditional social order.[24]

Understanding the Drivers of anti-Muslim Hate

Over the past ten years, Tell MAMA has highlighted many sources of anti-Muslim hatred, many of which continue to drive hate towards Muslim communities today. Most prominently, debates and perceived crises around terrorism, immigration, and economic instability have driven anti-Muslim hatred in the past decade. As we have explored in previous annual reports, many hate crimes can be categorised as 'defensive' or 'retributive', fuelled by perpetrators feeling that their culture, community, or values are

being taken away or threatened by 'outsiders'.[25] These perceived grievances often materialise the most following terrorist attacks in the UK and abroad, creating spikes in anti-Muslim violence, abuse and harassment. We explored this thoroughly in our 2017 report, 'Beyond the Incident, Outcomes for Victims of Anti-Muslim Prejudice'.[26] That year, several high-profile domestic terror attacks in the UK occurred, including Westminster, a suicide bombing in Manchester, attacks on London Bridge and Finsbury Park, and

19 Morey, P. and Yaqin, Amina. (2011). 'Framing Muslims: Stereotyping and Representation After 9/11'. New York: Harvard University Press.

20 Pantazis, C., and Pemberton, S. (2009). 'From the 'Old' to the 'New' Suspect Community: Examining the Impacts of Recent UK Counter-Terrorist Legislation', In, The British Journal of Criminology, Volume 49, Issue 5, pp.646–666

21 Asad, T. (2018). 'Secular Translations: Nation-State, Modern Self, and Calculative Reason'. New York: Columbia University Press.

22 Ameli, S.R. (2007). 'The British Media and Muslim Representation: The Ideology of Demonisation' In, Islamic Human Rights Commission. pp. 50.

23 Mahmood, S. (2015). 'Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report'. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

24 Hall, S., Critcher, C., Jefferson, T., Clarke, J., and Roberts, B. (1978). 'Policing the crisis: Mugging, the state and law and order'. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

25 McDevitt, J., Levin, J., and Bennett, S. (2002). 'Hate Crime Offenders: An Expanded Typology', Journal of Social Issues 58.

26 Tell MAMA (2018). 'Beyond the Incident: Outcomes for Victims of Anti-Muslim Prejudice - Tell MAMA Annual Report 2017'.

an attempted bombing on the London Underground tube system. Tell MAMA recorded a 475% increase in offline anti-Muslim cases reported in the week following the UK 2016 EU referendum. However, this spike was dwarfed by the 700% increase recorded in the week following the Manchester Arena attack on 22 May 2017, with 72 reports recorded seven days after the terror attack, compared with nine reports in the previous week.[27] Such significant spikes highlight the devastating real-world consequences that these tragedies have towards innocent Muslims, and each year we continue to observe and record spikes in offline and online cases as a result of real-world events. Significantly, in the past three years, we have witnessed significant spikes in the aftermath of the Christchurch terror attacks in 2019, the 2019 General Election, the Covid-19 pandemic, and subsequent lockdowns and

rises in caseloads during the summer months.

Perceptions of immigration and how it is communicated in public discourse are other crucial drivers of anti-Muslim prejudice that we have documented over the past decade. Our 2016 report explored the link between the EU referendum, news media coverage, and anti-Muslim narratives.[28] As we explored in 2016, despite the significance of general prejudice towards Islam in the UK, evidence indicates that emotional reactions to perceived threats such as terror attacks and economic insecurity may better predict hostility towards out-groups.[29][30] These typologies are particularly relevant as they highlight the connections between politically charged events or discussions with the motivations behind a significant proportion of hate crimes.

Social mobility

The scale of societal discrimination towards Muslims in the UK and its adverse effects on their social mobility is well documented.[31] British Muslims have a relatively high rate of education despite the repeated discrimination they face from schools, their teachers, fellow students, and concerns about the misuse of safeguarding policies in education in cases flagged with us – an issue we have documented for several years now, demonstrating the importance of training staff to understand what the policies around safeguarding do and do not state whilst committing to improving ways in which biases (unconscious or otherwise) are eradicated and challenged by management and ongoing training programmes.[32] Furthermore, mention the unfair system of predictive

grading in schools that make disadvantaged students even more disadvantaged when applying for higher education.[33] Nevertheless, despite overcoming these barriers and attaining strong educational accolades, their transition into full-time employment is still markedly difficult.[34][35] British Muslims are one of the most unemployed and underpaid groups in the UK, and while 10% of the general population are in 'higher managerial, administrative and professional' roles, only 6% of British Muslims fall into the same employment category.[36] As pointed out by Connor and Koenig (2015), discrimination in the workplace takes place at multiple stages for Muslims through both explicit and implicit bias in recruitment and all the way to promotion.[37] During recruitment, candidates can

27 Ibid.

28 Tell MAMA (2017) 'A Constructed Threat: Identity, Tolerance and the Impact of Anti-Muslim Hatred – Tell MAMA Annual Report 2016'.

29 Cottrell, C. A., and Neuberg, S. L. (2005). 'Different emotional reactions to different groups: A sociofunctional threat-based approach to "Prejudice"'. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Issue 88, no.5, pp.770–89.

30 Mackie, D. M., Devos, T., and Smith, E. (2000). 'Intergroup emotions: Explaining offensive action tendencies in an intergroup context'. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Issue 79, pp.602-16.

31 Tell MAMA. «Anti-Muslim Hate Harms the Social Mobility of Young Muslims, Study Finds.» Tell MAMA. Last modified September 7, 2017. https://tellmamauk. org/anti-muslim-hate-harms-the-social-mobility-of-young-muslims-study-finds/.

32 Tell MAMA. «Over-Reactions on Prevent Are Causing Fears Within Muslim Students.» Tell MAMA. Last modified January 29, 2016. https://tellmamauk.org/ over-reactions-on-prevent-are-causing-fears-within-muslim-students/.

33 Wynes, G. (2017). 'Rules of the Game: Disadvantaged students and the university admissions process', The Sutton Trust.

34 Sian. K.P. (2015). 'Spies, surveillance and stakeouts: monitoring Muslim moves in British state schools', Race Ethnicity and Education, 18:2, 183-201.

35 Qurashi, F. (2018). 'The Prevent strategy and the UK 'war on terror': embedding infrastructures of surveillance in Muslim communities', Palgrave Communications, 4(17), 1-13.

36 Social Mobility Commission (2017). The social mobility challenges faced by young Muslims. London: Social Mobility Commission.

37 Connor, P., and Koenig, M. (2015). 'Explaining the Muslim employment gap in western Europe: individual-level effects and ethno-religious penalties', Social

be overlooked for having Muslim-sounding names or for stating an address within a neighbourhood known for its high ethnic and religious minority population.[38] While at the interview stage, candidates can be rejected for their appearance, including religious attire and grooming. More broadly, European studies have found that Muslim names and attire can harm employment outcomes for young Muslims both at the initial application stage and the interview stage.[39] [40] The latter study, which was conducted in Germany, concluded that recruitment discrimination was three times as high for a woman with a Turkish name wearing a headscarf compared to a woman with a Turkish name that did not wear a headscarf, suggesting that markers of Muslim identity carry an extra 'religious penalty' above an 'ethnic penalty' for individuals entering the labour market. Such findings support previous research on the added discrimination of religious penalties for Muslim people beyond the ethnic penalties that many already face.[41] [42]

Once overcoming these ethnic and religious barriers to entry into the labour force, Muslims still face unwelcome workplace environments. A recent study by Utopia, which interviewed 2000 individuals in the UK, found that 49% of Black, Asian and minority ethnic respondents felt they had to hide certain parts of their ethnic and religious identities in the workplace based on pressures to fit into a White dominated space.[43] This figure was even higher for BIPOC women at 59%. Moreover, 41% of respondents felt their workplace did not create inclusive environments, highlighting a sense of personality suppression amongst minority ethnic people in a workplace culture that prefers and promotes 'White behaviour'.[44] Such an environment suggests success, such as promotion, is achievable only through a narrow set of 'White behaviours' and that non-White religious and ethnic identity are merely holding you back. Alongside the microaggressions Muslims encounter in the workplace daily, such hostile workplace environments severely affect Muslim people's positive social mobility.[45]

The systemic discrimination Muslims face in the labour market is particularly acute for women. Although Muslim women in the UK from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds are more likely to succeed at secondary school and university than ever before, the 2016 Social Mobility Commission found that these women still did not receive positive labour market returns.[46] The report highlighted that these women still earn less than their counterparts from other ethnic groups. While they outperform their male counterparts at school and university, Bangladeshi women are less likely to achieve managerial or professional roles than male Bangladeshi graduates.[47] [48] A year later, the Social Mobility Commission used focus groups and interviews to get an understanding of the experiences of young Muslims face when entering the labour market.[49] The report found that both conscious and unconscious, anti-Muslim discrimination in the workplace was commonplace, especially for women and even more so for women who wore religious clothing. Other reports in the UK have made similar findings, including the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee report (2016) and the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Race and Community (2012), with both highlighting

Science Research, 49: 191-201.

38 Elahi, F., and Kahn, O. (2017). 'Islamophobia: Still a challenge for us all'. The Runnymede Trust.

39 Laitin, D., Adida, C., and Valfort, M.A. (2010). 'Identifying barriers to Muslim integration in France', Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, 107(52), 22384-22390.

40 Weichselbaumer, D. (2016). Discrimination against Migrants Wearing Headscarves. Bonn: The Institute for the Study of Labour (IZA).

41 Khattab, N., and Johnston, R. (2013). 'Ethnic and religious penalties in a changing British labour market from 2002 to 2010: the case of unemployment', Environment and Planning, 45, 1358-1371.

42 Khattab, N., and Modood, T. (2015). 'Both ethnic and religious: explaining employment penalties across 14 ethno-religious groups in the UK', Journal of the Scientific Study of Religion, 54(3), 501-522.

43 Utopia. (2020). 'BIPOC employees in the workplace'. Utopia.

44 Ibid.

45 Husain, A., and Howard, S. (2017). 'Religious Microaggressions: A Case Study of Muslim Americans', Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work, 26(1-2), 139-152.

46 Social Mobility Commission (2016). Ethnicity, Gender and Social Mobility. London: Social Mobility Commission.

47 Ibid.

48 Niven, J., Faggian, A. and Ruwanpura, K. (2013). 'Exploring "Underachievement" among highly educated young British-Bangladeshi women', Feminist Economics, 19(1), 111-136.

49 Social Mobility Commission (2017). The social mobility challenges faced by young Muslims. London: Social Mobility Commission.

the increased discrimination Muslim women face on top of their religious and ethnic identities.[50] [51] Broad research exploring more systemic racism, notably in healthcare,[52] drew attention to the ways in which conceptions of what passes for the sought-after 'qualities' in individuals and groups of workers influence working conditions for minoritised groups. Navigating these differentials means dealing with the weight of stereotyping and navigating misconceptions to enhance employment prospects.[53] A wide-ranging review of existing literature on employment inequalities found that when factoring in the intersectionality of visible markers (including gender, ethnicity, migration status and religiosity) positioned Black Muslim males at "the lowest hierarchy of outcomes".[54]

Returning to our work, Tell MAMA's 2020 report on Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred in North East England highlighted the lived experiences of anti-Muslim discrimination in the workplace, especially for Muslim women. 83.3% of female Muslim respondents stated that Islamophobia in the workplace negatively affected their employment opportunities.[55] These

findings, therefore, highlight the heightened disadvantage Muslim women face in attaining social mobility in the UK. Findings from this annual report will further shed light on these realities for Muslim people in a year full of uncertainties and new challenges.

Systemic discrimination towards Muslims is also evident in housing. The Runnymede Trust noted that while 31% of people in England and Wales owned a home, only 15% of Muslims were homeowners, making them much more likely to live in socially rented accommodation.[56] Muslim people in the UK are also much more likely to live in overcrowded households (42% likelihood compared to the 12% national average) and more deprived areas.[57] 46% of the UK's Muslim population live in 10% of the most deprived local authorities, according to the 2017 Social Mobility Commission report.[58] These factors, alongside Muslim people's higher economic inactivity, mean they are more likely to be at risk of poverty.[59] As we will explore in the next section, these realities have been further brought to light and exacerbated during the Covid-19 pandemic.

How the pandemic exposed existing structural inequalities

Findings from this annual report reveal that Muslims have faced increased discrimination in all aspects of their everyday lives during the Covid-19 pandemic despite the physical barriers of lockdown that were largely in place throughout the year. Our findings, which will be given more attention in our analysis chapter, follow on from a range of evidence for how the pandemic has not only revealed but enhanced the

systemic inequalities that exist for Muslims in the UK. Notably, Public Health England released a report in 2020 that displayed the disparities between ethnic groups affected by the pandemic. It revealed that people of Bangladeshi ethnicity were twice as at risk of death after getting Covid-19 compared to people of White British ethnicity, while Indian, Pakistani, Other Asian, and Other Black ethnicity people were

50 House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee (2016). Employment Opportunities for Muslims in the UK: Second Report of Session. London: House of Commons.

51 PPG on Race and Community (2012). Ethnic Minority Female Employment: Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi Heritage Women. First Report of Session 2012–2013. London: Runnymede Trust.

52 Birks, M., Cant, R. P., Budden, L. M., Russell-Westhead, M., Üzar Özçetin, Y. S., and Tee, S. (2017). "Uncovering degrees of workplace bullying: A comparison of baccalaureate nursing students' experiences during clinical placement in Australia and the UK". Nurse education in practice 25: 14-21.

53 Howells, K., Bower, P., and Hassell, K.(2018). 'Exploring the career choices of White and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women pharmacists: a qualitative study'. International Journal of Pharmacy Practice 26, no. 6: 507-514.

54 Hussein, S.(2022). 'Employment inequalities among British minority ethnic workers in health and social care at the time of COVID-19: A rapid review of the literature'. Social Policy and Society 21, no. 2: 316-330.

55 Tell MAMA (2020). 'Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Hatred in North East England'.

56 Elahi, F., and Kahn, O. (2017). 'Islamophobia: Still a challenge for us all', The Runnymede Trust.

57 Ibid.

58 Social Mobility Commission (2017). The social mobility challenges faced by young Muslims. London: Social Mobility Commission.

59 Hussain, S., and Sherif, J. (2014) 'Minority religions in the Census: the case of British Muslims', Religion, 44(3), 414-433.

between 10% and 50% more at risk than White British people.[60] The report also revealed the disparities among ethnicities within the working-age population (between 20 and 64), with Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities (80% and 50%, respectively), more at risk of death from Covid-19 than White British people.[61] As a BMJ entry noted, however, the report by Public Health England, albeit significant, did little to sufficiently explain the possible reasons why these disparities exist for ethnic minorities to such an extent, such as societal inequalities in health, employment, and housing.[62] Looking more closely at the socioeconomic and geographical inequalities exacerbated due to the pandemic, however, can help us better answer how these systemic inequalities for Muslim and ethnic minorities have been exposed and exacerbated during the pandemic.

For one, Muslims in Britain are concentrated in urban areas, particularly in London and the West Midlands, which were worst hit by the pandemic. In London, Muslims comprise 12.4% of the population, accounting for 37.4% of the national Muslim population. The borough of Brent, which has a Muslim population of 18.6%, was the worst hit of all London boroughs, with a mortality rate of 210.9 deaths per 100,000 people between March and May.[63] Newham, a London borough with a population of 32% Muslims, had the second highest mortality rate in London, with 196.8 deaths per 100,000 people.[64] The West Midlands, where 13.9% of all Muslims in the UK live, was another region in England and Wales badly hit by the pandemic, with a mortality rate of 92.6 deaths per 100,000 people.[65]

Across England and Wales, the most deprived areas had a death rate 118% higher than the least deprived areas.[66] Considering that 46% of British Muslims live in England's ten most deprived areas, and household deprivation has proven to affect health and mental wellbeing negatively; Muslims in the UK are disproportionally affected by Covid-19 based on their disadvantaged household deprivation.[67] The disparities in intergenerational housing have also been exposed during the pandemic. Census data from 2011 shows that while less than 30% of White British people over the age of 70 live with younger people, 80% of South Asian people and 50% of Black African or Caribbean people over the age of 70 live with younger people, which, in turn, makes self-isolation much more complex, and considering the advice given by the NHS that more at-risk over-70's should self-isolate at home, Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals, which Muslims make up a substantial number, are disproportionality at additional risk from contracting Covid-19 due to an inability to properly self-isolate. Moreover, 2011 census data shows that Muslim households are the most deprived of any group in the UK, with 35% of Muslim households being overcrowded compared to 13% of the total population. While Bangladeshi households in London had an overcrowding rate four times higher than the regional average, making them the most overcrowded ethnic group in the census.[68] This disparity makes self-isolation nearly impossible for many Muslim households as they are more likely to share the same bathrooms, kitchens, and sleeping spaces, thus making them more susceptible to infection.

In education, the pandemic brought further issues for disadvantaged students from ethnic minority backgrounds. As mentioned previously, research had revealed that before the pandemic, disadvantaged students were being given unfair chances of fulfilling their potential at higher education based on under-

60 Public Health England (2020). Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19. London: Public Health England.

61 Ibid.

62 BMJ. (2020). 'Ethnicity and Covid-19'. Available at: https://www.bmj.com/content/369/bmj.m2282.

63 ONS. (2020). 'Deaths involving COVID-19 by local area and socioeconomic deprivation: deaths occurring between 1 March and 31 May 2020', Office for National Statistics. Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsinvolvingcovid19byl ocalareasanddeprivation/deathsoccurringbetween1marchand31may2020.

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid.

67 Social Mobility Commission (2017). The social mobility challenges faced by young Muslims. London: Social Mobility Commission.

68 GLA. (2014). 'Trends in Overcrowding'. Greater London Authority.

predicted grades given by teachers (which universities use to make conditional offers to students before they sit their exams), and admission applications that are more catered for advantaged students.[69] When the pandemic arrived, schools were forced to abandon summer exams, which students rely on to fulfil their conditional offers into higher education, and instead lean more heavily on predicted grades and mock exam results, neither of which are accurate to true academic potential or performance. Such an approach is unfair since minority ethnic students, many Muslim students, are more likely to receive under-predicted grades than their more advantaged white counterparts.[70] Relying on these unfair predicted grades to determine students' futures further negatively affects the social mobility of those from minority ethnic backgrounds, thus reinforcing the discriminatory educational structures that were in place before the pandemic.

The pandemic has also revealed employment disparities that disproportionately affect Muslim people, both in terms of threats to lack of income and overexposure to the virus for key workers. One key factor is that Muslim people are more likely to be self-employed in the UK, with Pakistani and Bangladeshi people 73% more likely to be self-employed than White British people, according to 2018 census data which has made incomes for these individuals particularly uncertain.[71] Muslims are also more likely to work in shut-down industries such as restaurants, which took massive hits during the multiple lockdowns in 2020. Bangladeshi men, for example, are four times as likely to work in these industries compared to White British men, and 40% of Bangladeshi men aged between 30 and 44 work in these industries compared to 14% of White British men. Further, Bangladeshi and Pakistani households are less able to buffer their incomes

from potential shocks since employment rates for partners in these households are much lower.[72] For example, 29% of Bangladeshi men who work in shut-down sectors have a partner who is not employed, compared to just 1% of White British men in the same situation.[73] Therefore, this means Bangladeshi household incomes are much more negatively affected by closures from the pandemic than White British households.

The pandemic put much pressure on key workers throughout the UK, and this could not be truer than for Muslims, who account for a disproportionate number of all key workers and are more likely to be on the frontline in fighting the virus. Ethnicity data can be used to highlight such disparities further. For one, Black, Asian and minority communities make up 21% of total NHS staff, yet 63% of NHS healthcare workers who died from Covid-19 were from minority ethnic communities, showing the significant disparities between ethnic minorities, of which many are Muslim, face fighting the pandemic.[74] Moreover, the issue of systemic discrimination and bullying by NHS staff towards Muslim NHS workers has also been brought to light during the pandemic. ITV News ran a study that asked over 2,000 minority ethnic NHS workers about their experiences managing the pandemic. 73% of respondents said they felt overexposed to the virus because of a lack of PPE, while 50% said discrimination or fear of discrimination meant they felt they could not speak out about the dangers they faced fighting the pandemic.[75] Meanwhile, NHS staff survey data revealed that 29% of ethnic minority staff felt bullied, harassed, or abused by other NHS staff within the past 12 months, and a recent study concentrated in Derby and Burton NHS hospitals found that 27% of Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff have been

69 Wyness, G. (2017). 'Rules of the Game: Disadvantaged students and the university admissions process', The Sutton Trust.

70 Ibid.

71 ONS. (2020). 'Self-employment', Office for National Statistics. Available at: https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/work-pay-and-benefits/employment/self-employment/latest#data-sources.

72 Platt, L. and Warwick, R. (2020). 'Are some ethnic groups more vulnerable to COVID-19 than others', Institute for Fiscal Studies. Available at: https://ifs.org.uk/inequality/chapter/are-some-ethnic-groups-more-vulnerable-to-covid-19-than-others/.

73 Ibid.

74 Amnesty International UK. (2020). 'UK among highest COVID-19 health worker deaths in the world'. Amnesty International UK. Available at: https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/uk-among-highest-covid-19-health-worker-deaths-world.

75 ITV News. (2020). "'Discrimination' on frontline of coronavirus outbreak may be factor in disproportionate BAME deaths among NHS staff". ITV News. Available at: https://www.itv.com/news/2020-05-13/discrimination-frontline-coronavirus-covid19-black-minority-ethnic-bame-deaths-nhs-racism.

bullied, harassed or abused by colleagues within the past 12 months.[76] [77] Considering the well-documented discrimination Muslims and ethnic minorities faced in the NHS before the pandemic, with one report highlighting that Muslims were the most discriminated group in the NHS in 2015, it should come as no surprise that the pandemic further exposed these realities.[78] In our analysis chapter, we will further highlight the widescale discrimination that Muslim key workers faced during the pandemic in 2020 and how such instances indicate a broader culture of Muslim discrimination in the UK.

The fight for racial justice and the intersection of multiple marginalised identities

Beyond the pandemic, 2020 was also an unprecedented year in the fight against racial injustice. The tragic death of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers created shock and outrage and led millions of people throughout the USA and globally to stand up against racism on their streets and on social media. What was originally about police brutality quickly developed into a broader protest of systemic anti-Black discrimination that infects all aspects of society. The UK is no exception, and in the months of May and June, peaceful protests erupted on streets throughout the country, pointing out the realities of systemic racism that still plague this country today. As with the US, however, the idea of racism towards Black Muslims in the UK is often overlooked, even though 1 in 3 Black and minority ethnic people are Muslim and the experience of being a Black person in the UK is largely intertwined with the experience of being a Muslim, as highlighted by the web resource Everyday Muslim.[79] There is a broad body of academic research documenting the experiences of Black Muslim communities and their perceptions of policing in the United States[80] and Canada,[81] the UK[82] (including gendered perspectives[83]), and France.[84]

It is crucial, therefore, that the lived realities of anti-Black racism and discrimination towards those with intersecting identities are given the full attention they deserve and not left to be erased.[85] These identities are part of a complex symbiotic socio-political relationship that contributes to a heightened vulnerability to discrimination in every aspect of their lives, including social mobility, health, and within the policing and judicial apparatus. This intersectional discrimination is made even more prominent for those with other potentially vulnerable identity frames. The death in custody of Sheku Bayoh, a Black Muslim who died in police custody after six officers restrained him in 2015, also brought into question institutional racism in the police, as the chair of the inquiry into his death, who is investigating if racism was a motivating factor in his death, welcomed the admission about institutional racism in Police Scotland. [86] Sheku's family members have also faced abhorrent racist abuse when giving

76 The King's Fund. (2020). 'Ethnic minority deaths and Covid-19: what do we do?' The King's Fund. Available at: https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/blog/2020/04/ethnic-minority-deaths-covid-19.

77 Derbyshire Live. (2021). 'BAME staff faced bullying from hospital colleagues and patients'. Available at: https://www.derbytelegraph.co.uk/news/local-news/bame-staff-faced-bullying-hospital-5223012.

78 The King's Fund. (2015). 'Making the difference: Diversity and inclusion in the NHS'. The King's Fund. Available at: https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/field_publication_file/Making-the-difference-summary-Kings-Fund-Dec-2015.pdf.

79 Everyday Muslim. Available at: https://www.everydaymuslim.org/projects/black-british-muslim-heritage-project/.

80 Auston, D.(2017). 'Prayer, protest, and police brutality: Black Muslim spiritual resistance in the Ferguson era'. Transforming Anthropology 25, no. 1: 11-22.

81 Ellis, B. Heidi, Alisa K. Lincoln, Saida M. Abdi, Elizabeth A. Nimmons, Osob Issa, and Scott H. Decker. «"We all have stories": Black muslim immigrants' experience with the police.» Race and Justice 10, no. 3 (2020): 341-362.

82 Joseph–Salisbury, R., Connelly, L., and Wangari-Jones, P.(2021). «"The UK is not innocent": Black Lives Matter, policing and abolition in the UK.» Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal 40, no. 1: 21-28.

83 Nurein, S, A., and Iqbal, H.(2021). 'Identifying a space for young Black Muslim women in contemporary Britain'. Ethnicities 21, no. 3: 433-453.

84 McIntosh-Holland, L.(2015). 'Black, Muslim, and French? Assimilation and French Identity'.

85 Auston, D. (2015). 'Mapping the Intersections of Islamophobia and #BlackLivesMatter: Unearthing Black Muslim Life and Activism in the Policing Crisis', Sapelo. Available at: https://sapelosquare.com/2015/05/19/mapping-the-intersections-of-islamophobia-blacklivesmatter-unearthing-black-muslim-life-activism-in-the-policing-crisis/.

86 Bohner, A.(2023).»Sheku Bayoh Inquiry Chair ‹welcomes› Police Scotland›s Racism Admission.» The National. Last modified May 25, 2023. https://www.thenational.scot/news/23548174.sheku-bayoh-inquiry-chair-welcomes-police-scotlands-racism-admission/.

evidence to this inquiry, with Lord Bracadale saying that in some instances, the abuse 'may amount to a hate crime'.[87]

As we will explore further in the analysis chapter, of the known ethnicities of victims of anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia reported to us in 2020, over 11%

were Black. This figure highlights the significant racism Black Muslims face in the UK today and the need for fundamental change at all levels of society. Tell MAMA are fully committed to this change and will continue to support victims of racism.

Post-Pandemic Developments and the ongoing threat of the far-right

As we have explored, the Covid-19 pandemic exposed deep societal inequalities that disproportionately affect Muslim people, not to mention the raft of misinformation targeting Muslims surrounding Covid-19 that we will explore more deeply in this report. Following the pandemic, however, there has been a range of developments that have contributed to enhancing anti-Muslim prejudices and hate crimes towards the Muslim community, both online and offline. For one, the advancement of Brexit provided an opportunity for the progression of anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim sentiment across the country. Recent work by Creighton and Jamal (2022), for example, highlights the normalising effect of Brexit on these hateful sentiments.[88]

On top of this, we have noticed an increasing shift towards the normalisation of far-right figures and narratives in mainstream political discourse since 2020. Despite Tell MAMA and other academics in the field have tracked this progression over the past decade, we can confidently say that the regularity of anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant speech and narratives from the far-right has become more mainstream since 2020 to where it is not uncommon to witness the so-called 'Great Replacement' conspiracy theory which inspired various acts of white supremacist terrorism, attempted terror attacks or terror plots, from

Christchurch in New Zealand to the United States and the UK to parts of Europe.[89] With the 'memefication' of these racist conspiracies, academics like Goetz (2021) argue that by weaponising demographics, identitarians and other far-right movements allowed them to address topics of social, family, women's and reproduction policy, but also to link these with questions of migration and immigration on the one hand and with gender relations on the other hand with the aim of injecting racist discourses into the mainstream debate.[90] The extreme right's reliance on 'menacing metaphors' around death or a fight for survival is a visible light that retains continuity with Nazi population policies.[91] Moreover, this obsession with demographics, they argue, aligns with their ultra-regressive and nativist gender policies that strip women of bodily autonomy and force upon them traditional gender roles (the private sphere of the home).[92] For Miller-Idriss (2020), in their most extreme forms, these violent conspiracies function as 'dystopian fantasy theories' in particular geographic spaces – with the 'great replacement' operating globally, 'white genocide' a conspiracy in North America and in Europe, the anti-Muslim myth of Eurabia.[93] The violent rhetoric of the three conspiracies feeds notions of white victimhood with emotional appeals to protect and take action to preserve territories from external threats and 'others' – migrants, refugees, Muslim and

87 BBC News.(2022). 'Judge Condemns Racist Abuse Faced by Bayoh Family'. BBC News. Last modified November 22, 2022. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-edinburgh-east-fife-63715727.

88 Creighton, M.J., and Jamal, A.A. (2022). 'An overstated welcome: Brexit and intentionally masked anti-immigrant sentiment in the UK', Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 48/5, pp.1051-1071.

89 Tell MAMA. (2019). 'How Christchurch Inspired Further Acts of Far-right Terror'. Tell MAMA. Last modified September 3, 2019. https://tellmamauk.org/how-christchurch-inspired-further-acts-of-far-right-terror/.

90 Goetz, J.(2021).»'The Great Replacement': Reproduction and population policies of the far right, taking the Identitarians as an example.» DiGeSt-Journal of Diversity and Gender Studies 8, no. 1.

91 Ibid. 64.

92 Ibid. 64-65.

93 Miller-Idriss, C.(2022). Hate in the Homeland. The New Global Far Right. Princeton University Press.

Jewish communities.[94] In a European context, the anti-Muslim conspiracy narrative of 'Eurabia', which speaks of the so-called 'Islamisation' of societies, echoes other racialised conspiracies in their obsessive interest in birth rates of white women across Europe within a broader cultural decline and tropes about an impending violent conflict. Bracke and Aguilar (2020) argue that the conspiracy narratives around Eurabia evoke 'different interrelated discourses: the problematisation of Muslims writ large, the idea of Europe waning, and the demographic threat posed by Muslims.'[95]

Variations of the Eurabia myth appeared during the anti-Muslim Reconquista in Spain in the fifteenth century[96] to the genocide of Bosniak Muslims in the Balkans during the 1990s.[97] Larsson has explored Eurabia as an anti-Muslim literary genre which portrays Muslims as non-European and 'barbaric, uncivilised and incompatible with Western values' in mainstream media and non-mainstream platforms.[98] Others, like Lee (2016), researched how Islamisation conspiracies united transatlantic networks.[99] Similarly, within the lifespan of Tell MAMA, we noted how an obscure Islamic concept became an obsessive interest for anti-Muslim agitators across social media[100] and, in some cases, gained mainstream credence.[101] Concerning the former, owing to the levels of anti-Muslim vitriol and harassment, we used our expertise to help educate police forces and the justice system about how such conspiracies can and do harm Muslims when done in a way that goes far beyond any legitimate form of legal speech or critique of a person's Islamic faith.

Muslims broadly continue to be vilified as criminals, particularly sex offenders and paedophiles, and the far-right has weaponised horrific criminal convictions and trials of those involved in group-based criminality and sexual exploitation to demonise Muslim men more broadly as an existential, cultural menace and threat to women and girls. Such stigmatisation had tragic consequences following the racist murder of the Muslim pensioner Mushin Ahmed in Rotherham in August 2015. As we reported following the jailing of Dale Jones and Damien Hunt in February 2016: [Dale] Jones had reduced Mushin Ahmed to a slur that grows more common in Rotherham – 'groomer'. A reference to the nightmarish child sexual exploitation scandal in the town. Where criminal gangs exploited vulnerable young girls due in part to a wider culture of indifference and victim blaming.[102]

In various annual reports and news articles, we documented case studies of Muslim men targeted offline with anti-Muslim slurs and threats. For example, one service user was called a 'beardo paedo' and the P-word in 2016, as in 2018, after attempting to run them over with their vehicle, a racist perpetrator wound their window down and said, 'Your beard, you look like a paedophile' and 'you must be happy there's a school up the road' before driving off (which later resulted in a criminal conviction).[103] Moreover, a consistent theme in the online casework we verify and analyse each year demonstrates how the far-right and more mainstream adjacent figures spread harm in rhetoric that mirrors the above and in more extreme, often racialised forms. For example,

94 Ibid. 9.

95 Bracke, S., and Aguilar, L. M. H.(2020). «"They love death as we love life": The "Muslim Question" and the biopolitics of replacement". The British journal of sociology 71, no. 4: 680-701.

96 Elliott van Liere, K.(2006). 'The missionary and the Moorslayer: James the Apostle in Spanish historiography from Isidore of Seville to Ambrosio de Morales'. Viator 37: 519-543.

97 Karčić, F. (2015). The Other European Muslims: A Bosnian Experience. Center for Advanced Studies, 2015.

98 Larsson, G.(2012). 'The fear of small numbers: Eurabia literature and censuses on religious belonging.» Journal of Muslims in Europe 1, no. 2: 142-165.

99 Lee, B.(2016). 'Why we fight: Understanding the counter-jihad movement'. Religion Compass 10, no. 10: 257-265.

100 Daro, I. N.(2018).»»Taqiyya»: How An Obscure Islamic Concept Became An Obsession Of Anti-Muslim Activists.» BuzzFeed News. Last modified April 12, 2018. https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/ishmaeldaro/taqiyya-explained.

101 Tell MAMA. (2019). 'Melanie Phillips and the Taqiyya Odyssey'. Tell MAMA. Last modified December 3. https://tellmamauk.org/melanie-phillips-and-the-taqiyya-odyssey/.

102 Tell MAMA.(2016). 'The Mushin Ahmed Trial: when Anti-Muslim Hate Turns to Murder'. Tell MAMA. Last modified February 29, 2016. https://tellmamauk.org/the-mushin-ahmed-trial-when-anti-muslim-hate-turns-to-murder/.

103 Tell MAMA.(2019). 'GUILTY: Van Driver Who Mocked and Threatened Muslim Man After Attempting to Run Him over'. Tell MAMA. Last modified March 20, 2019. https://tellmamauk.org/van-driver-mocked-and-threatened-muslim-man-after-attempting-to-run-him-over/.

our 2018 annual report gave an example of how image-based anti-Muslim materials evoke what Weaver (2010) described as 'liquid racism', where ambiguous signs and images function in a manner that 'encourages the development of entrenched socio-discursive positioning when reading these signs'.[104] More broadly, academic research explores how Muslim men, in discussions of child abuse and child exploitation, are spoken of within a framework of "dangerous masculinity" (Tufail 2015)[105], especially in relation to taxi drivers, and how such sentiments manifest in the online sphere, was expanded upon by Carter (2017).[106] Gill and Harrison (2015) analysed 122 news articles from five national newspapers and the overlapping theme that linked religion and culture to the crimes.[107] A wide-ranging assessment from Lovett et al. (2018) found that responses to child sexual abuse evolve and change over time whilst taking a critical look at institutional failings and the role of how media frames the issue.[108]

Syeda and Molkenbur (2023) have explored this in their recent paper, presenting how Muslims in a post-Brexit and post-pandemic UK continue to be scapegoated for socioeconomic issues, which became most evident with the petrol bomb attack by Andrew Leak targeting an asylum-seeker processing centre in Kent last year, which we explored thoroughly.[109][110] Andrew Leak is one of the various far-right terrorists who did not hide their racist worldviews online, who routinely used violent language, and openly advocated for vigilante violence against refugees – even going as far as to call for the indiscriminate murder of asylum seekers via a spitfire aircraft. On Facebook, Leak built a digital bivouac grounded in various anti-Muslim and far-right propaganda pages. That slow drip of hate crystallised their violent language and worldview into violent, terrorist actions.

The domestic threat of far-right terrorism towards Muslims, of course, pre-dates the pandemic years, noted in the tragic murder of Mohammed Saleem and the attempted bombings of several West Midlands mosques[111] to the tragic murder of Makram Ali and the attempted murder of other worshippers at the Muslim Welfare House in Finsbury Park in London during Ramadan in the summer of 2017.[112] In the online sphere, our research documented how the glorification of such terrorism, which is often situated within far-right historiographies, is an issue for counter-terror police.[113] The trend of young men and teenage boys drawn into far-right terror plots and neo-Nazi groups is an ongoing matter of growing concern in 2023 and beyond.[114] Our expert analysis of this issue includes how we documented over twenty individuals who took influence or downloaded the Christchurch terror video or screed following their convictions for terrorism offences.[115]

104 Weaver, S.(2010). 'Liquid racism and the Danish Prophet Muhammad cartoons.' Current Sociology 58, no. 5: 675-692

105 Tufail, W.(2015). 'Rotherham, rochdale, and the racialised threat of the ›Muslim Grooming Gang‹. International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy 4, no. 3: 30-43.

106 Carter, D. M.(2017)."(De) constructing difference: a qualitative review of the 'othering'of UK Muslim communities, extremism, soft harms, and Twitter analytics". Behavioral sciences of terrorism and political aggression 9, no. 1: 21-36.

107 Gill, A. K., and Harrison, K.(2015). 'Child grooming and sexual exploitation: are South Asian men the UK media›s new folk devils?' International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy 4, no. 2: 34-49.

108 Lovett, J., Coy, M., and Kelly, L.(2018). 'Deflection, denial and disbelief: social and political discourses about child sexual abuse and their influence on institutional responses. A rapid evidence assessment'. A Rapid Evidence Assessment.

109 Syeda, S., and Molkenbur, T. (2023). 'Mainstream and Far Right Islamophobia: A UK-Germany Comparison', Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. Available at: https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/london/19913.pdf.

110 Tell MAMA. (2022). 'The Tangled Web of Far Right Anti-Muslim Hate', Tell MAMA.

111 Dodd, V.(2013). 'Pavlo Lapshyn Jailed for 40 Years for Murder and Mosque Bombs'. The Guardian. Last modified October 25, 2013. https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/oct/25/ukranian-white-supremacist-murder-mosque-bombs-pavlo-lapshyn.

112 Tell MAMA.(2018). 'Darren Osborne Guilty of Finsbury Park Terror Attack'. Tell MAMA. Last modified February 1, 2018. https://tellmamauk.org/darren-osborne-guilty-of-finsbury-park-terror-attack/.

113 Tell MAMA.(2019). 'From Finsbury Park to Medieval Spain: How the Far-right Misuse History'. Tell MAMA. Last modified June 19, 2019. https://tellmamauk.org/from-finsbury-park-to-medieval-spain-how-the-far-right-misuse-history/.

114 BBC News. (2023). 'Terrorism: Police Concern over Teen Far-right Extremism'. BBC News. Last modified January 25, 2023. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-64399335.

115 Tell MAMA. (2023). 'Recent Neo-Nazi Terror Convictions Show Christchurch›s Ongoing Propaganda Influence'. Tell MAMA. Last modified June 2, 2023. https://tellmamauk.org/recent-neo-nazi-terror-convictions-show-christchurchs-ongoing-propaganda-influence/.

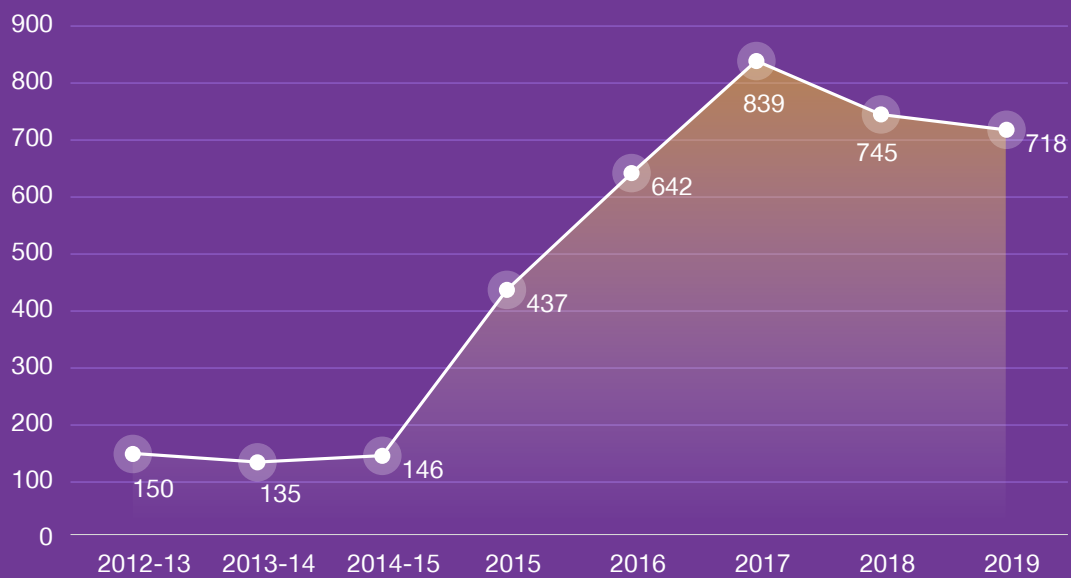# Anti-Muslim Hate Pre-Pandemic Years 2012-2019

03

Anti-Muslim Hate Pre-Pandemic Years 2012-2019

Between the years 2012 and 2019, Tell MAMA recorded a total of 5,267 offline cases, where our caseworkers verified 3,812 cases. A total breakdown of the verified offline cases per year can be seen below. It showed similar numbers between 2012 and 2014-15 until a significant jump in cases in 2015 when we began ramping up our reporting capabilities. That year saw an increase of 291 cases. Since 2015 we have steadily watched our verified numbers increase until 2017, when we hit our peak of 839 cases, a year that saw significant terrorist attacks across the UK and an unmistakable shift in anti-Muslim rhetoric in social and political discourse and news media. In 2018 and 2019, cases fell slightly to 745 and 718, respectively, but we continued to monitor increasingly targeted and violent cases across a broader spectrum of categories and locations.

Mapping anti-Muslim Hatred Offline (2012-2019)

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Key Trends in Offline Anti-Muslim Cases

During the pre-pandemic years, we have observed several trends in the offline world. These include trends from our numerical data over the years and more observable qualitative trends, such as event-specific language and narratives used in cases. The most apparent numerical trend from these eight years is the sheer dominance of abusive behaviour cases, making up over half of all cases in the broadest locations. Looking more closely at numerical data, however, we can observe a significant upwards shift in discrimination cases and an increase in severity in vandalism cases. As we will discuss in more depth,
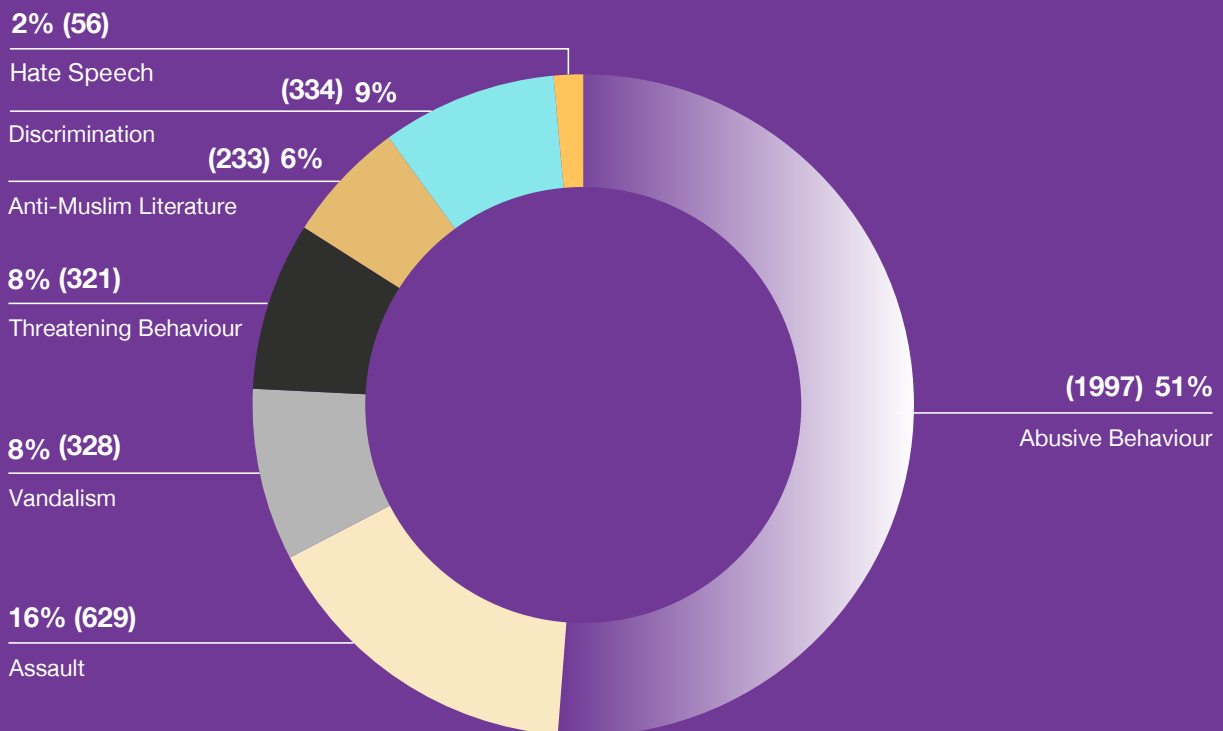
cases of discrimination in the workplace and at schools or other educational institutions have continued to rise in numbers and severity, and we have noticed a growing trend of institutional forms of discrimination. While vandalism cases have not consistently risen, we have noticed a shift in the severity of cases, including those that involve event-specific anti-Muslim language and cases of arson targeting Islamic institutions.

Another significant trend we have monitored over the years is the increase in cases in or around the household. These cases have either increased in numbers or proportionally compared to other location categories. As we will discuss, more of these cases involve neighbours and occur over extended periods than singular events, such as in public areas.

As seen in the graph below, abusive behaviour was by far the most common incident category over the eight years, each year and together as a lump sum, which can take many forms, defined as 'verbal and non-verbal abuse including comments or gestures' and distinguishable from assault (unwanted physical contact, including pushing and spitting) and threatening behaviour (verbal or symbolic threats of violent behaviour). In total, when added together across each year, abusive behaviour made up 51% of verified cases (N=1,997), assault with 16% of cases (N=629), discrimination with 9% (N=334), Vandalism and Threatening Behaviour with 8% and 328 and 321 cases, respectively, and Anti-Muslim Literature and Hate Speech with 6% (N=233) and 1% (N=56), respectively.

Verified Offline Cases 2012-2019 by Incident Category

2% (56)
Hate Speech

(334) 9%
Discrimination

(233) 6%
Anti-Muslim Literature

8% (321)
Threatening Behaviour

8% (328)
Vandalism

16% (629)
Assault

(1997) 51%
Abusive Behaviour

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Incident Category Trends Breakdown

Categorising anti-Muslim Hate and Discrimination (2012-2019)

Legend:
- Abusive Behaviour
- Assault
- Threatening Behaviour
- Vandalism
- Anti-Muslim Literature
- Discrimination
- Hate Speech
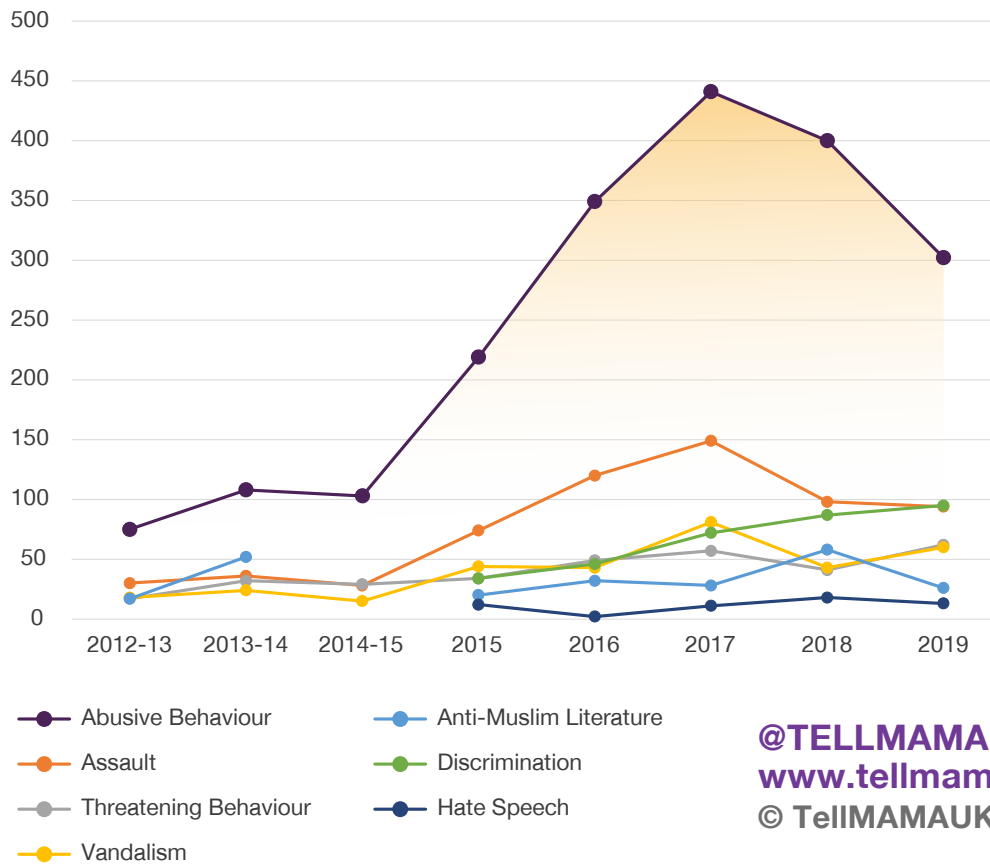
Abusive Behaviour

A full breakdown of the abusive behaviour numbers over the eight years is displayed above. As we can see, abusive behaviour sharply rose in 2015 and continued to peak at 441 cases in 2017, the year with the most verified cases in the pre-pandemic years. A closer reading of these cases reveals that abusive behaviour was consistently over 50% of verified cases (except for 2019, when it made up 48% of verified cases). There was also never a year where it was not the most common category. It was the most common category in 2013-14 and 2014-15, making up 80% and 70% of cases, respectively. On average, abusive behaviour cases comprised 57% of overall cases for the pre-pandemic years.

Assault

Assaults were the second most common category we recorded between 2012 and 2019. Similar to abusive behaviour, physical violence increased considerably from 2015, when it jumped from 28 to 74 cases, and peaked in 2017 with 149 cases. The proportion of assault cases per year ranged from 13% in 2018 to 27% in 2013-14 and remained relatively similar throughout the years until 2018 and 2019 when they dropped as other categories became more frequent. Despite the slight fall in numbers from 2018, the severity of assault cases remained high throughout the years, and we noted several cases each year that mainly stuck in our memories. For example, in 2018, we noted how a male perpetrator chased after a Muslim woman and spat on her clothes and headscarf. In Birmingham in 2017, a young man was waiting in a public area when he suddenly shouted 'Fu**ing P**i' before being punched in the forehead so hard he lost a considerable amount of blood and needed an ambulance to take him to hospital to close the deep wound. The victim found

the police to be uninvested in the case and was told he faced disciplinary action for missing work due to his injury, which, a few weeks later, he began to bleed

Threatening Behaviour

We recorded and verified 321 cases of Threatening Behaviour in the pre-pandemic years, making up 8% of total cases. As we can see, threatening behaviour cases gradually rose between 2012 and 2017, reaching 57 cases, then falling considerably in 2018 with 41 cases and spikes and peaks in 2019 with 62 cases. It was proportionally most significant in 2013-14 and 2014-15, with 24% and 20% of cases in those years, respectively, and notably 9% of total cases in 2019. The spike from 41 cases in 2018 and 5% of proportional cases that year to 62 cases and 9% of proportional cases is the most notable trend of Threatening Behaviour in the pre-pandemic years.

Threatening behaviour cases, by their nature, are typically linked with violence of some sort, and over the year, we have recorded several cases where

Discrimination

We verified 334 offline discrimination cases in the pre-pandemic years, making up 9% of total cases in those eight years. Interestingly, discrimination was the only category that increased each year, thus further supporting the trend from 2020 onwards that sees discrimination increase proportionally by most of any category. From 2015 to 2019, when we began recording discrimination cases, numbers increased from 34 to 95 and rising proportionally from 7% in 2015 to 14% in 2019. Although the numbers were as high as abusive behaviour or assault, the increase in cases over those years is the most significant category trend we recorded. As we will explore in more depth in the 2020 and 2021 sections, there are several reasons why discrimination cases are trending upwards so significantly. It appears that the combination of increasing discrimination cases and a better understanding in society and from victims of what constitutes discrimination, such as in the school or workplace, are contributing factors.

By looking at the specific actions involved in discrimination cases over the year, many cases

again. The assault was profoundly traumatising for the victim, lasting long after his wound eventually healed.

Muslims faced the threat of violence from strangers, often in public areas. Notable examples include how a visibly Muslim woman was walking on the pavement in London when two males approached her, asking if she was Muslim, and upon confirming her religious identity, one of the men revealed a large knife before fleeing the scene. In another instance from 2017, a man made a throat-slitting gesture towards a Muslim woman in a public area. While in these instances, a clear threat was made through actions rather than words, verbal threats are the most typical form of the threatening behaviour category and often involve verbal threats to get beaten up, killed, or raped. Also, in 2017, a Muslim male was threatened with violence and called the P-word by a racist cyclist while walking in Manchester.

occurred within the victim's place of work or educational institution. In our 2018 report, for example, we highlighted how much discrimination occurred in the workplace and educational institutions. A long-standing case in 2017 ended with a Black Muslim man taking his employer to a tribunal over racist and anti-Muslim treatment within a 'relentlessly intimidating and hostile working environment'. For example, in another case, a disabled Muslim teacher was refused permission to pray on Fridays, despite offering to take a pay cut for the time spent praying. After handing his notice in, he found that staff had falsely cited his disability as his reason for leaving.

Discrimination does not exclusively occur in the workplace or educational institutions, however, and over the years, we have recorded several cases in places such as airports and other transport locations, businesses, and by the police. In 2019, we received a shocking case whereby two Muslim males who work as flight attendants boarded a rival airline from Glasgow to London with their other colleagues and decided to change into their uniforms by opening

their carry-on luggage at the gate. However, once they boarded the aircraft, police boarded the plane to question them, which was done in front of their colleagues and passengers. Police informed the men that staff members from this other airline had reported 'two suspicious Asian men boarding a flight.' The case left the two males deeply upset, embarrassed, and angry, and they received little to no apology.

In another airport case 2017, a man was stopped at Aberdeen airport by a group of plain-clothed airport security officers. They began to ask him questions such as 'Why were you here?', 'Where do you live?' and 'What do you do for a living?'. The officers eventually asked him where he was from, to which

he answered, 'From London, I am a British citizen' to which the officers replied, 'No, where are you actually from originally'. While initially confused, he answered that he was born in Iraq. The officers then began to ask even more questions despite no indication of wrongdoing, asking the victim his thoughts on recent political issues in Iraq. Eventually, the officers gave him his passport, boarding pass, and driver's license back, but they did not explain why he was being stopped and questioned for such a long time. The victim and his friend proceeded to the terminal for their flight but noticed two plain-clothed officers following them for 30 minutes.

Vandalism

Vandalism comprised 8% of cases in the pre-pandemic years (n=328). It carried a similar trajectory as the other categories through the years and significantly spiked from 2016 to 2017, going from 43 cases in 2016 to 81 cases in 2017, and a proportional increase from 7% to 10%. As we will explore more thoroughly in the Locations section, vandalism often takes many forms, but most typically involves graffiti, arson, or breaking windows/doors, and most often targets Islamic institutions and households. In 2019, for example, a Muslim family's home had a swastika etched into their front door, while in 2016, eggs were thrown into a Muslim family's home by neighbours following ongoing anti-Muslim abuse by them. Vandalism is also very much event-specific, primarily regarding graffiti, where it often uses anti-Muslim language specific to these high-profile events. For example, in 2019, we recorded a case whereby a school in Oxford was attacked with anti-Muslim graffiti that included a Nazi swastika and references to the recent Christchurch terror attacks in New Zealand. Graffiti was sprayed on a building in Manchester that read 'Islamic State', while the words 'Kill Islam

before it kills you' were graffiti sprayed on University of Birmingham property, both in 2015. While only weeks after the EU referendum result in 2016, 'Muslims are scum' was painted on the front door of a Muslim family's home in Cardiff, as well as knives stabbed into the grass of the household's garden.

In 2017, one town in Herefordshire experienced a spree of Islamophobic graffiti when 'Muslim rapists out' and 'Islam rapists out' was sprayed around the town, and a pig's head was left outside an Islamic Community Centre. Cases involving vandalism tap into anti-Muslim language that is consistent with the language used in verbal abuse cases, especially that which relates to child abuse, sexual assault, and terrorism, such as graffiti using the words 'Paedo', 'Rapist', and 'Terrorist' to name a few.

Cases of vandalism, especially those that occur in publicly visible areas or Islamic institutions, are particularly distressing for Muslim communities as they ultimately threaten their sense of safety and community in their places and value.

Anti-Muslim Literature

We recorded 233 offline verified cases of anti-Muslim literature in the pre-pandemic years, which amounted to 6% of total cases. These cases are targeted attacks via written or printed means, distributed to or with the intent to cause fear or harm toward individuals and institutions. The most significant spike in cases

occurred between 2017 and 2018, when cases jumped from 28 (3%) to 58 (8%) and then significantly dropped the next year to 26 cases (4%). Such a pronounced spike in reports can relate to the self-styled 'Punish a Muslim Day' letters distributed in the UK throughout March of 2018, sending shockwaves

throughout Muslim communities created a profound sense of fear and anxiety for their safety.

In total, 23 letters were sent to households, 12 to Muslim institutions, and 11 to the victim's place of work. Cases of anti-Muslim literature often include direct threats such as threats of violence. In 2019, for example, we received a shocking report whereby an Islamic school in London received a letter with a picture of London Mayor Sadiq Khan drawn with a Muslim prayer cap and a beard, with the caption 'Prophet Muhammud' and 'I hate Ni**ers, Jews, & all

of you', and made reference to 'Ashraf Al Mursaleen'. The back of the letter contained the words' Pissy Girls of England' and 'Bi*ches, I will f**k you all! – Suck my c**k'. Earlier in 2018, we received a series of similar reports where anti-Muslim letters and DVDs were sent to 3 different Islamic institutions in London and Yorkshire and included references to paedophilia and used the N-word. Like the case in 2019, the author(s) of each letter uses variations of the spelling Muhammad, which includes Muhammud (misspelt), Mohamed, and Mohammed.

Hate Speech

We recorded 56 cases of hate speech in the pre-pandemic years, which made up 1% of total cases. Hate speech calls explicitly for violence against Muslims through highly offensive words and writings intended to make recipients fearful. Although more of

a significant factor in the online world, hate speech offline still has an impact, and we recorded 11, 18, and 13 cases in the years 2017, 2018, and 2019, respectively.

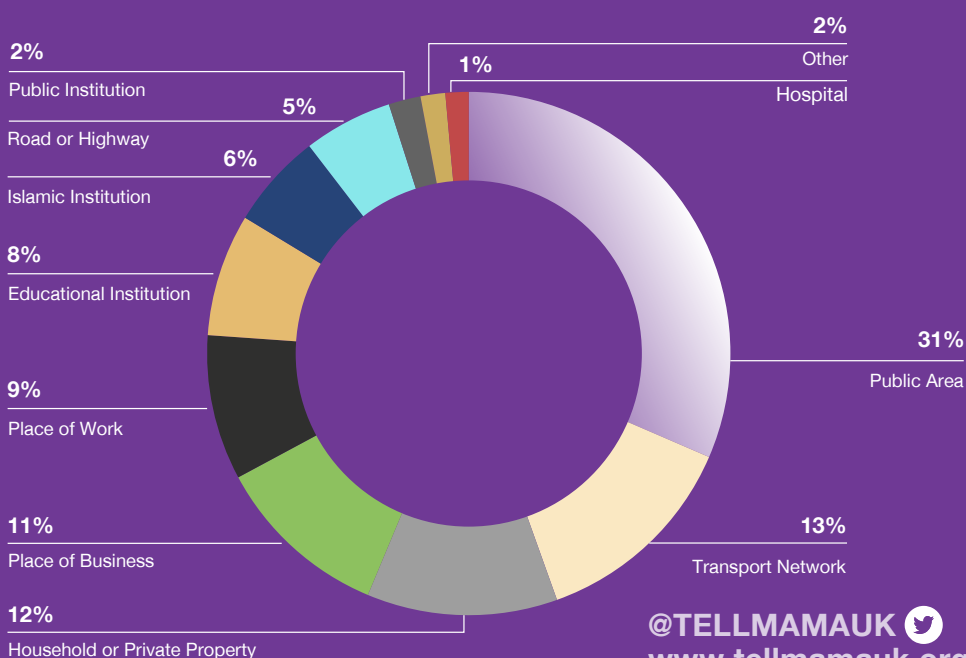## Place Category Trends Breakdown

When looking at place categories over the years, cases taking place in Public Areas made up the majority with 31%, followed by Transport Networks with 13%, Household or Private Property (12%), Place of Business (11%), Place of Work (9%), Educational

Institution (8%), Islamic Institution (6%), Road or Highway (5%), Public Institution (2%), hospital (1%), and 'Other' make up 2%. Such analysis, however, was absent when academics externally wrote reports based on our data prior to 2015.

Location of anti-Muslim Cases Reported to Tell MAMA (2012-2019)

- 2% Public Institution
- 5% Road or Highway
- 6% Islamic Institution
- 8% Educational Institution
- 9% Place of Work
- 11% Place of Business
- 12% Household or Private Property
- 1% Hospital
- 2% Other
- 31% Public Area
- 13% Transport Network

* Where data is available

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Public Area

Anti-Muslim attacks in the pre-pandemic years occurred most commonly in public areas, with 1,032 cases. Our data reveal high degrees of street attacks perpetrated by passers-by or people driving past. As seen in the graph above, cases in public areas ranged from 72 in 2012-13 to a peak of 282 cases in 2017. Proportionally, cases in public areas shifted from a peak in 2012-13 of 48% to between 26% and 34% between 2015 and 2019, peaking in those years at 34% in 2017. The most common cases in public areas were abusive behaviour, the most common combination of incident category and place category from our dataset over the eight years. Analysing location and incident categories can further help us evaluate the typologies and motivations behind Islamophobic hate crimes. As we have noted over the years, there is often very little oversight from authority figures within busy public settings, including town centres and other pedestrianised spaces. The relative anonymity perpetrators possess within these types of busy social spaces can strengthen the desire to commit hate crimes relating to a situation, the nature of which is then fuelled by existing prejudices. The physical and psychological impact of experiencing abuse in public spaces from strangers can be significant regardless of whether the abuse is physical or verbal. As discussed in our previous reports, victims often report the deeply troubling isolation they have felt in the aftermath of attacks in public areas and how this has reduced their desire to enter these public spaces again, thus limiting their social mobility.[1]

Transport Network

Cases in transport networks were the second most common in the pre-pandemic years, with 428 cases. Proportionally it made up 13% of total cases in 2016, 2017, and 2018, and 20% and 10% in 2015 and 2019, respectively. The drop from 2015 to 2016 (7% proportionally and 4 cases), and from 2018 to 2019 (3% proportionally and 25 cases) are the most significant trends for cases at transport networks. Looking more closely, cases at transport networks typically fell under abusive behaviour and assault. Many of the cases we reported in the pre-pandemic years that took place on transport networks involved perpetrators targeting victims with anti-Muslim abuse, often in confined spaces such as buses and other public transport. Therefore, the nature of these locations makes for particularly distressing situations for victims who often cannot escape their attackers, such as during a moving bus or on the London Underground.

In 2016, a Muslim woman wearing a headscarf was in Wembley underground station when a male walked past her, saying 'Fu**ing Muslims' to her face, leaving her confused and scared. In the days following the Paris terrorist attacks in 2015, a visibly Muslim woman was verbally abused while sitting on the London Underground when a male shouted anti-Muslim remarks about the attacks and how it was her fault only days after the attack occurred. While in 2017, a Muslim family received anti-Muslim abuse on a train between Leeds and Manchester. Three middle-aged white males were drinking and swearing loudly when one of the victims politely asked them to stop swearing as several young kids sat near them, who instead began shouting abuse at the Muslim family, saying, 'This is what happens when you let immigrants in here'. In contrast, another said, 'There is no such thing as a British Muslim' and 'I was in the army, I knew how to deal with them', before ranting about Syria and Somalia. The majority of cases that take place on transport networks target women, particularly visibly Muslim women. Over the years, we have received several reports where Muslim women wearing headscarves have been singled out and targeted. In 2017, for example, a Muslim woman wearing a headscarf was on the Jubilee line when two White males standing behind her touched her head; she moved forward slightly when one of the males pulled off her hijab. She looked back and confronted them when the males shouted at her and told her to get off the train. The attack left her deeply distraught, and she struggled to explain what had happened when she spoke to the police at the next station, fearing that the two perpetrators would attack her.

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1   Tell MAMA. (2018). 'Beyond the Incident: Outcomes for Victims of Anti-Muslim Prejudice, 2017 Annual Report'. Available at: https://tellmamauk.org/tell-mamas-annual-report-for-2017-shows-highest-number-of-anti-muslim-incidents/.

Household or Private Property

Between 2012 and 2019, we recorded 386 cases (12%) in Households or Private Properties. In 2012-13 household cases made up 11%, while in 2015, they made up only 3% with 14 total cases. Notably, household cases skyrocketed in 2016 to 80 cases and 12% of total cases that year, a rise of 471%. While in 2017, it increased further by 26% to 101 cases, and even further to 113 cases in 2018 and 15% of cases that year. In 2019 household cases fell from 113 to 109 but proportionally increased to 17%. As we will continue to see in 2020 and 2021, there is a notable trend of household cases increasing either by raw number, proportionally, or both. Beyond the numbers, we can also observe a rise in household neighbour-related cases, many of which are not isolated but take place over a more extended period with perpetrators known to the victims. These cases are particularly distressing to the victims because of their longevity and the sense of inescapability related to them happening close to home.

Moreover, many cases in the pre-pandemic years that took place in or around households or private properties involved verbal abuse, harassment, and, notably, intimidation. Perpetrators often use persistent intimidation tactics such as loud noises, banging doors and windows, throwing food and excrement at properties, and committing other vandalism. These cases also sometimes result in discrimination from council workers or the police when victims report the cases.

In 2015 we received a long-term case, for example, whereby a Muslim family in Lancashire was constantly abused by their neighbours over four years. The harassment began in 2011 when they were having their garden redesigned when their neighbours, an older-aged white couple, began hurling racist abuse at the workers, throwing stones in their garden and glaring at them from their house. The abuse escalated when the neighbours continuously parked their cars to block the family's driveway and cars so they could not get out. It took place over the years despite pleading with the couple to stop, and the harassment caused such severe distress and anxiety to the children that they are seeking psychological help. They contacted the police multiple times over the years but were always told they could do nothing and that it was a council matter, which also failed to help. Later in 2016, the couple used their dog to intimidate the children, letting it off the leash to run around their front garden and bark at them. The perpetrators directed racist and abusive language at them, including 'P**i b*stards' and 'fu**ing Muslims'. Over the pre-pandemic years and into 2020, 2021, and 2022, we have received numerous cases that go far beyond an isolated attack, and we continue to provide as much support as we can for the victims.

Place of Business

We recorded 356 cases in places of business during the pre-pandemic years, which amounted to 11% of total cases. In 2015, they accounted for 12% of cases, with 53 cases recorded and increased the most from 2015 to 2016, when they jumped to a peak of 81 cases (13% of cases). In the three years following, there were 77, 73, and 72 cases, respectively. The majority of these cases involved abusive behaviour or assault. However, incidents at privately-owned establishments do not always result in decisive action from businesses.

In our 2017 report, we highlighted a case whereby a Muslim woman and her five children were abused by a woman whilst shopping at the Manchester Trafford Centre. The perpetrator spat in the face of the former's 11-year-old child and shouted, "Black scumbag", "people like you shouldn't be here", and "look at you with that thing on", about the victim's hijab. The victim's son managed to take a picture of the perpetrator. The victim told Tell MAMA that the incident occurred in a busy shopping centre area and that the victim had screamed for help before approaching staff at a nearby shop. However, the response from staff in the shopping centre was "slow or non-existent", in her words. Once the police arrived at the scene, the perpetrator was untraceable. While

in 2016, we highlighted a case whereby an abusive woman who was blocking a supermarket aisle with her pushchair began t verbally abuse and threaten a Muslim woman when she attempted to pass,

Place of Work

Cases that occurred in places of work accounted for 9% of total cases between 2012 and 2019, with 294 cases. The most significant jump in cases that took place at the workplace occurred between 2015 and 2016, when it increased from 14 cases (3%0 to 59 cases (9%). It also increased by 15 cases in 2017 and peaked proportionally in 2018 with 11% of cases (N=80). Certain professions appear more vulnerable to hate crimes than taxi drivers and other jobs related to nighttime economies, such as restaurant staff and owners, security guards, and takeaway drivers. Cases that target Muslims in these professions can often act in groups and involve a form of 'thrill-seeking' to impress the rest of their group. In addition to the nighttime economy, other public-facing professions, particularly public transport staff, are also high-risk.

While abusive behaviour is the most common category of hate within the workplace, discrimination is common and often involves fellow employees, bosses, or the broader workplace institution at fault. For example, in 2015 and 2016, we recorded 6 and 10 workplace discrimination cases, respectively, while in 2018, we recorded a peak of 65 workplace discrimination cases. Over the years, this has included several cases of denying Muslims the ability to pray, not inviting Muslims to work events such as Christmas parties, sneaking bacon into Muslim staff's lunches, or actively preventing Muslims from progressing in their role. Many victims of workplace discrimination have expressed fears of losing their job or harming their careers, and some have felt no choice but to leave their jobs to stop the targeting. Victims of workplace discrimination have felt 'frustrated', 'isolated', and 'miserable' and have struggled to sleep, find fulfilling work, and regain their confidence.

In 2018 we highlighted a case whereby a group chat with the victim's colleagues, including their managers,

saying, 'What you gonna f***ing do? Hey, I will rip your headscarf off your f***ing head. What you gonna do? Go call your ISIS.'

which contained repeated instances of anti-Muslim language, abusive language, threats, and sexual harassment, such as 'f***ing immigrants', 'postbox', 'terrorist', 'I'll rip her headscarf off', and 'f***ing c**nts, lot of them'. While in 2017, we reported a case in which a Muslim woman had been bullied by a colleague who would, on multiple occasions, refer to her hijab as a "tea towel". She also reported abusive customer comments, which denigrated her race and Islamic beliefs. However, she felt that if she reported the bullying to her employers, it would affect her job and may cause further negative behaviour towards her, saying, 'I am afraid to report it within the workplace as it would impact my job and cause too much stress.' In 2016, we highlighted several workplace discrimination cases, including a case where a man had brought an exercise device into work, which prompted his supervisor to ask if he intended to cause an explosion in the building. On a separate occasion, he had brought in a drinks bottle and was asked again whether it was explosives. The hostility continued and grew more racist in nature, and management later asked the victim to treat this behaviour as 'banter'. Such disregard from colleagues and the wider workplace institution is a typical method to downplay Islamophobia and treat it as 'non-serious'. During that same year, we reported a case where a Muslim woman reported that management had mistreated her and told her to focus on her job after she complained that a colleague, who had previously bullied her, suggested that she must have family in Syria despite being of a different ethnic background. She was seen by management as a 'troublemaker' after raising these concerns, making her out as the problem in the situation.

Educational Institutions

We recorded 248 (8%) cases that took place in educational institutions in the years 2012-2019. Cases jumped from 23 (5%) in 2015 to 50 (8%) in 2016, a rise of 117%. In the years following, case numbers remained similar until they increased slightly to 64 in 2019, where they made up a proportional peak of 10% of cases. As with workplace cases, cases in educational institutions most commonly involved abusive behaviour but also saw an increasing trend of discrimination cases. Between 2015 and 2016, we recorded a 750% increase in educational discrimination cases, rising from 4 to 34 cases. Discrimination in educational institutions can take many forms and, over the years, has included some school pupils being treated with unnecessary suspicion, being isolated and punished in class for no apparent reason, and being referred to safeguarding or Prevent programs which have left the child and their parents with deep anxiety, distress, and confusion. School policies have also been discriminatory towards Muslims, such as prohibiting Islamic attire or halal food, for example.

Pupils and parents facing anti-Muslim cases within their educational institutions can become disengaged with school life and educational achievements. Some pupils felt they needed to change schools, while others took significant time off, putting their studies on hold. Pupils and parents may experience isolation, anxiety, and a lack of self-confidence. In 2018 we highlighted a case in which when a Muslim schoolboy was asked not to be in a class photo, the teacher said, 'Why, do you have something to hide? You look suspicious.' The teacher later asked if he had an explosive device on him. Several of the cases over the years have involved Muslim students or staff being called terrorists or linked with terrorism in some way, such as the case just mentioned, as well as dozens of others. In 2017, for example, a Muslim schoolgirl who was called a 'bomber' and had bacon thrown on her lunch by her peers and later asked her parents if she could be moved to an Islamic school where she

would not be the only student who wears the hijab. Teachers and wider school management can also promote anti-Muslim behaviour.

In our 2017 report, we shone a light on a horrible case we received whereby a GCSE student was made to watch an 18-rated drama based on the 'honour killing' of a young Asian girl by her father as an introduction to the topic of 'Muslim families' in a Religious Education lesson. As the boy's parents pointed out, honour killings are a cultural practice among several faith groups in parts of Asia and Africa and have nothing to do with religious practice. The second of these lessons was about 'Muslim families' concerned with forced marriage, displaying a concerning level of ignorance and insensitivity in defining Muslim families. In the Q&A section that followed, some children mockingly asked the Muslim boys if their families were the same as these stereotypes, demonstrating the level of prejudice that can be instilled or vindicated amongst young people if taught in this manner. Furthermore, we received several cases of Muslim parents experiencing abusive behaviour from other parents over the years. In 2018, for example, a Muslim woman was threatened by another parent who said, 'We don't like people like you' and threatened to 'sort you out' after their children were in a minor altercation at school. Some cases involving university staff and students have involved abusive behaviour, while others comprise unfair treatment. Other examples included Muslim students and staff being called the P-word, terrorists, and having their headscarves pulled off, to more discriminatory cases such as a student being told by their university tutor that they were surprised they were not arrested after leaving their backpack on the bus.

As we will explore in more depth in 2020 and 2021, discrimination cases at the workplace and in educational institutions continue to proliferate and have become more common.

Islamic Institutions

Over the pre-pandemic years, we recorded 193 cases   that targeted Islamic Institutions, making up 6% of

total cases. In those years, cases peaked in 2017 with 54 cases, which comprised 6% of proportional cases that year and rose by 20 cases from the previous year. Since 2017, cases have fallen to 37 and 38 in 2018 and 2019, respectively, but have remained proportionally similar at 5% and 6%. Most cases that target Islamic Institutions are vandalism cases and typically involve graffiti, arson, or other forms of property damage. For example, in 2019, we received several reports of arson that targeted mosques or buildings approved to be converted to mosques, such as in Skegness. Mosque threats following terror attacks were also a common occurrence over the years. Hours after the Westminster Bridge attack in 2017, for example, Christopher Massey, 46, dialled 999 and claimed to have left two kilograms of explosives outside the Southend Mosque and Islamic Trust. Officers attended the scene but found no explosives and traced Mr Massey from the mobile phone used to make the initial phone call. While after the Manchester Arena bombing that same year, a perpetrator shouted outside a mosque that Muslims' were not welcome' and that they 'were terrorists responsible for the Manchester bombing' before being calmed down by members of the mosque. Following the London Bridge attack, a man left a fake bomb outside Paisley Central Mosque. James Palmer, 31, had been drinking and

watching news coverage of the attack, which inspired him to construct a fake bomb with two gas canisters, which were taped together with wire and wood and were accompanied by a handwritten message which read: 'Youse are next, defo.'

Following the Christchurch terror attacks in 2019, meanwhile, three mosques were attacked with sledgehammers only hours after news broke out, and a Muslim man outside the entrance of his mosque was called a 'P**i ba**ard' and assaulted, and a mosque received an anonymous phone call from a man who said, 'Do you know what has happened in New Zealand?', followed by 'go back to your own country'.

Cases of vandalism targeting Islamic institutions such as mosques cause congregations to feel insecure and fearful of further attacks. While these cases do not occur in public areas, they still challenge Muslims' right to worship freely and in peace. We see that vandalism intends to target a whole community rather than individuals. Therefore, this means that such cases are more likely to be premeditated, given the specific institutions targeted in most cases and the hours in which they are targeted (often at night or in the early morning).

Road or Highway

We recorded 150 cases that took place within the category of road or highway, making up 5% of total cases. These numbers increased significantly in 2016 from 13 the previous year to 38 cases and increased further to a peak of 58 cases in 2017 before decreasing to 40 cases in 2018 and 31 cases in 2019, with proportional numbers remaining similar through these years. Most of these cases involved abusive behaviour or assault, with many also being classified as road rage, whereby the perpetrator gets in traffic-

related disputes with strangers, often unprovoked by the victim, and verbally abuses the victim using anti-Muslim language and makes threats. In 2019, for example, a man attempted to run over a visibly Muslim mother and her child while they were crossing the road, while also shouting racist language, including the P-word, while other cases have involved drivers throwing liquids and foods at Muslim drivers at traffic lights, calling them terrorists and paedophiles.

Victim and Perpetrator Breakdown

As explored throughout our previous annual reports, anti-Muslim cases reported to Tell MAMA are heavily gendered. What stands out in this analysis is that

women are the majority of victims, and males are the majority of perpetrators. Victims of Islamophobic abuse are often outnumbered by their abusers. These

trends support the theory that perpetrators select victims in a relatively vulnerable position whom they perceive to be less able to defend themselves or seek help from others.

Victims

Looking at the graph below, we can see that victims were predominantly females compared to males over the eight years. In the years 2012-13 to 2014-15, numbers were relatively similar, with females still making up the majority of cases, but from 2015 onwards, we can see a significant rise in the proportion of female victims, as well as a general rise in both female and male victim cases due to the rise in cases from 2015 onwards. Proportionally, female victims rose from 33% of cases in 2014-15 (when the victim's gender was known) to 61% of cases in 2015, while that same year, male victims made up 35% of cases proportionally. From 2015 onwards, we can see that female victims overwhelmingly make up the cases.

When looking at the ethnicity of victims between 2012 and 2019, we can see that Asians dominated the proportion of cases, followed by Arab or North African victims, showing that those perceived to be from a Muslim-majority group face particularly racialised versions of anti-Muslim hate.

The visibility of Muslim victims is also an important factor to consider when recording cases of anti-Muslim hate crimes. 'Visibly Muslim' refers to a victim wearing Islamic clothing. The most evident examples of Islamic clothing over the eight years were the hijab, niqab, and abaya. For men, this might include a beard, wearing a thobe or Islamic headwear. Given the popularity of specific Islamic clothing, like the hijab, female victims are more identifiable as Muslims. Perpetrators of Islamophobic abuse often referred to a victim's Islamic clothing, suggesting they had selected the victim based on their religious markers. For example, in one case in 2018, a young Muslim woman was travelling on a London bus when a

Victims of Offline Anti-Muslim Cases by Gender 2012-2019

Male   Female
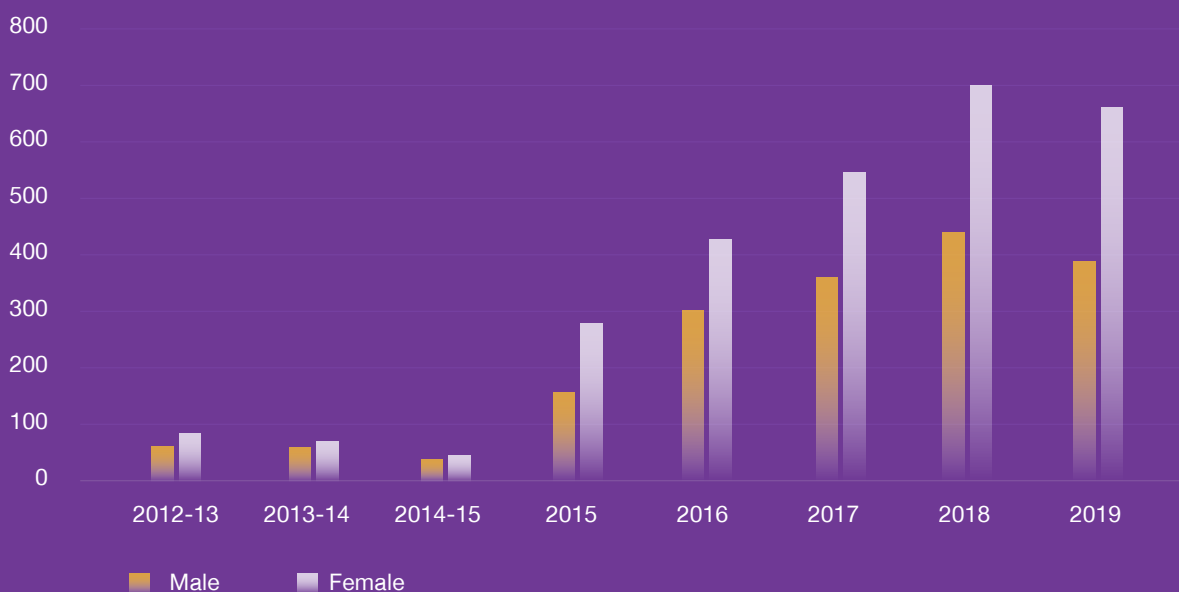
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man entered, grabbed her possessions and started swearing at her. When she confronted him, he replied, 'I have no respect for you because you have a hijab on. Shut up, f*ck you.'

As seen in the graph below, the proportion of visibly Muslim victims was consistently over 40% in the pre-pandemic years, peaking at 59% in 2015 and a low of 37% in 2018 and 2019. Visibly Muslim women were also the most common sub-category for each year. In 2015, 46% of all victims were visibly Muslim women

Ethnicity of those Reporting to Tell MAMA (2012-2019)

Legend:
- White
- Other
- Black
- Asian
- Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Backgrounds
- Arab or North African
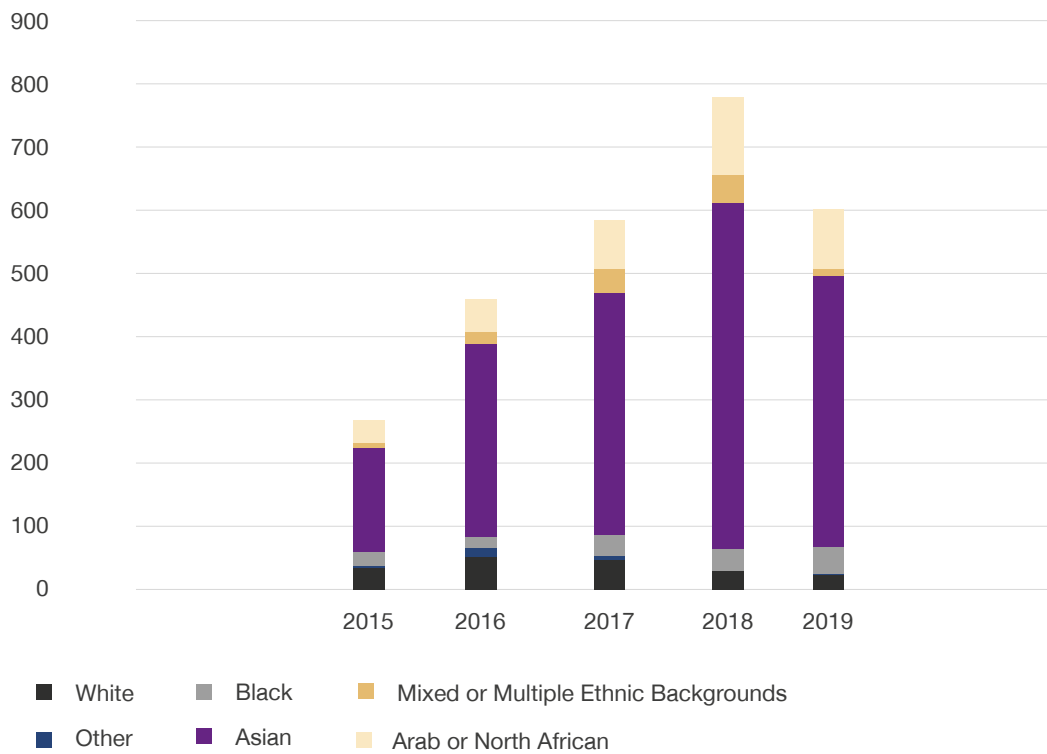
* Where data is available

Percentage of those Targeted for their Islamic Clothing (2012-2019)

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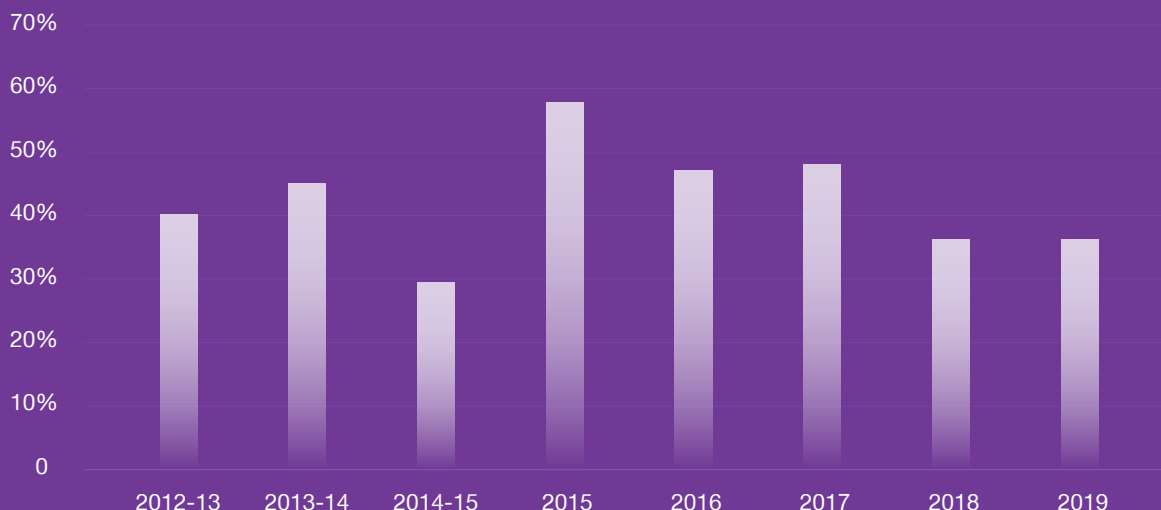(N=215), while in 2016, the proportion was 39% (N=295) and 53% in 2017 (N=353). Notably, in these years, the number of visibly Muslim women victims increased considerably from 215 in 2015 to 353 in 2017, despite a drop in their proportional percentage in their respective years.

Perpetrators

Perpetrators, meanwhile, tell a different story and yet further highlight the gendered nature of anti-Muslim hate crimes. Instead, perpetrators are overwhelmingly male, making up most cases (when the perpetrator's gender is known) where we recorded the relevant data every year. Similar to victim gender data, however, 2015 marks a significant uptick in cases and a rise in the proportional number of male perpetrators. That year male perpetrators made up an astonishing 76% of cases. While in 2016, 2017, and 2018 they made up 66%, 64%, and 73% of known perpetrators, respectively. Perpetrators often use racist, misogynistic, xenophobic language or threats of sexual violence alongside Islamophobic abuse. In our 2018 report, we highlighted a series of reports that display this, including one where an elderly, visibly Muslim woman was targeted on the street by three men with a dog. They pushed her, threatened her with the dog and verbally abused her, calling her a 'refugee b*tch', 'f****** immigrant' and threatened to 'deport' her. While in another incident that year, a man threatened a visibly Muslim woman with a bottle, saying, 'I'm going f****** hit you in the c*nt with this' before throwing the bottle at her. While in 2016, we highlighted a case whereby a male perpetrator targeted a Muslim woman with threats to rape Muslim women and murder Muslim men after the UK left the European Union, leaving her feeling unsafe at the moment. Group dynamics are an essential aspect of anti-Muslim violence, and many perpetrators

Gender of Perpetrators of anti-Muslim Hatred (2012-2019)

Legend: Male, Female
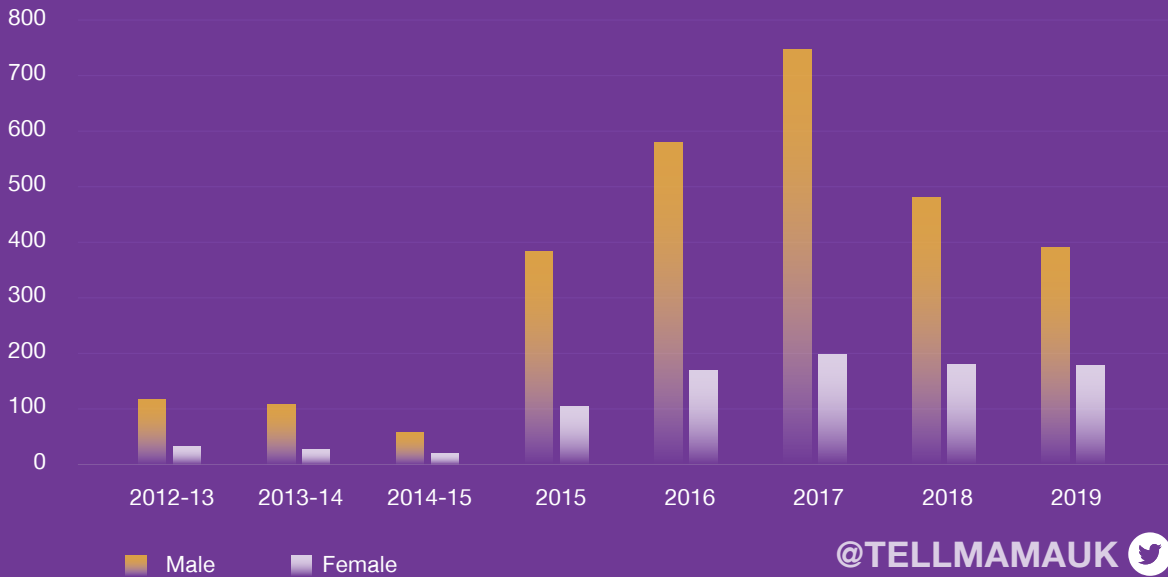
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target Muslim victims when they are in groups, and the victims are either alone or perceived to be vulnerable. For example, in 2016, we highlighted a report whereby a group of men shouted at a woman, 'ALLAHU AKBAR, BOOM!'. As they got off the bus, they laughed together and continued laughing when

Ethnicity of Perpetrators of anti-Muslim Hatred (2012-2019).

Legend: White, Black, Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Backgrounds, Other, Asian, Arab or North African
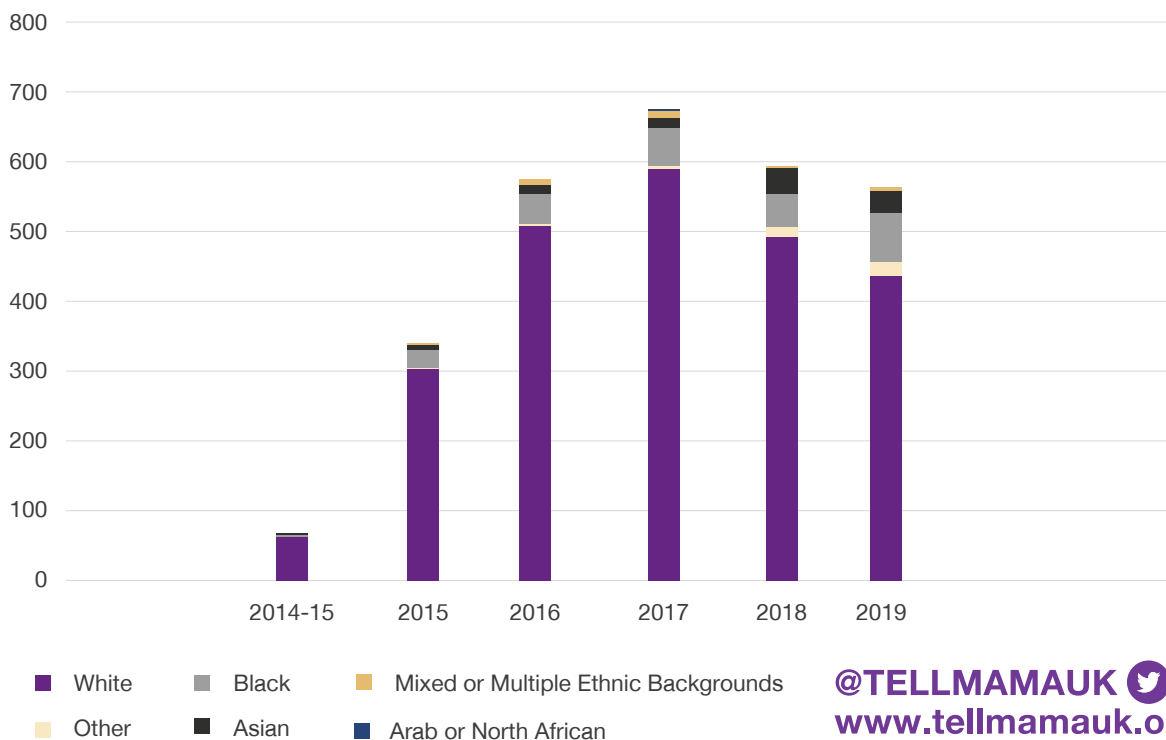
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* Where data is available

looking at the victim as they left the scene.

Perpetrator ethnicity between 2012 and 2019 was also overwhelmingly white, peaking in 2017 with 635 white perpetrators, as seen in the graph below.

Geographic Location

From 2017 onwards, we began a more advanced collection of the geographic locations of cases we receive. The data show higher frequencies of anti-Muslim cases in big cities and urban areas with larger, more prominent Muslim communities. As discussed in our 2015 report, there are regional factors to consider when analysing hate crime trends.[2] Moreover, issues relating to areas of higher population density or high levels of deprivation across the UK significantly affect the potential for social mobility, cultural cohesion, and general happiness and satisfaction. Looking more

closely at the geographical locations of cases between 2017 and 2019, we can see that London dominated each year. In 2017 we recorded 274 cases in the capital, 241 in 2018, and 240 in 2019, which is also the case in 2020 and 2022, as we will explore in the respective data analysis chapters. Cases in Greater Manchester, the Midlands, and cities in Yorkshire and Humber, such as Sheffield and Rotherham, are also prominent. Below displays the two maps we published showing the location of cases across the country in 2017 and 2018.

Verified Anti-Muslim Incidents reported to Tell MAMA in 2017 by Region (N=839) (Unknown location=25)
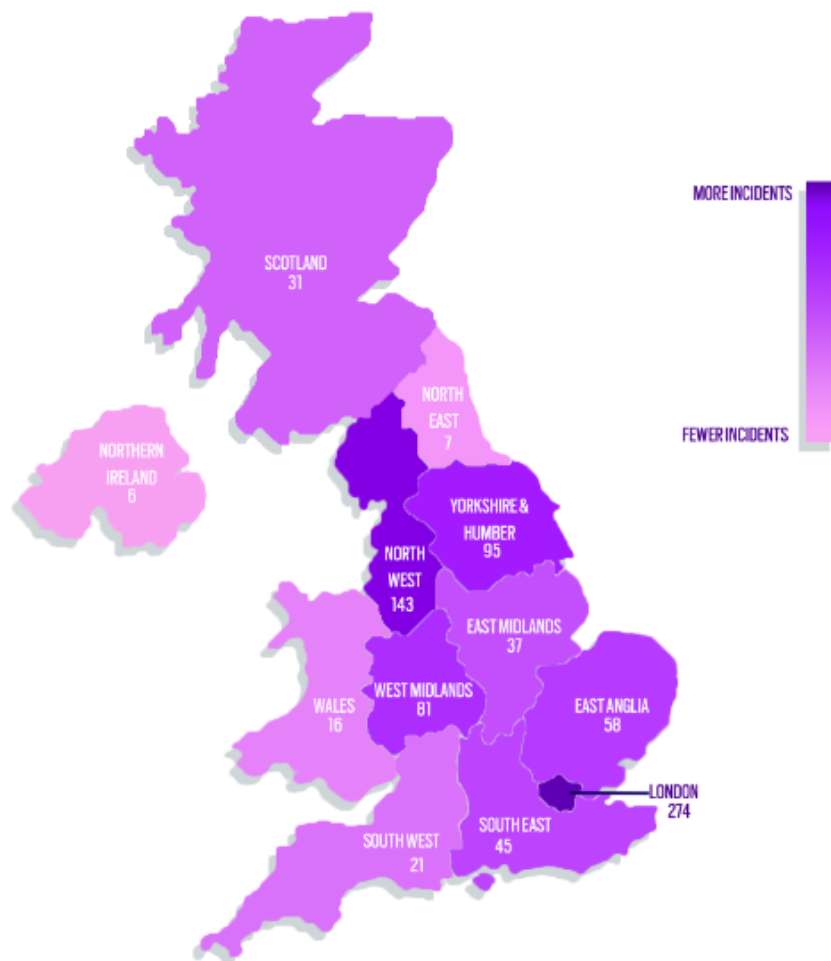
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2   Tell MAMA. (2016). 'The Geography of Anti-Muslim Hatred – Tell MAMA Annual Report 2015', Tell MAMA.

Top 6 UK Cities with Highest Number of Incidents Reported to Tell MAMA 2018

Sheffield 19
Rotherham 13
Manchester 62
Leicester 12
Birmingham 28
London 241

Conclusion – Where Have We Been and Where Are We Going?

Tell MAMA recorded and verified thousands of offline anti-Muslim cases in the pre-pandemic years. These cases have taken place in various places, in workplaces, public areas, on public transport or highways or targeted mosques (or worshippers going to and from places of worship) and have been classified into various categories. The most notable trends from this time have been the persistence of abusive behaviour cases, which has consistently topped our list of incident categories, but also the increasing prevalence of discrimination and vandalism cases, either in numbers or severity. Workplace and school-based discrimination became increasingly frequent from 2015 onwards, a trend that we continue to notice in 2020, 2021, and 2022. These cases are deeply distressing for the individuals and their

families, especially when the perpetrators often do not understand or refuse to understand how their actions or inactions are hateful and further enable institutional Islamophobia. Through these cases over the years, many of which require lengthy correspondence with victims to understand the entire situation, we have better understood how institutional discrimination manifests and how it is allowed to proliferate, and crucially, how we as an organisation can best support victims so they get the best possible outcomes. The nuanced concept of institutional Islamophobia and how it affects Muslims in the real world is something we will look at in more detail in the 2020 and 2021 offline sections.

Over the pre-pandemic years, we have also noticed an uptick in household-related cases. Many of these cases involve altercations with neighbours that are often known to the victims, and they often take place over a more extended time compared to more typically isolated attacks such as abusive behaviour in public areas. As we have briefly explored in this chapter, these cases can be relentless and highly tiring and anxiety-inducing for the victims, many of whom have entire families targeted by the perpetrators. We have noted this trend in 2020, 2021, and 2022, which we continue to monitor heavily and seek to support those impacted.

The unmistakably gendered nature of anti-Muslim hate crimes is another critical aspect to note, and over the years, we have noted how victims are consistently women, and often visibly Muslim women, while perpetrators are overwhelmingly male, mainly white males. Furthermore, this is a trend we have recorded yearly in the pre-pandemic years and continued from 2020 onwards. In particular, the overwhelming number of cases disproportionately targeting visibly Muslim women over the eight years is shocking and consistently occurs in all categories and locations.

Lastly, the pre-pandemic years can be primarily marked by the event-specific nature of anti-Muslim cases and how high-profile events at home and abroad influence the nature of offline cases. Key drivers included how individuals with underlying prejudices sought the weaponise terror attacks, shocking acts of child abuse and related criminality or were emboldened by political events or statements from high-profile figures. Notably, the EU referendum in 2016 changed how we understand trigger events and the scale that they can impact anti-Muslim attacks at home, creating dozens of specifically related cases in all manners of locations and categories. Since then, we have observed several other trigger events that have only increased in scale, namely the Manchester Arena bombing in 2017, the Punish a Muslim Day letters in 2018, and the Christchurch attacks in 2019, which was the worst trigger event in terms of the spike in cases it caused we have ever witnessed since Tell MAMA began operations. Following the pre-pandemic years, we continue to witness how certain global events negatively affect anti-Muslim hate crimes here in the UK.

Anti-Muslim Hate Post-Pandemic

04

The Evolving Anti-Muslim Hate Trends 2020

1. Discrimination:

Discrimination was more prevalent in 2020 than in any year previously reported in cases to Tell MAMA, making up 17% of the year's verified offline cases. Discrimination occurred in various settings: educational institutions, workplaces, places of business, transport networks, hospitals, and engaging with the police. Such variation suggests that anti-Muslim discrimination in the UK cannot be pinned down to one prominent area. These findings uphold the research highlighted in this report's literature review, which pointed to a reality of anti-Muslim discrimination in the UK in all aspects of society. Our research reveals that the pandemic exacerbated preexisting anti-Muslim discrimination in these settings as schools and workplaces went online following the lockdown. We find that this new dynamic which has forced people to adjust to new settings has allowed certain people to continue to treat Muslim communities in a discriminatory way. In this section, we will explore some notable discrimination cases discrimination and call for the need for meaningful changes on a societal level.

a. Educational institutions

Schools are a vital stage for children, teenagers, and young adults to develop themselves and their personal identities and set up their futures. Unfortunately, not everyone in school receives the same treatment, and there are still significant disparities in schools on an institutional level that foster prejudice.[1][2] For example, the 2017 Social Mobility Commission report interviewed young Muslims in the UK and found that teachers often carried Muslim stereotypes of Muslim pupils and maintained low expectations of them.[3] They also said that not enough Muslim teachers received sufficient encouragement to fulfil their potential, nor were they placed in the correct sets for their ability.[4] Muslim pupils also felt they could not raise these concerns for fear of being further isolated and bullied.[5] Therefore, the above significantly impacts their self-confidence and self-worth, impedes their desire to enter higher education, and prevents Muslim teaching staff from progressing. In fact, the 2017 report highlighted that young Muslims are more likely to drop out of higher education and less likely to achieve higher grades (either 1st or 2:1), and 'interviewees felt their choices were more constrained because of inequitable access to high-status universities (often because of geography), discrimination at the point of entry or self-limiting choices for fear of being in the minority.'[6] Guidance from Universities UK in addressing Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred presented an intersectional framework.[7] They made wide-ranging recommendations that ranged from promoting religious literacy to involving Muslim

1 Crozier, G., and Davies, J. (2008). "'The Trouble is They Don't Mix': Self-Segregation or Enforced Exclusion?", Race, Ethnicity and Education, 11(3), 285–301.

2 Hawkins, K. (2014). 'Teaching for Social Justice, Social Responsibility and Social Inclusion: A Respectful Pedagogy for Twenty-First Century Early Childhood Education', European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 22 (5), 723–738.

3 Social Mobility Commission (2017). The social mobility challenges faced by young Muslims. Available at: London: Social Mobility Commission.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid, p.3.

7 Universities UK. «Tackling Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Hatred: Practical Guidance for UK Universities.» (2021). Available at: https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-12/tackling-islamophobia-and-anti-muslim-hatred-uuk.pdf

voices in inclusion initiatives, providing training to staff to reduce bias and foment an understanding of how anti-Muslim hatred operates, understanding that Muslim students have concerns around the Prevent duty, whilst also improving access to third-party support services and improving the handling of harassment complaints.[8]

In 2020 we received 15 in educational institutions that fell under discrimination. Many of the perpetrators of these cases were in roles of responsibility and authority, such as headteachers and classroom teachers. One case we received in March, for example, involved a teacher calling the Prophet Muhammad a 'paedophile' in a culture and ethics class and making the class vote on whether they agreed if he was 'disgusting', despite efforts from other students to challenge it and providing a deeper historical context. A failure of staff to provide for the Muslim students left them feeling voiceless and mocked. After finding out that some of the pupils reported the teacher to the school, the teacher sent the pupils to detention. Another case we received regarded a school in with a history of systemic racism and anti-Muslim discrimination. The individual who reported the case stated how the school has a culture of racist and anti-Muslim prejudice and microaggressions, and they described how efforts by current and past students to seek redress resulted in further marginalisation. The victim highlighted how the school often denies pupils a voice over these matters. In 2020, senior students sent out an email urging staff and students at the school to report instances of racism and anti-Muslim hate, and in response, the school removed the email and replaced it with a more generic one

focusing on how the school has been affected by the pandemic. Consequently, this led current and former pupils to petition the school to address these systemic issues. Notably, beyond the anti-Muslim discrimination that deeply affects pupils in these schools, both cases highlight how school institutions and those appointed in leadership roles within them actively deny some students their voices based on their ethnicity and religion, setting them up exceptionally poorly in a stage of their lives when they should be developing their voices and identities that they will carry for the rest of their lives.

The pandemic proved to be another means of discrimination in educational institutions. For example, a news report was released in September exposing how Edinburgh University gave a Muslim first-year student a ham sandwich while self-isolating in their residence halls.[9] In comparison, we received another incident whereby a primary school headteacher sent a letter to parents of Bangladeshi pupils stating that some members of the community were not abiding by the lockdown rules, specifically those working in the taxi and restaurant businesses and those waiting for test results, therefore putting everyone else at risk. As we explored in the literature review, the scapegoating narrative towards Muslim communities became a regularity during the pandemic and exposed how Muslim communities in the UK are treated as 'problem groups' that pose a risk to the rest of Britain. Such anti-Muslim narratives have no place in UK society, particularly from those placed in roles grounded by specific standards of responsibility and fairness, such as a headteacher.

a.   Workplaces

Anti-Muslim discrimination in the workplace is a dominant part of Muslim people's lives that further diminish their social mobility in society. As we explored in the literature review, discrimination in the workplace takes many forms and ranges from

unfair treatment at the recruitment and interview stages, the ability to progress in a role and gain promotions, and being on the receiving end of derogatory Muslim prejudices and hateful anti-Muslim behaviour from colleagues and bosses,

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8   Ibid. pp 12-14.

9   Edinburgh Live. (2020). 'Muslim student self-isolating at Edinburgh University halls served ham sandwiches'. Available at: https://www.edinburghlive.co.uk/news/edinburgh-news/muslim-student-self-isolating-edinburgh-19023527.

which is often met without repercussions towards the perpetrators. Such biases and behaviours occur both consciously and unconsciously, but regardless, they leave the victim feeling mistreated, undermined and othered based on their ethnicity and religion. In 2020, 28 discrimination cases occurred in the workplace, highlighting the lived reality of systemic discrimination that occur daily in these settings for Muslims. Heath and Martin (2013) asserted that Muslim men and women face a "consistent pattern" of labour market penalisation, which are largest for the economic activity of Muslim women and "large and significant" for the unemployment of Muslim men.[10] An intersectional analytical framework from Miaari, Khattab and Johnston (2019) found a gendered, racialised overlap between ethnic and religious discrimination towards Muslim women in the labour market.[11] Di Stasio et al. (2019) found "substantial gaps" in callbacks from potential employers between majority and minority religious groups across five European countries (including the UK).[12] A BBC News report in 2017 that even in diverse cities like London, Muslim names still secured fewer interviews compared to candidates with Christian-sounding names.[13] More recent research from Sweida-Metwally (2022) further confirmed a 'Muslim penalty' and labour market hierarchies around ethnicity and religion/culture and that a 'country of origin penalty' may also exist.

Moreover, writing for the Conversation, Sweida-Metwally argued that "discrimination plays an important role in bringing about the Muslim penalty".[14] Labour market disparities, including the stark reality that Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women who suffer lower pay experience a pay gap more extensive than 25 years ago (only slightly less

so for Black women). However, the authors stressed caution when seeking explanatory factors.[15]

Many of the reports we receive that fall under workplace discrimination involve derogatory passing comments and microaggressions by colleagues and bosses, as well as unfair treatment towards Muslim employees. In 2020, this included, for example, bosses asking Muslim employees not to wear specific religious clothing and shave their beards, to record their prayer times at work to suggest that they are using up work time or being suspended for raising concerns about another colleague who made Islamophobic remarks in the workplace.

Several cases are worth more attention in this report to emphasise the reality of anti-Muslim workplace discrimination, which we sanitised to protect the identities of those impacted whilst helping readers understand how different forms of discrimination occur. One case, for example, involved a local council worker who was employed at the council for 17 years, being moved into other departments without appropriate notice, being regularly given night shifts more often than her other colleagues, being denied Eid holiday requests or appropriate shift changes for Ramadan, and not being given a voice to raise her concerns to senior members of staff after receiving derogatory Islamophobic comments from colleagues. Despite all these discriminatory practices by the workplace and those in senior positions, the council worker was suspended from her job on unfair grounds. In another case, an Amazon worker who had stated he intended to excel in the company and move up the ranks was told that he would not go far in the company by senior staff and had his contract terminated as his fellow white colleagues in the same role were

10 Heath, Anthony, and Jean Martin. «Can religious affiliation explain 'ethnic'inequalities in the labour market?.» Ethnic and racial studies 36, no. 6 (2013): 1005-1027.

11 Miaari, Sami, Nabil Khattab, and Ron Johnston. «Religion and ethnicity at work: a study of British Muslim women's labour market performance.» Quality & Quantity 53, no. 1 (2019): 19-47.

12 Di Stasio, Valentina, Bram Lancee, Susanne Veit, and Ruta Yemane. «Muslim by default or religious discrimination? Results from a cross-national field experiment on hiring discrimination.» Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 47, no. 6 (2021): 1305-1326.

13 Adesina, Zack, and Oana Marocico. «Is It Easier to Get a Job if You›re Adam or Mohamed?» BBC News. Last modified February 6, 2017. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-38751307.

14 Sweida-Metwally (2022) which is Sweida-Metwally, Samir. «Does the Muslim penalty in the British labour market dissipate after accounting for so-called "sociocultural attitudes"?.» Ethnic and Racial Studies 45, no. 16 (2022): 359-388. https://theconversation.com/muslim-culture-is-routinely-blamed-for-lower-levels-of-employment-but-my-research-shows-this-is-not-what-is-behind-the-problem-187647.

15 Manning, Prof Alan, and Rebecca Rose. «Contrary to the Impression Given by the Sewell Report, Things for Ethnic Minorities in the UK Labour Market Are Not Getting Better.» British Politics and Policy at LSE. Last modified April 19, 2021. https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/sewell-report-labour-market/.

promoted, despite working extra hours.

We received a case from multiple South Asian NHS workers who stated they were anti-Muslim discrimination targets at an NHS hospital. The reports highlighted how Muslim staff felt they were treated differently from their white colleagues, intimidated by managers over working hours and what to wear, and that they avoided speaking up about it to more senior members in fear of repercussions since Muslim staff in the ward had been previously suspended for unknown/unfair reasons. These reports corroborate previous research studies that

have exposed the systemic discrimination that ethnic minorities face in the NHS and UK healthcare system regularly. As we highlighted in the literature review, a recent King's Fund survey, for example, revealed that 29% of ethnic minority staff in the NHS felt bullied, harassed, or abused by other NHS staff within the past 12 months.[16]

Based on these shocking reports and research, it is, therefore, imperative that workplaces make more severe commitments to eliminating systemic discrimination in every aspect of their recruitment stages and working environments.

Household incidents during the pandemic

The year 2020 was unprecedented for everyone's physical mobility. From the 16 March, the entire country began entering a national lockdown, limiting most of the population to their homes and surrounding area. It put much strain on people's living conditions as never before had so many people been forced to remain indoors and limit their outdoor activities as much as possible. The increased time spent at home, especially during the day when most people would usually be at work or school, thus increasing the likelihood of interactions with neighbours. Previous research has revealed the importance of neighbours for human wellbeing broadly, as well as the crucial role they can play as a support network during moments of crisis.[17] [18] During the pandemic, however, Muslims have been subject to a wide range of abuses in and around their homes from neighbours and flatmates to an extent that Tell MAMA has never seen before. As we revealed in the analysis section, 189 reports occurred in the household. Many of the victims were families or groups, and notably, many of the perpetrators were not only white British (in line with perpetrator statistics from 2020 more broadly) but were multiple people, including multiple neighbours. These findings are particularly concerning as it shows

that household neighbour incidents were based on multiple targeting from a group of people over a sustained period, creating an extremely stressful living dynamic for the victims. Many cases did not start during the lockdown but were exacerbated by it and worsened during this time as people were concentrated in and around their homes far more. Below we will look more closely at some notable incidents in households during the lockdown to highlight the severity of this trend.

In the first few days of lockdown, we received 4 cases regarding abusive or threatening behaviour from neighbours. One case, for example, involved a hostile neighbour threatening to "smash their head in" with a hammer, calling the victim the P-word, and playing loud music at unsociable hours. In another, a Muslim household living at the property for 30 years began regularly throwing pork products at its front door. Many of the incidents we received from people during the lockdown left them and their families extremely distressed and worried about leaving their properties. In one incident, a Muslim household in Manchester had been regularly abused, threatened, and intimidated by four different households in the neighbourhood. An example of this threatening behaviour involved having aggressive dogs set

16 The King's Fund. (2020). 'Ethnic minority deaths and Covid-19: what do we do?' The King's Fund. Available at: https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/blog/2020/04/ethnic-minority-deaths-covid-19.

17 Brodeur, A., and Flèche, S. (2019). 'Neighbors› Income, Public Goods, and Well-Being', Review of Income and Wealth, International Association for Research in Income and Wealth, 65(2), 217-238.

18 Toya, H., and Skidmore, M. (2013). 'Do Natural Disasters Enhance Societal Trust?', Kyklos, 67(2), 255-279.

on them and foul in their garden, their driveway blocked, and being constantly followed and racist abuse shouted at them. Their young children were shouted at and accused of learning how to make bombs at the mosque and called terrorists when they were playing in the garden. The family were even threatened to have their heads smashed in at one point. When speaking with the victims, we were told that such hostile behaviour has had an immeasurable effect on their mental wellbeing, and they feel they must always remain indoors and close their curtains to avoid contact with the perpetrators.

In another incident, a woman in shared accommodation was the victim of repeated microaggressions from her flatmate during lockdown. Examples included making Islamophobic remarks in the communal areas, physically intimidating the victim, and even saying she wished to see the victim hanged. Such shocking behaviour has traumatised the victim physically and mentally, leaving them feeling unable even to leave their room.

Since the first national lockdown in March, particular value has been placed on mental and physical wellbeing and the importance of a healthy living environment. Seemingly endless articles and written pieces came out during this time, emphasising the importance of living spaces and the outdoors as a coping mechanism for the harsh dynamics of the lockdown. Spending an hour outdoors daily during lockdown became a significant part of people's lives and their emotional wellbeing.[19] These cases, however, and numerous others where victims have said they feel they cannot leave their homes because of the abuse and assault they receive, highlights the devastating reality of anti-Muslim hate and Islamophobia during the pandemic. As these cases show, it is not even possible for many Muslims to leave their homes or even their rooms, in a time when physical mobility has never had such an immense impact on mental wellbeing.

Another notable trend that frequently reoccurred when analysing the data on household incidents during the pandemic was the victim's feeling of a lack of care or duty from police forces when dealing with anti-Muslim hate and Islamophobia. Many of the cases that were reported to us involved police involvement, usually with the victim rightly calling the police after an incident occurred with a hostile neighbour. Unfortunately, many of the victims who reported to us stated that they felt the police services, whether a single/group of officers investigating the case or the broader police system, did not take their cases seriously. Alternatively, in some cases, it involved taking the perpetrator's side, making inappropriate comments about the situation, and showing a lack of concern or empathy for the victim and the traumatic events they have gone through.

Such behaviour is a significant problem more broadly in the police that previous research has exposed, and one that the seminal MacPherson Report revealed was institutional rather than just individual following the murder of Stephen Lawrence and its subsequent investigation.[20] The Centre for Hate Studies at Leicester University, for example, did a project that revealed 76% of hate crime victims in the study did not report the hate crime to the police, with 30% doing so because they believed the police would not take it seriously, while 20% believed the police could not do anything.[21] Although the study was not limited to the Muslim community, it demonstrates the distinct lack of trust amongst minority communities in the UK towards the effectiveness of police services in dealing with hate crimes. The Sussex Hate Crime Report made similar findings that point to a significant issue within British police forces and its knock-on effects on victims of anti-Muslim hate crimes and the wider Muslim community.[22] Notably, the report, based on 20 individual studies conducted as part of the project revealed more negative perceptions of the police after Muslim victims had contacted

19 Lades, L.K., Laffan, K., Daly, M. and Delaney, L. (2020). 'Daily emotional well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic', British Journal of Health Psychology, 25(4), 902-911.

20 MacPherson, W. (1999). 'The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry: Report of an Inquiry'.

21 University of Leicester. (2014). 'The Leicester Hate Crime Project'. Leicester: University of Leicester.

22 Paterson, J., Walters, M. A., Brown, R., and Fearn, H. (2018). 'The Sussex Hate Crime Report'. Brighton: The University of Sussex.

them regarding an incident. Some did not contact the police because they felt it would not help the situation, or they feared they would experience secondary victimisation by the police.23

Lack of trust in police forces affects not only the victims of anti-Muslim hate crime and their willingness to report future cases but also those close to the victims and the wider Muslim community. When hate crimes are not handled with the respect and compassion they deserve, it sends a terrible message to these victims and the wider community. The Long Goodbye, a recent hard-hitting short film directed by Aneil Karia and featuring esteemed artist Riz Ahmed, highlights such a sense of victimisation and alienation. The film depicts a British South Asian community being violently targeted in their homes by a group of racist white nationalists and involves a scene where the police take the side of the perpetrators and allow such hate crimes to continue in plain sight. Although a dramatisation of the future, the film is grounded on a lived reality of anxiety and fear within this community, which is made only worse by institutional issues in the police.

It is crucial, therefore, that police forces approach anti-Muslim hate crimes with a consistent degree of empathy, respect, and professionalism. We feel it is vital to shine a light on some of the cases reported to Tell MAMA to show how such actions, or lack thereof, from the police, can leave victims of anti-Muslim hate feeling even more victimised and marginalised.

One notable case, for example, involved an individual in shared accommodation being the victim of anti-Muslim abuse and physical assault by their other housemates. The victim, who was previously assaulted, which left her with physical injuries, was called a "terrorist" and a "f**king b**ch" and told that women who wear religious clothing are "bad inside". The victim was also regularly harassed and bullied, such as being pushed in the corridor, making comments about cooking pork in the kitchen and having her water turned off when using it. These continuous microaggressions made the victim feel scared and worried about leaving her room when the perpetrators were in the communal areas, fearing further abuse. The victim notified the police, and on arrival, they said that the perpetrators seemed like friendly people and were not targeting her, despite all the examples of abuse and physical assault that the victim told them. When the victim notified the housing council about the incidents, they were told that they could not progress with the case and possibly move her to a new property because the police had not logged anything. Such discrimination and lack of empathy from the police left the victim feeling completely isolated.

In another case, we received a report from a single mother of three children who was the victim of repeated abuse over the past two years, which became much worse during the lockdown. One incident involved the victim's sister coming to the front door of the house to drop items off during lockdown when a neighbour began hurling racist abuse at the victim and her sister and telling them to go back to their own country. The main perpetrator involved other neighbours and incited even more abuse at the victim and her sister. After police arrived at the scene, the officers took little notice of the victims and said that the perpetrators had not committed any crimes, despite video evidence of the abuse taking place. The victim felt that the officers did not even consider her opinion over the incident and immediately sided with the perpetrators, making her feel even more victimised and unwelcome in the community. When a new police officer was assigned to the case after more abuse occurred, the victim felt the new officer did not take her seriously and treated the case with little concern, despite the victim stating she felt she and her kids could not go into their own garden in fear of confrontation with the neighbours.

Based on these findings and the shocking case studies that have been brought to light, more robust safeguarding measures must be in place to support victims who report anti-Muslim and Islamophobic hate from neighbours in the household environment.
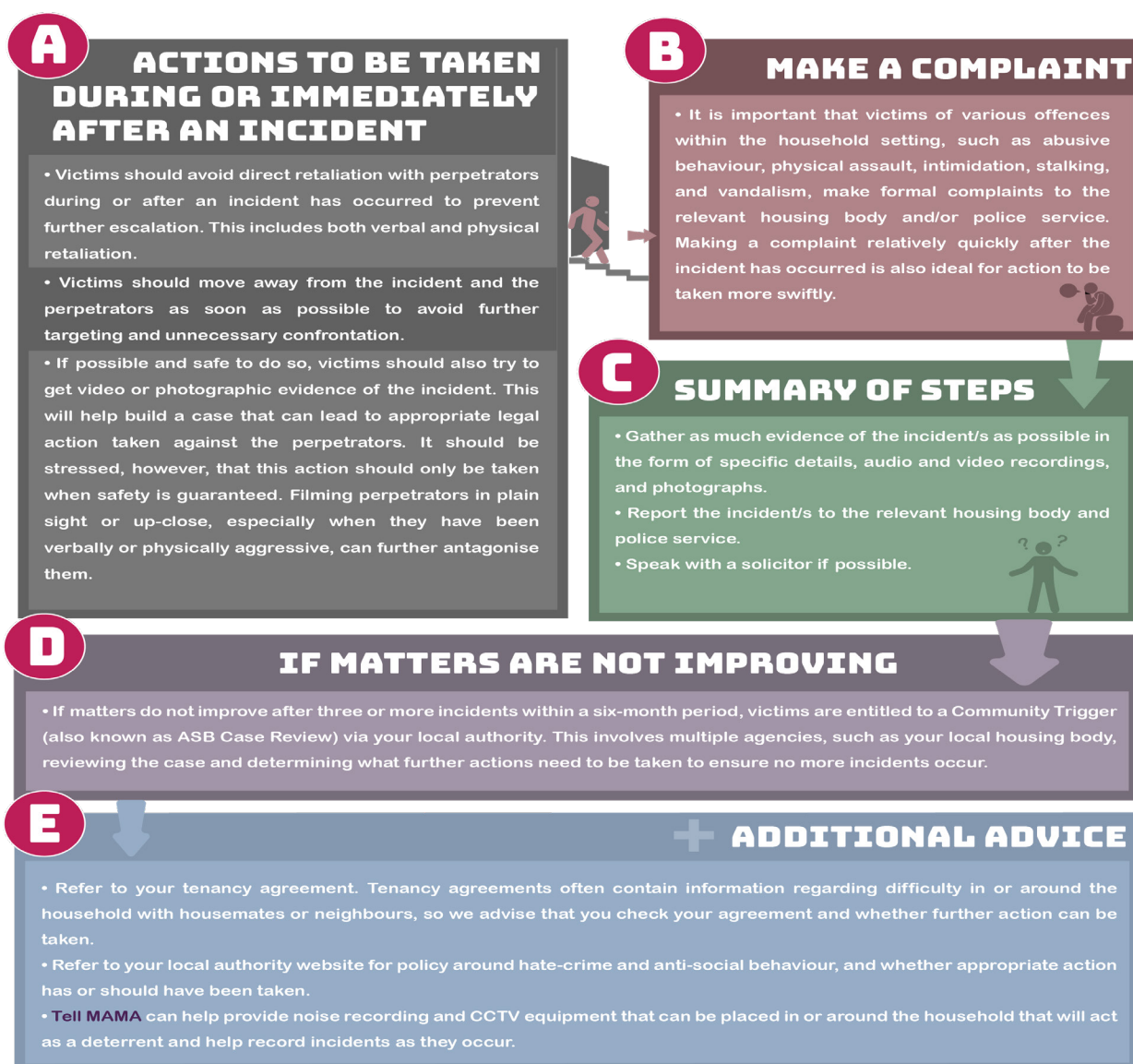
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23 Ibid.

Police forces also need to be more equipped and aware of the varied nature of anti-Muslim and Islamophobic hate crimes and be better prepared to deal with these instances in a way that prioritises and supports the victims. People's homes are spaces of comfort and safety, particularly during the pandemic, and they have the absolute right to live there in peace without fear of abuse, assault, and intimidation. It is, therefore, crucial that appropriate measures are taken to support Muslim victims and prevent perpetrators from getting away with these crimes and doing them in the first place. We go into more detail regarding how we think housing services and police forces can better approach these concerning trends in the recommendations section.

Measures victims can take:

There are several essential steps that individuals and families can take following an incident in and around the household which will help prevent escalation and better ensure appropriate action is taken towards the perpetrator(s).

A **ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN DURING OR IMMEDIATELY AFTER AN INCIDENT**

• Victims should avoid direct retaliation with perpetrators during or after an incident has occurred to prevent further escalation. This includes both verbal and physical retaliation.

• Victims should move away from the incident and the perpetrators as soon as possible to avoid further targeting and unnecessary confrontation.

• If possible and safe to do so, victims should also try to get video or photographic evidence of the incident. This will help build a case that can lead to appropriate legal action taken against the perpetrators. It should be stressed, however, that this action should only be taken when safety is guaranteed. Filming perpetrators in plain sight or up-close, especially when they have been verbally or physically aggressive, can further antagonise them.

B **MAKE A COMPLAINT**

• It is important that victims of various offences within the household setting, such as abusive behaviour, physical assault, intimidation, stalking, and vandalism, make formal complaints to the relevant housing body and/or police service. Making a complaint relatively quickly after the incident has occurred is also ideal for action to be taken more swiftly.

C **SUMMARY OF STEPS**

• Gather as much evidence of the incident/s as possible in the form of specific details, audio and video recordings, and photographs.
• Report the incident/s to the relevant housing body and police service.
• Speak with a solicitor if possible.

D **IF MATTERS ARE NOT IMPROVING**

• If matters do not improve after three or more incidents within a six-month period, victims are entitled to a Community Trigger (also known as ASB Case Review) via your local authority. This involves multiple agencies, such as your local housing body, reviewing the case and determining what further actions need to be taken to ensure no more incidents occur.

E **+ ADDITIONAL ADVICE**

• Refer to your tenancy agreement. Tenancy agreements often contain information regarding difficulty in or around the household with housemates or neighbours, so we advise that you check your agreement and whether further action can be taken.
• Refer to your local authority website for policy around hate-crime and anti-social behaviour, and whether appropriate action has or should have been taken.
• Tell MAMA can help provide noise recording and CCTV equipment that can be placed in or around the household that will act as a deterrent and help record incidents as they occur.

A. Actions to be taken during or immediately after an incident

-   Victims should avoid direct retaliation with perpetrators during or after an incident has occurred to prevent further escalation. This includes both verbal and physical retaliation.

-   Victims should move away from the incident and the perpetrators as soon as possible to avoid further targeting and unnecessary confrontation.

-   If possible and safe to do so, victims should also try to get video or photographic evidence of the incident. This will help build a case that can lead to appropriate legal action taken against the perpetrators. It should be stressed, however, that this action should only be taken when safety is guaranteed. Filming perpetrators in plain sight or up-close, especially when they have been verbally or physically aggressive, can further antagonise them.

B. Make a complaint

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C. Summary of steps

Key workers

During the pandemic, key workers became essential to maintaining some form of normality. These individuals, which range from NHS staff, taxi drivers, delivery drivers, depot workers, restaurant staff, and supermarket staff, to name a few, have highlighted how much society depends on them to keep things running when everything else comes to a standstill. Muslims make up a large proportion of this workforce.

-   Gather as much evidence of the incident/s as possible in the form of specific details, audio and video recordings, and photographs.

-   Report the incident/s to the relevant housing body and police service.

-   Speak with a solicitor if possible.

D. If matters are not improving

-   If matters do not improve after three or more incidents within a six-month period, victims are entitled to a Community Trigger (ASB Case Review) via your local authority. This involves multiple agencies, such as your local housing body, reviewing the case and determining what further actions need to be taken to ensure no more incidents occur.

E. Additional advice

-   Refer to your tenancy agreement. Tenancy agreements often contain information regarding difficulty in or around the household with housemates or neighbours, so we advise that you check your agreement and whether further action can be taken.

-   Refer to your local authority website for policy around hate crime and anti-social behaviour, and whether appropriate action has or should have been taken.

-   Tell MAMA can help provide noise recording and CCTV equipment that can be placed in or around the household that will act as a deterrent and help record incidents as they occur.

As we raised in the literature review, a Muslim Census study involving 1000 Muslims found 35% of respondents were key workers, compared to the 22% national average, with this figure rising for Muslims over 40 to 40%. In London specifically, Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. a large proportion Muslim, make up 44% of the city's transport workers and 54% of food production, process, and sale

workers.[24] Our data has revealed a concerning trend of anti-Muslim and Islamophobic hate directed towards Muslim key workers. From the first national lockdown in March onwards, we received 49 incidents targeting Muslim key workers. Of these incidents, 28 fell under the category of abusive behaviour (58%), seven under threatening behaviour (14%), six under assault (12%), six under discrimination (12%), and two under hate speech (4%). Twenty of these incidents targeted key workers who worked in the transport industry, 10 in health and social care, ten who worked for essential shops such as supermarkets and petrol stations, 5 in food sales and delivery, and 4 in the police service.

During the pandemic, one of the most striking aspects of this trend was the overwhelming targeting of Muslim taxi drivers, private hire drivers, and Uber drivers. In total, we received 19 incidents targeting these drivers from the start of the first lockdown. Examples ranged from passengers refusing to wear masks when in the vehicle, hurling Islamophobic abuse, and even physically assaulting the driver. In one case that was reported to us, passengers that entered a taxi refused to wear a mask despite the driver reminding them of the government rules in place that made it a requirement. Upon refusal, one of the passengers started shouting abuse at the driver, saying, 'Oh you f**king Muslim, go back to your own country'.
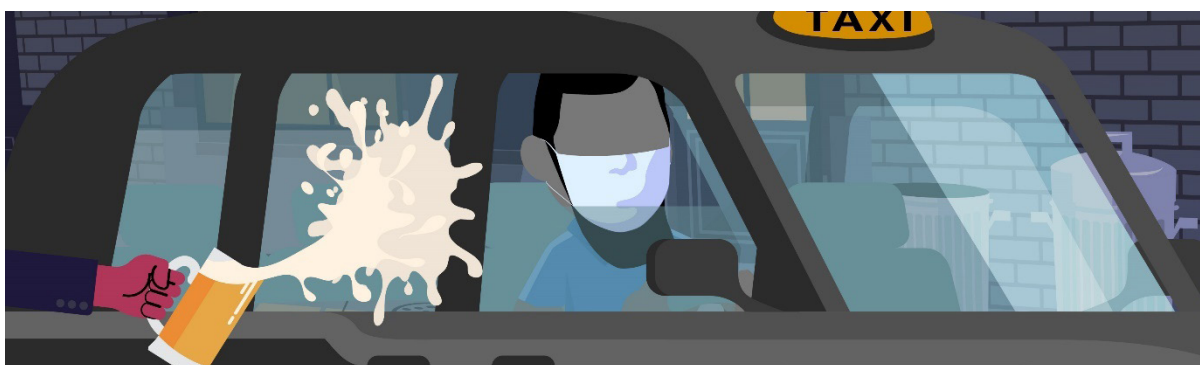
In another case, a Muslim taxi driver was waiting to pick up passengers when an acquaintance of the passengers began shouting at the driver, asking 'Why you f****** wearing that mask for?' when the driver drove off to avoid confrontation, the individual hurled alcohol at the driver's window, some of which hit the driver. Another shocking case during the pandemic involved a Muslim taxi driver in the West Midlands being called a P**i ba**ard and punched in the face with a knuckle duster, leaving the driver to require hospital treatment. These findings come in light of a culture of Islamophobic abuse and assault targeted towards Muslim drivers. Our recent report on Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate in northeast England, which interviewed victims of hate crimes in that area, revealed such a reality for these drivers.[25]

Based on these cases and our numbers more broadly, more robust safeguarding measures are necessary to provide safety and security for Muslim taxi, private hire, and Uber drivers who are vulnerable to such hateful attacks. Local initiatives such as the recent Safety, Security & Beyond initiative in Derbyshire and Chesterfield that Tell MAMA is a partnership with, which is designed to protect taxi drivers and passengers better, is a step in the right direction, and we encourage the launch of similar initiatives throughout the UK.

24 The Health Foundation. (2020). 'Black and minority ethnic workers make up a disproportionately large share of key worker sectors in London'. Available at: https://www.health.org.uk/chart/black-and-minority-ethnic-workers-make-up-a-disproportionately-large-share-of-key-worker.

25 Tell MAMA. (2020). 'Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate in North East England'. Tell MAMA.

The emergence of 'Zoombombing'

A fourth trend that we have noticed during the pandemic in 2020 is the emergence of 'Zoombombing'. The term refers to a new form of online trolling and harassment that involves hacking into Zoom meetings to cause disruption and offence. The phenomenon emerged around March, when national lockdowns began to be imposed globally and schools, businesses, and organisations were forced to communicate using online video conferencing platforms. As in-person meetings went online, hateful individuals and groups saw an opportunity to target certain minority groups with harassment, intimidation, and threats.[26] In one case, for example, an online synagogue service attended by over 200 people was hijacked with antisemitic messages in the chat room. In comparison, the antisemitism watchdog in the UK, the Community Security Trust, revealed in 2020 that they received 19 reports of video conferences being hijacked with antisemitic content.[27]

Tell MAMA also received a small number of reports of this new phenomenon that targeted events held by the Muslim community. In July, for example, we received a report of a conference focusing on interfaith solidarity being hijacked by a group of individuals. The perpetrators began hurling racist and Islamophobic abuse over their microphones, making Nazi propaganda phrases, shouting 'kill all Muslims', and repeatedly using the N-word. Such vile behaviour left the individuals on the call shocked and horrified.
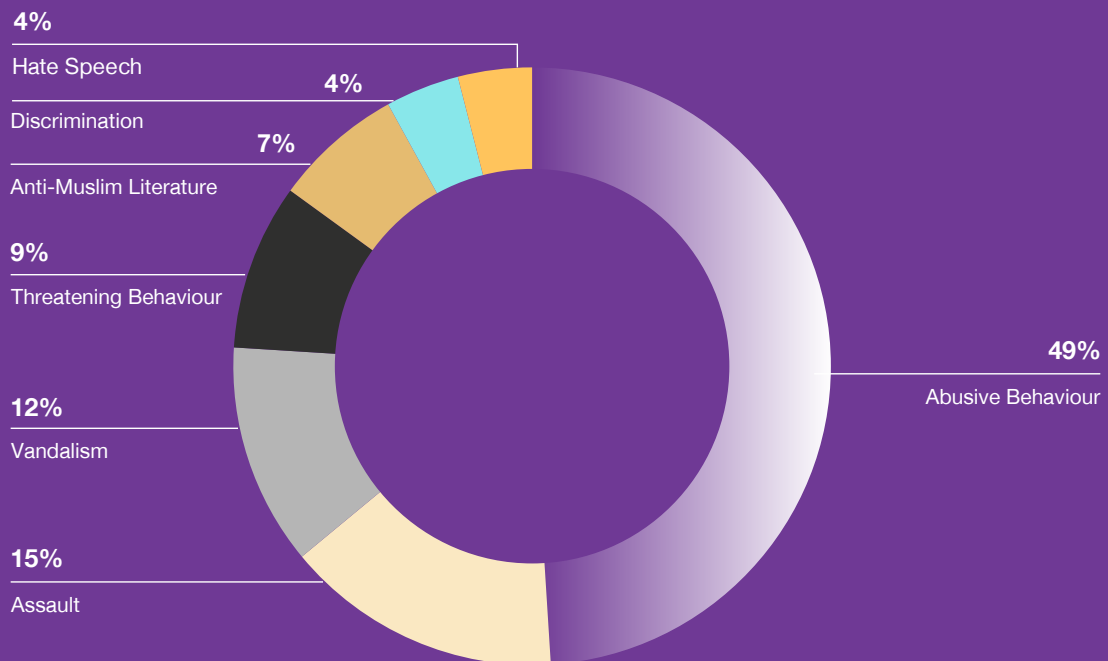
With few signs of online video meetings losing popularity, more concrete measures must be taken by the companies who run these platforms to protect their users better. More awareness about how potential victims of 'Zoombombing' can approach and prevent it from happening to them is also essential. In the recommendations section, we go into more detail about how we think this can be done.

Summary and analysis of data

In 2020 Tell MAMA received 906 offline reports. Of these cases, 726 were verified by our caseworkers. This section of the report will summarise and evaluate Tell MAMA's data from verified offline anti-Muslim cases between 1 January and 31 December 2020, where we aim to highlight the key data trends from the year and notable comparisons from the previous year. Islamophobic attacks often include multiple types of abuse. For example, a victim may experience a verbal attack followed by threats of violence and/ or a physical attack. In cases involving multiple types of abuse, we would categorise the incident based on the most prominent or most serious component of the attack according to the victim's testimony.

Abusive behaviour was the most common, with 49% (N=354) of verified cases; this can take many forms, defined as 'verbal and non-verbal abuse including comments or gestures' and distinguishable from assault (unwanted physical contact, including pushing and spitting) and threatening behaviour (verbal or symbolic threats of violent behaviour). Abusive behaviour was followed by discrimination at 15% (N=106), assault at 12% (N=91), threatening behaviour at 9% (N=63), and vandalism at 7% (N=48). A full breakdown of the results by incident category is displayed below.

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26 Anti-Defamation League. (2020). 'What is "Zoombombing" and who is behind it?'. Anti-Defamation League. Available at: https://www.adl.org/blog/what-is-zoombombing-and-who-is-behind-it.

27 Community Security Trust. (2021). '2020 Annual Review'. Community Security Trust.

Verified Categories of anti-Muslim Cases in 2020

- 4% Hate Speech
- 4% Discrimination
- 7% Anti-Muslim Literature
- 9% Threatening Behaviour
- 12% Vandalism
- 15% Assault
- 49% Abusive Behaviour

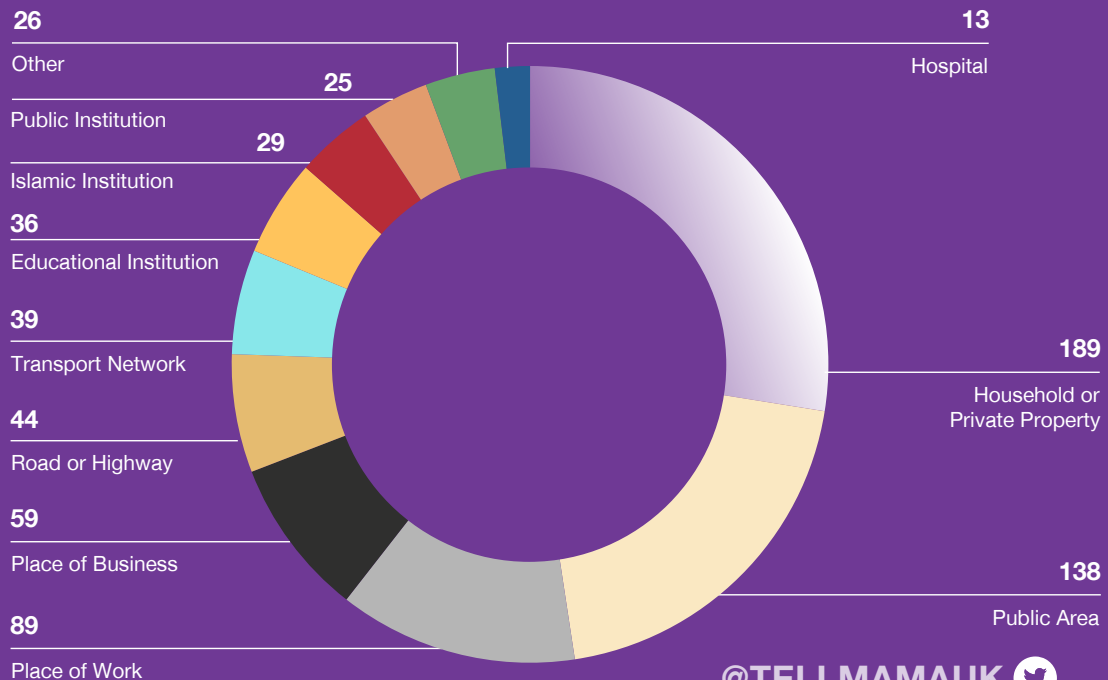@TELLMAMAUK
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Notably, discrimination cases comprised 15% of total cases, the most we have ever recorded (N=106) and the most proportionally for a given year, the second being 2019, with 14% of cases (N=95). It is crucial to note that this marks a significant upward trend in discrimination that we have noted for several years and one that we highlighted in the 2019 section to show that it was the only incident category that has consistently increased yearly.

Compared to 2019, cases of abusive behaviour increased from 302 to 354, an increase of 17%, while cases of discrimination increased from 95 cases to 106. Cases of assault decreased slightly from 94 to 91 cases, and threatening behaviour increased from 62 to 63 cases. Cases of vandalism decreased from 60 to 48. Anti-Muslim literature increased slightly from 26 to 33, while hate speech increased significantly by 138% from 13 cases in 2019 to 31 cases in 2020,

the most significant increase in 2020 in terms of percentage.

Most commonly, verified cases in 2020 took place in households or private properties (N=189), which marks the most cases we have ever recorded in this location, going from 109 cases to 189, an increase of 73% and a proportional increase of 9%. Verified cases in public areas totalled 138 cases, which included high instances of attacks on streets and pavements, either perpetrated by passers-by or people driving past. Other public areas include parks, public squares, high streets, and shopping locations. Next most common were places of work with 89 cases (12%), places of business (N=59), road or highway (N=44), transport networks (N=39), educational institutions (N=36), Islamic institutions (N=29), and public institutions (N=25). A full breakdown of the place categories for 2020 appears below.

Verified Locations of anti-Muslim Cases in 2020

26 Other

25 Public Institution

29 Islamic Institution

36 Educational Institution

39 Transport Network

44 Road or Highway

59 Place of Business

89 Place of Work

13 Hospital

189 Household or Private Property

138 Public Area

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As we will explore in more detail, the most significant element is the rise and majority number of household-related cases. While this can include a range of locations beyond just the household, such as other forms of private property locations, many cases refer to cases in and around the household, including areas of the property that are the most visible and lead to the most interaction with passers-by and neighbours such as the front garden or porch, the driveway, and the rear garden. Many of these cases involve conflict with neighbours and often include ongoing 'low-level' harassment, such as abusive comments, social exclusion, or repeated inconveniences, such as parking in front of driveways, emptying bins in front of the victim's house, or playing loud music late at night. These instances regularly escalate to more severe vandalism, threats, or physical violence. Experiencing abuse in and around their home can have serious physical and psychological implications for victims as they often cannot avoid their perpetrators. As discussed in the Trends section, the onset of the

Covid-19 pandemic and ensuing lockdown triggered an unmistakable rise in household-related cases to a level we have never seen before since we began recording cases in 2012.

Cases in public areas have always dominated the proportion of total cases each year. In the pre-pandemic years (2012-2019), cases in public areas comprised 31% of cases. In 2020 this proportion fell to 19% of cases. Compared to 2019, cases in public areas fell by 28 cases from 166 to 138 and decreased in proportion by 7%. It can prove challenging to achieve satisfactory criminal justice outcomes for victims of anti-Muslim prejudice in public areas, as police may struggle to identify suspects due to the high density of pedestrians. Victims reporting to Tell MAMA often express that cases were not worth reporting due to this fact or because the police had told them that this was the case when they did report. However, due to the prevalence of CCTV in public spaces, smartphones, and the potential for witnesses to come forward, it is always worth reporting a case

to raise awareness and prevent further victimisation.

The significant decrease in cases in public areas is indicative of the unique year 2020 but also the emergence of new location trends in anti-Muslim hate. For one, the pandemic caused a nationwide lockdown, severely limiting people's time outside in public areas. Cases in public areas are typically the most common location category because of the ease of movement and the frequency of one-time interactions whereby perpetrators that hold anti-Muslim and xenophobic prejudices come across people they may not do so in their personal lives, thus increasing the likelihood of hateful interaction on the street, for example. With a severely limited ability to access these public spaces in 2020, these hateful interactions were far less likely. Secondly, supported by the significant rise in household cases, this marks a shift towards other locations becoming more frequent places for anti-Muslim hatred, which we continued to monitor and confirm in 2021 and 2022.
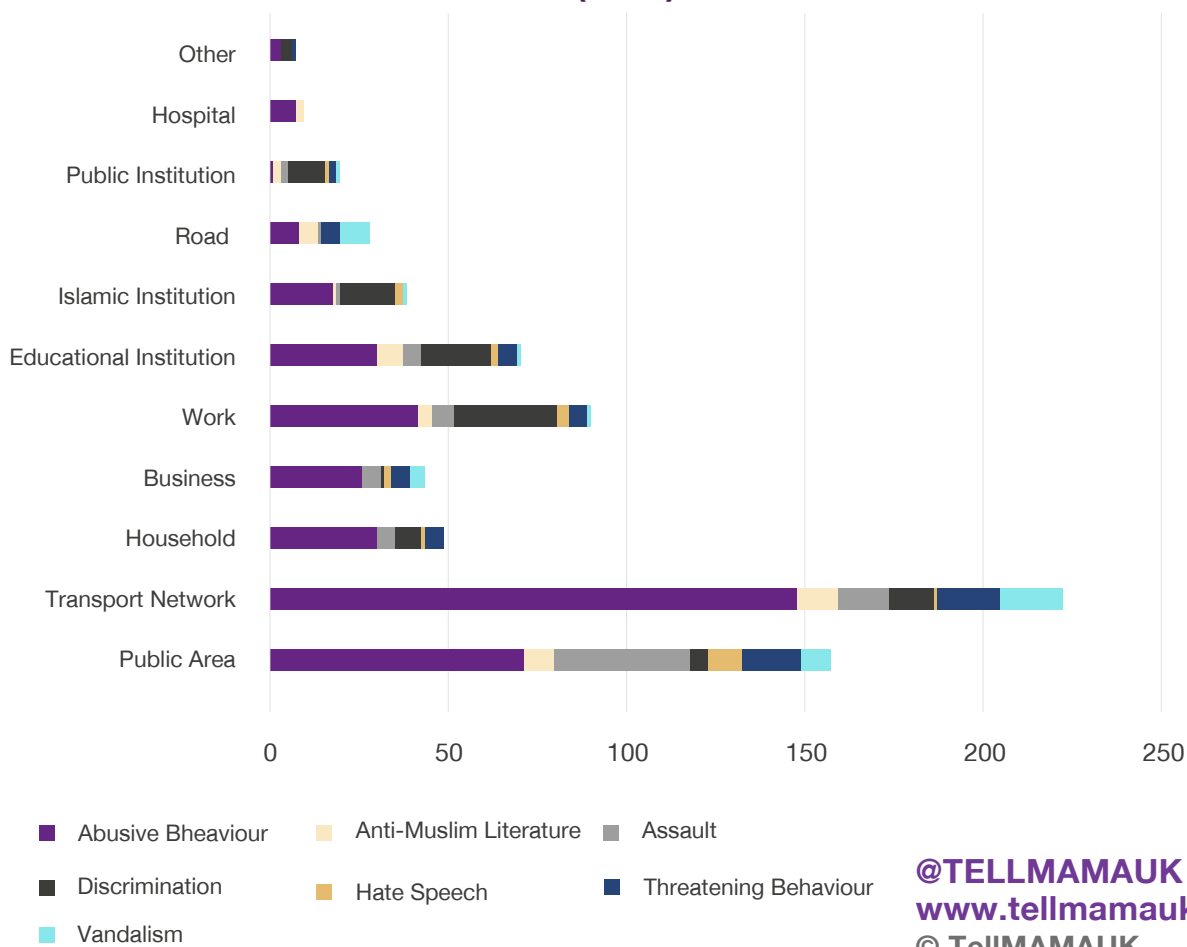
Cases occurring at the victim's place of work have risen considerably by 51% (N=59 to 89) over the previous year, while cases in places of business have fallen by 13 cases from 72 to 59. A total of 44 cases took place on roads or highways, an increase of 13 cases from 2019, while 39 cases took place in transport networks, such as buses, trains, and train stations; this is a decrease of 22 cases and a percentage decrease of 36%. Cases in educational institutions fell from 64 to 36 cases, while we recorded 29 cases targeting Muslim institutions, a fall of 9 cases over the previous year. These include attacks on mosques, Islamic schools, and Islamic cultural centres, often as vandalism, threatening letters, or symbolic attacks using pork products or alcohol. Cases in public institutions, meanwhile, increased from 19 in 2019 to 25 in 2020, while cases in hospitals remained the same at 13 cases. A complete comparison of the cases by place category between 2019 and 2020 appears below.
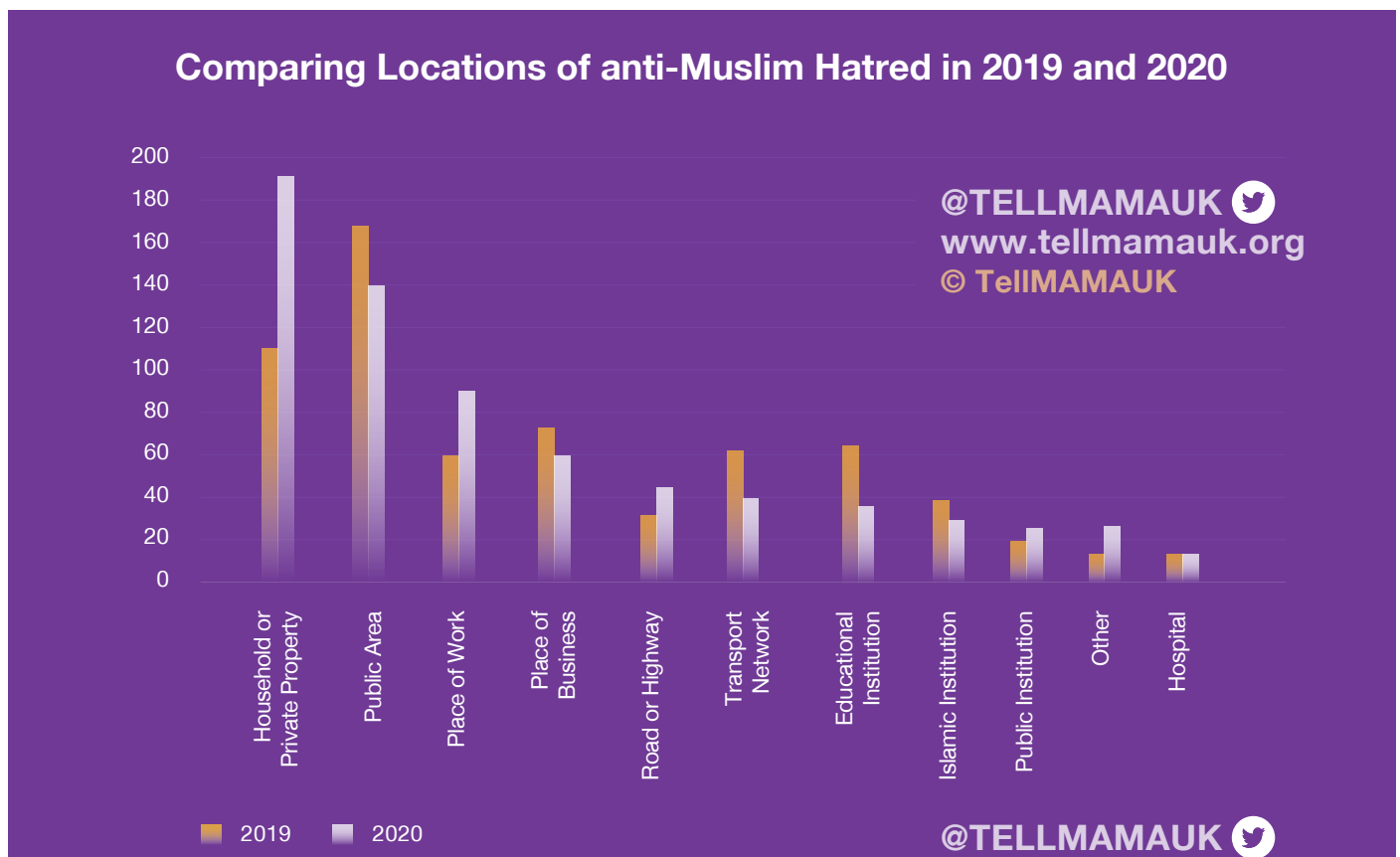
Comparing Locations of anti-Muslim Hatred in 2019 and 2020

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Legend: 2019, 2020

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Analysing location and incident categories can further help us evaluate the typologies and motivations behind Islamophobic hate crimes. The most common combination was abusive behaviour cases in the

household area or dwellings (N=143), followed by abuse in public areas (N=69). A full breakdown appears below.

Location and Incident Categories Reported to Tell MAMA (2020)

Legend:
- Abusive Bheaviour
- Discrimination
- Vandalism
- Anti-Muslim Literature
- Hate Speech
- Assault
- Threatening Behaviour

Emerging Data Trends

The year 2020 brought unprecedented new normalities for the British public. As we can see in our data, this had a significant knock-on effect on anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia opened the door for new trends to prosper.

Discrimination

We have continued to monitor the steady rise of discrimination cases since 2015. Our figures over the years demonstrate an evident rise in the raw numbers of discrimination cases and the percentage of the total reports, highlighting a total increase in anti-Muslim discrimination each year. Previously, verified reports of discrimination increased by 111.76% in just two years, with 34 verified reports of discrimination in 2015 rising to 72. In 2018 we recorded 87 verified cases, which makes up 12.5% of the total cases, whereas, in 2017, discrimination cases amounted to 8.5% of the total (N=839). In 2019 this rose to 95 cases and made up 14% of cases that year, while in 2020, it rose further to 106 cases and 15% of total cases. Some instances of discrimination also involve abusive behaviour or assault and would, therefore, be categorised differently. By looking at the specific actions involved in each case, many cases within the victim's place of work or educational institution involved discriminatory or unfair treatment. In 2020, 28 cases of verified discrimination cases took place at the workplace, while 32 number of cases at educational institutions such as schools, colleges, and universities.

Many of the cases that took place at the workplace involved forms of microaggressions and unfair treatment. In 2020, this included, for example, bosses asking Muslim employees not to wear specific religious clothing and shave their beards, to record their prayer times at work to suggest that they are using up work time or being suspended for raising concerns about another colleague who made Islamophobic remarks in the workplace, as well as putting bacon in a Muslim colleague's sandwich, making comments about Osama Bin Laden, and being mocked about not drinking alcohol at a work-related event. Within educational institutions, we verified 15 discrimination cases in 2020. As we explored in the Trends section, these cases involve pupils and parents, but it should be noted that they exclude educational staff as that falls under workplace discrimination.

Vandalism

Cases of vandalism decreased in 2020 from 60 in 2019 to 48 in 2020. Although a substantial decrease, the severity of cases continues to rise each year and is worth looking at further. Cases typically target households or private property, mainly front and rear gardens, as well as places of business such as Muslim-owned restaurants and Islamic institutions. In one case, a Muslim woman reported to us that her car on her private drive was scratched and lashed at with a knife and other parts of the car were damaged, such as the wing mirror and aerial broken. An eye was also drawn on the passenger side window, which the victim feels was related to a similar case in which her neighbour's letterbox was daubed with harmful statements. While this was the latest attack she had received, abuse from the neighbour had been ongoing for years.

In another series of cases, several mosques were targeted with racist anti-Muslim graffiti in Stockton, including the letters KKK and other symbols sprayed onto the walls of Farooq E Azam Mosque & Islamic Centre and Jamia Al-Bilal Mosque, referring to the white supremacist hate group. While in Norwich, a building planned to be converted into an Islamic centre was the target of an arson attack in July 2020. Planning permission was granted for the mosque at the former pub in December 2017, but the site had remained boarded up until months before the attack when work got underway on the redevelopment. The plan was not to demolish the former pub but to repurpose it for the growing Muslim population in the area. Police confirmed that a man was seen starting the fire before leaving the scene.

Verified Household or Private Property Cases by Incident Category 2020

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■ Household or Private Property
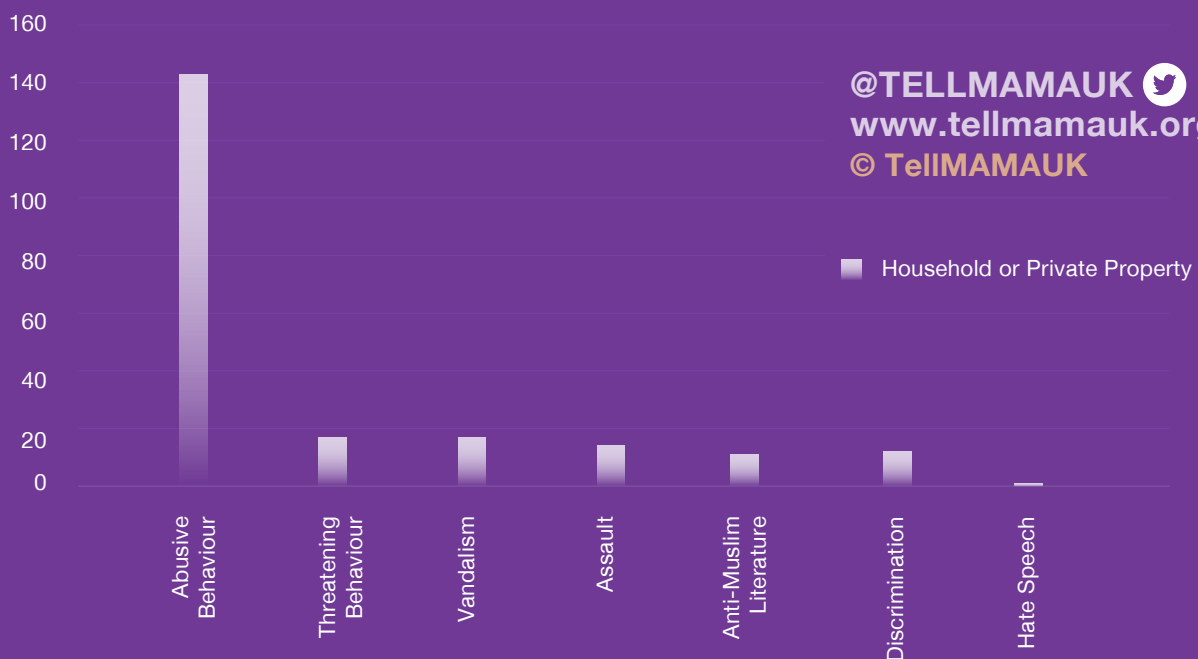
Household cases

Cases in or around the household were arguably the most significant trend in 2020, with a rise of 73% from the previous year and a proportional rise from 17% in 2019 to 26% in 2020. A complete breakdown appears below. As mentioned, cases of abusive behaviour were the most common category within the household and typically involved neighbours - it dominated the proportion of household cases with 67%.

Locations

London	297
Birmingham	32
Manchester	36
Rotherham	6
Leeds	12
Sheffield	6
Nottingham	9
Glasgow	13
Newcastle	14

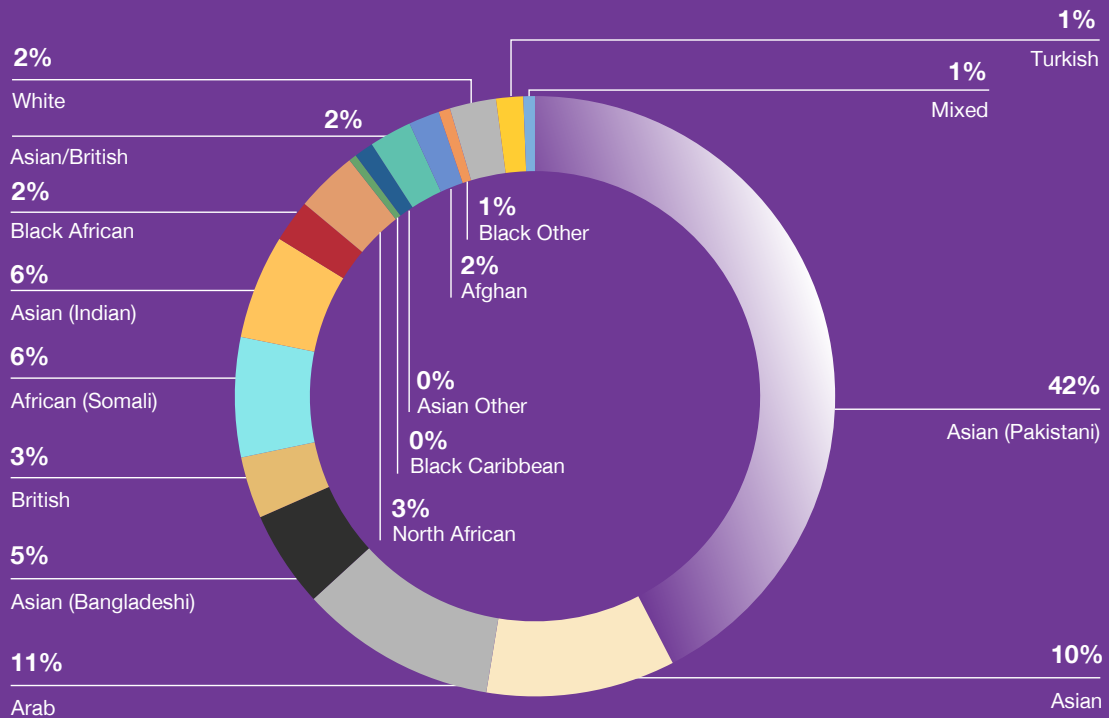# Victims and Perpetrators

Victims

In total, we recorded the details of 710 victims, of which 330 were female and 318 were male, the rest being institutions or private properties or unknown. Looking more closely at how the gender of victims varies across incident categories and locations helps us better understand the dynamics of gendered anti-Muslim hatred. Below we can see that cases of abusive behaviour and assault predominantly target females, while males were more often the victims of discrimination. While for gender and place category, females were victims in public areas and places of business much more than males. Males were victims more often in the workplace. Other categories were relatively similar.

The Category and Gender of those Targeted with anti-Muslim Hate (2020)

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Legend:
- Female
- Male
- Property or Institution
- Unknown/Undisclosed

Categories: Abusive Bheaviour, Anti-Muslim Literature, Assault, Discrimination, Hate Speech, Threatening Behaviour, Vandalism

Ethnicity of those Reporting to Tell MAMA in 2020

- 2% White
- 2% Asian/British
- 2% Black African
- 6% Asian (Indian)
- 6% African (Somali)
- 3% British
- 5% Asian (Bangladeshi)
- 11% Arab
- 1% Black Other
- 2% Afghan
- 0% Asian Other
- 0% Black Caribbean
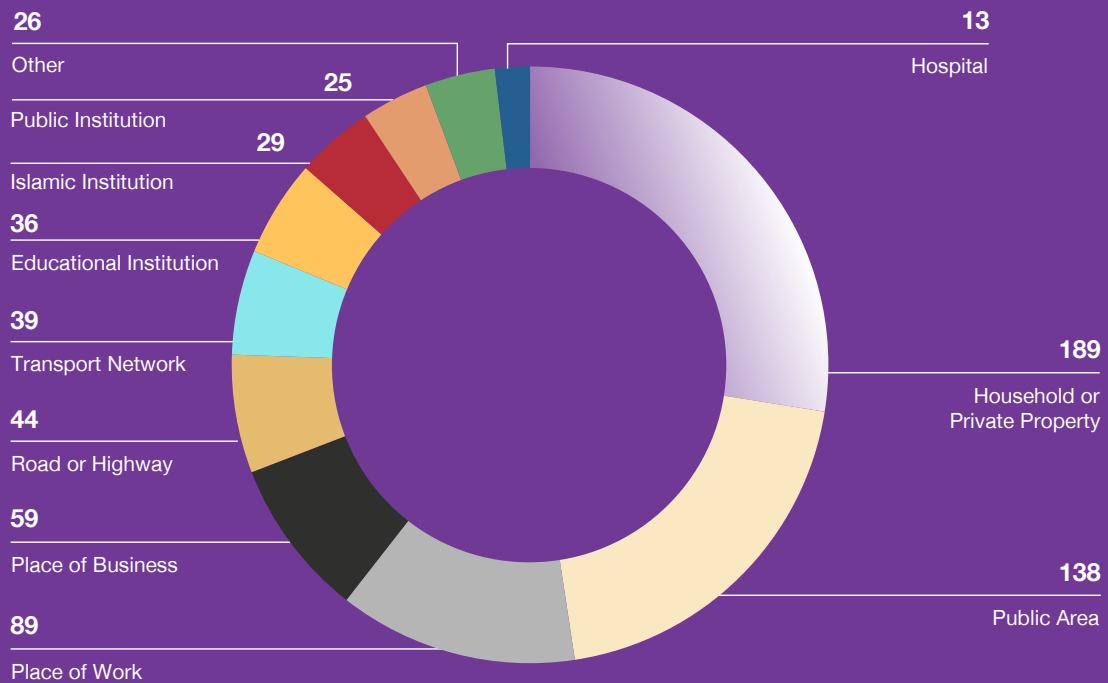- 3% North African
- 1% Turkish
- 1% Mixed
- 42% Asian (Pakistani)
- 10% Asian

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Regarding the victims' ethnicities, Pakistanis comprised the majority of reported cases with 42% (N=204), with Arab and Asian next with 11% and 10%, respectively (N=51 and N=49). Other ethnicities that were commonplace included Asian (Indian) with 6%, African (Somali) with 6%, and Asian (Bangladeshi) with 5% of cases.

Location of those Reporting to Tell MAMA in 2020

26
Other

25
Public Institution

29
Islamic Institution

36
Educational Institution

39
Transport Network

44
Road or Highway

59
Place of Business

89
Place of Work

13
Hospital

189
Household or
Private Property

138
Public Area

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We can also look more closely at the religious visibility of victims of anti-Muslim hatred reported to us. In total, we recorded 288 cases where victims were visibly Muslim. Of the known visibility markers of victims, 53% wore a headscarf (hijab) (N=126), 30% were wearing a beard (N=72), and 3% were wearing a face veil (niqab) (N=7). Such a high prevalence of cases targeting visibly Muslim women highlight the unmistakable gendered nature of anti-Muslim hate crimes and the broader reality that visibly Muslim people are more at risk from targeting than non-visible Muslims.

* **Hijab** – a headscarf covering the head and hair

Abaya – a long, loose garment worn from head/shoulders to toe

Niqab – a veil which covers the head, hair and face
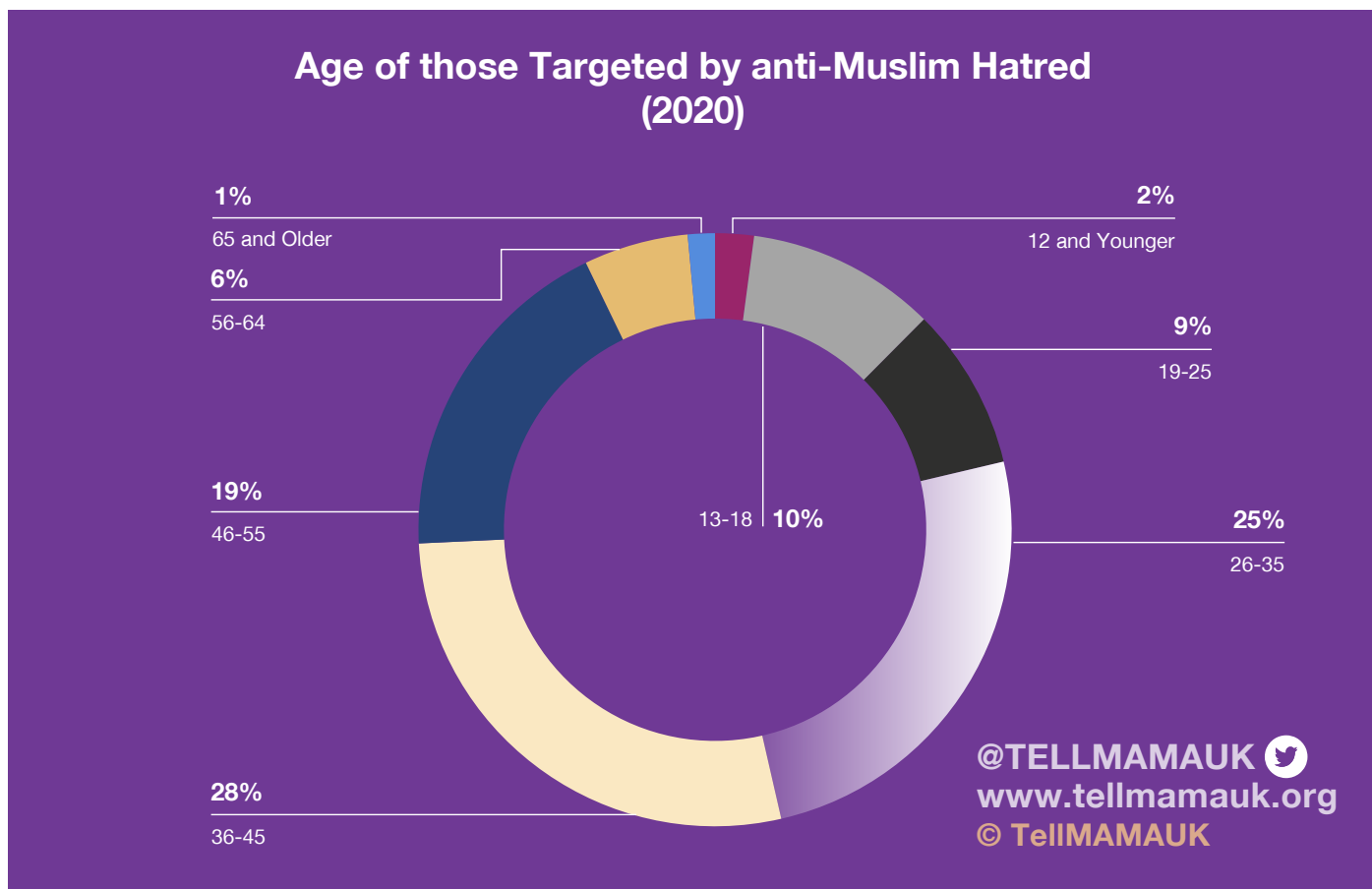
Thobe – a long, loose robe worn primarily by men

Salwar Kameez – a tunic paired with loose trousers

Topi - a prayer cap

The highest proportion of known victims ages was 36-45 with 132 cases, then 26-35 with 122, followed by 46-55 with 88 cases. A full breakdown can appear below.

Age of those Targeted by anti-Muslim Hatred (2020)

- 1% — 65 and Older
- 6% — 56-64
- 19% — 46-55
- 28% — 36-45
- 10% — 13-18
- 2% — 12 and Younger
- 9% — 19-25
- 25% — 26-35

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Perpetrators

We recorded the details of 623 perpetrators, of whom 401 were male, 137 were female, and 85 were either other or unknown. Many perpetrators that fell under other/unknown were reported to us as a group where the genders were not disclosed. Like in previous years, by far, the most common perpetrator known to us in 2020 were white British males, with 263 perpetrators, followed by 66 white British female perpetrators.

The most common perpetrator age was 36-45 with 118 known cases, followed by 26-35 with 97 cases. A full breakdown appears below.

Perpetrators of Anti-Muslim Hate by Age 2020

3%
65 and Older

13%
56-64

18%
46-55

27%
36-45

13-18 **8%**

1%
12 and Younger

8%
19-25

22%
26-35
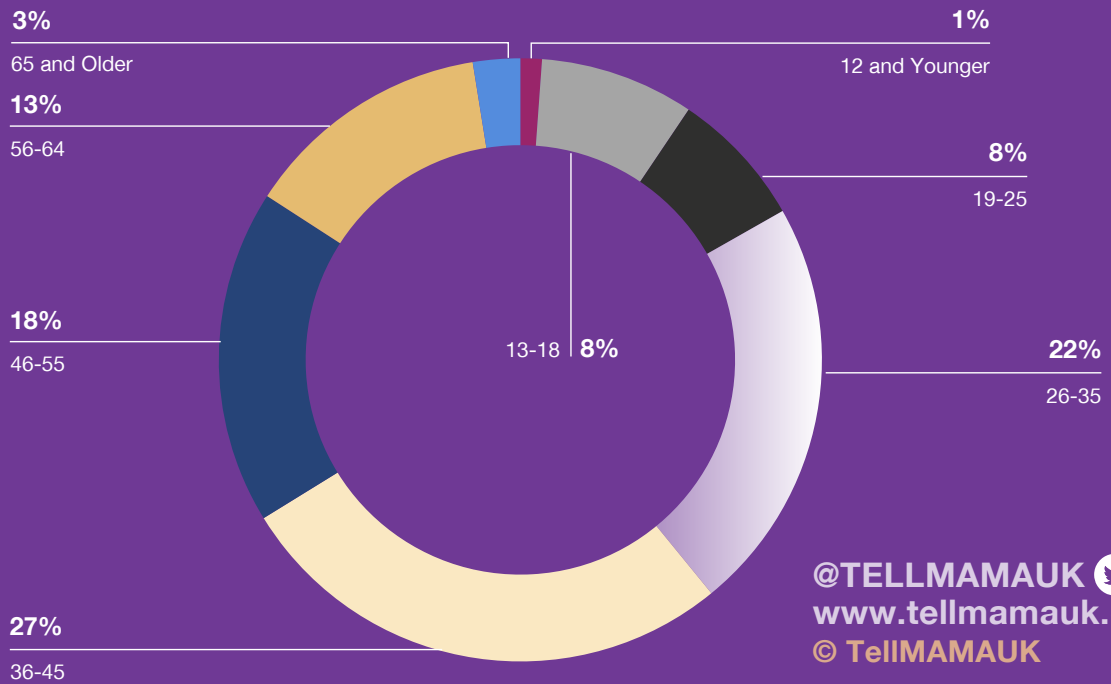
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Timeline

When broadly looking at 2020 holistically, the lockdown greatly did influence the varieties of anti-Muslim hatred, and following the easing of restrictions in some areas, we did see a significant uptick in cases in September when Covid-19 rules were relaxed, and more face-to-face interactions were taking place in public, creating more opportunities for perpetrators to target Muslim communities.

Monthly breakdown of cases reported to Tell MAMA in 2020
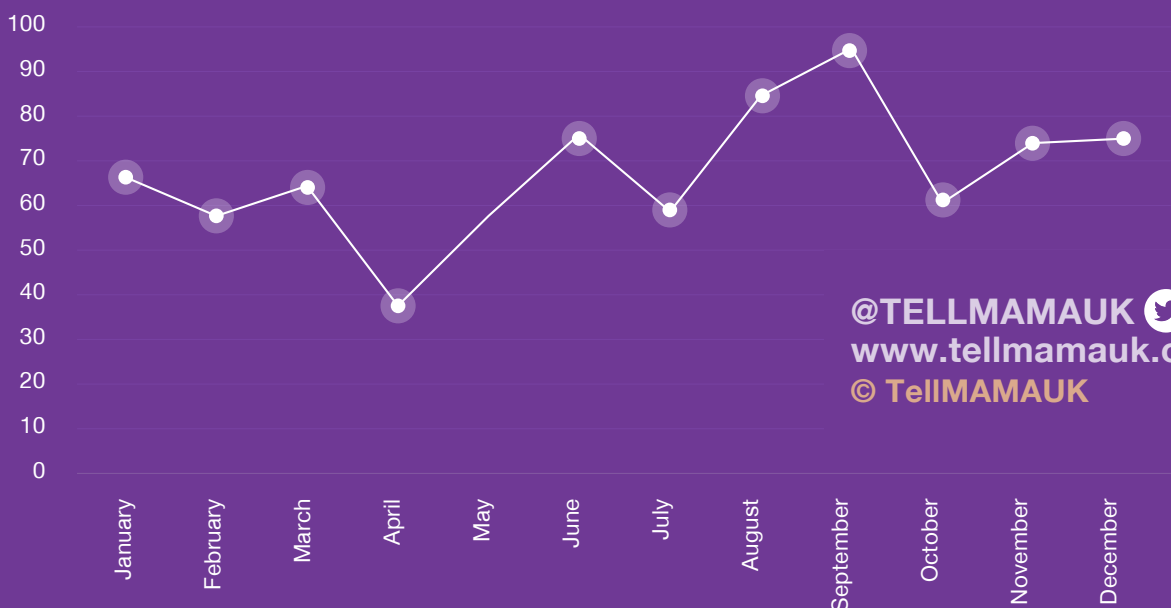
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The Normalised New Trends of Anti-Muslim Hate 2021

In 2020 the most significant trends we observed were the rise in the proportion of discrimination cases and cases taking place in households or private properties, which has continued from 2021 onwards.

Firstly, discrimination cases continued to make up over 15% of total cases, rising to 17% in 2021 and still the second most frequent type of case we received, after abusive behaviour. Many of the cases in 2021 took place in either schools or places of work and often highlight institutional issues where they occur.

Secondly, cases in households and private properties rose even further in 2021, making up 35% of to-tal cases, a proportional rise of 7%. As with 2020, many of these cases involved neighbour disputes and proved particularly stressful for the victims as they were often recurrent rather than isolated cases that occur more typically in public areas with strangers, for example. Many of these cases took place over several weeks, months, and sometimes even years, creating a sense of inescapability for many victims. Many cases in households or private properties fell under the category of abusive behaviour (69%), second to assault (11%).

Discrimination

Tell MAMA has observed a steady rise in discrimination cases since 2015. Although the statistical rise of these cases is worth examining, the numbers do not tell the whole story, and it is necessary to shed further light on the shocking nature of how anti-Muslim discrimination takes place and how heavily it affects Muslim victims.

As we explored in depth in the 2020 section, discrimination cases typically occur in the workplace and educational institutions. In one case, we supported a Muslim employee who was on a Zoom meeting when one of his colleagues remarked about the end of Ramadan, saying, 'We don't deal with that Shawadywady business' before other colleagues began laughing. The Muslim employee complained to his workplace but was told that the perpetrator was just old and 'did not know they could not say things like that'. The victim eventually left the job after the workplace did not respond to the complaint accordingly and denied it even happened.

Anti-Muslim discrimination can manifest within educational institutions in several ways. One such way is abuse directed towards Muslim pupils or staff. In a few cases reported to Tell MAMA, Muslim students will be called 'terrorists' and would be asked 'what are they hiding in their backpacks?'. In other cases, we have had cases reported of female students having their headscarves pulled off and called 'P***'. In the Newcastle area, we supported a family with ongoing school-related matters after their daughter began wearing the headscarf. Despite claims it was 'banned' in uniform, we advocated for them in writing, demonstrating how it was not whilst challenging cultural assumptions that one of the parents was 'aggressive' towards staff by simply gesticulating with their hands as they spoke.

Our advocacy within schools also extended to writing to schools to offer advice, training to staff and students, and to help mediate between schools and parents.

Discrimination in educational institutions also occur in higher education environments and target both university students and staff, the latter of which we classify as workplace cases.

Household cases

Cases in or around the household have continued to rise since 2020, highlighting that it was not just a lockdown phenomenon but an emerging trend that we have been observing since then. As highlighted in the 2020 section, many of these are not isolated attacks that we more typically record in other locations such as public areas and transport networks but take place over extended periods and involve multiple attacks. These cases also typically involve neighbours; the victims are often families whom one or more neighbours individually and collectively target.

In previous reports, we have highlighted the shocking nature of household-related cases, which often involve verbal abuse, vandalism, and assault. However, since 2020 we have observed particularly shocking cases on a more consistent basis, many of which occur throughout the year and cause a level of distress to the victims and their families that we have not witnessed before. Although the numbers from 2020 and 2021 suggest the prevalence of household cases is here to stay, nothing quite prepares for their severity, particularly longstanding cases involving families and vulnerable people such as children and older communities. While the 2020 covid-induced lockdowns certainly caused a unique phenomenon where everyone had to stay home, it certainly jump-started the prevalence of these cases. We are deeply concerned by the nature of household cases in 2021 and the rate at which they are occurring, and we hope that detailing the following cases help shed light on the devastating realities Muslim people face in the places they call home.

The proximity of households means that victims of anti-Muslim attacks often struggle to escape their perpetrators, either in the moment or over a prolonged period. Many cases we receive involve clear instigation from the perpetrators in the form of abusive behaviour, often verbal. Many perpetrators seem to relish confrontations with victims and seek them out.

In one case, a Muslim family was repeatedly subjected to racist abuse and assaulted by a female perpetrator in London. The victim got in touch with us saying the abuse had been ongoing for months and involved the perpetrator calling them 'F****** P**i's', spitting on them when they walk past each other, and complaining to the local housing association that their food 'smells', after which she began calling them 'Smelly P**i's' regularly, both to the parent and their children. The perpetrator was also constantly recording the victim and their children, including when they were on their property, and even put nails under their car's tires so they would get punctured. Unfortunately, in these situations, there is often no secure evidence that the police can use to prosecute, making the situation extremely frustrating, scary, and isolating for the victims, especially when they know the perpetrator can continue abusing as usual with no immediate repercussions from the police. Fortunately, we supported and by working with anti-social behaviour officers this case went to court and the perpetrator was charged.

Many of the household-related cases we receive involve some form of vandalism alongside abusive behaviour, and this often includes food or other items being thrown at the house, windows, parts of the garden or vehicles being vandalised, such as in the case just mentioned, and graffiti being sprayed on the house or private property. In one case from 2021, a family's home in London was graffitied with the words 'ISIS' and 'P***' on their front door. The council at the time refused to take down the graffiti leaving the family feeling disheartened and unsupported. This incident was one of many that the family has endured over the last 3 years, the recent of which was a graffiti of a swastika on their door and labelling the family as 'terrorists'. We have supported the family and worked with other agencies to relocate them to a safer and better property where they will not be subjected to this ongoing harassment and abuse that had detrimental effects on them.

Alongside abusive behaviour and vandalism at households, we received several cases involving threatening behaviour. In one shocking case, for example, a Muslim family was subjected to brutal, abusive behaviour from neighbours and was threatened with several deadly weapons, including an axe and a box cutter knife. Several videos were recorded by the victims showing the group of perpetrators coming up to the victim's property with weapons and threatening

them. When the police arrived, the victim felt they did not treat the threats seriously despite showing them the videos of the threats. English was also not the victim's first language which they felt led to the police officer's treated them in a patronising way when explaining things. The police then attempted to close the case prematurely due to a lack of evidence despite the videos being presented, we supported the family and followed up on the case with the police and ensured that this case is re-opened, and actions taken accordingly.

Spike in cases following Israel-Palestine

We also received a notable spike in cases in May during the increased political tensions in Israel-Palestine. Since early May, we received a rise in online and offline reports. From 8 May to the end of the month, we received 56 cases online and offline., marking a sharp rise of 430% compared to the seven days before 8 May, where we recorded 13 reports. While many of these cases took place in public areas, often in busy high streets for example, we received several offline cases in educational institutions, especially schools. The most prominent location of these cases was in London, followed by Yorkshire and Greater Manchester.

Incident Categories	Count
Abusive Behaviour	29
Anti-Muslim Literature	3
Assault	5
Discrimination	8
Hate Speech	4
Threatening Behaviour	4
Vandalism	3
Total	56

In late June, a member of the public contacted us to flag racist and anti-Muslim graffiti in two locations that dehumanised and disparaged Arabs, Palestinians, and the Prophet Muhammad. Examples included "F*** Palestine", and "F*** Arabs", "F*** the Prophet Muhammad".[1]

Tell MAMA reported the racist graffiti to the Metropolitan Police and the local council to investigate and remove.

Condemnation was widespread, with many across Jewish communities and communal groups condemning the racism and calling for the police to prosecute those responsible on social media following our publication of the story.

The above example showcases the importance of not ignoring racism and hate when individuals find it and knowing where to report it, or with the above, allowing Tell MAMA to flag it with the relevant authorities, and the importance of Muslim-Jewish solidarity when racism seeks to divide communities.

The importance of accountability does have tangible impacts for those impacted, as a news story in Norwich highlighted, as the bus company First suspended a driver alleged to have made racist comments to a child and denied them service after she attended a protest in support of Palestine. She told the Norwich Evening News, "Yes, I am satisfied as I was not sure if they would go with it, but I am still really annoyed with what happened at the time."[2]

Months later, in November, a Muslim family contacted our service after they described how a man in an army uniform targeted them with abuse in a lengthy anti-Muslim rant where he accused their father of 'oppressing women' and that "Palestine isn't real".

With their informed consent, we wrote to Sainsbury's on the family's behalf and further highlighted the case on our website, and got a response from their press office, who told us: "Sainsbury's is an inclusive retail-

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1 Tell MAMA. «Racist and Dehumanising Graffiti Targeting Arabs, Muslims, and Palestinians Found in West London.» Tell MAMA. Last modified June 24, 2021. https://tellmamauk.org/racist-and-dehumanising-graffiti-targeting-arabs-muslims-and-palestinians-found-in-west-london/.

2 Hardy, Ben. «Norwich Bus Driver Suspended over Racism Allegation.» Norwich Evening News. Last modified June 1, 2021. https://www.eveningnews24.co.uk/news/crime/22346941.norwich-bus-driver-suspended-racism-allegation/.

er and does not tolerate any abusive, discriminatory, or threatening behaviour in our stores. If a customer experiences anything of this nature, we will support them to report the incident to the police and help with investigation in any way that we can."[3]

Britain First

We also continued to monitor a series of agitations from the far-right group Britain First, who in 2021, as they have done in previous years and since, made many of attempts to target and intimidate refugees housed in temporary living conditions across the UK, as well as leafletting child sexual exploitation (CSE) concerns specifically minority-run businesses in certain areas.

In October of 2021, Britain First ramped up their attempts to intimidate refugees being housed in temporary accommodation, many of whom were Afghan refugees fleeing the fallout of Afghanistan and the Taliban's takeover earlier in the year. According to Britain First's website, they claimed to have undertaken these xenophobia-driven protests over a dozen times in September and October, including unsolicited visits within the hotels where the refugees were temporarily housed, for which Tell MAMA continued to monitor. These locations included Telford, Stoke-on-Trent, and Colchester, to name a few, and involved group members approaching refugees and asking where they came from alongside other questions. The group uploaded upwards of 75 videos in 2021 of these protests and subsequent accosting of refugees in the hotels and their vicinities. Despite their loose attempts of appearing as journalists in these videos and doing 'innocent' work, their xenophobic intentions are clear for everyone to see and have been so since their conception, as we have covered as far back as 2013 and continued to do so since. Crucially, one of Britain First's primary focuses is the expulsion of immigrants from the UK, particularly those perceived to be from Muslim countries.

More broadly, the infamous racist so-called "Great Replacement" conspiracy theory primarily drives their campaign. They use Islamophobic narratives about Muslims being killers, rapists, and paedophiles, to 'justify' their harassment of refugees at these housing locations for the sake of intimidation and social media content. While the videos they upload to social media are edited, allowing them to finely pick their look and appear to come across as softer, their actual opinions are far more evident on their social media channels such as Telegram, where the anti-Muslim language used by their members is similar to the language we record in our offline and online cases, including remarks linking Muslims and refugees to sexual criminals and violence, as well as broader racist narratives related to an 'invasion'.

In a similar tone, we noted several videos uploaded by Britain First in 2021 where they approach Muslim-owned businesses, such as takeaway restaurants and taxi ranks, with CSE-related leaflets to both intimidate these innocent individuals as well as speak to their audiences that they suspect these groups are to blame for historical CSE issues in their respective towns and cities. The leafletting is driven mainly by a combination of CSE conspiracy theories that put the entire blame on South Asian communities as well as the Great Replacement conspiracy theory to hijack genuine CSE concerns that have taken place over the years and leave no doubt in their supporters and potential supporters minds that all Muslims and refugees are sexual criminals. They leafletted locations included Derby, Preston, Burton-upon-Trent, Gloucester, Rotherham, and many others. While groups and individuals have every right to spread awareness about genuine concerns with CSE-related issues, especially considering the long history of police failings in many towns and cities across the country, we feel there is no place for such behaviour from Britain First. The hyper-specific focus on Muslim-owned businesses for the sake of internet content does nothing but further

3 Tell MAMA. «Man in Army Uniform Told Family «Palestine Isn›t Real» During Anti-Muslim Rant.» TELL MAMA. Last modified November 4, 2021. https://tellmamauk.org/man-in-army-uniform-told-family-palestine-isnt-real-during-anti-muslim-rant/.

highlight the group's unmistakable anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant agenda, one that is more plainly clear on their social media channels.

Another aspect of Britain First's social media content from 2021 was videos they uploaded of their members entering police stations across the country with the same CSE leaflets. In these highly edited videos, the group attempt to laugh and have a friendly discussion with police staff to highlight their cordial relation-

ship with the police. Of course, this is all just forceful PR from the group to both mask their real racist agenda and to show that the police are on board with the group, as if to show they have a working relationship in CSE matters. While many of the videos still show the police's reluctance to engage with the far-right group, Britain First's ability to edit the videos means that the police must be aware of how their behaviour with the group reflects on them in future interactions.

Offline Anti-Muslim Cases Reported to Tell MAMA in 2021

Summary and analysis of data

In 2021 Tell MAMA received 1107 offline reports, of these cases 781 were verified by our caseworkers. This section of the report will summarise and evaluate Tell MAMA's data from verified offline anti-Muslim cases between January 1st and December 31st, 2021, where we aim to highlight the key data trends from the year and notable comparisons from the previous year.

Looking at the incident categories we can see that abusive behaviour dominates the number and percentage of cases, as they did in 2020. This was followed by 121 cases of discrimination, 87 of assault, 79 of threatening behaviour, 36 of hate speech and anti-Muslim literature, respectively, and 33 cases of vandalism. A full breakdown of cases by incident category can be seen below.

Verified Categories of anti-Muslim Cases in 2021

- 5% Vandalism
- 6% Anti-Muslim Literature
- 6% Hate Speech
- 10% Threatening Behaviour
- 11% Assault
- 16% Discrimination
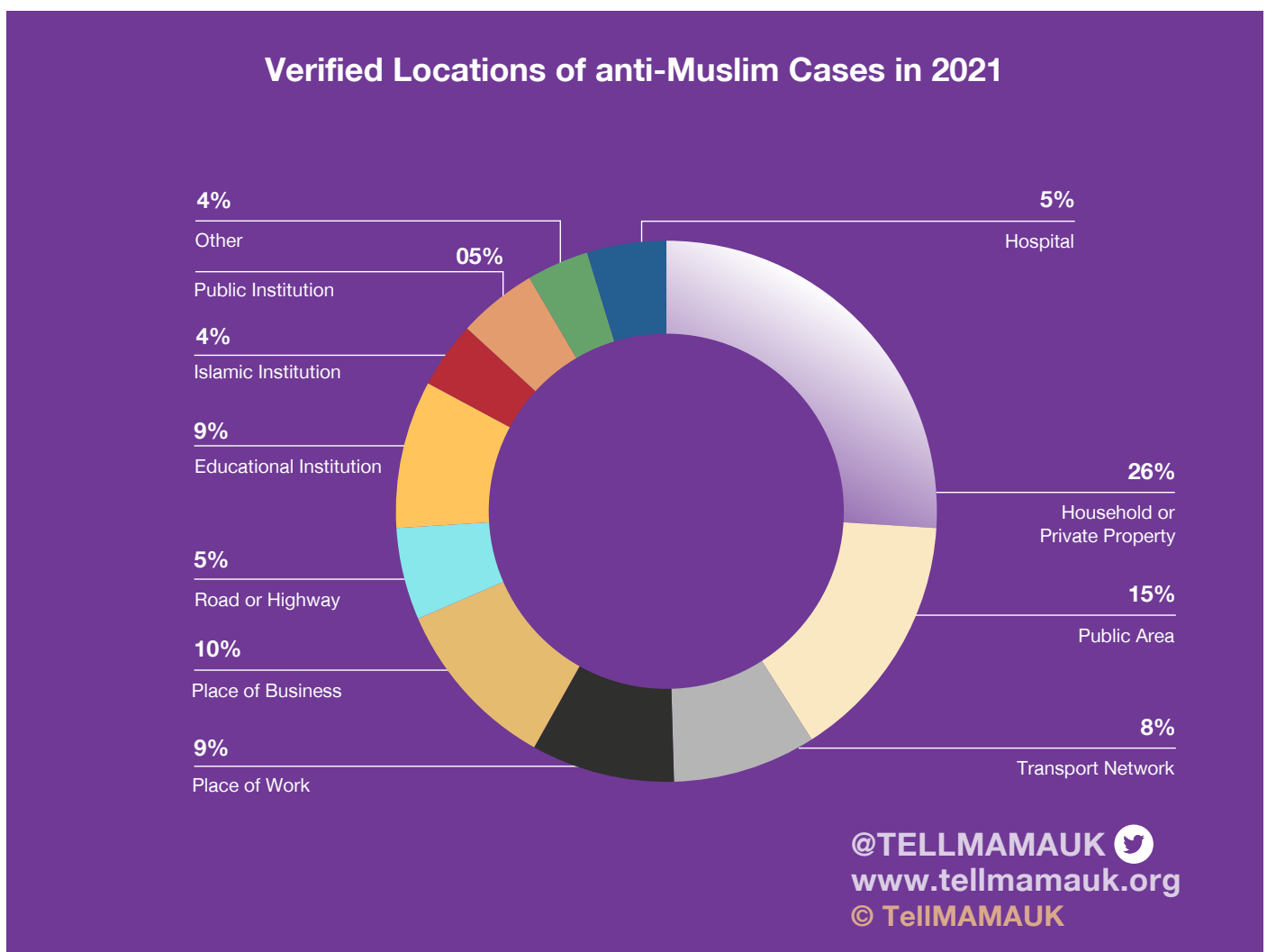- 46% Abusive Behaviour
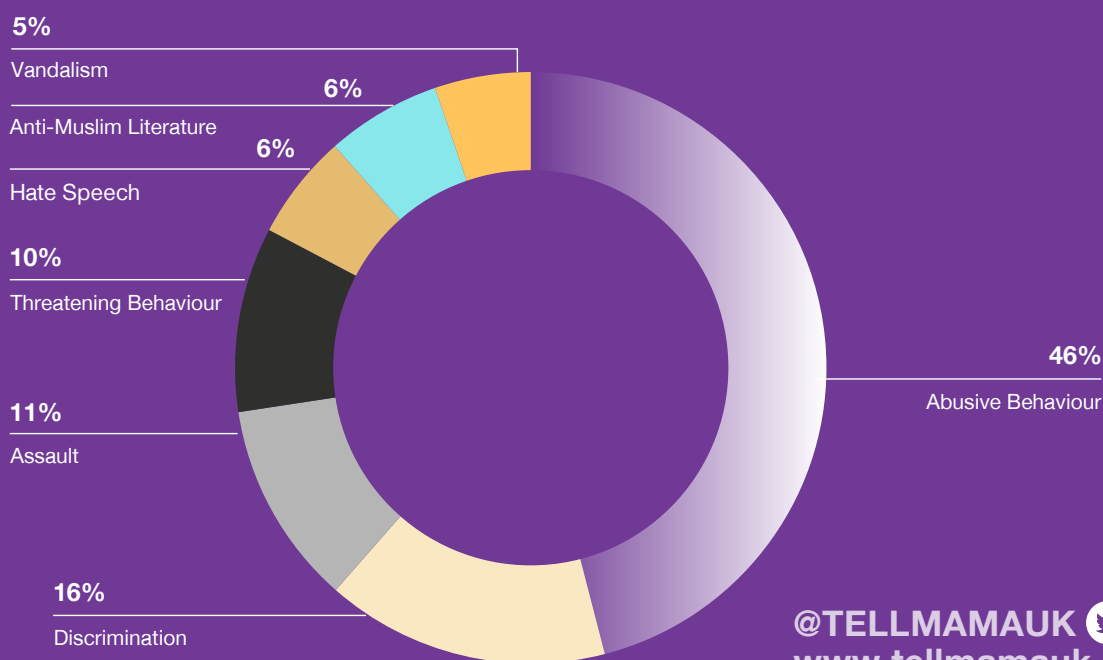
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When comparing with 2020 cases of abusive behaviour are of similar numbers (N=354 for 2020 and N=359 for 2021). Cases of discrimination increased by 15 cases over the previous year and proportionally by 2%, from 106 in 2020 to 121 in 2021. Assault decreased by 4 cases and remained the same proportionally, while threatening behaviour increased by 16 cases and proportionally from 9% to 11%. Hate speech has increased even further from 2020 to 45 cases total in 2021, from 4% to 6% while anti-Muslim literature increased by 16 cases from 33 to 49 in 2021, from 4% to 6% respectively. Finally, cases of vandalism decreased from 48 in 2020 to 41 in 2021.

Anti-Muslim attacks in 2021 most commonly took place in households or private properties (N=193), followed by public area with 117 cases, and place of business with 71 cases, and place of work and educational institution with 67 cases, respectively. A full breakdown can be seen below.

Verified Locations of anti-Muslim Cases in 2021

- 4% Other
- 05% Public Institution
- 4% Islamic Institution
- 9% Educational Institution
- 5% Road or Highway
- 10% Place of Business
- 9% Place of Work
- 5% Hospital
- 26% Household or Private Property
- 15% Public Area
- 8% Transport Network

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The most significant trend from the place categories was the continued prevalence of household cases following 2020. That year we recorded the most household cases in our 10 years of data recording with 203 verified cases. The fact this has increased slightly to 203 verified household cases shows therefore that the conditions created from the pandemic in 2020 were not an isolated phenomenon but potentially a catalyst for anti-Muslim hate crimes in and around the household to become the norm. Like last year, many of the household cases involved neighbours and were not isolated attacks but rather longer-term cases with a long series of hateful interactions that often included a combination of abusive behaviour, vandalism, and assault.

The prevalence of cases in the workplace and educational institutions is also worth noting and is a trend that has continued from 2020. Cases in educational institutions have changed quite significantly from 36 cases and 5% of proportional cases in 2020 to 67 cases and 9% proportionally in 2021. As we explored in the trends section, discrimination at the workplace and within educational institutions was commonplace in 2021 and is a growing trend since 2020.

Cases in or targeting Islamic institutions increased significantly from 2020 to 2021, rising from 29 cases the previous year to 69 cases in 2021. Crucially, 28 of these cases involved vandalism, whereas last year 8 cases involved vandalism. While cases that took place in places of business significantly increased from 59 to 81. The increase in foot traffic in 2021 compared to 2020 due to the relaxing of lockdown restrictions may help explain for the increase in these cases, especially when in-person shopping was back into full-swing in 2021 after a down year in 2020. That being said, cases in public areas have slightly decreased from 138 in 2020 to 117 in 2021.

A full comparison of cases by place category between 2020 and 2021 can be seen below.

Verified Street-Based (Offline) Anti-Muslim Cases by Place Category 2020 and 2021
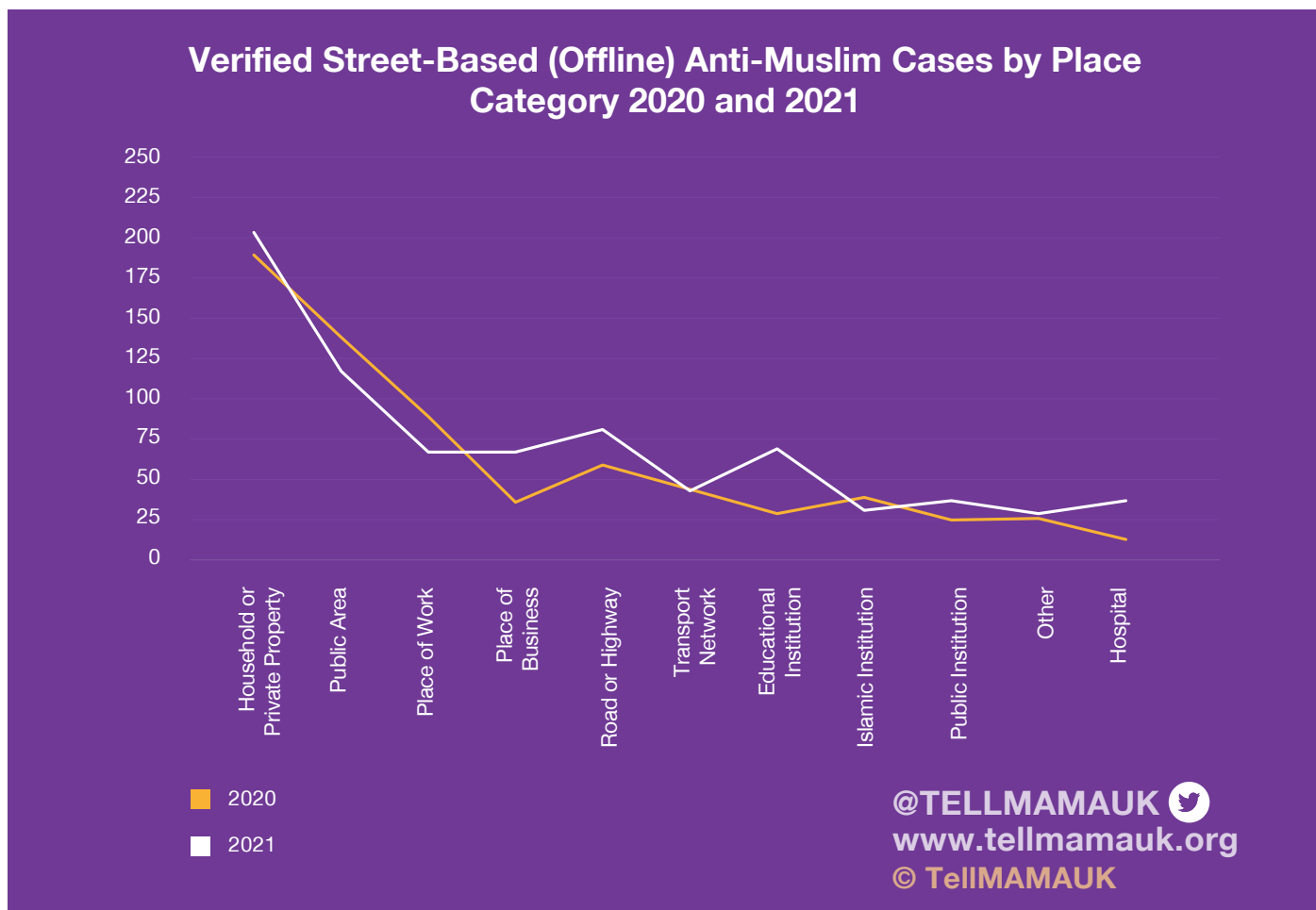
When looking at incident categories alongside place categories, we can see that abusive behaviour in or around the household was the most common combination (N= 201), followed by public spaces.
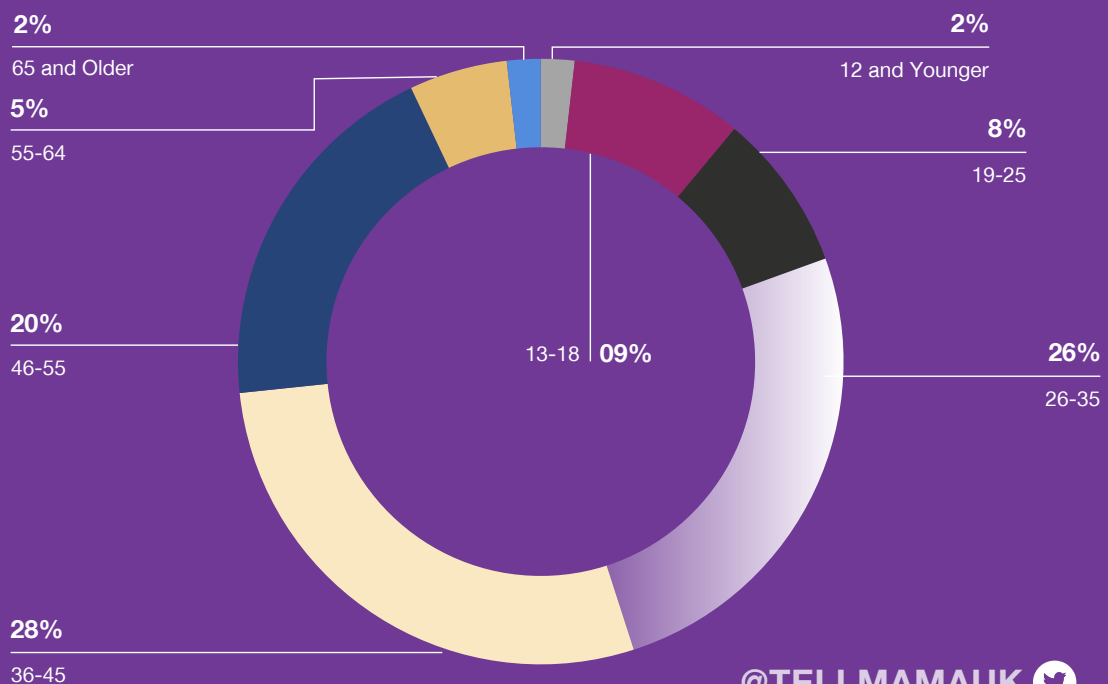
Victims and Perpetrators

Victims

In total we recorded the genders of 771 victims, with 331 being female, 309 males, and 101 classified themselves as either a group or family, the rest being institutions or private properties or unknown. For the latter, the specific genders were not disclosed but the details of the cases were considered more insightful for our analysis than if we classified the victim's genders as 'unknown'.

We recorded 381 cases of victims that were visibly Muslim. This is an increase of 93 cases from the previous year. Of these cases, 41% number were women wearing the headscarf.

Like last year, the highest proportion of known victim ages were 36-45 with 205 cases, an increase of 87 cases from last year, followed by 26-35 with 185 cases and increase of 63 cases and 46-55 with 142 cases, an increase of 54 cases from 2020.

Age of those Targeted by anti-Muslim Hatred (2021)

- 2% — 65 and Older
- 5% — 55-64
- 20% — 46-55
- 28% — 36-45
- 09% — 13-18
- 2% — 12 and Younger
- 8% — 19-25
- 26% — 26-35
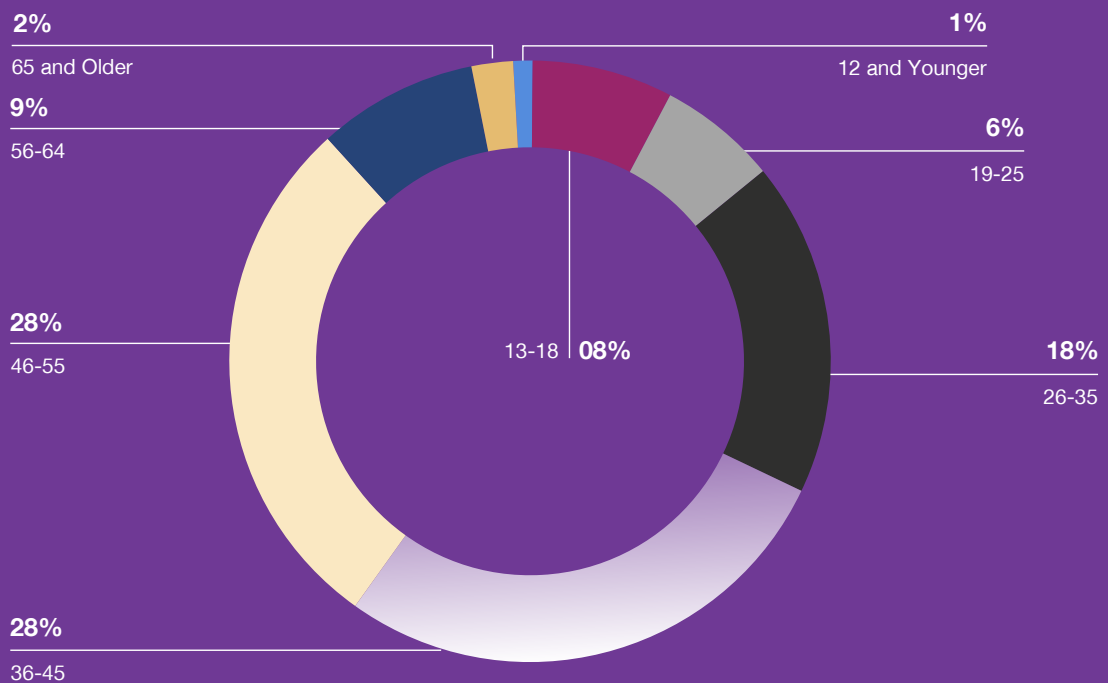
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Perpetrators

In 2021 we recorded the details of 673 perpetrators. Of which, 351 were male, 151 were female, and 171 were a group. Similar to the victim gender data, we feel that including the group number even when the specific genders were not clarified is important to show how much of an influence group dynamic have on targeting and perpetrating anti-Muslim hate.

In comparison to our 2020 data, we have identified an increase in numbers across all age ranges with the most common perpetrator age being 46-55 (N=91), followed by 36-45 (N=187) and 26-35 with (N=121).

Perpetrator Ages in Verified Tell MAMA Cases in 2021

2% — 65 and Older
9% — 56-64
28% — 46-55
28% — 36-45
1% — 12 and Younger
6% — 19-25
18% — 26-35
13-18 | 08%

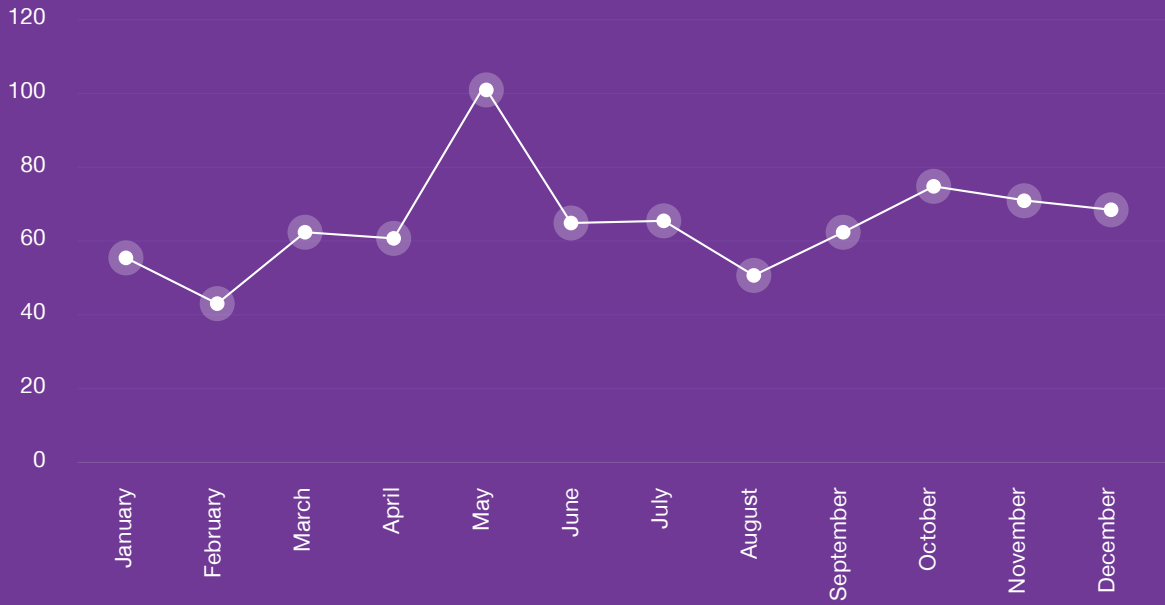@TELLMAMAUK
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Location

The highest proportion of anti-Muslim cases occurred in London (40%, N=313) where location was available followed by Yorkshire and Humber (18%, N=140), North West (13%, N=101) and West Midlands, (11%, N= 85).

It could be argued that a higher number of anti-Muslim cases occur in areas with a higher population of Muslims. However, there may also be regional factors to consider when analysing hate crime trends. These may include issues relating to areas of high level of deprivation, these areas may also be impacted by local policing and may relate to some areas of high levels of community tensions.

Timeline

The most significant spike in cases that we recorded in 2021 occurred in May following the rise in tensions in Israel-Palestine. In total, we recorded 88 cases that month, the most of any month through 2021. As we explored in the trends chapter, from 8th May to the end of the month we received a total of 56 offline cases, marking a sharp rise of 430% compared to the 7 days prior to the 8th of May, where we recorded 13 reports.

Timeline of Anti-Muslim Cases Reported to Tell MAMA by Month 2021

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Manifestations of Anti-Muslim Hate Online

05

A Decade of anti-Muslim Online Discourse

To help readers navigate the online discourses and rhetoric throughout the decade of our work, we created two distinct word clouds (dated between 2015 to 2018 and 2019 to 2021, respectively) to capture how anti-Muslim and Islamophobic sentiments appeared in our work. Due to the sheer volume, we attempted to present a non-exhaustive way of demonstrating how people talk about Muslims or their religious identities – ranging from overt racist language, racialised slurs and dehumanising terms to calls to action (including for mass deportations, violence or calling for the destruction or damage towards mosques). Through the pandemic years, examples of such language expressly and overtly spoke of Muslim communities (often overwhelmingly discussed by ethnicity, e.g., Pakistani) as either "unclean" or "backward" or likely to spread the coronavirus. At the height of those advocating for social change during major Black Lives Matter protests, various tweets included rhetoric like "tear down" or "remove" mosques due to their apparent historical links to slavery, hence its more prominent presence in the latter word cloud. The report will explore further how racist language, especially the P-word, prominently appears in both word clouds, but we want to draw attention to it alongside other racist terms like "go back to your own country," another consistent form of abuse. Equally consistent was how various harmful social media commentaries linked Muslims broadly to terrorism and criminality, especially following major tragedies and trigger events – from domestic terror attacks like Manchester to international attacks such as on the offices of Charlie Hebdo to the Paris terror attacks in November 2015. Again, this section does not intend to provide such analysis, which is found further into the report, as with the role of conspiracy theories and disinformation. However, when considering the above, Evolvi (2017) identified that whilst discussions of the racialisation of Muslims on Twitter about discussions around terrorism and cultural identity, overtly anti-Muslim attitudes proved intimately connected to discussions of ethnicity, politics and gendered forms of intergroup antagonisms, even when they reject any association to racism, reducing their Islamic beliefs to an "ideology" reduced them to cultural "others".[1] Moreover, as the latter word cloud demonstrates, legitimate criticism of politicians morphs into outright bigotry, hence why Naz Shah MP and London Mayor Sadiq Khan appear clearly, often in tweets reported to us, that target or speak of both politicians in ways no political figure should face. Another consideration to consider when observing both word clouds is the influence of the far-right, from individual agitators and ideologues to groups and political entities; their social media activity before bans or account restrictions occurred did influence what members of the public reported to us, and what the platforms did or did not do to stimy the flow of anti-Muslim rhetoric and their lackadaisical approach to content moderation.

However, before we delve further into our online analysis, we want to briefly note the methodologies we use to categorise anti-Muslim materials flagged with us in the online world.

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1 Evolvi, Giulia. "#Islamexit: inter-group antagonism on Twitter." Information, Communication & Society 22, no. 3 (2019): 386-401.

Definitions of Online Incident Categories

- **'Abusive behaviour'** – Verbal and non-verbal abuse, including comments or gestures targeting an individual due to their perceived Muslim identity or beliefs.

- **'Threatening behaviour'** – Direct and indirect threats of harm or violence motivated by anti-Muslim prejudice.

- **'Hate Speech'** – Verbal communication, often (but not always) non-targeted, delivered to an audience to spread racialised and religiously motivated forms of hatred and incitement to violence and broadly promote dehumanising and degrading stereotypes about Muslims and their Islamic faith.

- **'Anti-Muslim literature'** – visual forms of digital hate content which use images, videos, or text to propagate Islamophobic tropes or disinformation.

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How we verify cases in the online mirrors that in the offline – as we would, for example, disregard a non-UK account holder spreading hate materials if no individuals targeted directly were UK-based. Part of the verification work also extends to validating URLs and ensuring that, where possible, our caseworkers are confident that those responsible are UK-based whilst not losing sight of the global and transnational forms of anti-Muslim hate and Islamophobia in other parts of the world. Moreover, as with the offline world, we continue to revise and improve our methodologies in how we measure and monitor online materials as it helps us identify trends whilst also potentially limiting the reach of those who intend real-world harm and those who may act on such rhetoric and seek to harm Muslims or their places of worship.

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In the lifespan of Tell MAMA, overt, violent, and dehumanising forms of racist language formed a small yet noticeable minority of online reports from 2013 to 2021. To understand this further, our researchers took a holistic look at the data from these years. For example, almost 5% of online reports (verified or otherwise) in 2013 (n=30) used the P-word and often incorporated other dehumanising terms like 'dirty' or 'smelly' or 'scum'; with further examples using other racist languages like the N-word in conjunction. Subsequently, during the early years of Tell MAMA (2013, 2014 and 2015, respectively), the use of the P-word explicitly appeared in seventeen reports the

following year and twenty-two cases in 2015.

Equally, through the early years and beyond, a clear minority of reports concern two overt forms of dehumanising language: mechanistic (the denial of humanity and human traits comparable to machines) and animalistic dehumanisation (comparing the out-group to animals and denying human traits).[2] Nevertheless, several far-reaching studies draw links between conscious, overt forms of out-group dehumanisation and predictors of support for policies that harm such out-groups[3] to endorsing[4] violence and behaviours (identified as signing petitions against

2 Haslam, Nick, and Steve Loughnan. "Dehumanization and infrahumanization." Annual review of psychology 65, no. 1 (2014): 399-423.

3 Kteily, Nour, and Emile Bruneau. "Backlash: The politics and real-world consequences of minority group dehumanization." Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin 43, no. 1 (2017): 87-104.

4 Kteily, Nour S., and Emile Bruneau. "Darker demons of our nature: The need to (re) focus attention on blatant forms of dehumanization." Current Directions in Psychological Science 26, no. 6 (2017): 487-494.

the identified out-group or withholding charitable donations).5 For example, tell MAMA recorded 65 overt examples of the dehumanising term 'Musrat' (and variations, including 'muzzie' and 'muzrat') in 2013 (n=30), 2014 (n=15), and 2015 (n=20).

Academic research into the harms of digital hate speech on social media and the real-world risks it poses in creating the conditions of group-based violence as observed in Burma (Myanmar) and the genocide of its Rohingya Muslim minority.[6] From Sri Lanka and the role of anti-Muslim disinformation on Facebook,[7] which helped facilitate group-based violence, to the limitations of shutting such platforms to stem the flow of hate speech amidst calls for violence,[8] the role of technology and their potential liability or complicity in the incitement of genocide on their platforms remains a subject of legal scholarly work.[9] From Nazi Germany to Rwanda, technologies of the time helped to accelerate the dehumanisation of out-groups – from Jewish communities[10] or the Tutsi minority[11] through animalistic dehumanisation. Detecting hate speech on internet platforms has focused on English, Arabic, Chinese and other European languages as others, like, Ibrohim & Budi (2019),[12] deployed ways to detect hate speech in Indonesia and automated hate speech detection in Bengali (owing to a lack of studies on the issue)[13] point to a global problem, mainly when far-right agitators would help push violence-inducing language or calls for the stripping of the fundamental rights of others. Ethnographic research about Holocaust denial and anti-Jewish racism on Twitter notes its broad importance as a place of importance as a "political archive of contemporary racism, extreme speech, and lies as aspirational and actionable truths",[14] which other academics highlight how these platforms do[15] and do not uphold egalitarian ideals.

Moreover, during this era of Tell MAMA existence, Twitter would not implement policies around harmful content that dealt explicitly with dehumanisation until 2018, Holocaust denial until 2020[16] and Srebrenica genocide denial one year later.[17] However, the issues existed before and endured on the platforms to different degrees, not just in English. In the 2016 reporting cycle, we recorded at least fifteen overt examples of the dehumanising slur "Muzzie", with some of the most extreme calls for genocide towards Muslims invoked the gas chambers of Nazi Germany.

Calls for violence towards Muslims online targeted not just individuals or Muslims broadly but their places of worship – with at least ten overt references to calling for, encouraging others, or expressing a desire to burn mosques. Encouraging others to acts of violence and potential terror against Muslim communities nationally is beyond the scope of this section, and we remind readers of our extensive research about how those emboldened by trigger events often hold pre-existing racialised hostilities and seek to push others towards potential violence and criminality. Examples

5 Martherus, James L., Andres G. Martinez, Paul K. Piff, and Alexander G. Theodoridis. "Party animals? Extreme partisan polarization and dehumanization." Political Behavior 43, no. 2 (2021): 517-540.

6 Milmo, Dan. "Rohingya Sue Facebook for £150bn over Myanmar Genocide." The Guardian. Last modified December 6, 2021. https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2021/dec/06/rohingya-sue-facebook-myanmar-genocide-us-uk-legal-action-social-media-violence.

7 Samaratunge, Shilpa, and Sanjana Hattotuwa. "Liking violence-A study of hate speech on Facebook in Sri Lanka." (2014).

8 Wijeratne, Yudhanjaya. "The control of hate speech on social media: Lessons from Sri Lanka." CPR South (2018).

9 Hakim, Neema. "How social media companies could be complicit in incitement to genocide." Chi. J. Int'l L. 21 (2020): 83.

10 Hartman, John J. "A Psychoanalytic View of Racial Myths in a Nazi Propaganda Film: Der Ewige Jude (The Eternal Jew)." Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies 2 (2000): 329-346.

11 Maogoto, Jackson Nyamuya. 'The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.' ACCORD. Last modified June25, 2003. https://www.accord.org.za/ajcr-issues/the-international-criminal-tribunal-for-rwanda/.

12 Ibrohim, Muhammad Okky, and Indra Budi. "Multi-label hate speech and abusive language detection in Indonesian Twitter." In Proceedings of the Third Workshop on Abusive Language Online, pp. 46-57. 2019.

13 Sharif, Omar, and Mohammed Moshiul Hoque. "Tackling cyber-aggression: Identification and fine-grained categorization of aggressive texts on social media using weighted ensemble of transformers." Neurocomputing 490 (2022): 462-481.

14 McGranahan, Carole. "Extreme speech| A presidential archive of lies: Racism, twitter, and a history of the present." International Journal of communication 13 (2019): 19.

15 Veletsianos, George, and Royce Kimmons. "Scholars in an increasingly open and digital world: How do education professors and students use Twitter?.." The Internet and Higher Education 30 (2016): 1-10.

16 Kastrenakes, Jacob. "Twitter Will Ban Holocaust Denial Posts, Following Facebook." The Verge. Last modified October 14, 2020. https://www.theverge.com/2020/10/14/21516468/twitter-holocaust-denial-banned-facebook-policy.

17 Kastrenakes, Jacob. "Twitter Will Ban Holocaust Denial Posts, Following Facebook." The Verge. Last modified October 14, 2020. https://www.theverge.com/2020/10/14/21516468/twitter-holocaust-denial-banned-facebook-policy.

of extreme speech logged by Tell MAMA appear in our yearly annual reports, but for now, beyond the scope of this report, it is critical to express that in the 2017 reporting cycle, of over 560 individual keywords, we found eighty-five examples of social media posts using the racist P-word epithet. In short, 15% of all online keywords throughout 2017 used overtly racist language towards Muslims or about Muslims, irrespective of their ethnic identity.

Furthermore, the overlap between racism and misogyny appeared in the dataset, including phrases like "P*** slag" and referring to someone as a "f****** P*** b*tch" whilst disparaging their religious clothing. Racialised anti-Muslim animus and misogyny appeared in statements like "Muslim terrorist b*tch" to "brown b*tch" who wears an "ugly hijab" or other broader racialised remarks telling Muslim women online to "get out of our country" or similar interactions. A small minority of gendered, fatphobic comments included remarks like "P***, fat cow". Comparatively speaking, gendered racist language towards Muslim men overwhelmingly blamed them for the crimes and terrorism of others, especially with examples using language alongside the P-word like paedophile, nonce or groomer. Some of the most disturbing, egregious, and violent language captured in a minority of verified cases for 2017 saw those exploiting the various tragedies that unfolded after different acts of terrorism to call for the genocide, internment, or mass removal of Muslims from across the UK. Compared to the following dataset for 2018, we did observe a decline in overtly racist language, including the P-word, but it, like other racist languages, never went away entirely. Some articulations of Islamophobic animus online used overt homophobic language – for example, referring to Allah as a "c*cksucker" to inflict more profound harm to Muslims who read such comments online. Conversely, some social media accounts took horrific homophobic violence and killings abroad to tarnish Muslims broadly, evoking what Puar (2007) identifies as homonationalism,[18] which other academics would use as a framework when discussing Indigenous rights in North America[19] and within a European framework around anti-Muslim abuse and Islamophobia[20] and consequently, the experiences of LGBT+ Muslims in countries like the Netherlands.[21]

Genocidal language did also appear in a select number of 2018 reports online. Some related language, however, invoked the racist conspiracy of the so-called "great replacement" and "white genocide". Moreover, other examples would deploy racist and racialised terms that overlap with animalistic and non-animalistic forms of dehumanisation of Muslims, such as harmful far-right rhetoric like musrat or muzrat would appear alongside neologisms like "Englandistan" and "Sh*tholeistan". Such linguistic examples permeate across racialised conspiracies about Muslims in Europe, including the theory of "Eurabia".22

Much of the gendered anti-Muslim language on social media in 2018 reflected the language echoed by certain politicians, but again, those comments made by Boris Johnson when the foreign secretary appeared in the 2018 annual report, Normalising hatred. Various online comments about Muslim women and the niqab included comparisons to letterboxes, postboxes, curtains, the Ku Klux Klan, patio umbrellas and finally, bank robbers. Ethnographic research has previously explored how such language impacts veiled Muslim

18 Puar, Jasbir K. Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times. Durham, NC:Duke University Press

19 Morgensen, Scott Lauria. "Settler homonationalism: Theorizing settler colonialism within queer modernities." GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies 16, no. 1-2 (2010): 105-131.

20 Freude, Leon, and Núria Vergés Bosch. "Homonationalism in Europe? A quantitative comparison of the values of Europeans." Sexuality & Culture 24, no. 5 (2020): 1292-1314.

21 Akachar, Soumia. "Stuck between Islamophobia and homophobia: Applying intersectionality to understand the position of gay Muslim identities in the Netherlands." DiGeSt. Journal of Diversity and Gender Studies 2, no. 1-2 (2015): 173-187.

22 Bergmann, Eirikur. "The Eurabia conspiracy theory." In Europe: Continent of Conspiracies, pp. 36-53. Routledge, 2021.

women in places like Finland.[23] However, before crossing the threshold of political normalisation, examples of dehumanising anti-Muslim graffiti comparing veiled Muslim women to postboxes did, on occasion, appear in the UK.[24]

Noteworthy in the 2019 reporting cycle included social media accounts glorifying the white supremacist terror of the terrorist responsible for the murder of 51 Muslims in Christchurch, New Zealand – actions that fall into anti-legislation, not just the realm of hate crime. Such examples appear in the special Tell MAMA report on the anti-Muslim terror attacks in Christchurch.

Whether at the embryonic phase, its early years or the years leading us towards the tenth anniversary of Tell MAMA, the overlap between the criminalising, stigmatising, dehumanising and racialising narratives about Muslims (whether targeted individually or collectively) cuts across the offline and online spheres – including, as one study highlighted, within education.[25] Indeed, the issues are not limited to the UK[26] or the English language[27] – especially in the overlapping hostilities of misogyny and anti-Muslim hostility.[28] Moreover, through the pandemic years, the dizzying volume of conspiracist narratives and disinformation campaigns was unlike much we had observed in the decade of our work. Combined with the failures and shortcomings of social media platforms to get on top of the issue, it fell upon the police and civil society to invest time and resources into debunking content, especially on Twitter. In addition, platforms must engage with trusted third-party groups, minoritised communities and broader civil society in finding meaningful ways to ensure users feel safe and supported, mentally and physically, from racism and hate. To return to a broader point: as demonisation on social media, especially on platforms like Instagram, the abuse of fundamental rights like freedom of expression is instrumentalised to target Muslims, further propagates forms of social exclusion.[29] The process of social exclusion, the researchers add, is a process that denies the satisfaction of the basic needs of fundamental needs in society, exposing the targeted group to forms of social imbalance (undermining their fundamental rights).[30] The intersections between how Muslims, especially women, navigate the dangers of the offline and online spheres as identifiable Muslims in spaces can (but not always) build resilience in both spaces.[31] The real-world impacts of online hate are well-documented – for individuals and minoritised communities more broadly.[32] Other studies examined the online implications of anti-Black and anti-Muslim racist violence at a street-level[33] and anti-LGBT+ violence[34] to the threat of far-right violence on UK streets.[35] Academics have long researched how the weaponisation of the tragedy of terror attacks often does trigger higher levels of hate online.[36] As Professor Williams (2019) observed, digital hate

23 Almila, Anna-Mari. "Veiling, gender and space: On the fluidity of 'public'and 'private.'" In The Routledge international handbook to veils and veiling practices, pp. 230-245. Routledge, 2017.

24 Sleigh, Sophia. ""Muslim Women, Postbox. The Only Difference is the Colour." Islamophobic Graffiti Scrawled Across Putney Embankment." Wandsworth Times. Last modified March 2, 2015. https://www.wandsworthguardian.co.uk/news/11827747.muslim-women-postbox-the-only-difference-is-the-colour-islamophobic-graffiti-scrawled-across-putney-embankment/.

25 Chaudhry, Javeria. "British Pakistani students' experiences in multi-ethnic secondary schools in England." (2019).

26 Nguyen, Thu T., Shaniece Criss, Amani M. Allen, M. Maria Glymour, Lynn Phan, Ryan Trevino, Shrikha Dasari, and Quynh C. Nguyen. "Pride, love, and twitter rants: Combining machine learning and qualitative techniques to understand what our tweets reveal about race in the US." International journal of environmental research and public health 16, no. 10 (2019): 1766.

27 Dragoš, Sreo. "Islamophobia in Slovenia: Politically produced intolerance." Journal of Contemporary European Studies 13, no. 3 (2005): 299-315.

28 Banaji, Shakuntala, and Ramnath Bhat. Social media and hate. Taylor & Francis, 2022.

29 Civila, Sabina, Luis M. Romero-Rodríguez, and Amparo Civila. "The demonization of Islam through social media: A case study of# StopIslam in Instagram." Publications 8, no. 4 (2020): 52.

30 Ibid. 52.

31 Hirji, Faiza. "Claiming our space: Muslim women, activism, and social media." Islamophobia Studies Journal 6, no. 1 (2021): 78-92.

32 Müller, Karsten, and Carlo Schwarz. «Fanning the flames of hate: Social media and hate crime.» Journal of the European Economic Association 19, no. 4 (2021): 2131-2167.

33 Williams, Matthew L., Pete Burnap, Amir Javed, Han Liu, and Sefa Ozalp. "Hate in the machine: Anti-Black and anti-Muslim social media posts as predictors of offline racially and religiously aggravated crime." The British Journal of Criminology 60, no. 1 (2020): 93-117.

34 tefni, Oana, and Diana-Maria Buf. "Hate speech in social media and its effects on the LGBT community: A review of the current research." Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations 23, no. 1 (2021): 47-55.

35 Lowe, David. "Far-right extremism: is it legitimate freedom of expression, hate crime, or terrorism?." Terrorism and political violence 34, no. 7 (2022): 1433-1453.

36 Miró-Llinares, Fernando, Asier Moneva, and Miriam Esteve. "Hate is in the air! But where? Introducing an algorithm to detect hate speech in digital microenvironments." Crime Science 7, no. 1 (2018): 1-12.

speech remains a pernicious social ill when acting in tandem with a street-level hate crime.[37] He argued that whilst the most vicious, pernicious and harmful digital hate speech spikes for the first 24-48 hours after trigger events, including terror attacks (within the UK or abroad), adding that the consequences are twofold: the baseline of digital hate remains elevated months later, and the tipping point means seeing it translate into street-level hate crime.[38] Other academics contest that the normalisation of far-right and radical-right politics shifted the "Overton window" about what rhetoric once deemed harmful and hateful find acceptability in more mainstream political discourse.[39] To return to ideas of motivated thinking[40] and the interconnectivity of legitimising myth-making[41] and concepts of social hierarchies and dominations,[42] Eftedal & Thomsen (2021) argue that individuals hold two forms of judgement (an "official" one that is presented outwardly to others and a "true" preference that remains hidden below the surface)— adding that to publicly endorse a position that bridges the compromising interests of various groups when it comes to discussions of curving or not curving fundamental speech rights.[43] Fundamentally, their concluding arguments put focus on how the Overton window that judgements for both sides of an issue can vanish if the conditions are right or meet particular ideological confirmations,[44] as people across all six studies supported restricting the violent, criminal views of specific groups who harm minorities, women and children.[45]

We ask that readers focus on the harmful nature of the online rhetoric, especially when prior research on digital hate on Twitter had a tangible impact on racially and religiously aggravated hate crimes in London.[46] Other academic research focuses on the mood[47] and empathy levels (and lack thereof)[48] of those who inflict hate speech online as factors beyond the social media platforms themselves. The voices of those who impact anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia online must always continue to inform how individuals, communities, civil society, and governments respond to hate speech and digital hate and when the boundaries blur and overlap into street-level harm and harassment, groundbreaking research[49] that our data has previously and continues to highlight.

The Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns understandably had an exponential impact on the nature of online reports throughout 2020, 2021 and 2022. To make sense of this and to allow room to explore the themes in greater depth in the future, the focus of this section begins with a numerical breakdown of the yearly reporting cycles.

The online caseload for the pandemic years for this report occurs from 2020 to 2022, divided between verified and non-verified cases below by each year, with attention to the category codes used by Tell MAMA. In 2020, online cases totalled 650, with 592 cases meeting the verification standards. Of that 592 figure, 16% fell under the category of Abusive Behaviour (n=95), 10.64% fell under Anti-Muslim Literature (n=63), and Threats fell under a small

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37 Williams, Matthew. "Hatred behind the screens: A report on the rise of online hate speech." (2019).

38 Ibid.9.

39 Lehman, Joseph. "A brief explanation of the Overton window." Mackinac Center for Public Policy (2014).

40 Edelson, Jack, Alexander Alduncin, Christopher Krewson, James A. Sieja, and Joseph E. Uscinski. "The effect of conspiratorial thinking and motivated reasoning on belief in election fraud." Political Research Quarterly 70, no. 4 (2017): 933-946.

41 Lucas, Brian J., and Nour S. Kteily. "(Anti-) egalitarianism differentially predicts empathy for members of advantaged versus disadvantaged groups." Journal of personality and social psychology 114, no. 5 (2018): 665.

42 Sidanius, Jim, and Felicia Pratto. "Social dominance theory: A new synthesis." In Political psychology, pp. 315-332. Psychology Press, 2004.

43 Eftedal, Nikolai Haahjem, and Lotte Thomsen. "Motivated moral judgments about freedom of speech are constrained by a need to maintain consistency." Cognition 211 (2021): 104623.

44 Ibid. 16.

45 Ibid. 17.

46 Williams, Matthew L., Pete Burnap, Amir Javed, Han Liu, and Sefa Ozalp. "Hate in the machine: Anti-Black and anti-Muslim social media posts as predictors of offline racially and religiously aggravated crime." The British Journal of Criminology 60, no. 1 (2020): 93-117.

47 Farrington, Neil, Lee Hall, Daniel Kilvington, John Price, and Amir Saeed. Sport, racism and social media. Routledge, 2017.

48 Brown, Alexander. "What is so special about online (as compared to offline) hate speech?." Ethnicities 18, no. 3 (2018): 297-326.

49 Allen, Chris, Arshad Isakjee, and Özlem Ögtem Young. "" Maybe we are hated": the experience and impact of anti-Muslim hate on British Muslim women." (2013).

minority of cases (n=14,2.36%). Overwhelmingly, commensurate with previous Tell MAMA annual reports and research, most verified cases fell into the category of Hate Speech (70.94%, n=420). The figures for the following year marked a downturn compared to the spike the previous year, owing to the gradual reduction of national and local lockdowns, with an overall verified caseload of 449 cases, verified at 431 verified cases. From that figure, 128 verified cases represented almost one in 3 reports (n=128, 29.76%), as over half of the verified cases fell under Hate Speech (n=228, 53%) as just over 11% fell under Anti-Muslim Literature (n=47), with Threats constituting 5% (n=22). To conclude the pandemic years, the total caseload for the online sphere in 2022 totalled 395 cases, where Hate Speech represents over 50% of the verified cases (n=266, 67.5%).

Therefore, in broad terms, if we take the verified cases across all online platforms from March 23 (when the national lockdown began) until the end of June (as initial restrictions continued to ease), the figure stands at 290 reports, representing almost half all reports to our service in just one hundred days.

Given the scale of the challenge such figures present and do justice to the topics at hand, the following sections will provide audiences with a detailed, not exhaustive thematic exploration of topics ranging from conspiracy theories, racialisation, media framing, responses to Black Lives Matter and the intersections between anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia.

To conclude this section, Tell MAMA will present positive case studies of how public bodies should use social media to challenge anti-Muslim falsehoods and provide recommendations for social media platforms moving forward in 2023 and beyond.

The most expansive sections will include broad literature reviews that help define, contextualise, and understand the mechanics of conspiracy theories—tracing their origins, how they flourish (pre-internet and in digital forms) and how some conspiracies gain traction from mainstream popular culture and politics. Moreover, we emphasise how racialised forms of conspiracist thinking target ethnic and religious minorities in historical and contemporary forms to help audiences better understand how such ideas do not exist in vacuums. Therefore, we begin with attention to how contemporary anti-Muslim conspiracy theories to the historical and modern forms of racialisation in parts of Europe, demonstrating how colonial powers like Spain constructed Muslims as a politically expedient racialised group. Such constructions, along with the eventual expulsion of Muslims, would inspire Catholic nationalists centuries later; even if the Reconquista mythologised and sanctified specific individuals, the marginalisation, forced conversions, dehumanisation, and discrimination (as with Spain's Jewish population centuries earlier[50]), was very real. The traumas left deep impressions on their collective memories of Jewish[51] and Muslim communities since sacred sites "shape the trajectory of historical experiences"[52] as such spaces become contested as forms of collective memories for Catholics and Muslims in Spain today.[53]

With that in mind, it also remains essential to display how, from the extreme to more mainstream iterations of the far and radical right, the power of myth, racialisation, and historiography functions to marginalise religious and ethnic minorities today. Gross (2009) argues that race is not an objective biological fact but instead arose as a powerful ideology during particular historical moments – a product of socioeconomic and psychological conditions.[54] In their review of Gross's book, Salyer (2010) argues that the idea of race concerns the "social and political constructions that establish and perpetuate hierarchies of power."[55] Gotanda (2011) contends that racialisation is an "inscription of an ascribed subordination on a raced

50 Roth, Norman. "The Jews of Spain and the Expulsion of 1492." The Historian 55, no. 1 (1992): 17-30.

51 Linhard, Tabea Alexa. Jewish Spain: A Mediterranean Memory. Stanford University Press, 2014.

52 Almaguer, Tomas. Racial fault lines. University of California Press, 2020.

53 Ouassini, Anwar. "We have come back home: The Spanish-Moroccan community, collective memory, and sacred spaces in contemporary Spain." Religions 10, no. 2 (2019): 128.

54 Gross, Ariela Julie. What blood won't tell: A history of race on trial in America. Harvard University Press, 2009. Pp, 8-9.

55 Salyer, Lucy E. "What Blood Won't Tell: A History of Race on Trialin America." (2010): 179-183.

body linked to a racial category," which has three categories: bodily, categorisation, and ascribed subordination.[56] This formulation, they argue, allows harmful stereotypes and tropes like the "Muslim terrorist" to be imposed more broadly upon Muslims irrespective of their "subjective wishes" amidst broader political implications in a post-9/11 context.[57]

Nor is the racialisation of religion a new idea amongst academics, given how it fuses concepts around "phenotypical and cultural characteristics that are deemed unchanging and hereditary."[58] For Goldberg

(2006), the configuration of Muslim and Jewish identities in historical Europe to anti-blackness connects Elizabethan England to the Enlightenment racial hierarchies, adding that the constructions of Muslims' embodied the death' of European values and history.[59] This sentiment is echoed by those who link racialisation to conspiracy thinking and posits that conspiracies complement the above forms of racialisation and function as the final stage of the racialisation process.[60]

Conceptualising conspiracy theories, history and concepts of racialisation, a literature review

There is an abundance of conspiracy theories, misinformation, and hyper-partisanship in political life. In 2018, polling revealed that 60% of Britons believe in at least one conspiracy theory. Researchers at Cambridge University partnered with the polling firm YouGov to survey nine countries over six years[61] and defined a conspiracy theory as "a theory that some actors have conspired to do something covertly, usually something dysfunctional or evil."[62] This characterisation mirrors existing definitions, which posit that conspiracy theories help explain the causes of significant social and political events and their circumstances and connect the secretive machinations of two or more powerful actors.[63][64] Others contend

that the rhetoric around conspiracists and conspiracy theories are forms of orthodoxy that seek to curtail the space for "acceptable opinions."[65] For van Prooijen (2016), the appeal of conspiracy theories stems from the validation some conspiracy theories gained when acknowledged.[66] According to experimental research, its appeal reflects a search for meaning (although endorsing conspiracy theories may reflect an exaggerated form of such desires).[67] Alternatively, it demonstrates a sense of powerlessness resulting from low socioeconomic status and disadvantage,[68] or those on the 'losing' side of politics may be more likely to endorse conspiracy theories.[69] Others explore the role of collective narcissism and group superiority,[70]

56 Gotanda, Neil. "The racialization of Islam in American law." The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 637, no. 1 (2011): 187-188.

57 Ibid. 188.

58 Galonnier, Juliette. "The racialization of Muslims in France and the United States: Some insights from white converts to Islam." Social Compass 62, no. 4 (2015): 570-583.

59 Theo Goldberg, David. "Racial europeanization." Ethnic and racial studies 29, no. 2 (2006): 344-346.

60 Zia-Ebrahimi, Reza. "When the Elders of Zion relocated to Eurabia: conspiratorial racialization in antisemitism and Islamophobia." Patterns of Prejudice 52, no. 4 (2018): 314-337.

61 Addley, Esther. "Study Shows 60% of Britons Believe in Conspiracy Theories." The Guardian. Last modified February 3, 2020. https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/nov/23/study-shows-60-of-britons-believe-in-conspiracy-theories.

62 Ibid.

63 Keeley, Brian L. "Of conspiracy theories." The Journal of Philosophy 96, no. 3 (1999): 109-126.

64 Uscinski, Joseph E. "The study of conspiracy theories." Argumenta 2 (2017): 1-13.

65 Coady, David. "Psychology and conspiracy theories." The routledge handbook of applied epistemology (2019): 166-175.

66 Van Prooijen, Jan-Willem. The psychology of conspiracy theories. Routledge, 2018.

67 Graeupner, Damaris, and Alin Coman. "The dark side of meaning-making: How social exclusion leads to superstitious thinking." Journal of Experimental Social Psychology 69 (2017): 218-222.

68 Crocker, Jennifer, Riia Luhtanen, Stephanie Broadnax, and Bruce Evan Blaine. "Belief in US government conspiracies against Blacks among Black and White college students: Powerlessness or system blame?." Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin 25, no. 8 (1999): 941-953.

69 Uscinski, Joseph E., and Joseph M. Parent. American conspiracy theories. Oxford University Press, 2014. 118.

70 Cichocka, Aleksandra, Marta Marchlewska, Agnieszka Golec de Zavala, and Mateusz Olechowski. "'They will not control us': Ingroup positivity and belief in intergroup conspiracies." British Journal of Psychology 107, no. 3 (2016): 556-576.

from groups who feel marginalised and victimised by 'powerful' out-groups[71] to those seeking to reassert individualism.[72] Other forms of conspiracy theories, deemed as 'bottom-up' and directed towards the state,[73] reflect what Miller (2002) argues are "coded social critiques" – the means to create a space to question the legitimacy of institutions and facts[74] that may improve governmental transparency[75] or, as a cultural practice to map the trajectories of power.[76] In the pursuit of answers, some find resonance in the simplicity of the machinations that explain away complexities connected to what Marchlewska et al. (2018) conceptualise as the necessity of "cognitive closure".[77] Pursuing such closures can, in some ways, build positive associations with conspiracy theories at a time of national or global tragedy, where the causes of such events are yet fully known in contrast to those in higher need of cognitive closure reject conspiracies.[78] Ultimately, however, the authors stressed that conspiracy theories might help some navigate meaning from those motivated enough to get an answer in complex and uncertain situations.[79] Studies have also linked conspiracy theories to adverse health and civic outcomes, including a "significant negative relationship between anti-vaccine conspiracy beliefs and vaccination intentions."[80] More

broadly, a widely-cited literature review of health-related misinformation on social media highlighted the need for a comprehensive approach in response, highlighting the importance of health and media literacy to engage with the credibility of information online critically.[81] Equally, there is a growing body of research on Covid conspiracies and Twitter, more specifically, on polarisation[82], the role of negative emotions in intergroup language and how it correlates to exposure and engagement with conspiracies,[83] to the role of alternative narrative and ecosystems on the platform following mass shootings.[84] Significant social media platforms like YouTube (representing a small number of yearly Tell MAMA verified cases) were fertile ground for vaccine misinformation.[85] For example, one study found that 27.5% of the most popular Covid-19 videos featured misinformation whilst reaching millions globally.[86] Away from medical disinformation, previous research has explored antisemitic conspiracies,[87] anti-Muslim conspiracies in YouTube user comments following neo-Nazi terror attacks in Norway,[88] or how the platform's recommendations algorithm risks exposing users to radicalising content.

Furthermore, other researchers explored YouTube's efforts to limit their reach through de-platforming or

71 Bilewicz, Michal, Mikołaj Winiewski, Mirosław Kofta, and Adrian Wójcik. "Harmful Ideas, The Structure and Consequences of Anti S emitic Beliefs in Poland." Political Psychology 34, no. 6 (2013): 821-839.

72 Melley, Timothy. Empire of conspiracy: The culture of paranoia in postwar America. Cornell University Press, 2000.

73 Van Buuren, Jelle. "SPUR TO VIOLENCE?: Anders Behring Breivik and the Eurabia conspiracy." Nordic journal of migration research 3, no. 4 (2013): 205-215.

74 Miller, Shane. "Conspiracy theories: public arguments as coded social critiques: a rhetorical analysis of the TWA flight 800 conspiracy theories." Argumentation and Advocacy 39, no. 1 (2002): 40-56.

75 Clarke, Steve. "Conspiracy theories and conspiracy theorizing." Philosophy of the Social Sciences 32, no. 2 (2002): 131-150.

76 Fenster, Mark. Conspiracy theories: Secrecy and power in American culture. U of Minnesota Press, 1999.

77 Marchlewska, Marta, Aleksandra Cichocka, and Małgorzata Kossowska. "Addicted to answers: Need for cognitive closure and the endorsement of conspiracy beliefs." European journal of social psychology 48, no. 2 (2018): 109-117.

78 Ibid.

79 Ibid. 21.

80 Jolley, Daniel, and Karen M. Douglas. "The effects of anti-vaccine conspiracy theories on vaccination intentions." PloS one 9, no. 2 (2014): e89177.

81 Wang, Yuxi, Martin McKee, Aleksandra Torbica, and David Stuckler. "Systematic literature review on the spread of health-related misinformation on social media." Social science & medicine 240 (2019): 112552.

82 Kearney, Matthew D., Shawn C. Chiang, and Philip M. Massey. "The Twitter origins and evolution of the COVID-19 "plandemic" conspiracy theory." Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review 1, no. 3 (2020).

83 Fong, Amos, Jon Roozenbeek, Danielle Goldwert, Steven Rathje, and Sander van der Linden. "The language of conspiracy: A psychological analysis of speech used by conspiracy theorists and their followers on Twitter." Group Processes & Intergroup Relations 24, no. 4 (2021): 606-623.

84 Starbird, Kate. "Examining the alternative media ecosystem through the production of alternative narratives of mass shooting events on Twitter." In Proceedings of the International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 230-239. 2017.

85 Ginossar, Tamar, Iain J. Cruickshank, Elena Zheleva, Jason Sulskis, and Tanya Berger-Wolf. "Cross-platform spread: vaccine-related content, sources, and conspiracy theories in YouTube videos shared in early Twitter COVID-19 conversations." Human vaccines & immunotherapeutics 18, no. 1 (2022): 1-13.

86 Li, Heidi Oi-Yee, Adrian Bailey, David Huynh, and James Chan. "YouTube as a source of information on COVID-19: a pandemic of misinformation?." BMJ global health 5, no. 5 (2020): e002604.

87 Allington, Daniel, Beatriz L. Buarque, and Daniel Barker Flores. "Antisemitic conspiracy fantasy in the age of digital media: Three 'conspiracy theorists' and their YouTube audiences." Language and Literature 30, no. 1 (2021): 78-102.

88 Yusha'u, Muhammad Jameel. "Extremism or terrorism: Communicating Islamophobia on YouTube in the Norwegian attacks." Journal of Arab & Muslim Media Research 8, no. 2 (2015): 171-191.

demonetisation methods, adding that conspiracy channels proved twice as likely to implement offsite monetisation methods[89] - as research published by Srba et al. (2023) found that users did not automatically enter filter bubbles on YouTube despite watching conspiracy content.[90] Still, they found that a filter bubble effect did occur.[91] Finally, the research around hate speech on platforms like YouTube includes anti-LGBT+ user comments,[92] misogyny,[93] and anti-refugee hate speech[94][95] to the effectiveness[96] and limitations of counter-speech efforts and the contexts in which both emerge.[97] Additional research explores the automated methods of counter-speech detection in efforts to reduce harm whilst protecting fundamental speech rights.[98] Also relevant to this report is the work of Inwood and Zappavigna (2023) and their look at how white supremacists use YouTube comments to legitimise their violent, racist worldviews through the delegitimisation of experts and the media, by, for example, pushing anti-Muslim conspiracies about the Notre Dame fire alongside phrases like "We will never know the truth".[99]

Moreover, previous research identified how individuals could adopt such thinking, irrespective of political affiliations or demographic traits,[100] as to endorse a particular conspiracy is often contingent on an individual's belief in other conspiracy theories.[101] More generally, to support a conspiracy theory, Miller, Saunders, and Farhart (2015) equate it to a unique and ultimately extreme form of motivated reasoning,[102] of which people default to when presented with facts contradicting their biases (including how new information is analysed).[103] Some academics argue that partisan forms of motivated reasoning are pervasive,[104] conditional,[105] or to maintain the desire to maintain "accurate goals or motivations."[106] Furthermore, some experimental research identified a "tipping point" where sufficient challenges to pre-existing worldviews force some to ditch such motivated reasoning.[107]

Scholars have also argued, given the fluidity in which individuals adopt a variety of conspiracy theories, with a tendency towards "conspiracy thinking,"

89 Ballard, Cameron, Ian Goldstein, Pulak Mehta, Genesis Smothers, Kejsi Take, Victoria Zhong, Rachel Greenstadt, Tobias Lauinger, and Damon McCoy. "Conspiracy brokers: understanding the monetization of YouTube conspiracy theories." In Proceedings of the ACM Web Conference 2022, pp. 2707-2718. 2022.

90 Srba, Ivan, Robert Moro, Matus Tomlein, Branislav Pecher, Jakub Simko, Elena Stefancova, Michal Kompan et al. "Auditing YouTube's recommendation algorithm for misinformation filter bubbles." ACM Transactions on Recommender Systems 1, no. 1 (2023): 1-33.

91 Ibid.

92 Chakravarthi, Bharathi Raja, Ruba Priyadharshini, Rahul Ponnusamy, Prasanna Kumar Kumaresan, Kayalvizhi Sampath, Durairaj Thenmozhi, Sathiyaraj Thangasamy, Rajendran Nallathambi, and John Phillip McCrae. "Dataset for identification of homophobia and transophobia in multilingual YouTube comments." arXiv preprint arXiv:2109.00227 (2021).

93 Döring, Nicola, and M. Rohangis Mohseni. «Gendered hate speech in YouTube and YouNow comments: Results of two content analyses.» SCM Studies in Communication and Media 9, no. 1 (2020): 62-88.

94 Aslan, Alev. "Online hate discourse: A study on hatred speech directed against Syrian refugees on YouTube." Journal of Media Critiques 3, no. 12 (2017): 227-256.

95 Latorre, Juan Pablo, and Javier J. Amores. "Topic modelling of racist and xenophobic YouTube comments. Analyzing hate speech against migrants and refugees spread through YouTube in Spanish." In Ninth International Conference on Technological Ecosystems for Enhancing Multiculturality (TEEM'21), pp. 456-460. 2021.

96 Ring, Caitlin Elizabeth. "Hate speech in social media: An exploration of the problem and its proposed solutions." PhD diss., University of Colorado at Boulder, 2013.

97 Yu, Xinchen, Eduardo Blanco, and Lingzi Hong. "Hate Speech and Counter Speech Detection: Conversational Context Does Matter." arXiv preprint arXiv:2206.06423 (2022).

98 Tekiroglu, Serra Sinem, Helena Bonaldi, Margherita Fanton, and Marco Guerini. "Using pre-trained language models for producing counter narratives against hate speech: a comparative study." arXiv preprint arXiv:2204.01440 (2022).

99 Inwood, Olivia, and Michele Zappavigna. "Conspiracy Theories and White Supremacy on YouTube: Exploring Affiliation and Legitimation Strategies in YouTube Comments." Social Media+ Society 9, no. 1 (2023): 20563051221150410. Pp 9-10.

100 Goertzel, Ted. "Belief in conspiracy theories." Political psychology (1994): 731-742.

101 Lewandowsky, Stephan, Klaus Oberauer, and Gilles E. Gignac. "NASA faked the moon landing—therefore,(climate) science is a hoax: An anatomy of the motivated rejection of science." Psychological science 24, no. 5 (2013): 622-633.

102 Miller, Joanne M., Kyle L. Saunders, and Christina E. Farhart. "Conspiracy endorsement as motivated reasoning: The moderating roles of political knowledge and trust." American Journal of Political Science 60, no. 4 (2016): 824-844.

103 Douglas, Karen M., Joseph E. Uscinski, Robbie M. Sutton, Aleksandra Cichocka, Turkay Nefes, Chee Siang Ang, and Farzin Deravi. "Understanding conspiracy theories." Political Psychology 40 (2019): 3-35.

104 Lodge, Milton, and Charles S. Taber. 2013. The Rationalizing Voter. New York: Cambridge University Press.

105 Kunda, Z., 1990. The case for motivated reasoning. Psychological bulletin, 108(3), pp.481-482.

106 Bolsen, Toby, James N. Druckman, and Fay Lomax Cook. "The influence of partisan motivated reasoning on public opinion." Political Behavior 36, no. 2 (2014): 235-262.

107 Lau, Richard R., and David P. Redlawsk. 2001. "Advantages and Disadvantages of Cognitive Heuristics in Political Decision Making." American Journal of Political Science 45(4): 951–97.

"conspiracy ideation," "conspiracy ideology," and "conspiracy mindsets," which may prove indicative of a preference towards conspiracy explanations due to a dislike or bias towards official accounts.[108] The terminology around conspiracy theories is not without controversy and weaponisation from politicians to 'other' and scapegoat minorities,[109] including Muslims, during major political events like the EU Referendum in 2016.[110] Others have critiqued the idea of conspiracism, arguing that 'Particularism' about conspiracy theories is preferable terminology.[111]

Conspiracy theories also have a social aspect, especially in reinforcing in-group dynamics and out-group stigmatisation and dehumanisation. For example, racialised conspiracies of minority groups, including Muslim and Jewish communities in Norway,[112] are situated within the "conspiracy stereotypes" framework, which Kofta and Sedek (2005) explored in harmful antisemitism in Poland.[113] They focused upon "conspiracy stereotypes" – defined as "permanent conspiracies", indicating more robust predictions of anti-Jewish animus as it served to reinforce antisemitic canards about dual-loyalty and accusations of 'loyalty' to external 'enemy groups'[114] and adapted to look

strictly at anti-Muslim conspiracies in Germany[115] and the United Kingdom.[116]

For Barkun (2006), however, conspiracism is, in essence, a way to understand politics with claims of locating and exposing the "true loci of power" and decision-making.[117] Moreover, due to its association with "stigmatised knowledge"[118] and strong links with antisemitic individuals, neo-Nazis, and anti-government militias, it would not gain mass acceptance.[119] Nevertheless, conversely, conspiracy mainstreaming (even in unserious forms) may force some driven by stigmatised knowledge deeper in their pursuits of 'truths'.[120] Academics have noted how the rise of new media has helped conspiracism evolve further as a subculture.[121] However, not all conspiracy theories focus on deceptive leaders.[122] Indeed, historical and contemporary racist, antisemitic conspiracy theories showed a trajectory in the latter half of the nineteenth century when interest in the Illuminati and the Freemasons waned, and Jewish communities became the figureheads of alleged global conspiracies.[123] The Simonini letter of 1806 is an infamous antisemitic conspiracy that later influenced the notorious antisemitic forgery, the Protocols of the

108 Imhoff, Roland, and Pia Lamberty. "How paranoid are conspiracy believers? Toward a more fine-grained understanding of the connect and disconnect between paranoia and belief in conspiracy theories." European Journal of Social Psychology 48, no. 7 (2018): 909-926.

109 Sutton, Robbie M., and Karen M. Douglas. "Conspiracy theories and the conspiracy mindset: implications for political ideology." Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences 34 (2020): 118-122.

110 Swami, Viren, David Barron, Laura Weis, and Adrian Furnham. "To Brexit or not to Brexit: The roles of Islamophobia, conspiracist beliefs, and integrated threat in voting intentions for the United Kingdom European Union membership referendum." British Journal of Psychology 109, no. 1 (2018): 156-179.

111 The Particularist position argues against a broad dismissal of conspiracy theories, and, instead, evaluate each theory on its evidential merit. See Dentith, Matthew RX. "The problem of conspiracism." (2018). Pp 4-5.

112 Dyrendal, Asbjørn. "Conspiracy beliefs about Jews and Muslims in Norway." In The shifting boundaries of prejudice: Antisemitism and islamophobia in contemporary Norway, pp. 187-210. Scandinavian University Press (Universitetsforlaget AS), 2020.

113 Sedek, Grzegorz. "Conspiracy stereotypes of Jews during systemic transformation in Poland." International Journal of Sociology 35, no. 1 (2005): 40-64.

114 Ibid. 58.

115 Uenal, Fatih. "The secret Islamization of Europe exploring the integrated threat theory: predicting Islamophobic conspiracy stereotypes." International Journal of Conflict and Violence (IJCV) 10 (2016): 93-108.

116 Swami, Viren, David Barron, Laura Weis, and Adrian Furnham. "To Brexit or not to Brexit: The roles of I slamophobia, conspiracist beliefs, and integrated threat in voting intentions for the U nited K ingdom E uropean U nion membership referendum." British Journal of Psychology 109, no. 1 (2018): 156-179.

117 Barkun, Michael. A culture of conspiracy: Apocalyptic visions in contemporary America. Vol. 15. Univ of California Press, 2013. 178.

118 The concept of "stigmatised knowledge" for Barkun concerns the belief that certain forms of knowledge are suppressed or deligitimised by mainstream institutions, as technological developments like the internet, helped connect such individuals with those who believe in related forms. See: Ibid. pp. 113.

119 Ibid. pp 179-180.

120 Barkun, 2006, pp.36-37.

121 Wood, Michael J., Karen M. Douglas, and Robbie M. Sutton. "Dead and alive: Beliefs in contradictory conspiracy theories." Social psychological and personality science 3, no. 6 (2012): 767-773.

122 Ibid.

123 Byford, Jovan. Conspiracy theories: A critical introduction. Springer, 2011. 46.

Elders of Zion.[124] Broader antisemitic conspiracies and violence, however, are much older.[125][126] Further academic research details in greater length Christian and secular forms of secular antisemitism in England[127] and France[128] as case studies in what bridged medieval Christian antisemitism with secular, post-Enlightenment forms of antisemitism[129], which extended to other countries, including Spain and Germany.[130]

Kadish (1992) argued that rising nationalism and nationalistic chauvinism during WWI and the Russian Revolution helped mainstream antisemitism and scapegoating in British society.[131] By 1920, translations of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion surfaced in England, France, Poland, the United States and Germany (with various other translations appearing in the years ahead).[132] Academics have explored the tensions sections of the British press had with mainstreaming and condemning the text.[133][134][135] Even before the translations of the Protocols traversed Europe and North America, antisemitic authors and conspiracists obsessed over the Talmud, bridging medieval forms of antisemitism with the belief that the Jewish holy text hid secrets that revealed plans of global influence and domination.[136] Selective quotations, mistranslations, and de-contextualisation were political tactics to externalise Jewish communities as a societal threat,[137] which required reducing Judaism to essentialist, Orientalist, and racist frameworks to 'prove' "that evil was at the very root of Judaism".[138]

In the lifespan of Tell MAMA, varying degrees of essentialism towards Islam and the Quran populate extreme far-right and more contemporary mainstream radical right political spaces and movements.[139] To better understand such essentialism, researchers and academics explore the impacts of cultural essentialism and cultural racism[140] as the latter attaches cultural signifiers to define groups by 'immutable and insurmountable differences',[141] given its use of othering and interiorisation in discourse and practice.[142] Concerning the former, Gardell (2010) argues that Islamophobia (where the suffix of "phobia" moves away from psychological forms of fear but rather a means to explain political acts of prejudice, aversions, and discrimination)[143] is rooted in a manner where religion, and indeed culture, are hollowed out and reduced to monolithic entities with innate qualities and ideas that define the essence and being of a person.[144]

124 Oberhauser, Claus. "Simonini's Letter: the 19th Century Text That Influenced Antisemitic Conspiracy Theories About the Illuminati." The Conversation. Last modified March 31, 2020. https://theconversation.com/simoninis-letter-the-19th-century-text-that-influenced-antisemitic-conspiracy-theories-about-the-illuminati-134635.

125 Groh, Dieter. "The temptation of conspiracy theory, or: Why do bad things happen to good people? Part II: Case studies." In Changing conceptions of conspiracy, pp. 15-37. Springer, New York, NY, 1987.

126 Voigtländer, N. and Voth, H.J., 2012. Persecution perpetuated: the medieval origins of anti-Semitic violence in Nazi Germany. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 127(3), pp.1339-1392.

127 Holmes, Tara. "Readmission of Jews to Britain in 1656." BBC. Last modified June 11, 2014. https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/judaism/history/350.shtml.

128 Byford, 2011. 47.

129 Wistrich, Robert S. "Radical Antisemitism in France and Germany (1840-1880)." Modern Judaism (1995): 109-135.

130 Bravo López, Fernando. "Continuity and change in anti-Jewish prejudice: the transmission of the anti-talmudic texts of Sixtus of Siena." Patterns of Prejudice 45, no. 3 (2011): 234-235.

131 Kadish, Sharman. "Bolsheviks and British Jews: The Anglo-Jewish Community, Britain and the Russian Revolution." Jewish Social Studies 50, no. 3/4 (1988): 241-242.

132 Hagemeister, Michael. "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion: Between history and fiction." New German Critique 103 (2008): 83-95.

133 Liebich, Andre. "The antisemitism of Henry Wickham Steed." Patterns of Prejudice 46, no. 2 (2012): 180-208.

134 Times, The. "An exposure, the source of the Protocols: truth at last." The Times, 16 August 1921.

135 Wilson, Keith. "Hail and farewell? The reception in the British press of the first publication in English of the Protocols of Zion, 1920–22." Immigrants & Minorities 11, no. 2 (1992): 171-186.

136 Byford, 2011. 78.

137 Ibid.

138 Bravo López, 2011. Pp 227-288.

139 Wood, Clare, and W. M. L. Finlay. "British National Party representations of Muslims in the month after the London bombings: Homogeneity, threat, and the conspiracy tradition." British journal of social psychology 47, no. 4 (2008): 715.

140 Schiffer, Sabine, and Constantin Wagner. "Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia-new enemies, old patterns." Race & Class 52, no. 3 (2011): 77-84.

141 Balibar, Etienne. "Is there a 'neo-racism'?." Race and racialization: Essential readings 83 (2007). 85.

142 Anthias, Floya, and Nira Yuval-Davis. "Racialized Boundaries: Race." Nation 303 (1992).

143 Gardell, Mattias. "Crusader dreams: Oslo 22/7, Islamophobia, and the quest for a monocultural Europe." Terrorism and Political Violence 26, no. 1 (2014): 129-155.

144 Ibid. 133.

Follow

Boycott ALL these Muslim Ran Businesses, because the majority of them, probably have the Coronavirus, and if they do, they'd still stay open! Nothing but a danger to the general public.

6:00 AM - 4 Apr 2020

The above tweets reported to Tell MAMA in early April demonstrate this essentialist and racialised thinking. It perpetuates a logic that coalesces around a singular Muslim identity which commands the collapsing of different faiths, languages, and cultures to arrive at its harmful and dehumanising conclusion. Therefore, what is a 'Muslim shop'? What are the parameters that define a "Muslim-run shop"? As Cole (1998) notes, the P-word, a scabrous racist epithet, became a placeholder for cultural racists who marginalised and targeted individuals – reducing their identities and beliefs on cultural markers (e.g., food and clothing).[145] During the first coronavirus lockdown, which began in England on March 23 and ended with a gradual reduction of restrictions from May 13 onwards, Tell MAMA debunked numerous examples of far-right users weaponising decontextualised videos. More broadly, verified cases on Twitter echoed conspiracist language with complaints about imagined privileges afforded to Muslims over falsified claims of lockdown breaches. An example of this rhetoric, posted three days after the lockdown began (which all mosques complied with – with some closing before March 23), opined that 'if mosques opened for Friday prayers' would individuals continue to 'eat from their takeaways' or 'get in their taxis'?

To return to an earlier discussion point, the modern racialisation of non-Christian groups, more broadly, is, as Joshi (2006) argues, an eraser of the diversity of belief which makes them illegitimate compared to the 'righteousness' and 'goodness' of Christianity (racialised as white).[146] Consequently, Islam, Sikhism, and Hinduism become "invisible, illegitimate, and unworthy of attention" beyond crude stereotypes.[147] Moreover, by adopting Pharr's framework of oppression (1998),[148] the dynamics of in-groups and out-groups create the conditions for this cultural-religious hegemony to rationalise and, in turn, perpetuate forms of exclusion towards those belonging (or perceived to) 'othered' faiths[149]and, is rooted within European colonialism, which later became woven into popularised thinking that associate a given religion with other social traits[150] that undergo a 'radical forms of othering'.[151] It also bridges historical and contemporary perceptions of whom Europeans deem 'non-European'.[152] For Goldberg (1993), the Western concept of race has, since at least the turn of the fifteenth century, used racialised expression to fix subjects, irrespective of their location, which presents opportunities to some at the expense of racialised groups.[153] Centuries later, racialised or 'scripted forms' of racism preceded biological determinism and racial pseudo-science as pretexts for colonial expansion in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[154] Thomas (2010) posits how anti-Blackness became a tool to signify territorial and cultural differences between those within the same geographic spaces.[155] As whiteness defaulted towards positive associations, blackness was 'othered' as a 'deficiency'.[156] In plays in France and England, racialised depictions of Muslims and Jews positioned them as "physically Black" or with other identifiable physical differences to demarcate

145 Cole, Mike. "Racism, reconstructed multiculturalism and antiracist education." Cambridge Journal of Education 28, no. 1 (1998): 37-48.

146 Joshi, Khyati Y. "The racialization of Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism in the United States." Equity & Excellence in Education 39, no. 3 (2006): 211-226.

147 Ibid. 223.

148 Pharr, Suzanne. "The common elements of oppression." Homophobia: A weapon of sexism (1988): 53-64.

149 Joshi, Khyati Y. 2006. 217.

150 Joshi, Khyati Y. "Racialization of religion and global migration." In Intersections of Religion and Migration, pp. 123-149. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2016.

151 Meer, Nasar, and Tariq Modood. "For "Jewish" read "Muslim"? Islamophobia as a form of racialisation of ethno-religious groups in Britain today." Islamophobia Studies Journal 1, no. 1 (2012): 34-53.

152 Rana, Junaid. "The story of Islamophobia." Souls 9, no. 2 (2007): 148-161.

153 Goldberg, David Theo. Racist culture: Philosophy and the politics of meaning. Wiley-Blackwell, 1993.

154 Hanchard, Michael, and Erin Aeran Chung. "From race relations to comparative racial politics: A survey of cross-national scholarship on race in the social sciences." Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race 1, no. 2 (2004): 322.

155 Thomas, James M. 1747.

156 Baum, Bruce. The rise and fall of the Caucasian race: A political history of racial identity. NYU Press, 2006.

and signify differences for Christian audiences, demonstrating "a repetition of older com-parisons of color with faith and a shift in their deployment."[157]

In the metropole, Spanish rule obsessed over blood purity (Limpieza de Sangre), which concerned the status of those "unsullied" and "Old Christian" ancestry - free from the apparent 'taint' of Muslim, Jewish, or other 'heretical' groups.[158] In the sixteenth century, the relatives of those burned for heresy on this blood principle (second-generation for men and first-generation for women) could not hold office or practice professions like medicine, as violations could result in property confiscation.[159] Moreover, deploying the blood purity concept beyond the metropole was a tool to police its colonial populations as it associated Black communities with disloyalty to the Spanish crown and Catholicism.[160] It was underlying anti-Jewish anti-Muslim prejudice and forced conversions as 'New Christians', which threatened Spanish 'pure-blood' notions of race and nation, as the Holy Office institutionalised ethnic prejudices by demanding that suspects list their "stock and origin" during trials.[161] Consequently, religious persecution and ethnic prejudice became mutually reinforcing as the sixteenth century drew closer.[162] The Limpieza de Sangre statutes existed until the nineteenth century.[163] In colonial Spain, the idea of genealogy, which differed from Iberian caste systems,[164] assumed that cultural

traits, including religious identities, passed onward for four generations.[165] Thus, Spanish authorities sought to erase the cultural identity of Moriscos and force acceptance of a culture different from their own, nor was the rejection of Islam enough, with total assimilation the end goal,[166] given the crown's paranoia about crypto-Muslims and crypto-Jewish communities practising their faiths in private spheres, or with the former operating as a "fifth column" for the Ottomans amidst Spanish imperialist expansion.[167] The Spanish crown expelled its Jewish communities in 1492[168] and, centuries later, with the forced displacement of 300,000 Morisco Muslims[169] after more than a century of discrimination and marginalisation.[170] The traumas left a deep, indelible impression in the collective memories of both faith groups.[171]

In broad terms, conspiracies about Muslims and Islam have a distinct political function: with some modern examples welded to respective historiographies. For example, the enduring myth of the so-called 'Islamification' of demographics allowed neo-fascist political parties to justify policies like the mass removal by painting all Muslims as a cultural and civic threat.[172] In contrast, Lee (2017) argued that the self-styled "counter-jihad" movement is a "broad template for an Islamisation conspiracy of which Eurabia is the only one interpretation", even if others in the movement adopt other conspiracist arguments.[173] Moreover,

157 Loomba, Ania. "Periodization, race, and global contact." Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies 37, no. 3 (2007): 619.

158 Martínez, María Elena. "The black blood of New Spain: Limpieza de sangre, racial violence, and gendered power in early colonial Mexico." The William and Mary Quarterly 61, no. 3 (2004): 479-520.

159 Lanning, John Tate. "Legitimacy and Limpieza de Sangre in the Practice of Medicine in the Spanish Empire." Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas 4, no. 1 (1967): 37-60.

160 Martínez, María Elena (2004), 480.

161 Graizbord, David. "Inquisitorial Ideology at work in an Auto de Fe, 1680: Religion in the Context of Proto-Racism." Journal of Early Modern History 10, no. 4 (2006): 340-341.

162 Ibid. 341.

163 Ibid. 345.

164 Guha, Sumit. "What Europeans Contributed to the Caste System in India." Scroll.in. Last modified June 27, 2018. https://scroll.in/article/882736/caste-system-in-india-has-its-roots-in-europe-and-the-link-goes-beyond-than-just-the-word.

165 Crewe, Ryan. "Transpacific Mestizo: Religion and caste in the worlds of a Moluccan prisoner of the Mexican Inquisition." Itinerario 39, no. 3 (2015): 463-485.

166 Soyer, Francois. "Faith, culture and fear: comparing Islamophobia in early modern Spain and twenty-first-century Europe." Ethnic and Racial Studies 36, no. 3 (2013): 399-416.

167 Melammed, Renée Levine. "Judeo-conversas and Moriscas in sixteenth-century Spain: a study of parallels." Jewish History 24, no. 2 (2010): 155-168.

168 "1492 and All That." The Economist. Available at: https://www.economist.com/news/europe/21596963-offer-right-past-wrong-may-not-lead-huge-influx-people-1492-and-all

169 Jónsson, Már. «The expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain in 1609–1614: the destruction of an Islamic periphery.» Journal of Global History 2, no. 2 (2007): 196.

170 Carr, Matthew. Blood and faith: the purging of Muslim Spain, 1492-1614. Oxford University Press, 2017.

171 Jónsson, Már (2007), 197.

172 Douglas, Karen M., Joseph E. Uscinski, Robbie M. Sutton, Aleksandra Cichocka, Turkay Nefes, Chee Siang Ang, and Farzin Deravi. "Understanding conspiracy theories." Political Psychology 40 (2019): 14.

173 Lee, Benjamin J. "'It's not paranoia when they are really out to get you': the role of conspiracy theories in the context of heightened security." Behavioral

they argue that Islamisation theory is fundamental to the movement and is, in actuality, a "collection of conspiracy beliefs for adherents to draw on and assemble in their own fashion," not a singular theory, which, in turn, views Islam as a "totalitarian, hostile and homogenised political force."[174] Colloquially, a literary genre named the 'Eurabia genre' places a heavy focus on 'dhimmitude' (which concerns the apparent 'submission' of non-Muslims to 'Islamic domination') that some consider an ahistorical neologism.[175] The Norwegian far-right terrorist Anders Breivik, who murdered 77 people, primarily left-wing activists, at a Labour Party retreat, took much inspiration from such literature.[176] Carr (2016) argues that by removing the Islamophobic content, the central premise of ideas like 'Eurabia' echoes back to antisemitic conspiracies of the early twentieth century, which functions much like a convenient political, paranoid fantasy.[177] Moreover, the conspiracy, they argue, is a 'fever dream' in the European imagination, as the 'spectre of a new Islamic invasion' taps into older anxieties and confrontations and discards Muslim life and Islamic contributions to European society, presenting it instead as an 'alien' entity and threat.[178]

More broadly, Uenal (2016) sought to understand conspiracy stereotypes about Muslims and Islam in Germany, bringing together 355 respondents in a study that found a 'positive link' between such conspiracist thinking as an "intergroup outcome" which is "directly related to symbolic threat perceptions and the perception of a conflict involving a clash of civilisations."[179] It mirrors similar research which warned that exposure to intergroup conspiracy theories increases prejudice and discrimination towards the targeted group and risks spreading to

multiple out-groups.[180] Moreover, to test this, three studies took place. The first group dealt (n=166) with conspiracies about terrorism, immigration, and myths of 'Islamisation'.[181] The experimental study found far higher levels of prejudice in the pro-conspiracy group, confirming a causal relationship.[182] A second study group (n=173) explored antisemitic attitudes and racist anti-Jewish conspiracies, where increased bias had a tangible, discriminatory outcome: an increased reluctance to vote for a Jewish candidate.[183] The academics added, "Conspiracy theories can change how we feel – and potentially behave – towards implicated out-groups."[184] The final study revealed that exposure to antisemitic conspiracies expanded prejudice to secondary out-groups (from Asians to Arabs to disabled people to Irish communities and the elderly).[185]

Even in moments of collective grief, as many paused to lament the profound loss of many Muslim doctors, nurses, and health workers, some reported content designed to hijack such conversations with malicious and harmful falsehoods in a perverse form of victim-blaming, claiming that they caught the virus from the mosques' remaining open' as 'Islam gets special treatment. Such examples, it must be stressed, did not go unchallenged. Twitter, however, did not remove it.

In some reports, the rhetorical examples shifted to the everyday mobility of Muslims, who, like others, could be outside for a limited number of reasons – including health, exercise, or grocery shopping. Nevertheless, in notable far-right spaces, adjacent accounts posited that Muslims wanted 'special treatment' since social distancing measures are 'not in their culture'. The function was to further the idea that Muslims were non-compliant, criminalising communities.

sciences of terrorism and political aggression 9, no. 1 (2017): 4-20.

174 Ibid. 11.

175 Bangstad, Sindre. "Eurabia comes to Norway." Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations 24, no. 3 (2013): 372.

176 Ibid. 374-376.

177 Carr, Matt. "You are now entering Eurabia." Race & Class 48, no. 1 (2006): 11.

178 Ibid. 12.

179 Uenal, Fatih. "The secret Islamization of Europe exploring the integrated threat theory: predicting Islamophobic conspiracy stereotypes." International Journal of Conflict and Violence (IJCV) 10 (2016): 93-108.

180 Jolley, Daniel, Rose Meleady, and Karen M. Douglas. "Exposure to intergroup conspiracy theories promotes prejudice which spreads across groups." British Journal of Psychology 111, no. 1 (2020): 17-35.

181 Ibid. 20.

182 Ibid. 22.

183 Ibid. 24-25.

184 Ibid. 25.

185 Ibid. 27-29.

The evolving, growing trends of anti-Muslim hatred and conspiracist thinking on social media

Various Tell MAMA annual reports revealed that the role of the far-right and radical right – in mainstream politics and on British streets influenced significant trends in our yearly reports. Racist discourses – of ethnonationalist, exclusionary politics drove much of the rhetoric,[186] including those who sought to exploit tragic and despicable acts of terrorism to push harmful anti-Muslim narratives. As our research shows, as early as 2014 (and indeed beforehand),[187] the far-right had weaponised the heinous crimes of sexual exploitation of children to push racialised, stigmatised narratives about Muslims more broadly. In short, these narratives held communities directly and collectively responsible – including caustic arguments about Islam itself. However, the sharp end of this rhetoric included documented calls for violence and destruction or the targeting of Islamic institutions.

Sadly, the role of anti-Muslim and Islamophobic disinformation on social media is nothing new. Our researchers continue to debunk falsehoods about Covid-19. However, false reports of Muslim communities "breaching lockdowns" emerged from political manipulation and weaponisation pushed by the far-right – who used similar tactics following terror attacks. Such examples demonstrated the fault lines of how abuse of algorithms helped such disinformation and falsehoods find to gain more traction than the realities or debunking that followed. For example, as our 2017 Annual Report highlighted – Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (aka Tommy Robinson) went viral after falsely claiming that then Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police, Ian Hopkins, had posed with a copy of the Holy Quran shortly after the terrorist Salman Abdi had murdered twenty-seven people. The original photo, however, appeared the previous summer.[188]

Many far-right agitators, extremists and adjacent social media influencers also benefited from how platforms did not remove their pages (despite multiple breaches of their community guidelines).[189] In dealing with harmful, racist, and extremist ideological content from such groups, platforms are slow to remove content[190] or avoid banning accounts for repeated purposes of policy breaches. In 2021, The Times revealed how Facebook disbanded an internal data team which disclosed how the far-right outperforms other users for audience reach.[191]

Due regard for the wellbeing of minority groups appears in the slow, gradual policy changes around hate speech, dehumanisation, and how individuals can game algorithms with image-based memes to push racism and other forms of bigotry and hatred. Far-right influencers and agitators remain banned from Facebook but remain free to reap the benefits of verified status on the Facebook-owned platform Instagram. Our Annual Report for 2018 made clear that "The growth of hyperpartisan alternative news platforms, saturated in pro-Tommy Robinson content, gained notable attention in 2018 and 2019, creating a bivouac of ideological content, which, according to an investigation in Politico, generates more interactions on Facebook than traditional media outlets"

186 Tell MAMA. "The geography of anti-Muslim hatred: Tell MAMA annual report 2015." Tell MAMA Annual Report (2015). Available at: https://tellmamauk.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/tell_mama_2015_annual_report.pdf

187 Tell MAMA. "Rotherham, Hate, and the Far Right Online." Tell MAMA Report (2014). Available from: https://tellmamauk.org/rotherham-hate-and-the-far-right-online/

188 Tell MAMA. Beyond the Incident: Outcomes for Victims of anti-Muslim Prejudice." Tell MAMA Annual Report (2018). Available at: https://tellmamauk.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Tell-MAMA-Report-2017.pdf

189 Bedingfield, Will. "Facebook's Tommy Robinson Ban is All About Saving Face, Not Stopping Extremism." WIRED UK. Last modified February 28, 2019. https://www.wired.co.uk/article/tommy-robinson-facebook-instagram-ban

190 Hellen, Nicholas. "Facebook Slow to Delete Lucrative Posts of Far Right." The Times & The Sunday Times. Last modified July 14, 2018. https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/tech-giant-slow-to-delete-lucrative-posts-of-far-right-h8cwbpldx

191 Knowles, Tom. "Facebook Axes Team over Far-right Data." The Times & The Sunday Times. Last modified July 15, 2021. https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/facebook-axes-team-far-right-data-crowdtangle-v2hf8sxls

As we stressed in 2016, a fast-changing digital landscape (as users retreat from mainstream platforms due to account violations) allows "users a measure of ideological fluidity, " given that many groups operate without formal membership structures. As a result, social media presents new avenues to engage with extreme politics without ever attending political rallies,"[1] with many individuals and groups drawing ideological succour and support from anti-Muslim groups across Europe, North America, Australia, and India.

There are areas beyond the scope of hate crime, with some examples reported to Tell MAMA following despicable acts of far-right terrorism targeting Muslims drew support that could breach anti-terror laws. Examples emerged following the attacks[2] on Muslims in Finsbury Park at the Muslim Welfare House in 2017.[3] The alarming rise of attacks and incidents,

both on our streets and digitally (including glorifying the white supremacist terrorist responsible for the murder of 51 Muslims in Christchurch, New Zealand, in 2019).[4]

Tell MAMA recommends online platforms and significant search engines like Google in every annual report. For example, as far back as 2016, we have called on Google to "review how far-right websites are cheating its search algorithm through Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) to improve their rankings on stories related to crime, sexual exploitation, and terrorism" with mixed results.

The last few years saw policy and ownership changes across some of the biggest platforms. What happens in 2023 online will fall on the shoulders of policymakers and platform owners in making these spaces safe for all minoritised groups.

Understanding disinformation and campaigns of disruption

The following section explores the flow of disinformation during the initial lockdown period (March 23 to May 10) from far-right and far-right adjacent sources related to mosques and false claims of lockdown breaches. However, before providing such case studies, it is vital to define the problem of misinformation more broadly. Academics have long explored the dangers of misinformation campaigns in elections, arguing that it undermines objective decision-making[5] as

polarising language and alienates individuals from the electoral process.[6] From the EU Referendum in 2016,[7][8] the Presidential Elections in France in 2017,[9] or the German parliamentary elections in 2017[10] to the Catalan independence referendum that same year,[11] there is much to learn about misinformation online in Europe. During the 2019 elections,[12] the European Commission (which raised concerns previously) sponsored a fact-checking resource for voters.

1 Tell MAMA. "A Constructed Threat: Identity, Intolerance and the Impact of Anti-Muslim Hatred." Tell MAMA Annual Report (2016). Available at: https://tellmamauk.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/A-Constructed-Threat-Identity-Intolerance-and-the-Impact-of-Anti-Muslim-Hatred-Web.pdf

2 Tell MAMA. "Darren Osborne Guilty of Finsbury Park Terror Attack." Tell MAMA. Last modified February 1, 2018. https://tellmamauk.org/darren-osborne-guilty-of-finsbury-park-terror-attack/.

3 Tell MAMA. "From Finsbury Park to Medieval Spain: How the Far-right Misuse History." Tell MAMA. Last modified June 19, 2019. https://tellmamauk.org/from-finsbury-park-to-medieval-spain-how-the-far-right-misuse-history/.

4 Tell MAMA. "The Impact of Christchurch Terror Attack." Tell MAMA Interim report (2019). Available at: https://www.tellmamauk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/The-Impact-of-the-ChristChurch-Attack-Tell-MAMA-Interim-Report-2019-PP.pdf

5 Lewandowsky, Stephan, Ullrich KH Ecker, and John Cook. "Beyond misinformation: Understanding and coping with the "post-truth" era." Journal of applied research in memory and cognition 6, no. 4 (2017): 8.

6 Benkler, Yochai, Robert Faris, and Hal Roberts. Network propaganda: Manipulation, disinformation, and radicalization in American politics. Oxford University Press, 2018.

7 Howard, Philip N., and Bence Kollanyi. "Bots,# strongerin, and# brexit: Computational propaganda during the uk-eu referendum." Available at SSRN 2798311 (2016).

8 Fernandez, Miriam, and Harith Alani. "Online misinformation: Challenges and future directions." In Companion Proceedings of the The Web Conference 2018, pp. 595-602. 2018.

9 Ferrara, Emilio. "Disinformation and social bot operations in the run up to the 2017 French presidential election." arXiv preprint arXiv:1707.00086 (2017).

10 Neudert, L., Bence Kollanyi, and Philip N. Howard. "Junk news and bots during the German parliamentary election: What are German voters sharing over Twitter?." (2017).

11 Del-Fresno-García, Miguel, and Juan-Luis Manfredi-Sánchez. "Politics, hackers and partisan networking. Misinformation, national utility and free election in the Catalan independence movement." Profesional de la Información 27, no. 6 (2018): 1225-1238.

12 Pierri, Francesco, Alessandro Artoni, and Stefano Ceri. "Investigating Italian disinformation spreading on Twitter in the context of 2019 European elections." PloS one 15, no. 1 (2020): e0227821.

Beyond Europe, various academics analysed the role of misinformation on social media and digital platforms during the electoral campaigns of far-right figures like Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil.[1314] Equally, there are multiple research reports concerning this issue throughout the 2016 Elections in the United States.[15161718] Beyond politics, concerns around misinformation extend to climate change and public health issues, especially with the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic[19] and vaccine hesitancy.[20]

Having established background readings on the dangers online disinformation poses, Bennett and Livingston (2018) give a helpful definition of misinformation which they identify as the intentional spreading of falsehoods to further political goals.[21] Disinformation is a disruptive and deceptive tactic that undermines traditional media and information flows.[22] Furthermore, they argue against using the term "fake news" as it risks situating such events as aberrations and not symptomatic of a deeper malaise, which outweighs the usefulness of fact-checking (which conversely risks amplifying harmful falsehoods), compared to the need to repair the cracks in "political institutions and democratic values".[23] In response to disinformation come growing calls for using the SIFT method[24] to increase critical thinking skills. To SIFT is to stop (S) and investigate (I) its source, find (F) trusted coverage from reputable outlets and finally, trace (T) claims to their original context.[25]

Moreover, such disruptive tactics were present in several major far-right Twitter accounts identified in verified cases to Tell MAMA during the first lockdown in harmful content about Muslims. The content style mixed attention hacking tactics[26] and hyperpartisan language – defined by its opposition to traditional journalistic language (of course, sensationalist and 'yellow journalistic' forms of news are pre-internet phenomena).[27] By indulging exaggerated language or inflammatory tone and decontextualised content to grow an audience, they undermine trust in mainstream news outlets by presenting themselves as viable alternatives,[28] thanks to the rapid spread of misinformation on Twitter.[29]

For example, Twitter did not permanently suspend Katie Hopkins until mid-June (despite a short-term ban in January).[30] As a result, various tweets from the @KTHopkins appear in the data set, including racist comments about London Mayor Sadiq Khan "going back" to Pakistan (despite him being born in Tooting in south London) and having to apologise following successful legal action against her publicly.[31]

13 Recuero, Raquel, Felipe Bonow Soares, and Anatoliy Gruzd. "Hyperpartisanship, disinformation and political conversations on Twitter: The Brazilian presidential election of 2018." In Proceedings of the international AAAI conference on Web and social media, vol. 14, pp. 569-578. 2020.

14 Machado, Caio, Beatriz Kira, Vidya Narayanan, Bence Kollanyi, and Philip Howard. "A Study of Misinformation in WhatsApp groups with a focus on the Brazilian Presidential Elections." In Companion proceedings of the 2019 World Wide Web conference, pp. 1013-1019. 2019.

15 Swire, Briony, Adam J. Berinsky, Stephan Lewandowsky, and Ullrich KH Ecker. "Processing political misinformation: comprehending the Trump phenomenon." Royal Society open science 4, no. 3 (2017): 160802.

16 Pickard, Victor. "Media failures in the age of Trump." The Political Economy of Communication 4, no. 2 (2017).

17 Ott, Brian L. "The age of Twitter: Donald J. Trump and the politics of debasement." Critical studies in media communication 34, no. 1 (2017): 59-68.

18 Anderson, Janna, and Lee Rainie. "The future of truth and misinformation online." Pew Research Center 19 (2017).

19 Tagliabue, Fabio, Luca Galassi, and Pierpaolo Mariani. "The "pandemic" of disinformation in COVID-19." SN comprehensive clinical medicine 2, no. 9 (2020): 1287-1289.

20 Hornsey, Matthew J., Matthew Finlayson, Gabrielle Chatwood, and Christopher T. Begeny. "Donald Trump and vaccination: The effect of political identity, conspiracist ideation and presidential tweets on vaccine hesitancy." Journal of Experimental Social Psychology 88 (2020): 103947.

21 Bennett, W. Lance, and Steven Livingston. "The disinformation order: Disruptive communication and the decline of democratic institutions." European journal of communication 33, no. 2 (2018): 122-139.

22 Ibid. 124.

23 Ibid. 124.

24 "SIFT (The Four Moves)." Hapgood. Last modified February 15, 2021. https://hapgood.us/2019/06/19/sift-the-four-moves/.

25 Espina, Christine R., and Emily Spracklin. "Social media literacy in an infodemic." Nurse educator 46, no. 6 (2021): 332.

26 Marwick, Alice, and Rebecca Lewis. "Media manipulation and disinformation online." New York: Data & Society Research Institute (2017).

27 Campbell, W. Joseph. "Yellow journalism." The International Encyclopedia of Journalism Studies (2019): 1-5.

28 Benkler, Yochai, Robert Faris, and Hal Roberts. Network propaganda: Manipulation, disinformation, and radicalization in American politics. Oxford University Press, 2018.

29 Vosoughi, Soroush, Deb Roy, and Sinan Aral. "The spread of true and false news online." Science 359, no. 6380 (2018): 1146-1151.

30 BBC News. "Katie Hopkins Permanently Suspended from Twitter." BBC News. Last modified June 19, 2020. https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-53111295.

31 Sabbagh, Dan. "Katie Hopkins Forced to Apologise for Wrongly Linking Mosque to Attack on Police." The Guardian. Last modified October 5, 2020. https://www.theguardian.com/media/2020/oct/05/katie-hopkins-forced-to-apologise-for-wrongly-linking-mosque-to-attack-on-police.

Black Lives Matter, anti-Muslim hate, and social media

Tell MAMA coded twenty-six reports related to Black Lives Matter, with most tweets linking Muslims to the slave trade or calling for the tearing down of mosques.

People come to Britain and are offended by us so we start dismantling statues? I was born here and Mosques offend me. When do we start leveling them?

6:43 AM - 11 Jun 2020

A notorious and inflammatory tweet from a now-suspended account called for the destruction of mosques. The racialised tone included caustic statements like, "People come to Britain and are offended by us so we start dismantling statues? I was born here and Mosques offend me." They ended the statement with a harmful call to action: "When do we start leveling them?" Other tweets, written in reply to this tweet, and verified by Tell MAMA, included a user who encouraged the listing of mosques on a crowdfunded website that maps statues nationwide of individuals linked to the transatlantic slave trade.

Other content flagged and removed from Twitter included a racist tweet from a far-right user who posted on June 26: "I will not 'unite' with blacks or muslims, we cannot live with these people and they need to go." The tweet quoted an account promoting a far-right event related to sexual abuse scandals with a co-opted hashtag designed to delegitimise the Black Lives Matter movement.

On June 11, the petition website Change removed an Islamophobic petition calling for the destruction of mosques in response to the toppling and removal of statues of the slave traders Edward Colston and Robert Milligan in Bristol and London. Tell MAMA investigated the petition following several concerning

reports from the public. An article published that day revealed that many 500 signatories had locations outside the UK.[32] Change confirmed that the content had breached its rules on hate speech, and on Twitter, some UK-based users had expressed broadly anti-Muslim or Islamophobic hostility when sharing the petition or replying to those who had, including a user who advocated the use of bulldozers.[33]

Variations of other tweets included a reference to 'enslaved people owned by the Prophet Muhammad' or weaponised viral memes – including a post on Facebook, shared on Facebook (and later removed) over six-thousand times that included the caption, "Mosques should be taken down after all we can't have buildings that glorify slave traders can we?" Again, as with the Change petition highlighted above, this example appeared online on June 11.

Some tweets reported during this period also used selective quotations from a more extensive BBC educational resource titled 'Slavery in Islam' (a resource archived since September 2009).[34] A resource that does not seek to justify what is monstrously unjustified, as it presents a range of perspectives and sources, noting that slavery had existed in many other ancient legal systems in pre-Islamic times and highlights the differing conditions – from the freeing of enslaved people and regulating their treatment, whilst acknowledging fundamental breaches of human rights. It sought to contextualise them within the societal and political conditions from where they arose, not judging centuries of complex history by modern standards.[35] The BBC resource also details how he elevated Bilal, a formerly enslaved person, to Islam's first muezzin, who became an essential companion in the Prophet's time,[36] which many were selectively quoting this resource ignored. Nor is he the only example, as others have documented Black male and female companions from that era (and beyond),

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32 Tell MAMA. "Change.org Removes Petition Calling for the Destruction of Mosques After Removal of Slave Trader Statues." TELL MAMA. Last modified June 24, 2020. https://tellmamauk.org/change-org-removes-petition-calling-for-the-destruction-of-mosques-after-removal-of-slave-trader-statues/.

33 Ibid.

34 BBC. "Slavery in Islam." BBC. Last modified September 7, 2009. https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/history/slavery_1.shtml.
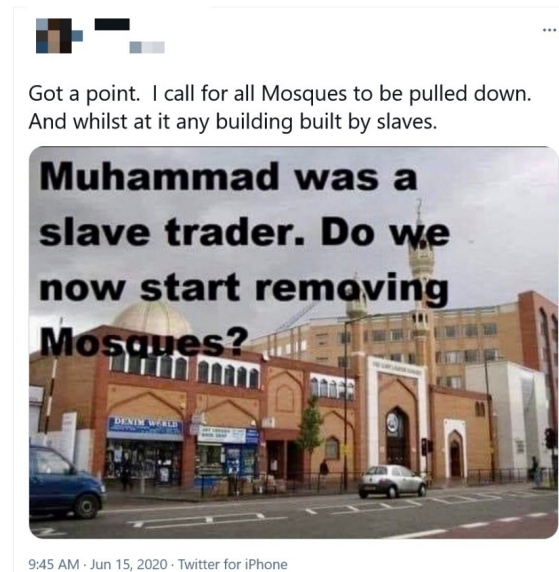
35 Ibid.

36 Curtis IV, Edward E. The Call of Bilal: Islam in the African Diaspora. UNC Press Books, 2014.

including Umm Ayman, also known as Barakah.[37] The Oxford Islamic Dictionary adds that manumission (the freeing of enslaved people) was a practice encouraged as a "meritorious act" as early Islam "mitigated the conditions of human bondage".[38]

Moreover, the BBC resource exists within a broader body of works dedicated to philosophy and ethics, with examples of philosophers from Aristotle to Thomas Aquinas favouring slavery,[39] secular arguments favouring slavery, and the rise of abolitionism and Christian thought on both topics.[40] Stripped of the nuances the article intended to present, the bad faith attacks highlighted in the dataset took selective screenshots from the introductory section, which circulated from more mainstream Twitter accounts. The tactic serves to delegitimise Muslims from all ethnic backgrounds from protesting and calling for racial equity, justice, and accountability from the police and highlighting injustices from history – broadening discussions about the legacies of slavery and colonialism.

From several far-right and ideologically adjacent and motivated accounts, calls for the destruction and toppling of mosques nationwide appeared on Twitter, with the platform removing some, but not all, examples reported – including the screenshot below.

Got a point. I call for all Mosques to be pulled down. And whilst at it any building built by slaves.

Muhammad was a slave trader. Do we now start removing Mosques?

9:45 AM · Jun 15, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

Similar tactics about the history of Muslims in Europe, notably in countries like Spain, mythologises and cultivate racialised historiographies that function as a 'radical form' of 'othering',[41][42] which ties into what Wodak and Forchtner (2014) identify as a narrow, chauvinistic form of identity politics that speaks to "group-specific collective memories" without fully addressing them.[43] It is a call back to the fictionalisation of politics – blurring the politics of reality and fiction political entertainment[44] – thus, making the study of images, comics, and memes of continued relevance when seeking to understand how idealised, utopian,[45] and exclusionary political bivouacs emerge online. Pictures that delineate authority and intimacy function in multivalent ambiguity instead of written text, creating a space for irony and claims of authenticity.[46] Therefore, reflecting a desire to compress history into binaries that 'sanitise and purify' the in-group in opposition to

37 Moore, Andre. "24 of the Most Influential Black Muslims in History." Atlanta Black Star. Last modified September 29, 2014. https://atlantablackstar.com/2014/09/29/24-of-the-most-influential-black-muslims-in-history/.

38 Esposito, John L., ed. The oxford dictionary of Islam. Oxford University Press, 2004. 297.

39 BBC. "Philosophers Justifying Slavery." BBC. Accessed March 16, 2021. https://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/slavery/ethics/philosophers_1.shtml.

40 Reddie, Richard. "Atlantic Slave Trade and Abolition." BBC. Last modified January 29, 2007. https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/history/slavery_1.shtml.

41 Meer, Nasar, and Tariq Modood. "How does interculturalism contrast with multiculturalism?." Journal of intercultural studies 33, no. 2 (2012): 175-196.

42 Simpson, Jennifer S., Carl E. James, and Johnny Mack. "Multiculturalism, colonialism, and racialization: Conceptual starting points." Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies 33, no. 4 (2011): 285-305.

43 Wodak, Ruth, and Bernhard Forchtner. "Embattled Vienna 1683/2010: Right-wing populism, collective memory and the fictionalisation of politics." Visual Communication 13, no. 2 (2014): 231-255.

44 Wodak, Ruth. The discourse of politics in action: Politics as usual. Springer, 2009. 157.

45 Forchtner, Bernhard, and Christoffer Kølvraa. "Extreme right images of radical authenticity: Multimodal aesthetics of history, nature, and gender roles in social media." European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology 4, no. 3 (2017): 260.

46 Ibid. 260-263.

the out-group.[47] Part of this appeal, within prejudice and in/out groups dynamics, concerns the influence of emotion within the context of the Intergroup Emotion Theory – where individuals forge ideas of being exemplars of said group and not individuals, as emotion is a powerful tool when responding to perceived threats or situations that impact the in-group.[48] Further research found that individuals can feel the group's emotions (or group members) even when not directly affected.[49] According to the study, anger did not always tilt toward violence or discriminatory practices towards out-groups - as it can result in disengagement or avoidance to prevent escalations.[50]

However, they add danger when an individual moves towards group-thought[51] in response to perceived emotional wounding. Therefore, content for diffuse but interconnected groups on social media, for example, may feel motivated to act on statements calling for vandalism and targeting mosques. Therefore, social media companies must also consider the context where such inflammatory comments risk offline harm. Again, take this case study as an example: a Facebook post that began "get the mosques pulled down across Britain" also on June 11 did not breach Community Guidelines. Nevertheless, again, the post took selective quotes on resources about the issue, and further, in the comments below, the user appended their remarks by stating that Germany "was the best" for killing enslaved people and replacing them with more.

On July 31, Tell MAMA verified a Facebook meme from a popular account (with over seventeen-thousand likes) that promotes user-generated content for locals in Dorset who had shared an image of a fake street sign named after El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, the name Malcolm X adopted after completing his pilgrimage to Mecca.[52] The caption posted this leading question: "Road names are being changed to show how diverse the country is. Would you welcome your road being renamed?" The image is fake and a product of far-right propaganda, as an investigation of its origin points to an inflammatory fake street renaming in Swansea, Wales, one day earlier. This stunt followed weeks of other agitations against local councillors who supported a motion to "examine Swansea's geography and institutions to see whether any names or images should be removed, amended or displayed differently - but not to eradicate the past."[53] Another motion objective was to include minority groups, women, disabled people, and those from working-class backgrounds in plaques and public memorials across the city.[54] Weeks later, and further coverage highlighted the 'limited' scope of the inquiry (which would make recommendations in October) as another councillor challenged some falsehoods circulating online, stating: "We have not made a decision. So, do you know what the first thing is - make that clear, and counter these vile, racist bigots."[55]

Nor had this been the first example of such a page purporting to focus on 'local' issues but sharing unrelated national news about Muslims; as in previous years, a search of its content revealed how it shared national stories related to opinion polls on burqa bans or about refugees in the English Channel. Some Facebook users condemned the post, accusing the page of promoting 'fake news' and fuelling racism. However, Facebook did not remove the content either.

47 Salmela, Mikko, and Christian Von Scheve. "Emotional roots of right-wing political populism." Social Science Information 56, no. 4 (2017): 567-595.

48 Mackie, Diane M., Lisa A. Silver, and Eliot R. Smith. "Intergroup Emotions: Emotion as an Intergroup Phenomenon." (2004).

49 Smith, Eliot R., and Diane M. Mackie. "Intergroup emotions." Handbook of emotions 3 (2008): 428-439.

50 Ibid. 429-430.

51 Ibid. 434.

52 Burrows, Cedric Dewayne. "El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz or Malcolm X: The Construction of El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz's Religious Identity in Composition Readers." Journal of Africana religions 3, no. 1 (2015): 31-43.

53 Youle, Richard. "Swansea councillors debated a Black Lives Matter motion and this is what they said." Wales Online. Last modified July 3, 2020. https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/black-lives-matter-swansea-news-18531949.

54 Ibid.

55 Youle, Richard. "Councillor labels Leavers of Swansea group 'vile, racist bigots' over Black Lives Matter comments." Wales Online. Last modified July 23, 2020. https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/swansea-black-lives-matter-news-18644056.

A Facebook post reported to Tell MAMA on June 9 read: "I don't like mosques they represent terrorism, sexism, paedophilia how's up for tearing them down??". That day also marked the removal of a statue of John Milligan, a Scottish slave owner who owned two sugar plantations and 526 enslaved people in Jamaica[56] and had also been, at one point, chairman of the West India Company.[57] A Museum of London spokesperson noted how Milligan's statue had "stood uncomfortably" outside the Museum of London Docklands – one of just three museums across the UK that address the transatlantic slave trade.[58]

At the height of protests nationwide, calling for racial justice, accountability for police violence and deaths in custody, structural and systemic racism and discrimination, various news articles identified various councillors suspended or resigned for their inflammatory remarks about Black Lives Matter. The section below does not intend to be exhaustive. However, it focuses on the failures of various councils when implementing their codes of conduct when councillors share harmful, racist, bigoted material that risks bringing the council into disrepute and undermines the public trust that racist behaviours will face adequate redress. Moreover, the failures point to structural issues, given the deep under-representation

of Black, Asian, and minority ethnic councillors. For example, the mother of Lee Rigby, Lynn, writing on behalf of the foundation named to honour his legacy, asked people to stop sharing her son's photo and details of his murder "in a divisive way to fuel arguments against the Black Lives Matter protests."[59] The statement added: "Seeing his image used to cause hate of any kind, especially for those exercising their freedoms in protest against this issue, hurts."[60]

Katie Hopkins tweeted (before her account suspension), "Treat every day like Sept1 1939. The sands of time are moving fast against white people in the UK" on June 5, 2020, after quote-tweeting content that equated 'taking the knee' – a symbolic gesture related to the Black Lives Matter movement to Nazism. However, this brazen disinformation did not show Jewish communities in Austria "taking a knee" in front of their Nazi oppressors. Instead, as the Jewish Telegraph Agency reported on March 18, 1938 (in a broader context of antisemitic purging, violence, and discrimination): "Groups of Jews, including two prominent rabbis, were forced to scrub streets under the eyes of stormtroopers in the Jewish quarter."[61] Moreover, Getty Images noted that a refugee smuggled the image out of Vienna at significant personal risk, as he was " a victim of this great persecution."[62] Furthermore, after Tell MAMA challenged this disinformation, a member of the public reported a tweet that read: "Perhaps Muslims should kneel after the next Islamist terrorist attack and when the report on child grooming is published???" written in reply from a now-suspended account holder.

Some outcomes scrutinise how councils oversee complaints of harmful content and conduct from councillors and where the lines between professional

56 BBC News. "Robert Milligan: Slave Trader Statue Removed from Outside London Museum." BBC News. Last modified June 9, 2020. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-52977088.

57 Greig, Finlay. "Who Was Robert Milligan? History of the Scottish Slave Trader Whose Statue on West India Quay in London Was Removed." The Scotsman. Last modified June 10, 2020. https://www.scotsman.com/news/people/who-was-robert-milligan-history-scottish-slave-trader-whose-statue-west-india-quay-london-was-removed-2880464.

58 Stephens, Simon. "Statue of Slave Trader Removed from Outside Museum of London Docklands." Museums Association. Last modified August 14, 2020. https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2020/06/10062020-statue-of-slave-trader-removed-from-outside-museum-of-london-docklands.

59 ITV News. "Lee Rigby Mum 'hurt' After His Name Used 'divisively' Against Black Lives Matter." ITV News. Last modified June 4, 2020. https://www.itv.com/news/granada/2020-06-04/mum-of-lee-rigby-hurt-after-his-name-used-in-divisive-way-in-black-lives-matter-campaign.

60 Ibid.

61 Jewish Telegraphic Agency. "Suicides Mount, Austrian Jews Besiege Consulates As Terrorism, Sacking of Shops Rises." Jewish Telegraphic Agency. Accessed February 18, 2021. https://www.jta.org/1938/03/18/archive/suicides-mount-austrian-jews-besiege-consulates-as-terrorism-sacking-of-shops-rises.

62 Getty Images. "Jews scrub Vienna streets in Nazi "purge", 1938." Getty Images. Accessed February 18, 2021. https://www.gettyimages.ae/detail/news-photo/photograph-of-a-group-of-jews-scrubbing-one-of-the-main-news-photo/1049044208.

and personal use of social media overlap (or remain strictly 'personal'). A 2019 report from the Committee on Standards in Public Life recognised the value of councils modifying existing codes of conduct, ranging from adding clarity to the appropriate use of social media and behaviour during meetings – with a significant recommendation calling on the Local Government Authority to create an updated code in consultation with officers and councillors across all tiers of governance.[63] Moreover, the report called for an optional broadening of the code of conduct, adding a rebuttal assumption that a councillor's social media conduct is in an official capacity.[64] It also highlighted the intimidation councillors face on social media, with anecdotal evidence demonstrating a disproportionate impact on female councillors.[65] Evidence from lawyers in local government highlighted the misuse of social media by some councillors, adding that Monitoring Officers' limited powers undermined public confidence in elected officials.[66] The report stressed, "Democratic representatives need to have their right to free speech and expression protected and not unduly restricted," adding that "equally the public interest demands that

they meet certain responsibilities in that role."[67]

More broadly, issues around unconscious bias, equality and diversity of councillors made more headlines. Census data of councillors across England in 2018 revealed that 96% were white and 63% were male – demonstrating little has changed from the 2004 figure of 3.5% of Black, Asian, and minority ethnic representation on English local councils. A more recent analysis from Operation Black Vote in 2019 put the figure in England at 14% but noted significant disparities in some regions: London boroughs like Barnet had a proportional representation of minority ethnic councillors when compared to the local population (66.7% and 64.9%, respectively); yet in Brighton and Hove, where one in 10 of the local people are from minority ethnic groups, they had zero councillors from Black, Asian, and minority ethnic backgrounds as other local authorities with sizeable Black, Asian, minority ethnic populations (between 6 and 12%) like Bournemouth and Portsmouth also had the same issue.[68]

Far-right misuse of child sexual exploitation crimes and broader anti-Muslim stigmatisation

Tell MAMA coded almost one hundred verified cases (n=97) that posited racialised, harmful, and stigmatising comments that linked Muslims to paedophilia, rape, child abuse, and child sexual exploitation (CSE). The examples below include sanitised examples demonstrating how such content, whilst often identified by users with overt far-right proclivities (or far-right adjacent fellow travellers), to account holders with no clear ideological identity, demonstrating how mainstreamed and normalised such talking points became online that often went far beyond legitimate discussions and condemnations that such despicable crimes warrant, into broader

anti-Muslim narratives that held communities or their entire faith responsible. More broadly, the continued mainstreaming and normalising of anti-Muslim and Islamophobic sentiment (a theme explored in previous Tell MAMA annual reports) in the UK harms Muslims across public life - be it political figures, athletes, business owners, students, and Muslims who use platforms like Twitter and Facebook in their daily lives. Throughout this section (and indeed others), case study examples seek to demonstrate how users targeted Muslims with racial microaggressions in their three most common forms: microassault, microinsult, and microinvalidation[69] to the spiritual microaggressions

63 Independent report. Local government ethical standards: report (2019). 31-32.

64 Ibid. 11.

65 Ibid. 35.

66 Ibid. 37.

67 Ibid. 37.

68 Operation Black Vote. "BAME Local Political Representation Audit 2019." (2019). Available from: https://www.obv.org.uk/sites/default/files/images/pdf/BAME-LOCAL-POLITICAL-REPRESENTATION-AUDIT-FINAL.pdf

69 Sue, Derald Wing, Christina M. Capodilupo, Gina C. Torino, Jennifer M. Bucceri, Aisha Holder, Kevin L. Nadal, and Marta Esquilin. "Racial microaggressions in everyday life: implications for clinical practice." American psychologist 62, no. 4 (2007): 271.

(based on religious identity), which some academics contend are analogous to racial microaggressions.[70] Taxonomies related to religious microaggressions include endorsing religious stereotypes, exotification, religious homogeneity assumptions, pathologising different faith groups, and denying faith-based and religious prejudice.[71] Critiques of the terminology are varied.[72] Others have devised scales to measure racial microaggressions, given the high correlations with existing ways racism is measured,[73] to scales that measure microaggressions against non-religious people in the United States.[74] Williams (2020) argued that microaggressions are "connected to pathological stereotypes, power structures, structural racism, and multiple forms of racial prejudice,"[75] connecting it to everyday forms of racism and discrimination[76] and the manifold ways that racial microaggressions harm the physical and mental health of those targeted.[77][78]

However, understanding how the routine nature of such harmful language is a conscious deed designed to malign, harm, or spread misinformation, whether directed towards Muslims or not, social media platforms have a duty of care to ensure platforms remain open to all. It must include taking steps to remedy harmful and abusive content beyond symbolic acts to help reserve the risk of normalising harmful, stigmatising tropes and language whilst protecting fundamental speech rights to ensure discussions of such criminality do not target Muslims or their faith in a stigmatising manner.

Commensurate with previous Tell MAMA research, and in each section category for the online world, case studies provided will include examples of (where the data was available) how social media platforms responded to flagged content. Moreover, we will give examples of exclusionary invalidations that sought to negate, undermine, and nullify Muslims' thoughts and experiential reality [79] in everyday discussions to link them or blame their Islamic faith for CSE. In a noteworthy example, a Facebook post reported in June, whilst not directed at Humza Yousaf MSP directly, the example below with its violent overtures included statements like "Its your kind that are systematically raping and abusing young white girls, it's your religion that blow up behead and knife white people on our streets." The user further expressed violent desires to harm Yousaf and other Muslims with the dehumanising term "your kind". Newspaper reports and Yousaf continue highlighting the extreme racism received online, including over 6,000 racist social media posts within a week of his speech about Black Lives Matter in the Scottish Parliament.[80] From the article, we learn of the impacts online racism has on Yousaf and his family, including his mother, for whom the social media experience became so upsetting that he asked her to stop using it.[81] The racist targeting of Yousaf on Twitter has also resulted in criminal convictions.[82]

The othering of Muslim political figures in the UK touches on what Udah and Singh (2019) described as the "othering process", which positions the 'Other' in

70 Hodge, David. "Spiritual microaggressions: Understanding the subtle messages that foster religious discrimination." Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work 29, no. 6 (2020): 473-489.

71 Nadal, Kevin L., M. Issa, Katie E. Griffin, S. A. H. R. A. N. Hamit, Oliver B. Lyons, and D. W. Sue. "Religious microaggressions in the United States." Microaggressions and marginality: Manifestation, dynamics, and impact. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons (2010). 297.

72 Sue, Derald Wing. "Microaggressions and "evidence" empirical or experiential reality?." Perspectives on Psychological Science 12, no. 1 (2017): 170-172.

73 Nadal, Kevin L. "The Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS): construction, reliability, and validity." Journal of counseling psychology 58, no. 4 (2011): 470.

74 Cheng, Zhen Hadassah, Louis A. Pagano Jr, and Azim F. Shariff. "The development and validation of the Microaggressions Against Non-religious Individuals Scale (MANRIS)." Psychology of Religion and Spirituality 10, no. 3 (2018): 254.

75 Williams, Monnica T. "Microaggressions: Clarification, evidence, and impact." Perspectives on Psychological Science 15, no. 1 (2020): 3-26.

76 Ibid. 5.

77 Williams, Monnica T., Destiny Printz, and Ryan CT DeLapp. "Assessing racial trauma with the Trauma Symptoms of Discrimination Scale." Psychology of violence 8, no. 6 (2018): 735.

78 Nadal, Kevin L., Katie E. Griffin, Yinglee Wong, Sahran Hamit, and Morgan Rasmus. "The impact of racial microaggressions on mental health: Counseling implications for clients of color." Journal of Counseling & Development 92, no. 1 (2014): 57-66.

79 Ibid.274.

80 Brown, Annie. "Humza Yousaf targeted with over 6000 racist social media posts in one week following BLM speech." The Daily Record. Last modified July 4, 2020. https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/humza-yousaf-targeted-over-6000-22299076.

81 Ibid.

82 Court Reporter. "Bigot Convicted of Racially Abusing Humza Yousaf on Twitter." Glasgow Times. Last modified November 17, 2020. https://www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/news/18878117.bigot-convicted-racially-abusing-humza-yousaf-twitter/.

opposition to the dominant white 'Self'.[83] Furthermore, and most importantly, they posit that the 'Self-Other' false-binary is a racialised construct that defines oneself in opposition through the frequent vilification and projecting upon the targeted 'Other' all negative attitudes held on that particular group.[84] Moreover, when exploring the daily experiences of Muslims in Edinburgh, Bonino (2015) studied how the distinctive markers of religiosity and 'Muslimness' (ranging from the beard to traditional clothing and the hijab) risked placing Muslims within a stigmatised group.[85] The public display of negative cultural diversity also risked categorising Muslims as "'discredited' individuals through mere visual contact."[86] They argue that a consequence of this concerns how essentialist readings of their Muslim identity made it harder for Muslims to use their multiple identities to navigate various socio-cultural hurdles and better define their social positionality on more equal grounds.[87] The study[88] echoes existing research by Hopkins (2004)[89] and Kyriakides, Virdee and Modood (2009)[90] on how signifiers of Muslim religiosity place them outside 'acceptable cultural boundaries' due to the symbolic power race and religious identity hold over them as markers of social difference.

Moreover, pre-existing socio-political and socio-cultural inequalities profoundly impact participation in online cultures.[91] For example, in the online sphere, Törnberg and Törnberg (2016) argue that social media, unlike traditional media, turns passive audiences into content creators, which, in turn, is the dynamic of digital hate cultures, characterised by

efforts to inflame public opinion against minorities.[92] Therefore, reproducing societal discourses pose various problems, including how we conceptualise top-down dominant relations of the mass media and how it works in conjunction with dominance in the shift towards social media.[93]

Such essentialist and dehumanising statements about Muslims even sought to blame Muslim women. In one verified tweet, a user blamed them for not wearing 'sexy clothes' instead of 'sheets and face veils' and looking like 'ghosts' so their husbands would not "look elsewhere". Twitter did not remove this example, but it did remove content from a far-right sympathiser calling for a ban on the face veil, the closing of mosques, and the halting of 'Islamist immigration'. There are two notable examples of Twitter failing to remove content from far-right and far-right adjacent accounts which used the language around CSE to target Muslims more broadly - including linking them to terrorism. The other example came from an account called the Labour Party, a "Muslim paedophile protection team".

In one case, a Twitter account identified by its white supremacist 'Groyper'[94] username and avatar (which academics identified as anonymised far-right accounts which tweet exclusively about race, politics, and religion)[95] wrote: "Maybe you could kindly ask fellow adherents of the mohamedian faith to leave vulnerable young children alone?"

More broadly, constructions of aggressive Muslim men preoccupied with criminality, violently enforcing patriarchal norms, and other problematising behaviours

83 Udah, Hyacinth, and Parlo Singh. "Identity, Othering and belonging: toward an understanding of difference and the experiences of African immigrants to Australia." Social Identities 25, no. 6 (2019): 843-859.

84 Ibid. 8.

85 Bonino, Stefano. "Visible Muslimness in Scotland: between discrimination and integration." Patterns of Prejudice 49, no. 4 (2015): 367-391.

86 Ibid.

87 Ibid. 375.

88 Ibid. pp 375-376.

89 Hopkins, Peter. "Everyday racism in Scotland: a case study of East Pollokshields." Scottish Affairs 49, no. 1 (2004): 88-103.

90 Kyriakides, Christopher, Satnam Virdee, and Tariq Modood. "Racism, Muslims and the national imagination." Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 35, no. 2 (2009): 289-308.

91 Harmer, Emily, and Karen Lumsden. "Online othering: An introduction." In Online Othering, pp. 1-33. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2019.

92 Törnberg, Anton, and Petter Törnberg. «Combining CDA and topic modeling: Analyzing discursive connections between Islamophobia and anti-feminism on an online forum.» Discourse & Society 27, no. 4 (2016): 401-422.

93 Ibid. 403.

94 For background on the far-right 'Groyper' movement see: "Groyper Army." Anti-Defamation League. Accessed February 9, 2021. https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/groyper-army.

95 Ribeiro, Manoel Horta, Pedro H. Calais, Yuri A. Santos, Virgílio AF Almeida, and Wagner Meira Jr. "" Like Sheep Among Wolves": Characterizing Hateful Users on Twitter." arXiv preprint arXiv:1801.00317 (2017).

are nothing new in the public consciousness,[96] ushering in notions of the 'ultimate other'[97] and 'Asian folk devils'[98] which intensified in a post-9/11 and post-7/7 context, which Hopkins (2006) argues, crystallised ideas that linked Muslim men to violence, aggression, and terrorism.[99] Moreover, as Hopkins showed in his research, drawing upon various focus groups (mainly of Pakistani Muslim men), constructions of their masculinity operated in contradictory terms (be it conforming to, subverting, or challenging stereotypes) and demonstrated the limitations of stereotyped thinking.[100] Drawing upon the theories of Alexander (1996), who argued that the creation of identities exists at the site of "culture" in a broader struggle over meaning meant negotiating and contesting constructions of power within an ongoing search for meaning and the imagining of such identities are potent tools that challenge essentialist tropes about race and culture,[101] appeared in Archer's research. She asserted that those in their study drew upon Black, Asian, and Muslim masculinities in numerous ways: solidarity against racism, resistance to whiteness, and the forging of such masculinities.[102]

The horrific criminal abuse scandals in cities like Rochdale and Rotherham in recent years though not disputed nor denied, have seen more critical commentary from various academics and scholars, including Tufail (2015),[103] Cockbain (2013),[104] Patel (2017),[105] and Miah (2015),[106] about the lasting harms racialising the crimes present. Moreover, Patel argued that dominant narratives around Rochdale put the onus on 'cultural deviance and ethnic difference' rather than the gendered power dynamics perpetrators hold over victims.[107]

The Jay Report shone a harsh light on the institutional failures to protect children irrespective of their background, as a culture of victim-blaming or a failure to listen to warnings from parents and teachers went unnoticed, as police officers failed to investigate rapes and acts of sexual violence. Until 2007, police had arrested young female victims for being drunk and disorderly or threatened them with arrest for "wasting police time".[108][109] The report further reiterates that there is no 'simple link' between race and child sexual exploitation, as, across the UK, the highest numbers of those convicted for these crimes were white men.[110] Moreover, the Jay Report did include non-white victims of child sexual exploitation[111], as Zlakha Ahmed, the founder and director of Rotherham-based Apna Huq who is a survivor of sexual violence and abuse, pointed out in an interview in November 2019 that more than 100 girls from minority ethnic backgrounds were amongst the 1,400 figure identified in the Jay Report.[112] Academic research on survivors

96 Archer, Louise, and Hiromi Yamashita. "Theorising inner-city masculinities:'race', class, gender and education." Gender and Education 15, no. 2 (2003): 115-132.

97 Phoenix, A. "The place of' race' and ethnicity in the lives of children and young people." Psychology of Education: Social behaviour and the school peer group 4, no. 3 (2000): 276.

98 Alexander, Claire. "Imagining the Asian gang: ethnicity, masculinity and youth after 'the riots.'" Critical social policy 24, no. 4 (2004): 526-549.

99 Hopkins, Peter E. "Youthful Muslim masculinities: gender and generational relations." Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers 31, no. 3 (2006): 337-352.

100 Ibid. 350.

101 Alexander, Claire E. The Art of Being Black: The Creation of Black British Youth Identities: The Creation of Black British Youth Identities. Clarendon Press, 1996.

102 Archer, Louise. "'Muslim brothers, black lads, traditional Asians': British Muslim young men's constructions of race, religion and masculinity." Feminism & Psychology 11, no. 1 (2001): 98.

103 Tufail, Waqas. "Media, state and 'political correctness': the racialisation of the Rotherham child sexual abuse scandal." In Media, Crime and Racism, pp. 49-71. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2018.

104 Cockbain, Ella. "Grooming and the 'Asian sex gang predator': the construction of a racial crime threat." Race & Class 54, no. 4 (2013): 22-32.

105 Patel, Tina G. "Cultural repertoires and modern menaces: The media's racialised coverage of child sexual exploitation." In Media, Crime and Racism, pp. 33-47. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2018.

106 Miah, Shamim. "The groomers and the question of race." Identity Papers: a journal of British and Irish studies 1, no. 1 (2015): 54-65.

107 Patel, 2018: 37.

108 Barnado's Scotland. "Lessons for Scotland from the Jay Report into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham: A Barnardo's Scotland discussion paper." Available from: https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/Resources/PDF/L/learning-the-lessons-from-the-jay-report-into-child-sexual-exploitation-in-rotherham-for-scotland.pdf.

109 Ansbro, Maria. "The independent inquiry into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham, 1997– 2013." (2014): 429-432.

110 Ibid. 91.

111 Ibid. 94.

112 Parker, David. ""I Was Raped As a Child" - Charity Founder Zlakha Ahmed Lifts Lid on Abuse Ordeal." Rotherham Advertiser. Last modified October 2, 2019. https://www.rotherhamadvertiser.co.uk/news/view,i-was-raped-as-a-child-charity-founder-zlakha-ahmed-lifts-lid-on-abuse-orde_33666.htm.

of sexual exploitation and abuse in South Asian communities identified how the burdens of silence to protect bodily and family honour carried traumas beyond the abuse they experienced, notably on their mental health and wellbeing.[113] Almost a decade earlier, research from Gilligan and Akhtar (2004), in interviews with Asian women in Bradford, described their fear about disclosing abuse due to how agencies and professionals will respond, which, in turn, was compounded by cultural imperatives, with examples like wanting to avoid shame and family and community honour.[114] Other research shows the failures of institutional racism, cultural stereotyping, and a lack of cultural diversity to help child survivors from Black, Asian, and minority ethnic backgrounds.[115]

Concerning the long-term impacts on Muslims in areas like Rotherham, Britton (2019) interviewed various Muslim men, foregrounding their experiences and disrupting discourses around the failures of integration, "Muslim self-segregation", and their positioning as 'outsiders'.[116] Furthermore, they argue the understandable emotive nature of the crimes and how they legitimised Muslim men as targets of social stigma and contempt for Muslims more broadly.[117] Of those interviewed, they spoke of acts of resilience (from protesting the far-right) to concerns about discrimination from the local council and a failure from the police to protect Muslim communities (or the misappropriation of public space when facilitating protests which one participant felt discriminated against Muslims as it prevented them from accessing the town centre).[118] Moreover, one participant, Umar, also brought up the racist murder of Muslim pensioner Mushin Ahmed and the lack of public condemnation and adequate media coverage.[119] Subsequent research from Britton (2019)[120] outlined further consequences of the racialisation of Muslim masculinities: Muslim men are often not portrayed as vulnerable or capable of displaying healthy emotions, and, consequently, for the Muslim men who face violence, it generates less media interest.[121]

Verified reports which made explicit reference to Rotherham appeared in this reporting cycle, including the targeting of a Muslim woman on Twitter whom some tagged into a MailOnline article from 2014 and generated hundreds of retweets and replies, risking a pile-on stemming from an earlier exchange where she had challenged their anti-Muslim rhetoric. Nor did Twitter remove the offending tweet, and despite help from users supporting her and challenging the targeted tweet, it speaks more broadly about the harmful and racialised targeting of Muslims on social media from those with far-right or adjacent far-right views.

For Pascale (2019), weaponised language consists of four components: censorship, propaganda, disinformation, and mundane discourse.[122] For the above example, we shall situate how Pascale describes how it enters mainstream discourse by normalising hatred through "purportedly ordinary language".[123] In a broader sense, Pascale posits that a systematic form of manipulation intensifies and amplifies resentments, as it "deepens social divisions and destroys the integrity of public information spaces."[124] Weaponised language, they add, is a symbolic tool that creates the groundwork for racist physical violence and terrorism to occur.[125] Ganesh

113 O'Neill-Gutierrez, C., and S. Chawla. "The child sexual exploitation of young south Asian women in Birmingham and Coventry." Children's Society (2017).

114 Gilligan, Philip, and Shamim Akhtar. "Cultural barriers to the disclosure of child sexual abuse in Asian communities: Listening to what women say." British Journal of Social Work 36, no. 8 (2006): 1361-1377.

115 Laws, Dr Sophie. "Sexual abuse of Black, Asian and minority ethnic children and young people: 'People don't talk about it'." Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse (CSA). Last modified October 21, 2020. https://www.csacentre.org.uk/resources/blog/sexual-abuse-of-black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-children-and-young-people-people-dont-talk-about-it/.

116 Britton, Joanne. "Challenging the racialization of child sexual exploitation: Muslim men, racism and belonging in Rotherham." Ethnic and racial studies 42, no. 5 (2019): 688-706.

117 Ibid. 3-4.

118 Ibid. 7-10.

119 Ibid. 11.

120 Britton, Joanne. "Muslim men, racialised masculinities and personal life." Sociology 53, no. 1 (2019): 36-51.

121 Britton, Joanne. "Muslims, racism and violence after the Paris attacks." Sociological Research Online 20, no. 3 (2015): 207-212.

122 Pascale, Celine-Marie. "The weaponization of language: Discourses of rising right-wing authoritarianism." Current Sociology 67, no. 6 (2019): 898-917.

123 Ibid. 909.

124 Ibid. 901.

125 Ibid. 909.

(2020) considers how weaponisation functions as a metaphor for the deliberate calcification of "affective economies of white grievance and rage" (often about white culture and protecting the virtue of white women) for political and cultural capital online – produced as white thymos.[126] By challenging the flows of affirmation (of white victimisation), the process of its legitimisation, and its mutual reinforcement of rectitude (often through visual content and memes).[127] Together, they serve as emotive sleights of hand for audiences and, more importantly, connect far-right networks on Twitter to produce and recirculate these narratives amongst themselves and connective bridges to the more mainstream rhetoric of the populist radical and far-right.[128] As Ghidina (2019) argues, victim-blaming, dehumanisation, and othering are related concepts since an empathy gap creates the conditions for dehumanisation to grow.[129]

An earlier literature review conducted by the Home Office and published in October came to similar conclusions, noting, "It is not possible to draw any conclusions as to whether some ethnicities have a greater involvement in group-based offending compared with others."[130] The Home Office literature review also draws attention to studies that point to a potential over-representation of minority ethnic offenders as it challenged other reports which helped popularise the model of Asian offenders and white victims.[131] Other studies cited in the literature review found no over-representation of minority ethnic offenders (where data was available), or, in a central review carried out by the Children's Commissioner for England, critical perpetrator information was missing in 90% of submissions and applicable, white offenders were in the majority (as 21% of perpetrator data lacked ethnicity). Other factors include bias in data collection to the conflation of ethnicity with nationality. Such biases risks skewing the data towards certain ethnic groups due to the high-profile cases in the media, as a racialised framing of the issue also skews law enforcement data to one type of offence category.[132]

Reflecting on the Home Office report, Ian Dean, from the Centre of Expertise on child sexual abuse, praised the government's laudable ambition of preventing, tackling, and responding to all forms of sexual abuse.[133] Regarding the gaps in data and media framing (and beyond), he acknowledged the disproportionate impact high-profile cases have on societal understanding and perceptions of these heinous crimes.[134] However, the risk, he added, of focusing on one type of offence and perpetrator ethnicity risks a failure to "recognise abuse and exploitation that does not conform to these perceptions of both victims and perpetrators."[135]

Gendered anti-Muslim hate online

One of the most enduring, racist, and harmful memes that dehumanise Muslim women and their unborn babies depicts a Muslim woman wearing the burqa and pregnant with a bomb (first published in 2006), which appeared in the 2020 dataset in late November, and on Twitter did not remove it. Despite a tiny minority of Muslim women wearing the face veil, there is an abundance of examples of it preoccupying more

126 Ganesh, Bharath. "Weaponizing white thymos: flows of rage in the online audiences of the alt-right." Cultural Studies 34, no. 6 (2020): 892-924.

127 Ibid.906-907.

128 Ibid. 914.

129 Ghidina, Marcia. "Deconstructing Victim-Blaming, Dehumanization, and Othering: Using Empathy to Develop a Sociological Imagination." Teaching Sociology 47, no. 3 (2019): 231-242.

130 Home Office (2020). "Characteristics of group-based child sexual exploitation in the community Literature review." Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/943955/Characteristics_of_group-based_child_sexual_exploitation_in_the_community__Literature_review.pdf

131 Ibid. 21-22.

132 Cockbain, Ella, and Waqas Tufail. "Failing victims, fuelling hate: challenging the harms of the 'Muslim grooming gangs' narrative." Race & Class 61, no. 3 (2020): 3-32.

133 Dean, Ian. "Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy: Reflections." Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse (CSA Centre). Last modified February 15, 2021. https://www.csacentre.org.uk/resources/blog/tackling-child-sexual-abuse-strategy-reflections/.

134 Ibid.

135 Ibid.

mainstream discussions, as, unlike in some European countries,[136] the British government has resisted calls for a public ban on the face veil. Nevertheless, as documented by Tell MAMA, inflammatory rhetoric from politicians in major newspapers emboldened some to target Muslim women on British streets, in public areas, and when accessing public services.[137] Moreover, the 2018 spike in reports sits within a growing number of case studies documented by Tell MAMA that show the disproportionate targeting of Muslim women who wear the niqab[138] with violence,[139] abuse,[140] or discrimination.[141][142]

Covid-19, stigma, and media framing

We had 17 verified cases related to how newspapers used images of Muslims (often, but not exclusively, women in Islamic clothing, especially headscarves) in generalised covid coverage during the height of the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, raising concerns that some, for ideological reasons, sought to single Muslims out as non-compliant with lockdowns or restrictions, or seen as "spreaders" of the virus. To help audiences make sense of these concerns, we have divided this section into two key sections: a literature review about how media frames can influence public perceptions, especially regarding the stigma towards minority groups (drawing from historical and contemporary case studies), felt most notably in East Asian and Southeast Asian and Asian-American (ESEA) and Pacific Island communities (AAPI) in the UK, parts of Europe and the United States and Canada. The other section will draw attention to

such public complaints, how some newspapers got them wrong, and finally, how one stock image of two Muslim women became a popular choice for general covid coverage domestically and abroad.

Definitions of stigma include the loss of status, stereotyping, labelling, and discrimination in contexts where the exercise of power persists.[143][144] It operates between individuals (including hate crime)[145] and structural forms, triggering bias and unequal healthcare access.[146] For example, stigma in the context of Covid-19 explored the stigma of attaching the virus to ethnicity and nationality, namely Chinese and other East Asian and Southeast Asian (ESEA) communities, resulting in rising racist violence, discrimination, social avoidance, denial of services or healthcare[147] or unequal healthcare service.[148] A stigmatised cultural identity relates to assumptions of inferiority, curtailing societal inclusion;[149] it flattens complex identities

136 France banned wearing a full face veil in public in 2011 as the Netherlands, Latvia, Denmark, Austria, Switzerland and Bulgaria have full or partial bans in public. See: BBC News. "Switzerland Referendum: Voters Support Ban on Face Coverings in Public." BBC News. Last modified March 7, 2021. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-56314173.

137 Tell MAMA Annual Report 2018: Normalising Hatred. 6.

138 With the consent of those impacted, Tell MAMA provides a range of news articles related to the abuse, violence, and discrimination Muslim women have faced found under the website tag niqab. Available from: Tell MAMA. "Niqab Archives." TELL MAMA. Accessed February 16, 2021. https://tellmamauk.org/tag/niqab/.

139 Tell MAMA. "Man Spat at Muslim Woman in Niqab in Tooting." TELL MAMA. Last modified September 16, 2020. https://tellmamauk.org/man-spat-at-muslim-woman-in-niqab-in-tooting/.

140 Tell MAMA. "Muslim Woman in Niqab Told "there Was No Need for Al-Qaeda in the Area"." TELL MAMA. Last modified May 10, 2019. https://tellmamauk.org/muslim-woman-in-niqab-told-there-was-no-need-for-al-qaeda-in-the-area/.

141 Tell MAMA Annual Report 2017: Beyond the Incident – Outcomes for Victims of anti-Muslim Prejudice. 29. Available from: https://tellmamauk.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Tell-MAMA-Report-2017.pdf.

142 Tell MAMA. "Muslim Woman in Niqab Denied Entry onto Bus with Her Child in London." TELL MAMA. Last modified January 28, 2019. https://tellmamauk.org/muslim-woman-in-niqab-denied-entry-onto-bus-with-her-child-in-london/.

143 Hatzenbuehler, Mark L., Jo C. Phelan, and Bruce G. Link. "Stigma as a fundamental cause of population health inequalities." American journal of public health 103, no. 5 (2013): 813-821.

144 Abbey, Susan, Manon Charbonneau, Constantin Tranulis, Pippa Moss, Wayne Baici, Layla Dabby, Mamta Gautam, and Michael Paré. "Stigma and discrimination." Can J Psychiatry 56, no. 10 (2011): 1-9

145 Sherry, Mark, and Anna Neller. "Intellectual disability, stigma, and hate crimes." In Intellectual Disability and Stigma, pp. 111-126. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2016.

146 Brondolo, Elizabeth, Linda C. Gallo, and Hector F. Myers. "Race, racism and health: disparities, mechanisms, and interventions." Journal of behavioral medicine 32, no. 1 (2009): 1.

147 Turner-Musa, Jocelyn, Oluwatoyin Ajayi, and Layschel Kemp. "Examining social determinants of health, stigma, and COVID-19 disparities." In Healthcare, vol. 8, no. 2, p. 168. Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute, 2020.

148 Phillips, David, and Dean Lauterbach. "American Muslim immigrant mental health: The role of racism and mental health stigma." Journal of Muslim Mental Health 11, no. 1 (2017).

149 Goffman, Erving. "Stigma and social identity." Understanding deviance: Connecting classical and contemporary perspectives 256 (1963): 265.

into harmful one-dimensional characteristics;[150] and produces economic and interpersonal forms of discrimination.[151] There are implications for the workplace[152] and when seeking employment.[153] History shows how minority ethnic groups, from Jewish communities[154] to Chinese communities in San Francisco[155] and Black communities, faced blame, dehumanisation, stigmatisation and marginalisation in the United States during certain epidemics.[156] In another example, in 1993, when a deadly viral outbreak wrongly assumed to pass from human to human claimed twenty lives[157] and had been framed in some major media outlets as the "Navajo flu" and "Najavo epidemic" in the United States.[158] The mainstream framing brought overt discrimination, stigmatisation, and racism toward the Navajo Nation and other Native American groups.[159] Some media outlets even violated the four-day mourning period, resulting in 'no media' signs on reservation roads, further eroding institutional trust, as some refused to engage with medical investigators.[160]

Bayer (2008) argues that stigma is a crucial tool in producing and reproducing power and control relations and is, therefore, intractably welded to the workings of social inequality,[161] as pre-existing hostilities when factored in with the social construction of diseases and illness (including moral judgements and the conditions in which the virus emerged from).[162] It can also increase social risk and stigma levels and influence those at risk of contracting it.[163] Moreover, history again shows how linking some diseases to geographic areas emboldens discriminatory practices and stigma.[164][165] In 2015, the World Health Organisation issued best practice guidance about naming diseases to "avoid causing offence to any cultural, social, national, regional, professional or ethnic groups".[166]

An experimental study in the United States that explored the role of stigmatising language argued that frames that emphasised the profound health implications and risks of Covid-19 did not increase racism or xenophobia.[167] In contrast, frames that discussed the virus in geography and its severe economic impact risked reinforcing harmful and negative beliefs about Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) - emboldening racist beliefs around economic wellbeing and status.[168] Factors considered include the Resource Scarcity Theory, which can negatively influence the inclusivity of in-group/

150 Crocker, Jennifer, and Brenda Major. "Social stigma and self-esteem: The self-protective properties of stigma." Psychological review 96, no. 4 (1989): 608-609.

151 Prasad, Pushkala, and Anshuman Prasad. "Organizational challenges at the periphery: Career issues for the socially marginalized." (2007).

152 Slay, Holly S., and Delmonize A. Smith. "Professional identity construction: Using narrative to understand the negotiation of professional and stigmatized cultural identities." Human relations 64, no. 1 (2011): 85-107.

153 Di Stasio, Valentina, Bram Lancee, Susanne Veit, and Ruta Yemane. "Muslim by default or religious discrimination? Results from a cross-national field experiment on hiring discrimination." Journal of Ethnic and Migration studies (2019): 1-22.

154 Markel, Howard. Quarantine!: East European Jewish Immigrants and the New York City Epidemics of 1892. JHU Press, 1999.

155 Shah, Nayan. Contagious divides: Epidemics and race in San Francisco's Chinatown. Vol. 7. Univ of California Press, 2001.

156 Kraut, Alan M. Silent travelers: Germs, genes, and the immigrant menace. JHU Press, 1995.

157 Hanlon, Shane. "The Four Corners Outbreak of 1993." The Plainspoken Scientist. Last modified July 10, 2020. https://blogs.agu.org/sciencecommunication/2020/07/22/the-four-corners-outbreak-of-1993/.

158 Schwarz, Maureen Trudelle. "The Explanatory and Predictive Power of History: Coping with the" Mystery Illness," 1993." Ethnohistory (1995): 375-376.

159 Pressley, Sue A. "Navajos protest response to mystery flu outbreak." The Washington Post. Last modified June 19, 1993. https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1993/06/19/navajos-protest-response-to-mystery-flu-outbreak/0e17c578-26d6-411d-8c97-6382429ec3dd/.

160 Grady, Denise. "Death at the Corners." Discover Magazine. Last modified January 19, 1993. https://www.discovermagazine.com/health/death-at-the-corners.

161 Bayer, Ronald. "Stigma and the ethics of public health: not can we but should we." Social science & medicine 67, no. 3 (2008): 465.

162 Ibid.466.

163 Herek, Gregory M., John P. Capitanio, and Keith F. Widaman. "Stigma, social risk, and health policy: public attitudes toward HIV surveillance policies and the social construction of illness." Health psychology 22, no. 5 (2003): 533.

164 Leung, Carrianne. "The yellow peril revisited: The impact of SARS on Chinese and Southeast Asian communities." Resources for Feminist Research 33, no. 1/2 (2008): 135.

165 Webel, Mari. "Calling COVID-19 a 'Chinese Virus' is Wrong and Dangerous – the Pandemic is Global." The Conversation. Last modified March 25, 2020. https://theconversation.com/calling-covid-19-a-chinese-virus-is-wrong-and-dangerous-the-pandemic-is-global-134307.

166 Shu, Lele. "Avoid stigmatizing names for 2019 novel coronavirus." Nature 578, no. 7795 (2020): 363.

167 Dhanani, Lindsay Y., and Berkeley Franz. "Why public health framing matters: An experimental study of the effects of COVID-19 framing on prejudice and xenophobia in the United States." Social Science & Medicine 269 (2021): 113572.

168 Ibid.

out-group dynamics[169] and potentially exacerbate discrimination.[170] In addition, AAPI communities face far greater economic hardships. For example, in New York, unemployment claims from Asian Americans increased by 6,900%, with racism being a significant factor.[171]

On social media, studies of public sentiment on Twitter related to Covid-19, for example, included a study of English-language tweets where tweets related to the theme of racism totalled 4.14% and over 500,000 tweets from a sample of over 13 million contained racist content.[172] A study of racist hashtags and mapping its growth on Twitter as Covid-19 became a global pandemic coincided with a rise of racist hashtags following Donald Trump's racist phrasing about the pandemic and its origins.[173] Studies have examined how the unintended consequences of images juxtaposed next to defamatory text in the United States.[174] Further analyses explored how the potential bias in images could distort audience perceptions of the news presented[175] and how the influence of the dual-coding theory, and how text and image are firmly interconnected but soon dominated by image information later.[176] Whereas Messaris and Abraham (2001) describe the power of images as "direct pointers" as, unlike words, they are not "constructed representations of reality"[177] since images can convey "unverbalised meanings, but also because awareness

of those meanings may be particularly elusive."[178] Hall et al. (1978) argued that unconscious 'maps' help to form the basis of any cultural knowledge, as media representations exist within a framework of understanding centred around it, and where responses related to moral panics fail to conform to societal expectation, the press looks to mainstream institutions to reassert certain cultural imperatives.[179]

In preparation for this report, we took one stock image reported to our service in October and used various reverse image search platforms, including Google Images, TinEye, and Yandex, to see how prevalent this image appeared in Covid-19-related headlines. The image in question concerns a syndicated Reuters image of two Muslim women, one of whom wears the niqab as the other wears the hijab - both are walking past an illustration of a virus outside the Regional Science Centre in Oldham, Lancashire, taken on August 3, 2020. Now, this is not a call for censorship but instead for understanding and consideration on news desks about how images convey information to audiences that, in isolation, when a stand-alone photo of a minoritised community risks stigmatising that group by associating them directly with the pandemic. Moreover, this proved especially true in the racist targeting, discrimination, and violence towards ESEA communities across the UK, United States,[180]

169 Rodeheffer, Christopher D., Sarah E. Hill, and Charles G. Lord. "Does this recession make me look black? The effect of resource scarcity on the categorization of biracial faces." Psychological Science 23, no. 12 (2012): 1476-1478.

170 Krosch, Amy R., and David M. Amodio. "Economic scarcity alters the perception of race." Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 111, no. 25 (2014): 9079-9084.

171 Liao, Shannon. "Unemployment Claims from Asian Americans Have Spiked 6,900% in New York. Here's Why." CNN. Last modified May 1, 2020. https://edition.cnn.com/2020/05/01/economy/unemployment-benefits-new-york-asian-americans/index.html.

172 Chandrasekaran, Ranganathan, Vikalp Mehta, Tejali Valkunde, and Evangelos Moustakas. "Topics, Trends, and Sentiments of Tweets About the COVID-19 Pandemic: Temporal Infoveillance Study." Journal of medical Internet research 22, no. 10 (2020): e22624.

173 Pei, Xin, and Deval Mehta. "# Coronavirus or# Chinesevirus?!: Understanding the negative sentiment reflected in Tweets with racist hashtags across the development of COVID-19." arXiv preprint arXiv:2005.08224 (2020).

174 Grimes, Tom, and Robert Drechsel. "Word-picture juxtaposition, schemata, and defamation in television news." Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly 73, no. 1 (1996): 169-180.

175 Zillmann, Dolf, Rhonda Gibson, and Stephanie L. Sargent. "Effects of photographs in news-magazine reports on issue perception." Media psychology 1, no. 3 (1999): 207-228.

176 Gibson, Rhonda, and Dolf Zillmann. "Reading between the photographs: The influence of incidental pictorial information on issue perception." Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly 77, no. 2 (2000): 355-366.

177 Messaris, Paul, and Linus Abraham. "The role of images in framing news stories." Framing public life: Perspectives on media and our understanding of the social world (2001): 215-226.

178 Ibid. 225.

179 Hall, Stuart, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke, and Brian Roberts. Policing the crisis: Mugging, the state and law and order. Macmillan International Higher Education, 2013. Pp. 54-55.

180 Borja, Melissa, Russell Jeung, Aggie Yellow Horse, Jacob Gibson, Sarah Gowing, Nelson Lin, Amelia Navins, and Emahlia Power. "Anti-Chinese rhetoric tied to racism against Asian Americans Stop AAPI hate report." Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council. (2020).

Canada,[181] France,[182] Chile,[183] Australia,[184] India,[185] and the Netherlands - as Wong (2021) situates the overwhelming harm of the model minority myth in racist discrimination and violence towards ESEA communities which did not begin nor will end with Covid-19.[186] Other research explored similar impacts on minority ethnic groups across Europe.[187]

We now return to the stock image of the two Muslim women mentioned above. Before elaborating on the dip sample exercise, which we stressed is non-exhaustive given the constraints given that it is one part of a more extensive report, we may return to this issue more rigorously. Moreover, of the twenty-nine examples we verified, our researchers had to view the active URL or archived link to confirm that the stock image remained, including examples of live blogs. Of the twenty-nine links, eight concern stories from Reuters (one example derives from an archived link owing to an image change), four from the BBC and three from Voice of America. Concerning the latter, two of these examples appeared online in October

2020, including an educational resource to counter covid misinformation[188] and to help communities improve their English language skills with a quiz about the virus.[189]

One example published by Reuters on August 13 headlined "What you need to know about the coronavirus right now" in an image slideshow with just two photos – one image of the two Muslim women, the other is of a Chinese woman at a supermarket in Beijing.[190]

The syndicated nature of the image meant that it appeared in a range of news outlets globally. Examples include The Sun (which included a map of the UK with Covid levels)[191], the Guardian,[192] Al Jazeera,[193] CNBC,[194] The Metro (the headline concerned Covid-19 levels in Birmingham despite the image's origins again being in Oldham),[195] The Metro US (via Reuters),[196] News18 (via Yahoo News Canada),[197] to news outlets in the Philippines[198] (syndicated from Reuters) and Colombia.[199]

181 Tuyisenge, Germaine, and Shira M. Goldenberg. "COVID-19, structural racism, and migrant health in Canada." The Lancet 397, no. 10275 (2021): 650-652.

182 France 24. "France's Asian Community Fights Back Against Racist Attacks During Pandemic." France 24. Last modified April 4, 2021. https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20210404-france-s-asian-community-fights-back-against-racist-attacks-during-pandemic.

183 Chan, Carol, and Maria Montt Strabucchi. "Many-faced orientalism: racism and xenophobia in a time of the novel coronavirus in Chile." Asian Ethnicity 22, no. 2 (2021): 374-394.

184 Elias, Amanuel, Jehonathan Ben, Fethi Mansouri, and Yin Paradies. "Racism and nationalism during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic." Ethnic and Racial Studies 44, no. 5 (2021): 783-793.

185 Kipgen, Nehginpao. "COVID-19 pandemic and racism in the United States and India." Econ Political Wkly 55, no. 23 (2020): 21-26.

186 Wong, Edwina. "Anti-Asian Prejudice, also in the Netherlands–Before, During Covid-19, and Beyond." Rijksuniversiteit Groningen. Last modified April 6, 2021. https://www.rug.nl/hrm-ob/bloggen/anti-asian-prejudice-also-in-the-netherlands-before-during-covid-19-and-beyond.

187 The European Network Against Racism. (2020) Evidence of the impact of Covid-19 on racialised communities exposes need to address persistent inequalities and racism. [online] European Network Against Racism. Available at: https://www.enar-eu.org/IMG/pdf/key_findings_of_the_map.pdf

188 VOA. "The Infodemic: Despite Small Infection Fatality Ratio, COVID-19 Has High Death Toll." VOA. Last modified October 2, 2020. https://www.voanews.com/a/covid-19-pandemic_infodemic_infodemic-despite-small-infection-fatality-ratio-covid-19-has-high/6196645.html.

189 VOA Learning English. "Quiz - Small Coronavirus Particles in Air Could Be Big Problem." VOA. Last modified October 2, 2020. https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/5606976.html.

190 Reuters. "What You Need to Know About the Coronavirus Right Now." Reuters. Last modified August 13, 2020. https://www.reuters.com/news/picture/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-coronavi-idUSKCN2590MG.

191 Williams, Terri-Ann. "Map Reveals Today's Coronavirus Infection Rates for YOUR Local Area." The Sun. Last modified October 27, 2020. https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/12995627/coronavirus-infections-area-map-covid-case-rates-you/.

192 Sample, Ian. "Hunt on for Future Covid Mutations That Cause Treatments to Lose Potency." The Guardian. Last modified October 20, 2020. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/20/scientists-on-lookout-for-covid-mutations-which-cause-treatments-to-lose-potency.

193 Al Jazeera. "Women May Mount Stronger COVID-19 Immune Response: Study." Al Jazeera. Last modified August 27, 2020. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/8/27/women-may-mount-stronger-covid-19-immune-response-study.

194 CNBC later replaced the story image with that of PM Boris Johnson, but the original stock image of the Muslim women appears on social media still. See example: CNBC. Twitter post. December 19, 2020, 7:19 pm. https://twitter.com/CNBC/status/1340376641508413441.

195 Westbrook, Caroline. "Which Parts of the UK Are Back in Lockdown As Birmingham Sees Covid-19 Spike?" Metro. Last modified August 21, 2020. https://metro.co.uk/2020/08/05/which-parts-uk-are-back-lockdown-aberdeen-becomes-latest-city-see-spike-coronavirus-cases-13087810/.

196 Metro US. "Hospitalised COVID-19 Patients Can Have Ongoing Symptoms for Months -study." Metro US. Last modified October 19, 2020. https://www.metro.us/hospitalised-covid-19-patients-can/.

197 News18. "COVID-19 Antibodies Present In Patients Four Months After Recovery - Study." News & Headlines - Yahoo News Canada. Last modified September 2, 2020. https://ca.news.yahoo.com/covid-19-antibodies-present-patients-030015767.html.

198 Lapid, Nancy, and Reuters. "Neanderthal Genes Linked to Severe COVID-19." ABS-CBN News. Last modified September 30, 2020. https://news.abs-cbn.com/spotlight/10/01/20/neanderthal-genes-linked-to-severe-covid-19.

199 Editorial La República S.A.S. "Universidad De Oxford Probará Humira Como Tratamiento Experimental Contra El Covid-19." Diario La República. Last modified September 30, 2020. https://www.larepublica.co/globoeconomia/universidad-de-oxford-probara-humira-como-tratamiento-experimental-contra-el-covid-19-3067390.

The images below show examples of how the stock image of two Muslim women appeared in news content in the UK and internationally

Quiz - Small Coronavirus Particles in Air Could Be Big Problem

Start the Quiz to find out

News > Health News

RED ALERT How many coronavirus infections in my area? Map reveals latest Covid cases near you

Terri-Ann Williams, Digital Health & Fitness Reporter
12:30, 27 Oct 2020 | Updated: 15:55, 27 Oct 2020

Reuters Health ✔
@Reuters_Health

British researchers have identified the level of antibody protection needed to prevent symptomatic COVID-19, the University of Oxford said on Thursday, adding that results from the study could help speed up new vaccine development.

reuters.com
UK scientists identify antibody levels needed to prevent symptomatic COVID-19
British researchers have identified the level of antibody protection needed to prevent symptomatic COVID-19, the University of Oxford said on Thursday, …

1:00 PM · Jun 24, 2021 · True Anthem

CNBC ✔
@CNBC

The U.K. has identified a new Covid-19 strain that spreads more quickly. Here's what they know

cnbc.com
The U.K. has identified a new Covid-19 strain that spreads more quickly. Here's…
So far, there's no evidence to suggest the new strain causes more severe disease or affects Covid treatments and vaccines, England's top medical officer said.

7:21 PM · Dec 19, 2020 · Echobox

36 Retweets   27 Quote Tweets   87 Likes

14:20 22 Dec 2020

FM warns new strain could lead to 'exponential growth' in cases

The first minister says a proxy marker known as the S-Gene dropout is a marker for the new strain, although it is not definitive that every case with this marker will be the new variant.

News is, after all, a popular medium that claims to describe reality to the public, as most of what individuals understand about the world goes through mediated processes (Bird 2010), as journalism functions not just to inform, mobilise, and entertain[200] but provide information for the management of daily and political life.[201] Gürsel (2009) asserts that journalistic narratives anticipate some emotional responses from audiences[202] - despite contradictory

ideas about the role of emotion and objectivity.[203] As Spitulnik (1996) argues, this common point of reference is for producing shared knowledge that, in turn, contributes to and helps recreate existing narratives.[204]

Assorted studies on the representation of Muslims and Islam in the British press range describes the process of 'othering' and a more subtle, ambivalent picture that indirectly helped negative stereotypes grow in coverage from 1998 to 2009. Similar discussions of problematising narratives about Muslims and Islam vastly associated them with "threats, problems or in opposition to dominant British values". Richardson (2004)[205] explored stigmatising frameworks in the press in a pre-9/11 context, as Poole (2002) primarily detailed negative coverage and Orientalist discourses in reporting Islam and Muslims in the mid-nineties.[206] A study of social hierarchies from Bleich et al. (2018) studied headlines from the New York Times (United States) and The Guardian (UK) from 1985 to 2014, concluding that whilst portrayals of Muslims, Jews, and Catholics remained relatively stable, Muslims

were "associated with more negativity".[207] More work is needed to ascertain how the media constructs and reinforces status hierarchies, especially its evolution over time, manifesting across groups and geographies.[208]

An earlier study from Bleich et al. (2015) analysed 685 newspaper headlines from 2001 to 2012, which they argued (citing analytical drawbacks they saw in previous major studies) painted a more nuanced picture. The conclusion made clear that some years provided more net negative coverage, adding that there were "more years where they were net positive", but, having adjusted for the reach and circulation of the newspapers sampled, "the weighted headline tone was net negative than net positive".[209]

A Reuters-syndicated article which appeared on Yahoo News UK on December 22, under the headline "WHO members to meet on Wednesday on new virus variant" re-used the image of the Muslim women and included the caption "The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak in Oldham".[210]

More broadly, stereotypes about specific groups or social categories develop and guide how others act as the automatic operation as it lays the foundations for implicit stereotyping.[211] De Vreese (2005) argued that communication is a dynamic process, not a static process where frames emerge, frame setting (defined by its interplay between audience predispositions and the frames themselves).[212] Furthermore, they offer a typology of news frames - from conflict and economics to human interest stories (episodic) to

200 Bird, S. Elizabeth. "Anthropological engagement with news media: Why now?." Anthropology News 51, no. 4 (2010): 5-9.

201 Hanitzsch, Thomas, and Tim P. Vos. "Journalism beyond democracy: A new look into journalistic roles in political and everyday life." Journalism 19, no. 2 (2018): 146-164.

202 Gürsel, Zeynep Devrim. «US newsworld: The rule of text and everyday practices of editing the world.» The anthropology of news and journalism (2009): 35-53.

203 Wahl-Jorgensen, Karin. Emotions, media and politics. John Wiley & Sons, 2019.

204 Spitulnik, Debra. "The social circulation of media discourse and the mediation of communities." Journal of linguistic anthropology 6, no. 2 (1996): 161-187.

205 Richardson, John E. (Mis) representing Islam: The racism and rhetoric of British broadsheet newspapers. Vol. 9. John Benjamins Publishing, 2004.

206 Poole, Elizabeth. Reporting Islam media representations of British Muslims. 2009.

207 Bleich, Erik, Hasher Nisar, and Cara Vazquez. "Investigating status hierarchies with media analysis: Muslims, Jews, and Catholics in the New York times and the Guardian headlines, 1985–2014." International Journal of Comparative Sociology 59, no. 3 (2018): 239-257.

208 Ibid. 15-16.

209 Bleich, E., Stonebraker, H., Nisar, H. and Abdelhamid, R., 2015. Media portrayals of minorities: Muslims in British newspaper headlines, 2001–2012. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 41(6), pp.942-962.

210 Yahoo News UK. "WHO Members to Meet on Wednesday on New Virus Variant." Yahoo News UK. Last modified December 22, 2020. https://uk.news.yahoo.com/calls-meeting-virus-variant-european-090330634.html.

211 Greenwald, Anthony G., and Mahzarin R. Banaji. "Implicit social cognition: attitudes, self-esteem, and stereotypes." Psychological review 102, no. 1 (1995): 14-15.

212 De Vreese, Claes H. "News framing: Theory and typology." Information design journal & document design 13, no. 1 (2005).

societal trends.[213] The oft-cited Entman (1993) argued that frames in the news media concern the presence (and indeed absence) of stock phrases, keywords, stereotyped images, and sources of information that "provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts of judgments".[214] Cacciatore et al. (2016) provide a more critical analysis, focusing on the misuse of the concept in some studies, as a strictly sociological analysis risks overstating its influence and reach, undermining new ways of thinking about framing more broadly.[215] Instead, they push for an expanded way to understand equivalence frames (including shifting away from text-based to visual cues, for example).[216] Lecheler and De Vreese (2019) share this critique, noting that journalistic news frames are primarily products of journalistic agency and, more often than not generic, are not bound to any particular issue but do not 'strict sense' satisfy the equivalence frame issue.[217] Finally, D'Angelo (2017)[218] has looked at the limited analysis of visual media frames, as analysis from Matthes (2009)[219] and Lecheler, Bos and Vliegenthart (2015)[220] show how an overwhelming amount of research focuses on text over image-based content.[221]

The media, and its coverage, exist not in a vacuum but within social norms and cultures that present stories in a manner conducive to the interests of their intended audience.[222] Geise and Baden (2015) present a different way to analyse multimodal visual frames from images in the news since visuals in this context, as suggested above, are rarely perceived in isolation[223] as multimodality can, they argue, address the communicative interactions between modalities – be it text, image, or sound.[224] Their analysis defined pictures as intentional, two-dimensional visual representations in individual or temporal contexts.[225] A general framing theory allowed the authors to argue that text, as with an image, goes through similar if distinct processes where the structuring of information and its subsequent decoding to its construction and integration into a coherent meaning which ultimately taps into where legible meanings emerge.[226]

Early and influential definitions of stigma include how it corresponds with bodily signs outwardly displaying something terrible about a person (Goffman 1963),[227] as Dovidio, Major, and Crocker (2000) defined it by the construction of devaluation and difference[228] in social contexts.[229] It can occur in overt forms (ranging from avoidance to dehumanisation)[230] to subtle forms (non-verbal interactions like avoiding eye contact).[231] Within the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, those stigmatised become viewed as societal risks, blamed, discriminated against, scapegoated, and

213 Ibid. 56-58

214 Entman, Robert M. "Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm." Journal of communication 43, no. 4 (1993): 51-58.

215 Cacciatore, Michael A., Dietram A. Scheufele, and Shanto Iyengar. "The end of framing as we know it… and the future of media effects." Mass Communication and Society 19, no. 1 (2016): 15-16.

216 Ibid. 15.

217 Lecheler, Sophie, and Claes H. De Vreese. News framing effects: Theory and practice. Taylor & Francis, 2019. 5.

218 D'Angelo, Paul. "Framing: media frames." The international encyclopedia of media effects (2017): 1-10.

219 Matthes, Jörg. "What's in a frame? A content analysis of media framing studies in the world's leading communication journals, 1990-2005." Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly 86, no. 2 (2009): 349-367.

220 Lecheler, Sophie, Linda Bos, and Rens Vliegenthart. "The mediating role of emotions: News framing effects on opinions about immigration." Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly 92, no. 4 (2015): 812-838.

221 Dan, Viorela. Integrative framing analysis: Framing health through words and visuals. Routledge, 2017.

222 Tolley, Erin. Framed: Media and the coverage of race in Canadian politics. UBC Press, 2015. 15.

223 Geise, Stephanie, and Christian Baden. "Putting the image back into the frame: Modeling the linkage between visual communication and frame-processing theory." Communication Theory 25, no. 1 (2015): 49.

224 Ibid. 49.

225 Geise, Stephanie. "Vision that matters." In Vision that matters, pp. 337-353. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2011.

226 Geise, Baden. 2015. 47.

227 Goffman, Erving. "Stigma and social identity." Understanding deviance: Connecting classical and contemporary perspectives 256 (1963): 265.

228 Dovidio, John F., Brenda Major, and Jennifer Crocker. "Stigma: Introduction and overview." (2000).

229 Crocker, Jennifer, and Brenda Major. "Steele., C.(1998). Social stigma." The handbook of social psychology (86): 504-553.

230 Herek, Gregory M. "AIDS and stigma." American behavioral scientist 42, no. 7 (1999): 1106-1116.

231 Hebl, Michelle R., Jennifer Tickle, and Todd F. Heatherton. Awkward moments in interactions between nonstigmatized and stigmatized individuals. Guilford Press, 2000.

held responsible for the pandemic's risk,[232][233] more so given how specific media frames on health issues risk furthering stigma.[234] Furthermore, the power of image also lies in its potential for audiences to imbibe non-verbal meanings over textual examples.[235]

Media representation and frames on other health issues like obesity hold an influence.[236] Fatphobic framing, for example, heightens weight-based discrimination[237][238] , as image-based content can negatively influence weight-based stigma. Even when news articles present content in a neutral tone, stereotypical images of obese individuals can influence stigma.[239] Conversely, analysing positive images could reduce this stigma if media outlets changed the image content to less negative to counteract harmful stereotypes.[240]

On October 30, a Muslim man reported a BBC article for its stock image choice days earlier, writing, "Another hijabi fronting covid news". The story, published on October 16, contained the headline: "Fortnight Covid 'fire-break' lockdown within days in Wales".[241] In a bizarre and needless inversion of an issue we highlighted earlier, the article's original image was of a sign, which changed to a Muslim woman walking down the street wearing a hijab and face mask. Tell MAMA highlighted this change on Twitter on the day of publication,[242] noting that the original image of a makeshift sign that read "Wales is Closed Covid-19" and we double-checked the actual URL

for this annual report, and that same image appears on previews on social media (see below). Moreover, the image caption "Wales appears to be heading for another lockdown" reflects the original image choice and is more confusing in its changed form. Context is essential. The original Getty Images photo, taken on June 2, shows members of the public walking past a series of closed shops,[243] a fact lost on those who had not performed a reverse image search. However, removed from that context, the choice to foreground a Muslim woman in a generalised story about a localised lockdown demonstrates the abovementioned concerns.

Image caption: This first image shows the original image for the fire-break story published on October 16, 2020, with a generic sign about the virus. The second image shows how the article later used an image of a Muslim woman in a headscarf after that for a brief time.

232 Cho, Hyunyi, Wenbo Li, Julie Cannon, Rachel Lopez, and Chi Song. "Testing three explanations for stigmatization of people of Asian descent during COVID-19: maladaptive coping, biased media use, or racial prejudice?." Ethnicity & Health 26, no. 1 (2021): 94-109.

233 Ramaci, Tiziana, Massimiliano Barattucci, Caterina Ledda, and Venerando Rapisarda. "Social stigma during COVID-19 and its impact on HCWs outcomes." Sustainability 12, no. 9 (2020): 3834.

234 Smith, Rachel. "Media depictions of health topics: Challenge and stigma formats." Journal of Health Communication 12, no. 3 (2007): 233-249.

235 Zillmann, Dolf, and Hans-Bernd Brosius. Exemplification in communication: The influence of case reports on the perception of issues. Routledge, 2012.

236 Frederick, David A., Abigail C. Saguy, Gaganjyot Sandhu, and Traci Mann. "Effects of competing news media frames of weight on antifat stigma, beliefs about weight and support for obesity-related public policies." International Journal of Obesity 40, no. 3 (2016): 543-549.

237 MacLean, Lynne, Nancy Edwards, Michael Garrard, Nicki Sims-Jones, Kathryn Clinton, and Lisa Ashley. "Obesity, stigma and public health planning." Health promotion international 24, no. 1 (2009): 88-93.

238 Puhl, Rebecca M., and Chelsea A. Heuer. "The stigma of obesity: a review and update." Obesity 17, no. 5 (2009): 941.

239 McClure, Kimberly J., Rebecca M. Puhl, and Chelsea A. Heuer. "Obesity in the news: do photographic images of obese persons influence antifat attitudes?." Journal of health communication 16, no. 4 (2011): 359-371.

240 Pearl, Rebecca L., Rebecca M. Puhl, and Kelly D. Brownell. "Positive media portrayals of obese persons: Impact on attitudes and image preferences." Health Psychology 31, no. 6 (2012): 828.

241 BBC News. "Fortnight Covid 'fire-break' Lockdown Within Days in Wales." BBC News. Last modified October 16, 2020. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-54566566.

242 Tell MAMA UK. "We've Been Alerted to a BBC Wales Article about the #Circuitbreaker Lockdown Which Replaced a Generic Image with That of a Muslim Woman Wearing the Hijab. The Original Image, However, Still Appears When the Link Is Shared on social media. Pic.twitter.com/yYnHZC5thm." Twitter, Twitter, 16 Oct. 2020, www.twitter.com/TellMamaUK/status/1317133337308299265.

243 Horwood, Matthew. "Wales Relaxes Aspects Of Coronavirus Lockdown - A woman wearing a surgical face mask walks passed closed shops on June 2, 2020 in Cardiff, United Kingdom." Getty Images News. Accessed March 10, 2021. https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/news-photo/woman-wearing-a-surgical-face-mask-walks-passed-closed-news-photo/1242155810.

Fortnight Covid 'fire-break' lockdown within days in Wales

🕐 41 minutes ago

`Coronavirus pandemic`

GETTY IMAGES

Wales appears to be heading for another lockdown

Facebook did remove a post that mocked the death of a thirteen-year-old Muslim boy, but only after Tell MAMA escalated its complaint. The text, written as a comment to a BBC news article, made little effort to hide their joy at the since, as "When the war starts, there will be less for us to kill," other language in the statement dehumanised Muslims as "filth" and shared their desire that the coronavirus would spread throughout mosques (despite mosques observing the lockdown). The same individual also called for Muslims in Pakistan to 'be shot' in response to the coronavirus.

Targeting refugees and anti-Muslim hate and misinformation

The influence of the far-right on verified cases in 2021 and 2022 continued in our data analysis – we categorised 197 cases that we could say espoused, propagated or pushed far-right talking points, imagery, disinformation, or propaganda, which accounts for 46.13% of the verified caseload for the online sphere in those years (n=427). Examples include white supremacist conspiracies, including the so-called "Great Replacement" to stigmatise content holding Muslims responsible for crime and terrorism. On the other hand, a small minority of cases came from account holders demonstrating Hindutva beliefs[244] and propagating similar ideological conspiracies about Muslim communities. The focus of this section, given the threat to refugee communities on a street level and when in temporary accommodation (and those perceived as such), will draw attention to how anti-refugee rhetoric online derives in our data, at least from far-right sources and more mainstream figures and outlets.

Throughout the pandemic years and after that,

various far-right groups continued to target, harass, and intimidate refugees and asylum seekers in temporary hotel accommodations offline to spread their propaganda online. Britain First is perhaps the most high-profile far-right group that continued to target hotels nationwide, intending to use their offline provocations for inflammatory social media clout[245] and drawing political condemnation.[246] In the years ahead, news headlines included how a member of the street defence movement received a criminal conviction for assaulting a security guard at a hotel[247] to the far-right group making headlines for being tricked into targeting hotels without refugees.[248] Groups like HOPE not Hate documented at least 79 examples of the far-right group targeting refugees at hotels.[249] Additionally, they conducted "54 of the 125 anti-migrant hotel visits recorded in 2021 and 25 of the 69 from January to June 2022".[250] Verified cases online link refugees in temporary accommodation to racist conspiracies, dehumanised as "invaders" and linked to terrorism, language academics explored

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244 Leidig, Eviane. "From cyber-Hindutva to Ab Ki Baar Trump Sarkar:(Trans) national entanglements of Hindu diaspora political integration." In Political integration in Indian diaspora societies, pp. 127-152. Routledge India, 2020.

245 Stretton, Rachel. "Government minister condemns "unacceptable" far-right protests in Coventry." Coventry Live. Last modified September 3, 2020. https://www.coventrytelegraph.net/news/coventry-news/government-minister-condemns-unacceptable-far-18874063.

246 Dearden, Lizzie. "Far-right Groups Are Targeting Hotels Housing Asylum Seekers." The Independent. Last modified August 25, 2020. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/asylum-seekers-housing-coronavirus-far-right-migrant-hotels-channel-crossing-a9687811.html.

247 Dearden, Lizzie. "Britain First Activist Convicted of Assault at Hotel Housing Asylum Seekers." The Independent. Last modified November 10, 2021. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/britain-first-migrant-hotels-court-assault-b1953781.html.

248 Taylor, Diane. "Britain First Duped into Protesting at Hotels with No Asylum Seekers." The Guardian. Last modified April 27, 2021. https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/apr/27/britain-first-duped-into-protesting-at-hotels-with-no-asylum-seekers.

249 HOPE Not Hate. "Britain First and Anti-Migrant Activism – HOPE Not Hate." HOPE Not Hate. Last modified July 4, 2022. https://hopenothate.org.uk/2022/06/28/britain-first-and-ant-migrant-activism/.

250 Ibid.

from different European perspectives, particularly from the far-right.[251][252] Moreover, other research looks at how the European far-right deploys hate speech, disinformation and attacks on minorities and their political opponents to strengthen echo chambers, sow enmity and strengthen their antagonistic narratives.[253] The strengthening of these bonds cuts between the offline and online worlds, especially in places like Slovakia, where academics looked at how both feed into the actions of anti-refugee digital and real-world vigilantism (albeit drawing from small samples).[254]

Governmental responses to the far-right campaigns included the Home Office offering targeted hotels (or those concerned about potential targeting) barriers, fences and other protective measures.[255] Political and community solidarity with refugees also made headlines, with wide condemnation of the far-right.[256] In the Midlands, a refugee told the press how the targeting was traumatic, and, in response, over one hundred councils, faith groups, and unions signed a statement of solidarity and condemned Britain First.[257] In further testimony, coverage in the Liverpool Echo highlighted the fears of asylum seekers, as when members of Britain First banged on doors, came prepared to run – unsure who was responsible or if it was the enforcement team from the Home Office.[258] Moreover, the far-right harassment drew further attention to the 'prison-like' conditions in the accommodation, poor-quality food, and issues accessing healthcare services. A Home Office spokesperson said they demand the highest standards and take the well-being of asylum seekers seriously.

It also must be stressed that various media outlets debunked viral claims about refugees and asylum seekers during this time. In one noteworthy example, the Independent debunked several of the assertions put forward in the ten-minute video, including that, of the 48,000 seeking asylum in the UK system (as of March 2020), "the population of those housed in hotels averages out at a figure closer to 1,000," drawing on data from National Audit Office.[259] The Reuters Fact Check team also confirmed this figure in an article headlined: "Fact check: The UK is not housing 48,000 illegal immigrants in hotels each night", published on

251 Ben-David, Anat, and Ariadna Matamoros Fernández. "Hate speech and covert discrimination on social media: Monitoring the Facebook pages of extreme-right political parties in Spain." International Journal of Communication 10 (2016): 27.

252 Ekman, Mattias. "Anti-immigration and racist discourse in social media." European Journal of Communication 34, no. 6 (2019): 606-618.

253 Darmstadt, Alina, Mick Prinz, and Oliver Saal. "The murder of Keira: Misinformation and hate speech as far-right online strategies." (2019): 155-167.

254 Vicenová, Radka. "The role of digital media in the strategies of far-right vigilante groups in Slovakia." Global Crime 21, no. 3-4 (2020): 242-261.

255 Dearden, Lizzie. "Government Offers Protection to Hotels Housing Asylum Seekers Amid Far-right Raids." The Independent. Last modified August 28, 2020. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/migrant-hotel-raids-asylum-seekers-protection-britain-first-far-right-a9694351.html.

256 Ibid.

257 Haynes, Jayne. "Powerful statement of solidarity condemns far right group who harassed refugees at hotels." Birmingham Live. Last modified October 21, 2020. https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/powerful-statement-solidarity-condemns-far-19136067.

258 McKeon, Christopher. "Grim Reality of Life Inside the Hotel Housing Asylum Seekers." Liverpool Echo. Last modified September 20, 2020. https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/its-prison-stress-harassment-waiting-18955942.

259 Wood, Vincent. "What is the True Story Behind Nigel Farage's Claim That 'illegal' Immigrants Are Staying in Hotels?" The Independent. Last modified August 3, 2020. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/nigel-farage-illegal-immigrants-hotels-worcestershire-a9648746.html.

August 23.[1] Following Nigel Farage's viral, inflammatory video, which clip gained over two million views on Twitter, the Home Office announced that an 'error' occurred when asylum seekers were placed in the constituency of the home secretary Priti Patel, citing an "operation error" at the hotel in Witham, Essex.[2] The hotel's director, Mark Venkatasami, told the local press of the profound suffering the 40 asylum seekers faced and how their re-location devasted staff and those asylum seekers, "They were crying, the asylum seekers and the staff because they were losing them and possibly their jobs."[3] He added: "We treated them as hotel guests; we treated them as human beings."[4]

In Glasgow, asylum-seekers protested the conditions in the hotel – demands included the return of the £5 daily allowance reinstated and to be put back in homes, which the Home Office denied in a statement, stating that, whilst in hotel accommodation, it met all living needs.[5] Months earlier, Police Scotland shot dead 28-year-old Badreddin Abadlla Adam, who seriously injured six others at the Park Inn Hotel on June 26 – the wounded were three other asylum seekers, two hotel staff, and a police officer.[6] Within minutes and hours, Tell MAMA received a flurry of online reports, verifying four that referenced the attack. Twitter later suspended an account holder who wrote, "Calm down everyone. Whatever it is I believe it will be a peaceful incident depending on skin tone," within 30 minutes of Sky News breaking the story on Twitter. As the news unfolded, Tell MAMA received a report of a refugee support service in Glasgow targeted with a racist comment calling for deportations after the organisation called for support for the asylum seekers in the hotel affected. A further report to Tell MAMA included a caustic tweet from a now-suspended and influential far-right account on Twitter that sought to blame those who expressed support for refugees in the city – the original tweet had over sixteen hundred retweets before removal. The family of Badreddin Abadlla Adam apologised and wished for a quick recovery for the victims.[7] His brother Adam stated that Badreddin had been anxious, wanting to return home, and alleged poor treatment at the hotel; he says, combined with the killing of relatives in the Darfur genocide, contributed to his deteriorating mental state.[8] The Home Office launched an urgent review of housing asylum seekers in hotels.[9]

Refugees housed in other temporary accommodations, including the notorious former army barracks in Folkestone, Kent, which inspectors condemned over several visits,[10] became focal points for the far-right to target.[11] For example, an Iranian refugee interviewed by Vice News, given the pseudonym Reza*, described being called a rapist by a far-right agitator filming and photographing the young refugee[12] – a common Islamophobic trope discussed in previous report sections, and indeed, in earlier Tell MAMA case studies. Moreover, She's been forced to step down for threatening her employees and should no longer be quoted - so you can just start with "Moreover, the far-right

1   Reuters Staff. "Fact Check: The UK is Not Housing 48,000 Illegal Immigrants in Hotels Each Night." Reuters. Last modified August 13, 2020. https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-factcheck-uk-housing-48000-illegal-im/fact-check-the-uk-is-not-housing-48000-illegal-immigrants-in-hotels-each-night-idUSKCN2592DV.

2   BBC News. "Witham: Asylum Seekers in Patel's Constituency 'an Error'." BBC News. Last modified August 17, 2020. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-essex-53804705.

3   Lazzell, Louise. "Exclusive: Staff and families 'in tears' when asylum seekers moved out of Rivenhall Hotel in Witham." Essex Live. Last modified August 20, 2020. https://www.essexlive.news/news/essex-news/nigel-farage-patel-asylum-seekers-4439371.

4   Ibid.

5   O'Neill, Emma, and Kirsty Feerick. "Asylum seekers protest in Glasgow claiming hotels just like detention centres." Daily Record. Accessed May 5, 2021. https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/asylum-seekers-protest-glasgow-claiming-22286803.

6   BBC News. "Glasgow Stabbings: Man Shot Dead Named As Badreddin Abadlla Adam." BBC News. Last modified June 28, 2020. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-53208080.

7   Sabljak, Ema. "Family of Glasgow Knife Attacker Apologise to Victims." Glasgow Times. Last modified July 19, 2020. https://www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/news/18592507.glasgow-stabbings-family-baddredin-abadlla-adam-apologise-victims/.

8   Ibid.

9   Press Association. "Home Office Urgently Reviewing Concerns over Asylum Seekers Moved to Hotels." News and Star. Last modified July 13, 2020. https://www.newsandstar.co.uk/news/national/18579683.home-office-urgently-reviewing-concerns-asylum-seekers-moved-hotels/.

10 Grierson, Jamie. "Report Condemns Home Office Failures at Barracks Used to House Asylum Seekers." The Guardian. Last modified April 23, 2021. https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/apr/23/report-condemns-home-office-failures-at-barracks-used-to-house-asylum-seekers.

11 Yeung, Peter. "Far-Right YouTubers Are Targeting a Former Army Barracks Housing Refugees." VICE News. Last modified October 26, 2020. https://www.vice.com/en/article/m7ajpn/napier-barracks-far-right-refugees.

12 Ibid.

harassment" the far-right harassment and intimidation extended to centre staff, volunteers, and refugees, adding that even if only a handful arrived, their use of online platforms proved very organised.[13] The Napier barracks have been a place of protest, from asylum seekers inside[14] and those outside protesting the conditions of the barracks (the latter resulted in an arrest for criminal damage),[15] as Kent Police took no further action against a photojournalist detained after photographing a protest in February 2021.[16]

In 2022, high-profile media examples saw how the far-right continued to target refugees,[17][18][19] and disseminated inflammatory leaflets to spread disinformation in local communities about asylum seekers[20][21] and told them to bin such racist material.[22] Moreover, police forces did investigate these leaflets in areas like Lancaster,[23] Plymouth[24], Belfast,[25] Lanarkshire,[26] Dis-

s,[27] and Cardiff.[28] Further examples that made media headlines demonstrated how white supremacist groups used platforms like Telegram to promote and inform their offline agitations[29] - of significant concern in 2022 included a growing awareness of how the far-right targets children online.[30] For Wahlström et al. (2021), the role of digital recruitment and the legitimisation of far-right violence offline are intrinsically tied to the reach and distribution of overtly violent and dehumanising language to understand better the "direct causal role of social media activity for political violence",[31] feelings that are crystallised by what academics call "moral shocks".[32] Moreover, subjectivity influences how individuals react to such events[33], but with our focus on the far-right, they may also use moral panics to exploit sentiment. The danger of racist, violent, and far-right language or desires for violence

13 Ibid.

14 Jee, Alex. "Asylum Seekers Stage Protest over Conditions." Kent Online. Last modified December 24, 2020. https://www.kentonline.co.uk/folkestone/news/asylum-seekers-stage-protest-over-conditions-239831/.

15 Williams, Sam. "Activists throw fake blood at gates of Napier Barracks to send message to Home Office." Kent Online. Last modified January 28, 2021. https://www.kentonline.co.uk/folkestone/news/there-will-be-blood-on-your-hands-241516/.

16 Busby, Mattha. "Police Drop Case Against Photographer at Kent Barracks Protest." The Guardian. Last modified February 6, 2021. https://www.theguardian.com/media/2021/feb/05/police-drop-case-against-photographer-at-kent-barracks-protest.

17 Robinson, Andrew. "Far-right group Britain First sparks anger after video at Huddersfield asylum seeker mill." Yorkshire Live. Last modified September 26, 2022. https://www.examinerlive.co.uk/news/west-yorkshire-news/far-right-group-britain-first-25102786.

18 Ovens, Eleanor. "Far-right Group Display Anti-immigration Banners Outside Refugee Hotels." The Mail. Last modified December 8, 2022. https://www.nwemail.co.uk/news/23176926.far-right-group-patriotic-alternative-protest-barrow/.

19 Berrill, Lewis. "Far Right Group Target Chichester Hotel over Plans to House Asylum Seekers." Echo. Last modified July 26, 2022. https://www.echo-news.co.uk/news/20516847.patriotic-alternative-rally-outside-chichester-hotel/.

20 "'Sickening' far-right leaflets put through Kettering letterboxes after asylum hotel move." Northamptonshire Telegraph. Last modified December 21, 2022. https://www.northantstelegraph.co.uk/news/people/sickening-far-right-leaflets-put-through-kettering-letterboxes-after-asylum-hotel-move-3960912.

21 Hardy, Ben. "Disgust As 'hateful' Far-right Leaflets Posted Through City Letterboxes." Norwich Evening News. Last modified April 29, 2022. https://www.eveningnews24.co.uk/news/crime/22323625.disgust-hateful-far-right-leaflets-posted-city-letterboxes/.

22 Hickey, Daniel. "People Urged to Bin Leaflets from 'dangerous' Far-right Group." Great Yarmouth Mercury. Last modified April 27, 2022. https://www.greatyarmouthmercury.co.uk/news/20991953.people-urged-bin-leaflets-dangerous-far-right-group/.

23 Rouncivell, Gayle. "Police investigate after 'absolutely vile' far-right leaflet is posted through Lancaster letterboxes." Lancaster Guardian. Last modified April 26, 2022. https://www.lancasterguardian.co.uk/news/crime/police-investigate-after-absolutely-vile-far-right-leaflet-is-posted-through-lancaster-letterboxes-3667308.

24 Eve, Carl. "Labour councillor confronts men delivering 'racist' leaflets in Plymouth." Plymouth. Last modified April 2, 2022. https://www.plymouthherald.co.uk/news/plymouth-news/labour-councillor-confronts-men-delivering-6897676.

25 Lynch, Connor. "Police 'reviewing footage' of Britain First video at Belfast hotel." Belfast Live. Last modified February 18, 2022. https://www.belfastlive.co.uk/news/belfast-news/police-reviewing-footage-britain-first-23136623.

26 Lanarkshire Live. "Lanarkshire MSP calls for police to investigate Neo-Nazi 'racist' pamphleting." The Daily Record. Last modified September 9, 2022. https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/in-your-area/lanarkshire/lanarkshire-msp-calls-police-investigate-27938877.

27 Hadden, Joe. "Outcry Amongst Residents After Far-right Nationalist Group Post Flyers Across Town." Diss Express. Last modified April 21, 2022. https://www.dissexpress.co.uk/news/outcry-amongst-residents-after-far-right-nationalist-group-p-9250753/.

28 Hayward, Will. "Far right recruiting propaganda is being posted into Cardiff homes." WalesOnline. Last modified April 27, 2022. https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/far-right-recruiting-propaganda-being-23797340.

29 Evans, Harri. "Far right group posts hundreds of leaflets opposing use of Snowdonia hotel for asylum seekers." NorthWalesLive. Last modified November 19, 2022. https://www.dailypost.co.uk/news/north-wales-news/far-right-group-posts-hundreds-25558873.

30 Adams, Richard. "From 'study Guides' to Trolling Raids: How UK Far-right Groups Target Children Online." The Guardian. Last modified August 3, 2022. https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/aug/03/study-guides-trolling-raids-how-uk-far-right-groups-target-children-online.

31 Wahlström, Mattias, Anton Törnberg, and Hans Ekbrand. "Dynamics of violent and dehumanizing rhetoric in far-right social media." New media & society 23, no. 11 (2021): 3290-3311.

32 Jasper and Poulsen (1995) describe the concept of how individuals lean towards political in response to an even that generates a great outrage, even if they lack the networks of contacts to act. Jasper, James M., and Jane D. Poulsen. "Recruiting strangers and friends: Moral shocks and social networks in animal rights and anti-nuclear protests." Social problems 42, no. 4 (1995): 493-512.

33 O'Connor, Francis, Stefan Malthaner, and Lasse Lindekilde. "Killing in pairs: radicalisation patterns of violent dyads." International Journal of Conflict and Violence (IJCV) 12 (2018): a640-a640.

towards Muslims online translated to around one in 10 verified cases to Tell MAMA (n=104, from 1029 verified cases between 2020 and 2022) required reports to the police for further investigation.

Addressing racism, hate and conspiracies on Twitter: reflections upon 2021, 2022 and onwards

A significant source of anti-Muslim and racist statements flagged in Tell MAMA cases in late 2021 (and in the months ahead) related to the individual impacts of institutional racism scandals engulfing English cricket. However, before we arrive at the case analysis, we must first give sufficient context of where they emerged from and the subsequent fallout into 2023. Therefore, the analysis follows is bookended by two major reports in 2022 and 2023 concerning institutional racism in English and Scottish cricket. Azeem Rafiq, whose shameful experiences of racism at Yorkshire County Cricket Club, wanted the focus on institutional, not individuals as in a statement said, "Cricket needs to understand the extent of its problems and address them. Hopefully, the structures of the game can now be rebuilt and institutionalised racism ended for good." Throughout 2021, many examples were flagged with us related to Azeem Rafiq, especially when he gave parliamentary evidence in a watershed moment for the sport (examples of which will appear below). The timeline of the racism scandal in Yorkshire, however, is worth giving further context as it did include an apology in August 2021 but did not admit to institutional racism before apologizing a month later to Rafiq, who they admitted had experienced "racial harassment and bullying" but did not provide a copy of the report to Rafiq or the wider public and in the months ahead, the cricket club went through significant staffing changes. Calls to clean up the game followed as in the summer of 2022, the England Cricket Board announced charges against Yorkshire and seven individuals – six of whom had, according to the investigation, used racist langue. However, some refused to pay fines and maintained their innocence. Now, having given some contemporary context, it remains imperative to draw on the works of academics when discussing the roots of cricket, as they have long challenged the notion that the 'home' of cricket falls within the geographic boundaries of England,[34] notably under the yolk of British coloniality in India, as Muslims have played cricket in England as early as 1902.[35]

During Azeem Rafiq's testimony in parliament, streamed live on various platforms, Tell MAMA received various reports – resulting in a mixed response regarding what content did and did not breach guidelines on racist hate speech. Examples of content not removed during our initial 2021 audit included, "If I lived in a country in which they despised my race, GUESS WHAT!! I WOULD MOVE TO A COUNTRY THAT DIDN'T HATE ME!!! Just saying!!!" and

Kelvin MacKenzie ✔
@kelvmackenzie — Follow

Can't be a total surprise that @AzeemRafiq30, a Pakistani muslim, sends an anti-Semitic tweet. Probably be well at home in the Labour party. Might even be leadership potential. Makes a nice change from a Muslim making a bomb and trying to kill hospital visitors don't you think.

12:42 PM - 18 Nov 2021

An offensive tweet from the former editor and columnist of The Sun Newspaper, Kalvin McKenzie, wrote (before deletion): "Can't be a total surprise that @ AzeemRafiq30, a Pakistani muslim, sends an anti-Semitic tweet." Nevertheless, he added, "Probably be well at home in the Labour party," before closing with the claim that it would make "a nice change from a Muslim making a bomb and trying to kill hospital visitors don't you think." Nor is the first example of such

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34 Long, J. A., Mark Nesti, Ben Carrington, and N. Gilson. Crossing the Boundary: A study of the nature and extent of racism in local league cricket. Leeds Metropolitan University, 1997.

35 Williams, Jack. Cricket and race. Berg Publishers, 2001.

scabrous language about Muslims from McKenzie, as in 2016, we criticised his comments about the Channel 4 journalist Fatima Manji who wears the headscarf, and his use of that holds Muslims collectively responsible for terrorism.[36]

As Rafiq spoke, an unrelated image of two indoor cricketers from Australia wearing shirts that read 'P*** Power' – the Melbourne-based team existed in relative obscurity beyond the local league until one photo from 2017 went viral in 2021. A small number of verified cases included racist tweets even falsely claimed that Rafiq, by shared ethnicity, was a member and, therefore, a proven 'hypocrite' and demonstrated

So it's ok to use the word p*** when it involves a pay cheque

9:58 AM - Nov 17, 2021 - Twitter for Android

3 Likes

Twitter suspended the racist account holder who, on the morning of November 17, tweeted, "So it's ok to use the word p*** when it involves a pay cheque." Those seeking to undermine Rafiq by invalidating his experiences of racism re-purposed this image, using the P-word without due care for those impacted by such racist language.

Tell MAMA verified ten reports which contained the P-word in 2021, over half of which (60%) referred to Azeem Rafiq. We recorded similar numbers of the P-word in the 2020 reporting cycle (as discussed earlier) –much of that racist discourse welded to discussions that demonised and dehumanised Muslim men as rapists, as others made racist expressions wishing that Muslims succumb to Covid-19.

Returning to the targeted tweets at Azeem Rafiq (or about him), Twitter did not remove an example of the above image edited to include a crude caption, "But it's okay when it suits". Furthermore, this image appeared from an account holder who retroactively removed their account; therefore, we cannot say with certainty that Twitter actioned this example. However, upon further analysis of this account holder, we found myriad examples of racist content – including towards Jewish communities – namely, the use of the Y-word. Moreover, the same account holder had shared the above image, suggesting that Rafiq's motivations were cynical, motivated by monetary gain, tweeting "money money money" accompanied by a cash emoji. When confronted with Rafiq's testimony, a far-right account holder replied, "Rotherham". Twitter took no action.

More broadly, we must situate these experiences in something more profound – for they exist not in a vacuum. As Burdsey (2010) argues, racism toward British-Pakistani and Muslim communities faced marginalising practices and pejorative-driven discourses that function as forms of othering – an exclusion from cricket not without historical examples, exacerbated in a post-7/7 climate.[37] They argue that such othering meant that Muslims became overwhelmingly viewed not as teammates at the county cricket level or residents in towns or cities but as 'belonging' or 'being' in Pakistan.[38]

English cricket infamously maintained ties to Apartheid South Africa – with the most infamous 'rebels' tour occurring when Nelson Mandela left prison in 1990.[39] Other nations also took part in such unofficial tours.[40] Many noted an absence of Black cricket-

36 York, Chris. "Kelvin MacKenzie's 'Vile' Column On C4's Muslim Presenter Spark Outrage." HuffPost. Last modified July 19, 2016. https://www.huffpost.com/archive/in/entry/the-suns-kelvin-mackenzie-fatima-manji_a_21433826.

37 Burdsey, Daniel. "British Muslim experiences in English first-class cricket." International Review for the Sociology of Sport 45, no. 3 (2010): 315-334.

38 Ibid. 316.

39 Weaver, Paul. "English Rebels Who Ignored Apartheid Cause Still Show a Lack of Shame." The Guardian. Last modified February 21, 2018. https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2010/jan/11/rebel-tour-1990-england-players-south-africa.

40 Nixon, Rob. "Apartheid on the run: The South African sports boycott." Transition 58 (1992): 68-88.

ers representing England, and by 1995, legal action began against an article so infamous for its racism; the Guardian mentioned the author's support for the neo-fascist British National Party.[41] It claimed that Black and South Asian players, "wherever born or raised, can never be 'culturally' English and never feel a deep, "unquestioning commitment to England'".[42] The editor of Wisden Cricket Monthly issued an apology,[43] as Phillip DeFreitas and other prominent Black cricketers mentioned in the article successfully sued and received out-of-court settlements.[44] Years later, DeFreitas reflected on the insult of being called an "interloper".[45] It was not until 2004 that Ajmal Shahzad became the first British-born Asian to play for Yorkshire Cricket Club.[46] Yorkshire CCC has, for many years, faced accusations of institutional racism (Searle 1996).[47] Accusations of institutional racism were levelled against the cricket club in parliament in 2004, with the club accused by a local MP of "deep-rooted, embedded racism."[48] The club demanded an apology.[49] Shahzad reflected positively during his tenure at the cricket club.[50] Rafiq made headlines after abhorrent antisemitic statements in 2011 resurfaced[51] – he apologised, spoke of his shame, and later met with a survivor of the Holocaust in London.[52]

Many tweets reported to Tell MAMA used dehumanising, anti-Muslim, and racialised language towards Muslim politicians and even children about Israel-Palestine. For example, Twitter did not remove a tweet called Muslim children "Jihadis in the making". Twit-

ter did, however, suspend the account of a notorious white supremacist who used a decontextualised video of Muslim students advocating for Palestinian rights to push racist conspiracies about demographic change. The original tweet began, "White British children are set to become a minority in classrooms by 2037. 2037 is merely 16 years away, imagine having to send your child to a school like this...".

On Facebook, a Muslim woman who wears the hijab described how a white male called her a "terrorist" when discussing Israel-Palestine on the platform.

Twitter did not act on our report concerning a far-right user who called for the closing of all mosques in response to the above video – upon a review of this account holder, they had called for banning Islam

41 Steen, Rob. "English Cricket Suffering As Black Interest Wanes." The Guardian. Last modified June 5, 2017. https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2004/jul/25/cricket.comment3.

42 Marqusee, Mike. "In search of the unequivocal Englishman: The conundrum of race and nation in English cricket." Race', Sport and British Society. London: Routledge (2001): 121-32.

43 The Independent. "Race Row Apology by 'Wisden' Editor." The Independent. Last modified July 7, 1995. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/race-row-apology-by-wisden-editor-1590365.html.

44 Carrington, Ben, and Ian McDonald, eds. 'Race', sport and British society. Routledge, 2002.

45 Harman, Jo. "Phil DeFreitas: Choosing Cricket Over Football & Playing In A Batsman's World." Wisden. Last modified November 25, 2020. https://wisden.com/stories/archive/ive-had-no-regrets-about-choosing-cricket-phil-defreitas.

46 Ward, David. "Broadacre Breakthrough - British-born Asian Plays for Yorkshire." The Guardian. Last modified June 5, 2017. https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2004/may/24/cricket.yorkshireccc.

47 Searle, Chris. "Towards a cricket of the future." Race & class 37, no. 4 (1996): 45-59.

48 Bradford Telegraph & Argus. "Racism Jibe MP out of Touch Says Yorkshire." Bradford Telegraph and Argus. Last modified October 26, 2004. https://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/7997769.racism-jibe-mp-out-of-touch-says-yorkshire/.

49 Wisden Cricinfo staff. "Local MP Claims Yorkshire Cricket is Racist." ESPNcricinfo. Last modified October 28, 2004. https://www.espncricinfo.com/story/local-mp-claims-yorkshire-cricket-is-racist-142866.

50 Waters, Chris. "Ajmal Shahzad's Memories of Yorkshire in Stark Contrast to Azeem Rafiq Racism Claims." Yorkshire Post. Last modified April 5, 2021. https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/sport/cricket/ajmal-shahzads-memories-of-yorkshire-in-stark-contrast-to-azeem-rafiq-racism-claims-3189360.

51 Sky News. "Azeem Rafiq Apologises for Antisemitic Messages Sent in 2011 - 'I Am Ashamed'." Sky News. Last modified November 18, 2021. https://news.sky.com/story/azeem-rafiq-apologises-for-making-antisemitic-comments-in-2011-12471813.

52 Mendel, Jack. "The Powerful Moment Azeem Rafiq Understood Where Antisemitism Leads." Jewish News. Last modified November 26, 2021. https://www.jewishnews.co.uk/the-powerful-moment-azeem-rafiq-finally-understood-where-antisemitism-leads/.

in the UK. Furthermore, this account holder blamed Jewish communities, in a classic antisemitic canard, for "encouraging" Muslims to enter the "West" and, therefore, faced the consequence – such rhetoric is an example of a white supremacist conspiracy.

Some of the most extreme, dehumanising rhetoric included referring to Islam as a "cancer" that desires to eradicate "Western culture". Others invoked Enoch Powell's notorious "rivers of blood" speech about students making pro-Palestine slogans. Nor did Twitter act upon these flagged reports.

On May 25, local press confirmed that staff at Judgemeadow Community College in Leicester, the source of the 34-second viral clip, had facilitated the peaceful protest.[53] The college's principal, Jason Smith, confirmed that the small protest occurred with minimal disruption to other students as staff watched on to allow students to express themselves on an issue they care about, adding, "We are working with students to ensure a fair understanding of events in a way that allows everyone to have their voice heard and considers a range of perspectives."[54] Other schools, however, faced criticism for handling student activism and protests[55] as rising reports of antisemitism in schools drew governmental condemnation.[56]

In other high-profile examples, the Conservative MP Michael Fabricant apologised and deleted a tweet, "These primitives are trying to bring to London what they do in the Middle East."[57]

Several tweets verified by Tell MAMA concerned the targeting of London Mayor Sadiq Khan – either directly (via direct mention) or indirectly (by name without reference to the Twitter handle), falsely accusing him of being "soft" on antisemitism because of their Islamic faith. In addition, Twitter suspended an account holder who targeted Khan, claiming he would give a Metropolitan Police officer a "pay rise" for making a

pro-Palestine gesture during a public march.

Tell MAMA worked with platforms like Twitter to flag and remove extremely violent accounts which called for the murder of Muslims and LGBT+ communities. In a notable, disturbing case study, a member of the public alerted us to a dormant account with the homophobic F-word in its username, namely @ burnthef******. The account holder had amended their profile name to read "Kill all Muslim" and used a transphobic and ableist meme on their Twitter header.

BBC reports Asian "grooming gangs" still active. But "ethnic sensitivity" protect them from police! Many areas have Muslim Town Councils who ignore this.Who will protect our most vulnerable kids? Incest is common in their own families too. Time to get this stopped! #bbcr4today.

MUSLIM GANG SENTENCED TO 169 YEARS FOR RAP[...] VULNERABLE ENGLISH SCHOOLGIRL IN H[...]

SHARE if you want them DE[...]

2:30 AM - 28 Jul 2021

167 Retweets 217 Likes

A racist account holder used a photo of Muslims celebrating the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad during a procession in Blackburn in November 2018 to broadly push racialised, criminalising, dehumanising narratives about Muslims. The account would repeatedly use the procession image to weaponise white resentment and rage – blaming Muslims for apparent social ills and attempting to reduce support for refugees – equating a fundamental right to seek refuge and safety with a pernicious, perverse racist conspiracy of so-called "Islamisation". Twitter failed to remove a tweet conflating refugees and Muslims as "enemies" intent on "fighting". Moreover, this account holder has been free to call for racist violence to avoid

53 Troughton, Adrian. "Pupils at Leicester secondary school stand on tables and chant 'Free Palestine' as teachers watch." Leicestershire Live. Last modified May 25, 2021. https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/leicester-news/pupils-leicester-secondary-school-stand-5456485.

54 Ibid.

55 Parveen, Nazia. "Anger over British Teachers' Response to Pro-Palestine Protests." The Guardian. Last modified May 26, 2021. https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/may/26/anger-over-british-teachers-response-to-pro-palestine-protests.

56 TOI Staff. "UK Education Minister Warns Schools to Act over 'abhorrent' Rising Antisemitism." The Times of Israel. Last modified May 29, 2021. https://www.timesofisrael.com/uk-education-minister-warns-schools-to-act-over-abhorrent-rising-antisemitism/.

57 PA Media. "Conservative MP Condemned for 'racist' Tweet About Israel Protests." The Guardian. Last modified May 16, 2021. https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/may/16/conservative-mp-criticised-racist-anti-palestinian-tweet.

an apparent 'civil war' before concluding, "We must fight them...now!".

Tell MAMA challenged a headline on the Staffordshire-Live website in May 2021, "Race row as Britain First labels Burton a hotspot for 'Islamic grooming gangs'". While the article took welcome steps to debunk the extremist group, including the dubious source for their 'evidence', our concern was twofold: the headline centred on Britain First's toxic, racialised falsehoods of Britain First whilst conflating Islam with Islamism. We put these points to the newspaper, which did not accept the potential harm such an incorrect conflation would have on Muslim communities. Moreover, we further cited that the leader of Britain First, Paul Golding, said "Islamist" and not "Islamic" as the headline erroneously suggested and that the stigmatising language of "Islamic gangs", the newspaper did not accept our requests.[58] In contrast, DerbyshireLive agreed to replace the inflammatory line "suspected grooming by Islamic gangs" with "suspected grooming by gangs" after we got in touch.[59]

Two Conservative councillors in Darlington spoke of their 'shock' and 'anger' at sharing a far-right hoax (debunked in 2015[60]) about Tesco and Muslims in May 2021.[61] In 2018, the then Lord Mayor of Exeter also shared the falsehood on Facebook,[62] demonstrating the longevity of such scabrous falsehoods finding new life long after debunking, demonstrating the need for political parties to adopt social media literacy training which incorporates good practice and tips to help elected officials identify falsehoods and misinformation.

Inconsistencies in Twitter Moderation

It remains unacceptable that in 2021 and beyond, some of the most overtly racist and fascist accounts flagged to our service avoided removal from Twitter. For example, an account with over 15,000 tweets since 2014 openly uses the iconography and logos of the New British Union of Fascists on its account bio but escapes censure despite multiple reports concerning their harmful abuse of the platform. Remarkably, Twitter's URL policy warns or blocks access to harmful material, spam, child abuse, illegal goods, non-censual nudity, violence, violent extremism, and hateful content which otherwise breaches the rules of the platform, did not warn users about the harms of accessing an overtly fascist propaganda hate site. Furthermore, we assessed the URLs of other notable far-right groups in the UK and found identifiable gaps in the usage of this policy, which will form part of the recommendations we make to social media platforms with every report. For example, the website for Britain First, the far-right street defence movement, did carry a warning to users (which they can ignore) whilst inviting users to engage with the comprehensive URL policy; however, changes to the ownership structure of Twitter under Elon Musk meant previously banned groups like Britain First (removed from the platform in 2017[63]). In addition, the core leadership received organisational validation in check marks in early 2023 (meaning their content can potentially reach a wider audience) after returning to the platform in October 2022.[64] However, subsequent warnings about links to the Britain First website no longer appear when users click on such URL links.

58 The quote from the leader of Britain First, Paul Golding, from a press release stated, "Eighty-five per cent of street grooming gangs are from an Islamist or Pakistani background," appeared towards the bottom of the article, as did the term "Islamic gangs" which we also challenged. See, Staffordshire Live Reporter. "Race row as Britain First labels Burton a hotspot for 'Islamic grooming gangs'." StaffordshireLive. Last modified October 29, 2021. https://www.staffordshire-live.co.uk/news/burton-news/race-row-britain-first-labels-5408720.

59 Slater, Carl. "Religious leader hits back after claim that Burton is 'hotspot' for grooming." DerbyshireLive. Last modified May 18, 2021. https://www.derbytelegraph.co.uk/news/derby-news/far-right-claim-burton-hotspot-5425954. For the original version see: https://web.archive.org/web/20210518055121/https://www.derbytelegraph.co.uk/news/derby-news/far-right-claim-burton-hotspot-5425954

60 Hosford, Paul. "No, Tesco Did Not Refuse a British Soldier Service to Avoid Offending Muslims." TheJournal.ie. Last modified February 26, 2015. https://www.thejournal.ie/tesco-refuse-british-soldier-1961245-Feb2015/.

61 Fox, Alexa. "Veteran Darlington Councillors 'horrified' After Unwittingly Sharing a Hoax Far Right Facebook Post." The Northern Echo. Last modified May 25, 2021. https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/19327875.darlington-councillors-horrified-unwittingly-sharing-hoax-far-right-facebook-post/.

62 Clark, Daniel. "Lord Mayor apologises after sharing fake Tesco soldier Muslim offence post." DevonLive. Last modified April 3, 2018. https://www.devonlive.com/news/devon-news/lord-mayor-apologises-after-sharing-1413240.

63 BBC News. "Twitter Suspends Britain First Leaders." BBC News. Last modified December 18, 2017. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-42402570.

64 Das, Shanti, and Dan Milmo. "Banned British Far-right Figures Return to Twitter Within Hours of Takeover." The Observer. Last modified October 29, 2022. https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/oct/29/banned-british-far-right-figures-return-to-twitter-within-hours-of-takeover.

Warning: this link may be unsafe

http://www.britainfirst.org

The link you are trying to access has been identified by Twitter or our partners as being potentially spammy or unsafe, in accordance with Twitter's URL Policy. This link could fall into any of the below categories:

- malicious links that could steal personal information or harm electronic devices
- spammy links that mislead people or disrupt their experience
- violent or misleading content that could lead to real-world harm
- certain categories of content that, if posted directly on Twitter, are a violation of the Twitter Rules

Back to previous page

Ignore this warning and continue

Twitter guidance on blocking links or enforcing warnings is contextual, driven by various factors, including what degrees of certainty the platform has in that the link is either malicious or harmful, as "a warning notice may be applied to links we first become aware of via lower-confidence information sharing from trusted third parties".[65] The blog adds additional consideration appears when websites critique or provide commentary on "content that violates our rules differently than links sharing the content straightforwardly or without commentary".[66]

Equally of concern is that the inconsistent approach also applies to conspiracy websites. For example, we identified how the Canadian website Global Research (Centre for Research on Globalization), which as Bessi et al. (2016), listed among 330 conspiracy websites, a wide-ranging and influential paper on online polarisation across YouTube and Facebook,[67] does and does not maintain warnings on Twitter when

accessing its material. Moreover, The Walrus, a Canadian news outlet, highlighted how its material ranked on Google search results.[68] Years earlier, a Canadian Jewish group complained of Holocaust denial material on their platform.[69] In 2016, a news article about the Centre for Research on Globalization highlighted how it pushed anti-Muslim tropes linking the Syrian Civil Defence group the White Helmets to terrorism.[70] Other media outlets have since accused the platform of hosting Russian disinformation and suggesting that 9/11 and Covid-19 were pre-planned forms of population control.

Regarding Covid-19, Media Matters for America stated, "Many Global Research articles circulated on Facebook also feature blatantly false or misleading information about COVID-19 and vaccines."[71] AP News also identified the Centre for Research on Globalization as a "superspreader" of Covid-19 disinformation.[72] In addition, academics condemned and debunked[73] the Centre for Research on Globalization for pushing the "Irish slave" myth – which, according to Dr Liam Hogan, holds "currency in ultranationalist, white supremacist neo-Nazi circles".[74]

Another shortcoming may also reflect a bias toward English-language outlets. For example, despite the EU DisinfoLab listing it as a conspiracy website in 2020, the French website Reseau International has no such warnings on Twitter when assessed for this report.[75]

Equally distressing and disturbing were websites selling the disgraced literature of some of the most infamous Holocaust deniers in Europe – from David Irving

65 Twitter Help Center. "Our Approach to Blocking Links | Twitter Help." Twitter Help Center. Last modified March 30, 2021. https://help.twitter.com/en/safety-and-security/phishing-spam-and-malware-links.

66 Ibid.

67 Bessi, Alessandro, Fabiana Zollo, Michela Del Vicario, Michelangelo Puliga, Antonio Scala, Guido Caldarelli, Brian Uzzi, and Walter Quattrociocchi. "Users polarization on Facebook and Youtube." PloS one 11, no. 8 (2016): e0159641.

68 Ling, Justin. "Why Google Has a Responsibility to Fight Fake News." The Walrus. Last modified June 4, 2021. https://thewalrus.ca/why-google-has-a-responsibility-to-fight-fake-news/.

69 Medoff, Rafael, and Alex Grobman. "Holocaust denial: a global survey, 2005." (2005).

70 R. Khan, Adnan. "Who Are Syria's White Helmets?" Macleans.ca. Last modified October 3, 2016. https://macleans.ca/news/world/who-are-syrias-white-helmets/.

71 Rosalie Li, E. "A Russian Disinformation Site Outed by State Department Last Year is Still on Multiple Social Media Platforms." Media Matters for America. Last modified August 30, 2021. https://www.mediamatters.org/fake-news/russian-disinformation-site-outed-state-department-last-year-still-multiple-social-media.

72 AP News. "The Superspreaders Behind Top COVID-19 Conspiracy Theories." AP News. Last modified February 15, 2021. https://apnews.com/article/conspiracy-theories-iran-only-on-ap-media-misinformation-bfca6d5b236a29d61c4dd38702495ffe.

73 Hogan, Liam. "Open Letter to Irish Central, Irish Examiner and Scientific American About Their "Irish Slaves."" Medium. Last modified March 17, 2018. https://limerick1914.medium.com/open-letter-to-irish-central-irish-examiner-and-scientific-american-about-their-irish-slaves-3f6cf23b8d7f#.byieqxydj.
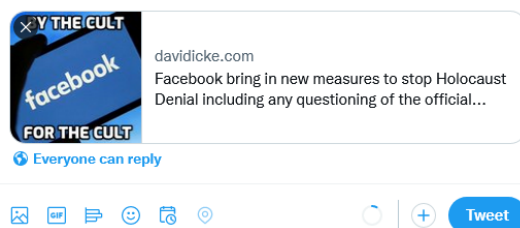
74 Hogan, Liam. "The myth of "Irish Slaves" in the colonies." (2016).

75 EUDisinfoLab. Twitter Post. June 15, 2020, 9:35 am. Available at: https://twitter.com/DisinfoEU/status/1272447720839784448

and Robert Faurisson[76] came without warning users clicking on the URL links. Furthermore, other fascist booksellers, who stock the racist screeds of figures like Oswald Mosley, avoided such notifications from Twitter. That equally extends to a so-called "neutral" seller of WWII memorabilia who also openly sold Holocaust denial literature, materials promoting the infamous neo-Nazi hate rock band Skrewdriver,[77] and sold "White Lives Matter" t-shirts also avoided any such warnings. Moreover, the abhorrent video game where players can re-enact the white supremacist terror in Christchurch and remain banned in New Zealand is accessible without notice. For obvious reasons, we are not naming the websites identified for this report but have raised them with Twitter to improve the safety of minoritised groups on the platform. In August 2021, Twitter and Google confirmed they would take steps to ban Srebrenica genocide denial,[78] as weeks earlier, BIRN identified at least twenty prominent denial accounts on Twitter.[79]

The website for the antisemitic author[80] and conspiracy theorist David Icke[81] also presents no warning to users when accessing links from Twitter. Twitter allows users to post content from Icke's website, generating preview links for grotesque Holocaust revisionism and denial.

https://davidicke.com/2020/10/13/facebook-bring-in-new-measures-to-stop-holocaust-denial-including-any-questioning-of-the-official-narrative/

davidicke.com
Facebook bring in new measures to stop Holocaust Denial including any questioning of the official…

🌐 Everyone can reply

Tweet

Online recommendations

In the pursuit of undoing harm, social media platforms must also help fund or prioritise the mental health and well-being of minoritised groups with improved support services or funding streams for licenced therapists to access broader support –in-person or online. Racism is a cause of ill health,[82][83] significantly when media consumption of traumatic events online[84] is associated with adverse health outcomes.[85] Platforms may also consider better signposting for support services like Mind or the Samaritans in the aftermath of "trigger events" and general ways to inform audiences about available support.

Google-owned platforms like YouTube must make more significant efforts to inform audiences about the reporting of hate speech and harmful materials on their platform and be more transparent in their decision-making, ensuring that malicious and vexatious attempts to remove legitimate content allow content creators to challenge it.

We welcome Google's efforts to de-list far-right websites mentioned in the previous Tell MAMA reports. However, we caution that Google must take additional steps when it comes from ideological-driven sites based in the United States or elsewhere, in some examples, push out anti-Muslim disinformation whilst benefiting from the legitimising status of Google News.

TikTok must build upon its good community-building work with the '#No2h8 campaign', help users report hateful content as videos and hashtags, and strength-

76 Charny, Israel W. "The psychological satisfaction of denials of the Holocaust or other genocides by non-extremists or bigots, and even by known scholars." Idea 6, no. 1 (2001): 17.

77 Brown, Timothy Scott. "Subcultures, pop music and politics: Skinheads and" Nazi rock" in England and Germany." Journal of Social History 38, no. 1 (2004): 157-178.

78 RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty. "Social Networks To Remove Content That Denies Srebrenica Genocide." RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty. Last modified August 12, 2021. https://www.rferl.org/a/bosnia-srebrenica-youtube-twitter/31406437.html.

79 Kuloglija, Nermina. "Twitter Hosts Right-Wing Rallying Cry of Srebrenica Genocide Denial." Balkan Insight. Last modified July 9, 2021. https://balkaninsight.com/2021/07/05/twitter-hosts-right-wing-rallying-cry-of-srebrenica-genocide-denial/.

80 Rosenberg, Yair. "New York Times Publishes Unqualified Recommendation for Insanely Anti-Semitic Book." Tablet Magazine. Last modified December 17, 2018. https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/news/articles/the-new-york-times-just-published-an-unqualified-recommendation-for-an-insanely-anti-semitic-book.

81 Allington, Daniel, Beatriz L. Buarque, and Daniel Barker Flores. "Antisemitic conspiracy fantasy in the age of digital media: Three 'conspiracy theorists' and their YouTube audiences." Language and Literature 30, no. 1 (2021): 78-102.

82 Devakumar, Delan, Sujitha Selvarajah, Geordan Shannon, Kui Muraya, Sarah Lasoye, Susanna Corona, Yin Paradies, Ibrahim Abubakar, and E. Tendayi Achiume. "Racism, the public health crisis we can no longer ignore." The Lancet 395, no. 10242 (2020): e112-e113.

83 Okazaki, Sumie. "Impact of racism on ethnic minority mental health." Perspectives on Psychological Science 4, no. 1 (2009): 103-107.

84 Tynes, Brendesha M., Henry A. Willis, Ashley M. Stewart, and Matthew W. Hamilton. "Race-related traumatic events online and mental health among adolescents of color." Journal of Adolescent Health 65, no. 3 (2019): 371-377.

85 Pfefferbaum, Betty, Sara Jo Nixon, Rick D. Tivis, Debby E. Doughty, Robert S. Pynoos, Robin H. Gurwitch, and David W. Foy. "Television exposure in children after a terrorist incident." Psychiatry: Interpersonal and Biological Processes 64, no. 3 (2001): 202-211.

en its moderation tools to clamp down on hate speech in user comments.

The report showed how anti-Muslim and Islamophobic disinformation campaigns populated significant social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook during the first national lockdowns in 2020. Our research exposed several high-profile examples, debunking them and flagging the content through the appropriate channels. However, Twitter must do more to increase how it allows users to report harmful and misleading content – as, in August 2021, it first announced its limited testing of a misleading reporting function in countries like Australia, South Korea, and the United States.[86] Such a policy change, although long overdue, is welcome; we are one of many organisations that called on such changes years earlier. Previously, we have called on Twitter to expand its "suspicious or spam" functionality to include a function for "misleading or disinformation" and hateful content, including an option to report racist and bigoted acts of disinformation.

Twitter must tighten loopholes in how those banned for account violations, notably on the far-right, circumvent said bans by creating alias accounts or, in some cases, using the login credentials of friends, allies, or sympathisers. Such actions were evident during the lockdowns of 2020 when notable far-right agitators who presented themselves as "legitimate" news sources by sharing videos and doctored footage went viral on Twitter.

Facebook must do more to counter disinformation on its platform – whilst fact-checking content works to a degree, more concrete steps from platforms to disincentivise users who continue to share such harmful content despite the warning that such information is false. Unfortunately, one warning is not always enough. It remains inconceivable that notable far-right agitators banned on Facebook, for example, benefit from an account and verified status on their other platforms like Instagram. Such glaring oversights must be the subject of further investigation and corrections.

Newspapers should commit to efforts to help com-

bat misinformation about Muslim communities by ensuring that articles contain the date of publication in the image – a trend we see with the Guardian and the New York Times who include a "from [year]" and "published [year] within the image preview of articles shared on social media. Such initiative-taking steps may help counter or limit the reach of those motivated by anti-Muslim hatred and racialised prejudice in taking stories, sometimes five years or older, to stigmatise Muslims. Efforts to tackle falsehoods are a shared responsibility, and newspapers and social media platforms should take the steps suggested. Equally, whilst it will not always stop confirmation bias, it might help to dissuade some individuals from sharing false or decontextualised information.

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86 BBC News. "Twitter Tests 'misleading' Post Report Button for First Time." BBC News. Last modified August 18, 2021. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-58258377.

Appendix A: best practice for police forces on social media when countering anti-Muslim disinformation

During the height of the coronavirus lockdown in England, various police forces took to social media to debunk far-right-driven propaganda and conspiracies that the authorities were 'ignoring' or facilitating Muslims breaching the lockdown and social distancing measures. As a result, proactive policing on social media became a powerful tool to counter malicious and inflammatory falsehoods. The three case studies below demonstrate best practices regarding a) countering the racialised lies and b) engaging with bad-faith actors and those who desire to spread anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia.

Case Study #1: Shropshire Police

During the afternoon of March 26, a tweet began: "Called my local Mosque in Shrewsbury to see if it was closed as per the new law and government guidance. Horrified to discover that they are still open and allowing people in." after accusing them of being 'super spreaders,' the user tagged in Shropshire Police (@ShropCops). The tweet did attract a small audience, as a quoted tweet, sent forty-five minutes later, read: "Where are the police to enforce a lockdown. ? Oh yes they are turning a blind eye as usual." By 5:32 pm on March 26, Shropshire police tweeted their first reply, countering the malicious falsehood and creating a robust and vital counter-message. The first reply read: "While still providing our usual 24/7 service we are also patrolling all religious buildings, licensed premises, vulnerable buildings and attending any ongoing reports of groups congregating," Adding, "If you mean the prayer centre in Shrewsbury (we don't have a mosque) it's on the list."[87]

The tweet read: "Probably because there is no Mosque in Shrewsbury. There is a prayer centre & it

has been checked and is fully compliant with the current government requirements."[88]

Moreover, after the original tweet had continued to gain more replies, the @ShropCops account repeated its original tweet, writing on March 29: "Probably because there is no Mosque in Shrewsbury", adding that "There is a prayer centre & it has been checked and is fully compliant with the current government requirements."[89] To the credit of their social media team, the staff at Shropshire Police continued to engage with bad-faith actors, with replies, "Either way the prayer centre is closed and not holding prayer sessions in line with all the government requirements."[90]

Like other Islamic institutions, the Shrewsbury Muslim Centre had observed the lockdown when the official guidance changed, postponing Friday (Jummah) prayers from March 19 before the lockdown began on March 23.[91]

The success of this intervention from Shropshire Police even made headlines in the national press.[92]

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87 Shropshire Police. Twitter Post. March 26, 2020, 5:32 PM https://twitter.com/ShropCops/status/1243229361001697280

88 Shropshire Police. Twitter Post. March 28, 2020, 7:56 PM https://twitter.com/ShropCops/status/1243990251183517698

89 Shropshire Police. Twitter Post. March 29, 2020, 10:49 AM https://twitter.com/ShropCops/status/1244200073883529216

90 Shropshire Police. Twitter Post. March 31, 2020, 3:19 PM https://twitter.com/ShropCops/status/1244992732457766912

91 Tell MAMA. "Shropshire Police Debunk Malicious Tweet About a Mosque 'ignoring' the Coronavirus Lockdown." TELL MAMA. Last modified March 31, 2020. https://tellmamauk.org/shropshire-police-debunk-malicious-tweet-about-a-mosque-ignoring-the-coronavirus-lockdown/.

92 Evans, Greg. "This Man Tried to Report a Mosque to the Police for Being Open During Lockdown but It Went Very Wrong." Indy100. Last modified March

Case Study #2: West Yorkshire Police

On March 28, the Leeds City Centre account of West Yorkshire Police countered a different falsehood, writing: "The picture being shared is over a week old (when pubs etc were still open) This is the original article."[93] On Facebook, one post with over 2,500 shares captioned a photo of congregants outside of the mosque, "Leeds Mosque today - they are not only putting their lives at risk but everyone elses. Will the Police act and stop this?" appearing in the dataset a day earlier.

A local journalist for an article about community preparedness with the impending national lockdown days away took the photo on March 20.[94] The fact-checking charity Full Fact uncovered and debunked other variations of the falsehoods, with two posts alone gaining over 10,000 shares combined.[95] The posts debunked by Full Fact appeared on Facebook between March

27 and 28,[96] where a clear ideological and sometimes far-right inspired motive appears, including from an individual supportive of Enoch Powell.

Moreover, Full Fact and Reuters are official fact-checkers for Facebook in the UK, and warnings appear on content based on the degree of misinformation present. In these examples, Facebook stated, "The primary claims in the information are factually inaccurate." The appeal of such messaging links to how individuals use mental shortcuts to evaluate the credibility of messaging, from endorsement (if others find it credible), reputation (familiarity with the content) and its persuasive intent and self-confirmation.[97][98] The power of a fact-check or debunking can prove weaker to audiences committed to a form of motivated reasoning that supports their reason for believing such misinformation, and studies show the power of familiarity as a persuasive form of messaging.[99] Moreover, with the ease with which click farms and other actors can skew popularity, it is essential to understand how credibility on Facebook, often defined by metrics of likes and shares, continues to influence even after fact-checkers debunk it. It, thus, raises questions about the justifications for maintaining content on the platform, which, as these examples show, risk spreading racialised abuse and the potential for incitement towards violence. Conversely, many comments did call out the racialised falsehoods. However, it raises more questions about why platforms are not allowing individuals to report inflammatory misinformation directed toward those with protected characteristics.

In all of the above examples, the false posts on Facebook used the out-of-context image, which research has shown to foster the illusion of evidence.[100] The Facebook posts also used emotive, leading, conspiracist language, including statements like "Will the Police act and stop this?" and "But they can congregate

31, 2020. https://www.indy100.com/article/coronavirus-uk-lockdown-mosque-shropshire-police-9437521.

93 West Yorkshire Police – Leeds City Centre. Twitter Post. March 28, 2020, 11:11 PM https://twitter.com/WYP_LeedsCity/status/1244039441938812934

94 Staff, Reuters. "False Claim: British Mosque Remains Open during Coronavirus Lockdown." U.K. Last modified March 31, 2020. https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-factcheck-leeds-mosque/false-claimbritish-mosque-remains-openduring-coronavirus-lockdown-idUSKBN21I3AX.

95 Rahman, Grace. "Photo Circulating of Busy Mosque Was Taken Before Lockdown." Full Fact. Last modified March 31, 2020. https://fullfact.org/online/coronavirus-mosque-shut-lockdown.

96 Ibid.

97 Metzger, Miriam J., and Andrew J. Flanagin. "Credibility and trust of information in online environments: The use of cognitive heuristics." Journal of pragmatics 59 (2013): 210-220.

98 Lewandowsky, Stephan, Ullrich KH Ecker, Colleen M. Seifert, Norbert Schwarz, and John Cook. "Misinformation and its correction: Continued influence and successful debiasing." Psychological science in the public interest 13, no. 3 (2012): 106-131.

99 Pennycook, Gordon, Tyrone D. Cannon, and David G. Rand. "Prior exposure increases perceived accuracy of fake news." Journal of experimental psychology: general 147, no. 12 (2018): 1865.

100   FROM, A. JOINT BRIEFING. "Who is most likely to believe and to share misinformation?." (2020).

at close quarters spreading disease, then some go and serve in their shops. WTF. DOUBLE STANDARDS." For a deeper context, an influential study of misinformation detection found that individuals disseminating false and misleading content (as publishers and users) on social media are more inclined to spread more intense negative emotions and prefer exaggerated and inflammatory words.[101] More broadly, studies have shown with news that the emotional response drove the viral success of particular news articles, regardless of the posting time or the content's value.[102][103] In the UK, a crucial reason for sharing misleading content was, first and foremost, to express a sentiment, to inform, and gauge the opinion of others.[104]

The local news outlet, South Leeds Life, which published the original article on March 21, updated their report to state: "We are aware that this post keeps being circulated on social media. Please note that it refers to the situation on March 20, 2020, three days BEFORE the lockdown was announced."[105] On March 29, a further article appeared in LeedsLive, which quoted the editor of South Leeds Life, Jeremy Morton, who said: "I'm appalled. It's a very fast-changing situation, and that story is from a week ago when the lockdown wasn't in place."[106]

Case study #3: West Midlands Police

On March 30, a video filmed in Birmingham's Small Heath area circulated across far-right Telegram channels and Twitter accounts, purporting to show congregants attending a mosque and breaching the national lockdown. The videos gained thousands of views, and on that same day, West Midlands Police issued a statement confirming that the mosque had closed a week earlier in line with the national lockdown.[107] The Birmingham Mail reported claims that police had responded to the video circulating on Facebook.[108]

However, the social media team at West Midlands Police continued to respond to tweets about the video in the hours and days ahead, further challenging the falsehood; in one tweet, writing: "Although we can confirm the footage was filmed in Small Heath, our officers have conducted enquiries and are satisfied that the mosque has been closed since Monday (March 23)."[109] This notable tweet is one of almost ten tweets sent to individuals who tagged West Midlands Police regarding the issue on March 30. Furthermore, when asked on Twitter what the force was doing to counter such malicious anti-Muslim and Islamophobic falsehoods, West Midlands Police replied, and linking to their statement, wrote: "Hi there. Where we identify fake news, we call it out."[110]

West Midlands Police ✔
@WMPolice

We're aware of a video circulating that appears to show a group of people leaving a mosque in Small Heath during the lockdown.

We've conducted enquiries and we're satisfied that the mosque has been closed since last Monday (23 March).

Full statement ⬇

Statement regarding Small Heath mosque video | News | West Midlands Police
We're aware of a video circulating that appears to show a group of people leaving a mosque in Small Heath since the government introduced restrictions last week....
🔗 west-midlands.police.uk

3:42 PM · Mar 30, 2020 · Twitter Web App

53 **Retweets**   19 **Quote Tweets**   174 **Likes**

101   Guo, Chuan, Juan Cao, Xueyao Zhang, Kai Shu, and Miao Yu. "Exploiting emotions for fake news detection on social media." arXiv preprint arXiv:1903.01728 (2019).

102   Vosoughi, Soroush, Deb Roy, and Sinan Aral. "The spread of true and false news online." Science 359, no. 6380 (2018): 1146-1151.

103   Berger, Jonah, and Katherine L. Milkman. "What makes online content viral?." Journal of marketing research 49, no. 2 (2012): 192-205.

104   Chadwick, Andrew, and Cristian Vaccari. "News sharing on UK social media: Misinformation, disinformation, and correction." Survey Report.

105   Marashli, Imran. "Services Cancelled but Worship Continues Amid Covid-19." South Leeds Life. Last modified April 7, 2020. https://southleedslife.com/services-cancelled-but-worship-continues-amid-covid-19/.

106   Hyde, Nathan. "Imam speaks out on viral photo of crowds outside Leeds mosque in 'coronavirus lockdown'." LeedsLive. Last modified March 29, 2020. https://www.leeds-live.co.uk/news/leeds-news/imam-speaks-out-viral-photo-18001078.

107   West Midlands Police. "Statement Regarding Small Heath Mosque Video | News | West Midlands Police." West Midlands Police. Last modified March 30, 2020. https://west-midlands.police.uk/news/statement-regarding-small-heath-mosque-video#.

108   Tyler, Jane. "Police statement on worshippers gathering at Small Heath mosque 'during lockdown'." Birmingham Mail. Last modified April 1, 2020. https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/police-statement-worshippers-gathering-small-18009022.

109   West Midlands Police. Twitter Post. March 30, 2020, 3:27 PM https://twitter.com/WMPolice/status/1244632265025519618

110   West Midlands Police. Twitter Post. April 2, 2020, 2:47 PM https://twitter.com/WMPolice/status/1245709478898565122

TM

www.tellmamauk.org