

UNITED KINGDOM

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Introduction

There was growing concern about the rise of the right wing in the United Kingdom in 2016, about the deepening crisis in Syria and the displacement of millions, exacerbated by instability in Muslim majority countries. In order to understand this febrile atmosphere, it is necessary to explore many different viewpoints and focus particularly upon the role and positioning of the Government, media and British Muslim groups, both academic and community based. In 2016 British Muslims used various approaches to challenge stereotypical and Islamophobic attacks in the media and in government policy. They achieved this by appealing to regulatory bodies, by increasing personal encounters and by investigating illegality in the interests of civil society in the United Kingdom. Some of those Muslim organisations that attracted the most opprobrium from the Government and media are in fact those with the clearest vision, whose views are crucial to the democratic functioning of the United Kingdom.

In 2016, the political campaign for the election of the US president cast a long shadow over British Muslims with Trump's wilful deployment of Islamophobic rhetoric. By the end of 2016, it was clear that he would become the next President. In 2016, in the United Kingdom, four very different elections had major impacts upon British Muslims and will, in varying degrees, affect the ways in which the United Kingdom is perceived by others and by the British people themselves. The most surprising vote - the EU referendum - will have many unintended consequences and led immediately to a dramatic increase in racist incidents against Muslims and other minority groups.² Secondly, Sadiq Khan was elected Lord Mayor of London. Thirdly, Malia Bouattia was elected President of the National Union of Students (NUS), the first Muslim female to occupy the role. Fourthly, a much lesser noticed election took place for Police and Crime Commissioners, which is important for the civil life of British Muslims, given the regional power wielded by the commissioners. Throughout the country, British Muslims have had to contend with new institutionalised racism in the form of

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² The Home Office report, *Hate Crime in England and Wales, 2015-16*, contains a special report on post-Brexit hate crime and notes a 41% increase in racial and religious hate crime in July 2016 compared to the same month the previous year, July 2015:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/559319/hate-crime-1516-ho-sb1116.pdf. Accessed 9.2.17

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the Government's civil surveillance policy in schools, universities, hospitals and prisons, called Prevent.

Public debates

In 2016 Sadiq Khan, Labour party member and formerly a human rights lawyer, became Mayor of London and British Islam entered the public realm in a more effective way than before: Khan is seen by many as popular and trusted. The London mayoral campaign that led to Khan's election was marred by vicious verbal attacks from the then Prime Minister, David Cameron, the Conservative candidate in the mayoral contest and the Daily Mail, a major right-wing tabloid newspaper. Abuse of Muslim public figures continued in 2016; Sheikh Suliman Ghani, a Muslim community worker and imam, was accused by both the then Prime Minister David Cameron and the Defence Secretary Michael Fallon of links with ISIS. Because there is no evidence of this, both had to apologise. SNP (Scottish Nationalist Party) MP Tasmina Ahmed-Shaikh has described the extreme racism she receives on social media.³ Nadiya Hussain, a national figure viewed positively by many, won the Great British Bake off in 2015 and in 2016 she baked the Queen's 90th birthday cake.⁴ Nadiya was also a guest on the very popular radio programme Desert Island Discs, so her celebrity status lasted beyond the Great British Bake-off. On Desert Island Discs in 2016 she described her life as a British Muslim as being good in so many ways, 'I love being British' but also explained that 'I expect to be shoved, or pushed or verbally abused. It happens, 'cos it's been happening for years'.⁵

The refugee and migrant crisis is now a permanent feature of continental Europe, and fear of migrants was one of the significant features in the British EU referendum, conducted during 2016 and leading to a firm commitment for Britain to leave the European Union. The Brexit vote triggered an increase in hate crimes against many people of different faiths and identities. A Pew research survey reveals the reflexive nature of anti-Muslim hatred; countries that were surveyed were more likely to base their hostility to Syrian refugees on attitudes toward extant Muslim minorities. In the UK, in keeping with the propensity to think

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<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/suliman-gani-michael-fallon-forced-apologise-imam-isis-link-david-cameron-pressure-sadiq-khan-claims-a7024656.html>;

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/snp-s-tasmina-ahmed-sheikh-sickening-online-abuse-brought-me-to-tears-1-4172307> Accessed 9.2.17

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<http://www.itv.com/news/2016-04-21/great-british-bake-off-winner-nadiya-hussain-presents-the-queen-with-her-90th-birthday-cake/> Accessed 9.2.17

⁵ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07nng5i>

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of Muslims and terrorism as connected, the Pew survey showed that 52% of Britons think “Refugees will increase the likelihood of terrorism in our country.”⁶ The Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) led a conference to consider the wide range of political and social debates that will develop during the years following the triggering of Article 50.⁷

The media and the press play an important part in British Muslim life: a new regulator, called IMPRESS, was approved in 2016 by the Press Recognition Panel.⁸ This new regulator is modelled on the recommendations of the Leveson Report into phone hacking, pursuit of celebrities and other press tactics.⁹ Lord Leveson chaired this committee, set up in 2011 in response to evidence of widespread phone message interception by newspaper reporters, and most specifically triggered when it came to light that a reporter had hacked into the voicemail of a teenage girl murder victim, Millie Dowler, in 2011. The creation of this new regulator, IMPRESS, gives hope to the possibility that Islam and Muslims will be more fairly represented in the press in future.

Miqdaad Versi of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) keeps a watching brief to challenge articles in the press that contain inaccuracies on Islam &/or Muslims or imbalance as with the case of Anjem Choudary. His efforts usually result in a correction or an apology depending on the publication involved.¹⁰ 2016 saw the usual press excesses: after the attack in Nice, France, on 4 July 2016, Kelvin MacKenzie of *The Sun* criticised Channel 4 News for letting the Muslim reporter Fatima Manji cover the events.¹¹ Members of Parliament (MPs) challenged the independence of the regulator to allow such fallacious criticism, which appeared to show that MacKenzie was offended that a Muslim reporter was covering a story about a Muslim killer.¹²

The media bias extends to commissioning and airing of programmes that betray clear and un-evidenced prejudice: Trevor Phillips made a documentary for Channel 4 *What British Muslims really think*, based upon a survey that secured opinions disapproving of homosexuality and approving of polygamy from British Muslim respondents. Complaints about the skewed nature of questions and comments about the similarity with views of other

⁶ <http://mend.org.uk/pew-report-reveals-negative-attitudes-toward-muslims-refugees-among-europeans/>

Accessed 9.2.17

⁷ <https://www.mabonline.net/report-mab-brexit-conference/> Accessed 8.4.17

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<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/10/25/impress-approved-as-regulatory-body-amid-press-freedom-fears/>

⁹ www.levesoninquiry.org.uk/ Accessed 9.2.17

¹⁰ <http://www.independent.co.uk/author/miqdaad-versi/>; <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/anjem-choudary-sentence-isis-terrorism-links-guilty-lee-rigby-media-blame-a7195286.html>; <http://www.mcb.org.uk/tag/media-misreporting/> Accessed 08.04.17

¹¹ <http://mend.org.uk/the-sun-correction/> Accessed 10.1.17

¹² <http://mend.org.uk/sun-gutter-journalism-just-sunk-lower/> Accessed 9.2.17

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devout religious communities did not persuade Channel 4 to change their position.¹³ Phillips' assertion of the need for a much more muscular approach to integration can appear necessary when the British press devotes years of coverage to Anjem Choudary - now jailed - yet in fact the media have been complicit in creating a climate of fear about perceived lack of integration of Muslims, by, in this case, providing publicity for Choudary.¹⁴

In another example of a sensationalist story based, on this occasion, on misinterpretation of survey data, in March 2016 *The Sun* newspaper was forced to publish a correction to its November 2015 headline “1 in 5 Brit Muslims’ sympathy for jihadis.” This was based on a Survation poll, which did not mention “jihadis” or “ISIS” or “ISIS fighters” and asked whether British Muslims felt “sympathy with young Muslims who leave the UK to join fighters in Syria.” The operative words were sympathy “with” not sympathy “for”. This headline led to the largest number of complaints the Independent Press Standards Organisation, IPSO¹⁵, had ever received. IPSO was set up in 2014 to be an independent regulator of the British press. IPSO chose MEND as the lead complainant to challenge *The Sun*. After months, IPSO concluded that *The Sun*, the biggest selling newspaper in the United Kingdom, had been responsible for coverage that was “significantly misleading.”

The BBC2 television series *Muslims like us* received mixed reviews: over nine days, ten British Muslims with differing views were filmed as they spent time together and the resulting film footage was edited down into a two part documentary. By focussing only on Muslims, this format was considered by some commentators to provide sensationalist exaggeration of differences rather than similarities between and among Muslims for the sake of reality TV. Yet the series also showed some authentic and enlightening debates, particularly facilitating a platform for articulate Muslim women to demonstrate balance and compassion in their British-Muslim identities.¹⁶

¹³ www.channel4.com/.../c4-survey-and-documentary-reveals-what-british-muslims-real;

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/apr/21/channel-4-what-british-muslims-really-think-complaints>

Accessed 10.1.17

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<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/aug/17/playing-into-hands-of-anjem-choudary-counter-terror-strategy-extremism> Accessed 10.1.17

¹⁵ <https://www.ipso.co.uk/> Accessed 10.1.17

¹⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/dec/14/panel-muslims-like-us-islam> Accessed 10.1.17

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In January 2016, David Cameron¹⁷ sparked a debate by proposing that Muslims, especially women, are not learning English and must attend classes to do so. He cited this idea as a way of reducing extremism, and suggested deportation if Muslim women did not accede. It led to a Twitter frenzy by high functioning, successful Muslim women challenging his premise that Muslim women are “traditionally submissive”. The theme of oppressed women emerged again in December 2016 in Dame Louise Casey’s review.¹⁸ In 2015 Dame Louise Casey was asked to undertake a review into integration and opportunity in Britain’s most isolated and deprived communities. After a year-long study of community cohesion in Britain, Casey, a senior civil servant in the government, branded ministerial attempts to boost integration of ethnic minorities as amounting to little more than “saris, samosas and steel drums for the already well-intentioned”.¹⁹ She recommended that communities that are increasingly divided by culture, background and economic hardship should be encouraged to cohere better. When interviewed on radio she talked about oppression of women in Muslim communities. She did not recommend systemic, government-led amelioration of poverty for all deprived communities, although she identified this as a major driver in dysfunctional communities. In its 14th year, the Muslim News Awards for Excellence 2016 again celebrated and rewarded many British Muslims and non-Muslims for their contribution to British life in sport, culture and many other areas.²⁰

Transnational Links

As a result of the war in Syria around 5 million have fled their country.²¹ The ensuing refugee crisis has put great pressure on mainland Europe, and this was used in the 2016 Brexit campaign.²² Many British citizens, Muslim and others, are concerned at the low numbers of Syrian refugees being brought to the United Kingdom. In 2016 the UK government decided to resume training of moderate Syrian rebels, despite the difficulty of discerning what

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<http://www.npr.org/2016/01/22/464013741/david-camerons-call-for-muslim-women-to-learn-english-sparks-outrage> Accessed 28.3.17

¹⁸ https://www.gov.uk/government/.../The_Casey_Review_Executive_Summary.pdf Accessed 28.3.17

¹⁹

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/575973/The_Casey_Report.pdf;

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/04/social-integration-louise-casey-uk-report-condemns-failing-s> Accessed 28.3.17

²⁰ <https://muslimnews.co.uk/news/awards/winners-presenters-sponsors-and-categories/> Accessed 8.4.17

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<https://www.mercycorps.org.uk/articles/iraq-jordan-lebanon-syria-turkey/quick-facts-what-you-need-know-about-syria-crisis> 28.3.17

²² <https://www.theguardian.com/arts/art-design/photography> Accessed 8.4.17

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“moderate” means.²³ The media publishes reports on young women going out to Syria to become “jihadi brides”.²⁴ Humanitarian support provided by British Muslims is significant, despite pressure from the counter terror legislation.²⁵ The war in Yemen continues, and in 2016 it was agreed that a judicial review would take place about UK government arms sales to Saudi Arabia, widely suspected of being used in Yemen.²⁶

In 2016, the civil peace of Turkey, fragile for some time, was finally ruptured by the instability of neighbouring Syria, by Turkey’s stance towards Kurds and the attendant upheavals.²⁷ The Turkish speaking communities in the United Kingdom number around 400,000, of whom many live in and around London.²⁸ On 15 July 2016, a failed Turkish coup²⁹ was blamed by President Erdogan on the Gülen movement.³⁰ Despite vehement denials of any involvement in the coup by Fetullah Gülen and his followers in the Hizmet movement, purges followed. Hizmet members and even those who comment on Hizmet activities were hard hit in UK, many having relatives in Turkey who are caught up in Erdogan’s retaliation.³¹ In Turkey thousands of Turks have been dismissed from their jobs in public life and Kurdish groups are at war with the Government. Relatives in the United Kingdom of Hizmet supporters and pro-Kurdish groups cannot support those in Turkey for fear of making the situation worse by association and for fear of being reported to the Turkish government.³² Turkish Muslims are not often headlined, but in the electoral campaigning for Brexit, the *Sunday Express* proclaimed that 12 million Turks would come to the United Kingdom if we stayed in the European Union.³³ There is no foundation for this assertion, as the *Sunday Express* had to admit.³⁴ Yet when the British Government’s Foreign Affairs Committee

²³ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/10/24/britain-to-resume-training-syrian-rebels/> Accessed 28.3.17

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<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/isis-british-brides-kadiza-sultana-girls-women-syria-married-death-killed-agsta-mahmood-islamic-state-a7187751.html> Accessed 28.3.17

²⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com> › World › Counter-terrorism policy Accessed 8.4.17

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<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/30/british-arms-exports-to-saudi-arabia-to-be-scrutinised-in-high-court> 28.3.17

²⁷ <https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmfaff/615/615.pdf> 28.3.17

²⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Turks Accessed 8.4.17

²⁹ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/12/turkey-failed-coup-attempt-161217032345594.html>
Accessed 28.3.17

³⁰

https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2016/20161109_report_turkey.pdf Accessed 28.3.17

³¹ <http://www.ozcankeles.org/press-release-ozcan-keles-english-84/>

³² www.hizmetstudies.org/150A_7316-16-jul-uk-message-calling-on-people-to-report-h...;

³³

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/17/a-vote-for-remain-is-a-vote-for-mass-immigration-from-turkey/>
Accessed 28.3.17

³⁴

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/greenslade/2016/jun/20/sunday-express-admits-12m-turks-coming-to-uk-story-was-inaccurate> Accessed 28.3.17

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visited Turkey after the 2016 failed coup, several witnesses expressed concern that the way in which Turkey was discussed during the UK's EU referendum campaign, and the UK's ultimate decision to leave the EU, would damage relations with Turkey.³⁵

In 2016 the putative role of 'Political Islam' and/or the Muslim Brotherhood in transnational political movements (Egypt, Israel, Palestine and Tunisia for example) continued to be explored by the British government. Since the Egyptian military coup of 2013 that deposed the democratically elected Muslim Brotherhood, there has been heightened information gathering. The Foreign Affairs Committee conducted their own enquiry into 'Political Islam' and the Muslim Brotherhood in 2016. This was partly because a previous report by Sir John Jenkins was never made public or even accessible to parliamentarians, and some felt that his role as ambassador to Saudi Arabia (where there is concern about the Muslim Brotherhood) had made his appointment to lead the Muslim Brotherhood Review misguided.³⁶

In Britain there is continuing anti-coup sentiment with regard to political developments in Egypt. 2016 sees an increase in collaboration among pressure groups, with non-partisan organisations sharing platforms and joint events together with others that they may have declined to be associated with in the past.³⁷

Law and Domestic Politics

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)³⁸ recommends strongly that the British government engages directly with British Muslim communities to tackle Islamophobia and give British Muslims a voice in issues that affect them adversely. This advice clearly cuts across British governmental policies on a range of issues: for the current British government, support for Palestine is interpreted as being dangerous.³⁹ Yet many British Muslims are concerned about the infractions of international law in the occupied territories.⁴⁰ In 2016, Theresa May, as Home Secretary, announced a review of Sharia courts as part of the counter terror strategy.⁴¹ This will be chaired by Professor Siddiqui who will

³⁵ <https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmfaff/615/615.pdf> Accessed 28.3.17

³⁶ <https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmfaff/118/118.pdf>; <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/uk-political-islam-report-main-findings-631341801> Accessed 8.4.17

³⁷ www.whoissisi.com; <http://t.co/2KIQfjr9P2>; <http://ercegypt.org/?lang=en>; <https://www.facebook.com/EgyRevCouncil/#> Accessed 10.4.17

³⁸ <http://mend.org.uk/ecri-report-calls-uk-government-establish-real-dialogue-muslims>; Accessed 28.3.17

https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/.../ecri/.../United_Kingdom/GBR-CbC-V-2016-038-ENG.p... Accessed 28.3.17

³⁹ www.middleeasteye.net/.../leaked-uk-counter-extremism-documents-cite-interest-pales... Accessed 28.12.16

⁴⁰ www.palestinecampaign.org Accessed 28.12.16

⁴¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/independent-review-into-sharia-law-launched> Accessed 28.12.16

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lead a panel of experts including experienced family law barrister Sam Momtaz, retired high court judge Sir Mark Hedley and specialist family law lawyer Anne Marie Hutchinson OBE QC. The panel will be advised by 2 male religious and theological experts – Imam Sayed Ali Abbas Razawi and Imam Qari Asim. A major area of investigation will be the possibility of Muslim women being discriminated against by sharia court rulings.

The term BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) is used to refer to ‘non-white’ Britons. A BME 2020 strategy was announced, to ensure that BME workers have more job opportunities⁴². The Ministry of Justice published a report on Muslim prison chaplains, expressing concerns about their perceived “fundamentalism”.⁴³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/review-launched-to-help-bme-workers-progress-in-their-careers>

The *Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015* and particularly its attendant guidance received a great deal of criticism in 2016.⁴⁴ Prevent and Channel, implementations of the guidance to the Act, are seen as dangerous by a range of key players. Some academics are active, such as Miller, Norris and Scott-Baumann⁴⁵. In 2016, CAGE, an independent group that is not aligned with the Government, published its research on the psychological model (known as ERG22+) that was used to develop the Prevent strategy.⁴⁶ CAGE is an NGO, describing itself as “an independent advocacy organisation working to empower communities impacted by the War on Terror policies worldwide.” The CAGE report demonstrates the risks of developing a surveillance model based on possible intent: “pre-criminal” behaviours are imagined behaviours or thoughts about illegal deeds, analogous to the fictional examples in the film *Minority Report*.

However, CAGE makes the error committed by most institutions with a duty of care to children or adults, by mistaking the meaning of the phrase “have due regard to” in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act (CTSA) 2015: 26(1). CAGE and many others believe

⁴² <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/review-launched-to-help-bme-workers-progress-in-their-careers>

Accessed 28.12.16

⁴³ <https://www.gov.uk/...prisons.../summary-of-the-main-findings-of-the-review-of-islam>... Accessed 28.12.16

⁴⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/counter-terrorism-and-security-bill> Accessed 28.12.16

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<http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2016/09/fifteen-years-911-how-uk-bypassed-justice-become-counter-terrorism-state> Accessed 28.12.16

⁴⁶ CAGE-The Science-Pre-Crime-Report.pdf

<https://cage.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/CAGE-Science-Pre-Crime-Report.pdf>; www.cage. ngo

Accessed 28.12.16

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that this means that schools, universities, hospitals, prisons etc. must comply with guidance literally⁴⁷:

The Government has therefore provided a framework for public sectors workers, under Section 26(1) of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, to spot the signs of radicalisation, as these employees are under a statutory duty to do so. Failure to comply may result in the public sector worker being taken to court and potentially punished for non-compliance. (CAGE The science of pre-crime 2016: 20).

In fact, the legal obligation is to ‘have due regard’ to the possibilities of someone being radicalised, and this can include deciding that one’s organisation is taking strong enough measures already.⁴⁸ A group like CAGE is vilified by the Government and by the British press, so their trenchant critique of “pre-criminal behaviour” is presumably ignored or discounted by many, yet there is also plenty of dissent about Prevent from within establishment groups, of which a few are summarised here: the UN special rapporteur warned that the Prevent strategy, implemented as guidance to the CTSA, could end up promoting terrorism, not inhibiting it.⁴⁹ David Anderson, Independent reviewer of terrorism legislation, repeatedly called for Prevent to be independently assessed and accepted that Muslims see it as “spying”.⁵⁰ The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) seeks to provide better community support than Prevent.⁵¹ The UK government’s parliamentary Joint Committee for Human Rights (JCHR) published a critical review of government policy on terrorism, questioning definitions of extremism, radicalisation, nonviolent extremism etc. and challenging the governmental attachment to the so-called “escalator model”, in which conservative religious beliefs are thought to lead to radicalisation and potentially to violent extremism.⁵² The Home Affairs Committee published a report entitled Countering Extremism which asserted that most British Muslims subscribe to British societal and civic values. In this context of compliance the Home Affairs Committee questioned the Government’s approach, which focusses upon Muslims as a presumed greater source of terrorist activity, rather than, for example, the Far Right.

⁴⁷ Scott-Baumann A and Tomlinson H (2016) Cultural cold wars: the risk of anti-‘extremism’ policy for academic freedom of expression Research Professional <http://representingislamонcampussoas.co.uk/cultural-cold-wars/> Accessed 28.12.16

⁴⁸ <http://representingislamонcampussoas.co.uk/cultural-cold-wars/> Accessed 28.12.16

⁴⁹

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/apr/21/government-prevent-strategy-promoting-extremism-mai-na-kiai> Accessed 28.12.16

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<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/muslims-prevent-scheme-seen-as-spying-says-terrorism-law-watchdog-a7347751.html> Accessed 27.12.16

⁵¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/terrorism>; Accessed 28.12.16

⁵²

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/joint-select/human-rights-committee/news-parliament-2015/counter-extremism-report-published-16-17/> Accessed 22.11.16

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A major omission in the Home Affairs Committee Report was the failure to mention Channel which has proved controversial. This programme, Channel, is the part of the counter-terror strategy that encourages those with safeguarding responsibilities for children, duty of care for young adults or generally concerned citizens to report individuals to Channel for correction of potentially dangerous views.⁵³ A Freedom of Information request was made in June 2016 on Channel's work, which made public the fact that over 1,000 children had been referred to Channel in 2015.⁵⁴ The possibility that this was disproportionate to the terror risk was endorsed by research conducted by the Soros Foundation. The Foundation conducted research in the UK and published a Justice Initiative report *Eroding Trust 2016* which demonstrates the dangerous impact of Channel and other forms of surveillance and suspicion across universities, prisons, schools and health services.⁵⁵ Despite this increasing body of evidence to challenge the Government's counterterrorist strategy in its impact upon civil society – challenges even from within Government - the Conservative Party government appeared in 2016 to be consistently resistant to criticism and minded to strengthen the implementation of the guidance. Under David Cameron's premiership the Queen's speech showcased a new extremism bill, and his successor Theresa May continued with the same intent.⁵⁶

The recording of Islamophobic crime by police forces began in 2016, after a long MEND campaign starting in 2012.⁵⁷ The request to record Islamophobia as a separate crime, as is already the case with anti-Semitism, was achieved by MEND lobbying the Police and Crime Commissioners, leading Prime Minister Cameron to announce in 2015 that from 2016 all police forces would be required to record Islamophobia and the United Kingdom will be able to disclose levels of Islamophobia in police-recorded crime data.⁵⁸

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<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/home-affairs-committee/inquiries/parliament-2015/countering-extremism/>;

<http://mend.org.uk/hasc-publishes-report-countering-extremism/> Accessed 28.12.16

⁵⁴ www.thetimes.co.uk/.../schools-refer-five-children-a-day-to-steer-them-away-from-ter...; Accessed 12.12.16

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425189/Channel_Duty_Guidance_April_2015.pdf Accessed 1.12.16

⁵⁵ https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/.../eroding-trust-20161017_0.pdf... Accessed 11.11.16

⁵⁶

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/14/queens-speech-cameron-promises-crackdown-on-extremists/>
Accessed 12.11.16

⁵⁷ mend.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/PCC_Manifesto_2016_summary.pdf Accessed 12.11.16

⁵⁸

<http://mend.org.uk/pm-announces-islamophobia-to-be-recorded-as-a-separate-category-of-crime/> Accessed 12.01.17

Activities and Initiatives of Main Muslim Organisations

In 2016 Muslim charities continued working across Europe and beyond to support displaced families and individuals from Syria and elsewhere, and they co-ordinate their responses with non-Muslim groups.⁵⁹ In 2016 much work focussed upon the perceived need in Muslim communities to embrace Prevent and protect the young from indoctrination online by radical preachers (Sara Khan's Inspire and Quilliam).⁶⁰ There was also pressure brought to bear on the Government in 2016 by the Muslim Council of Britain, which opposed the Prevent counter-terror guidance as discriminatory.⁶¹ In 2016 community activism continued that aimed to track and reduce Islamophobia (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks: Tell MAMA).⁶² MEND (Muslim Engagement and Development) encouraged British Muslims to become involved in local and national media and politics.⁶³ Unfortunately, tensions surface periodically among some groups; in December 2016 Tell MAMA made unsubstantiated accusations against MEND at a hearing before a parliamentary select committee.⁶⁴ Numerous organisations provide interfaith guidance: Three Faiths Forum, Faith Matters, the Joseph Interfaith Foundation and Faith in Society⁶⁵. Some groups challenge the dominant political ideologies, of which CAGE is the most high profile.

In 2016 NGOs, think tanks, charities and academic groups permeate and enrich the invisible membrane between grassroots community activism and higher education interests in research. Common ground between academic and community based groups has been created in the last decade by shared interests in "impact": making a positive difference in civil society and being able to prove it. Accompanying this cross fertilisation, and driving it forward is increased self-confidence among British Muslims about the sort of research they value and are interested in commissioning, co-producing and reading. MEND used academic research to inform its projects on self-awareness (what the community learns about itself from academic research) and self-projection (how research can be marshalled to improve understanding of British Muslims). The academic community will work increasingly with and study groups like MEND because sector-specific demands for having impact are being calibrated to measure excellence.

⁵⁹ www.helpforsyria.org.uk/16-charities-helping-syrian-refugees/ Accessed 12.01.17

⁶⁰ www.wewillinspire.com/ ;

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/meet-british-muslim-who-wants-lead-islamic-reformation-1900708928>

Accessed 14.3.17

⁶¹ <http://5pillarsuk.com/2016/10/23/mcb-denies-proposing-an-alternative-to-prevent/> Accessed 11.11.16

⁶² <https://tellmamauk.org/> Accessed 7.4.17

⁶³ www.wewillinspire.com/; <https://tellmamauk.org/>; mend.org.uk/ Accessed 7.4.17

⁶⁴ <http://mend.org.uk/mend-responds-libellous-defamatory-attacks-tell-mama/> Accessed 7.4.17

⁶⁵ www.3ff.org.uk/; <https://www.faith-matters.org/>; www.josephinterfaithfoundation.org/; faithinsociety.org.uk Accessed 7.4.17

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In addition more academics became interested in the many issues that face British Muslims and are arguably, a reflection of dilemmas facing all British citizens, such as class, racism, poverty and gender matters. The Muslims in Britain Research Network (MBRN) brings together academic and grassroots networks to discuss and resolve issues of concern.⁶⁶ In 2016, this resulted in MBRN membership exceeding 300 (almost doubling from several years prior), along with a continued rise in the number and range of participants at bi-annual MBRN events. Particular highlights of 2016 included the well-attended conference on “Islam and Peaceful Relations”, hosted by the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations at Coventry University, and the rapid rise of wider public engagement with MBRN social media platforms. We also see the steady increase of activities in 2016 in and around BRAIS (British Association of Islamic Studies), which provides a new platform for any academic interested in Islam and British Muslims.⁶⁷

In order to facilitate proper democratic relationships between grassroots organisations and governmental agencies, it is often necessary to cut through narratives that seem to exclude certain groups. The MCB has spearheaded community engagement around mosques⁶⁸ and raises interest about Islamophobia.⁶⁹ In 2016 CAGE produced a report that asserted the use by Government of a powerful counter-terror narrative machine (RICU; Research, Information and Communications Unit) that uses grassroots organisations to disseminate government information. Whether they realise it or not, certain grassroots organizations become the vehicle for counter- terror narratives with the help of a media company called Breakthrough Media.⁷⁰ In 2016 CAGE argued that RICU (Research, Information and Communications Unit) should be accountable to the Government, and that its covert actions cannot reasonably be argued to further the cause of counter-terror – on the contrary, this exacerbates mistrust when grassroots groups realise, as they often do, that they have been “used” as the carrier for governmental counter-narratives about Syria and charitable giving, for example. CAGE research has identified a trend in RICU’s work towards discrediting community voices that

⁶⁶ www.mbrn.org.uk/ Accessed 7.4.17

⁶⁷ www.brais.ac.uk/ Accessed 10.1.17

⁶⁸ www.visitmymosque.org/ Accessed 10.1.17

⁶⁹ <http://www.mcb.org.uk/rise-in-attacks-against-muslims-muslim-council-of-britain-calls-for-political-leadership-on-worrying-growth-in-islamophobia/> Accessed 12.12.16

⁷⁰ <https://www.cageuk.org/publication/we-are-completely-independent/> Accessed 12.12.16

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seek to challenge the global “war on terror” – and CAGE itself has been targeted, dubbed “Salafi-Islamist” and a “Jihadist prisoner lobby group.”⁷¹

MEND has developed a constructive initiative called *Islamophobia Awareness Month*. In 2016, for the fourth year running, 50 events took place across the country with the title “British Muslims: Best of British”. Each event showcased the major contributions that Muslims make to their country: role models including Mo Farah, Nadiya Hussain, Moeen Ali, Sayeeda Warsi and Sadiq Khan; the young age profile of the community - which reflects both the growing numbers who are entering higher education and also the numbers who will contribute a larger proportion of the working age population in future years and female entrepreneurs.⁷²

In conclusion it is clear that in 2016 British Muslims responded assertively and positively by challenging stereotypical and Islamophobic attacks in the media: protests were loud and clear about Trevor Phillips’ TV programme and *The Sun*’s distortion of the Survation report was successfully challenged by MEND. In government policy, the guidance attached to the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 focusses upon Muslims in a discriminatory way. In 2016 MCB, MEND, Tell MAMA and other groups kept a record of what is happening, and CAGE conducted meticulous investigations on the implementation of Prevent (RICU) and unmasked the model upon which Prevent is based (ERG22+). With regard to general civil society relationships, the *Islamophobia month* (MEND) and *Visit my mosque* (MCB) are ways of engaging directly with non-Muslims.

Muslim Population: History and Demographics

Statistics on British Muslims are found in collated outcome statistics from the 2011 Census.⁷³ The 2011 census still provides the most comprehensive source of data on British Muslim populations, with the attendant analysis by MCB. The Muslim populations of the United Kingdom reflect the British imperial past in the Indian subcontinent, yet Muslims

⁷¹

<http://standpointmag.co.uk/node/6683/full>;

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/may/02/inside-ricu-the-shadowy-propaganda-unit-inspired-by-the-cold-war> Accessed 12.12.16

⁷² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BBKHPjZIgpA&feature=youtu.be> Accessed 12.12.16

⁷³ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census> ; “What does the Census tell us about religion in 2011?”, www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_310454.pdf. Ali, Sundas, *British Muslims in Numbers* (London: Muslim Council of Britain, 2015), www.mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/MCBCensusReport_2015.pdf, accessed 5 January 2016.

have been in the United Kingdom since the 7th century. In the last 30 years, displaced Somalis, Iraqis and Syrians have settled here as a result of wars. Nearly half of all British Muslims were born in the UK and they are a young population: almost half of British Muslims (48%) are aged under 25 (1.3 million) and 88% aged under 50 (2.4 million).⁷⁴

There is a new set of statistics, the 2016 report *Scottish Muslims in Numbers*, which is modelled on MCB's 2015 *British Muslims in Numbers* and provides an important variation on national figures. This Scottish report reflects changing patterns in the shape of the United Kingdom as the executive powers of devolved regions increase. In addition, the introduction of local decision-making structures (for example metro-mayors), places greater emphasis on disaggregating data by region instead of the customary reliance on national statistics for identifying inequalities.⁷⁵ Inequalities are identified by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded CoDE (Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity) with a focus upon education, employment, housing and health.⁷⁶

Muslim Population

England and Wales: 3 million Muslims⁷⁷

Scotland: 76,000 Muslims

Northern Ireland: 3,800 Muslims.

Ethnic/National Backgrounds

Largest ethnic/national groups in England and Wales:⁷⁸

White total: 8%.

Mixed ethnic group: 4%

Asian/Asian British: 68% (includes Pakistani 38%, Bangladeshi 15% and Indian 7%)

Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: 10%

Other Muslims: 11% (includes new category for Arabs at 7%)

Inner-Islamic Groups

No official data available, but according to mosque statistics, which are inaccurate, in 2014 roughly 4.1% of mosques in the United Kingdom were Shi'i.⁷⁹

⁷⁴

⁷⁵ http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/scottish_muslims_in_numbers_web.pdf: MCBCensusReport_2015.pdf

⁷⁶ <http://www.ethnicity.ac.uk/research/research-partners/local-ethnic-inequalities/>

⁷⁷ <https://www.ons.gov.uk> accessed 1.3.17

⁷⁸ Excel data on ethnicity is available to download from the Office of National Statistics, www.ons.gov.uk, Accessed 3. 3.17.

⁷⁹ http://www.muslimsinbritain.org/resources/masjid_report.pdf. Accessed 27.2.17.

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Geographical Spread

Greater London Authority data drawing on ONS Annual Population Survey puts Muslim population in London at 15% in 2015. Muslims are third largest group (15%) in the capital after Christian (49%) and “No Religion” (25%).⁸⁰

Elsewhere in the country, Blackburn has a 27% Muslim population and Bradford, Luton, Slough, and Birmingham each have Muslim populations of over 20%.⁸¹

Number of Mosques

1,891 is the rough estimate of mosques as of 2016.⁸²

Muslim Burial Sites

- Garden of Peace, Elmbridge Road, Hainault, Ilford IG6 3SW
- City of London, City of London Cemetery, Aldersbrook Road, London, E12 5DQ
- Bury Cemetery, St Peter's Road, Bury
- Brookwood Cemetery, Glades House, Cemetery Pales, Brookwood, Woking, Surrey GU24 0BL
- North Watford Cemetery, North Western Avenue, Watford, WD25 0AW

“Chaplaincy” in State Institutions

The Markfield Institute of Higher Education (MIHE) chaplaincy certificate course ran for the 14th year in 2016, having started in 2003. This is the only Muslim chaplain training course running in UK for work in hospitals, universities, military or prisons. The Muslim Chaplains Association, attached to Her Majesty’s Prison Service (HMPS) provides prison service training.⁸³ In 2016,

⁸⁰

<https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/percentage-population-religion-borough/resource/abfb6175-f489-4c6e-ad2-f4d323183224#>

⁸¹ Office For National Statistics ONS Accessed 4.4.17

⁸² http://www.muslimsinbritain.org/resources/masjid_report.pdf. Accessed 27.2.2017

<http://www.muslimsinbritain.org/index.html>. Accessed 27.2.2017

⁸³ (<http://mca-hmps.co.uk/>) Accessed 18.12.16

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the prison chief rejected accusation that prison chaplains are often followers of the Deobandi school in South Asian Islam and therefore radical⁸⁴

Most higher education institutions (HEIs) have a chaplaincy or faith advisor who represents the Islamic tradition. Funding models vary, although many work in a voluntary capacity, some being linked to local mosques or are academic staff who happen to be Muslim. Universities with religiously diverse student bodies tend to have the most well developed chaplaincy support for religious minorities, including Muslims.

Halal Products

Halal slaughter is permitted in the UK, and halal products are relatively easy to obtain. They are becoming more easily available in supermarkets, with some operating a halal meat counter (e.g. the Asda store in Barking and Morrisons in Preston). Shazan and Haloodies are two halal brands readily available in supermarkets.

Places of Islamic Learning and Education

For details of Muslim schools and seminaries in the UK, see the Association of Muslim Schools website: <http://ams-uk.org/>. See Muslim faith leaders training report (2010)⁸⁵ for discussion of Darul Uloom provision.

- Cambridge Muslim College (14 St. Paul's Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EZ, tel.: ++44 1223355235, www.cambridgemuslimcollege.org)

⁸⁴

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/uk-prisons-chief-defends-muslim-chaplains-over-disgraceful-extremism-2052393559> Accessed 27.2.2017

⁸⁵

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/muslim-faith-leaders-training-and-development-now-and-in-the-future> Accessed 22.12.16

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- Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies (Marston Road, Oxford OX3 0EE, www.occis.ac.uk/)
- The Islamic College, London (133 High Road, Willesden, London NW10 2SW, tel.: ++44 2084519993, www.islamic-college.ac.uk/)
- The Markfield Institute of Higher Education (MIHE, The Islamic Foundation, Markfield Conference Centre, Ratby Lane, Markfield, Leicestershire, LE67 9SY, www.islamic-foundation.org.uk/User/Home.aspx). The first academic institution for the study of Islam in an Islamic institution within the context of Higher Education in the U.K.
- Cambridge Islamic College (58 Sturton Street, Cambridge CB1 2QA, tel.: ++44 1223 655223, www.cambridgeislamiccollege.org)

Muslim Media and Publications

- *The Muslim News* (PO Box 380, Harrow, Middlesex HA2 6LL, United Kingdom, www.muslimnews.co.uk/)
- British Muslim TV (www.britishmuslim.tv/)
- Islam Channel (428-432 Ley Street, Ilford, Essex IG2 7BS, www.islamchannel.tv/)
- *The Muslim Weekly* (Suite 8, Montefiore Centre, Hanbury Street, London E1 5HZ, www.themuslimweekly.com/)

Main Muslim Organisations

- The Muslim Council of Britain (PO Box 57330, London, E1 2WJ, tel.: ++44 8452626786, www.mcb.org.uk/). It is a non-sectarian body working for the common good. The Muslim Council of Britain is a national representative Muslim umbrella body with over 500 affiliated national, regional, and local organisations, mosques, charities, and schools.

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- Ahmadiyya Muslim Community UK (16 Gressenhall Road, London SW18 5QL U.K
Phone +44 (208) 870-8517, www.alislam.org)
- Muslim Youth Helpline (MYH FREEPOST RTRZ-RXTY-AUZR, tel.: ++44 2074358171, www.myh.org.uk/).
- Radical Middle Way (www.radicalmiddleway.co.uk/). Founded in the wake of the 7/7 attacks, it promotes a mainstream, moderate understanding of Islam that young people can relate to.
- Muslim Engagement and Development - MEND, (info@mend.org.uk, <http://mend.org.uk/advocacy/>). An organisation to empower and encourage British Muslims within local communities to be more actively involved in British media and politics.
- The New Muslims Project, The Islamic Foundation (Ratby Lane, Markfield, Leicestershire, LE67 9SY, tel.: ++44 1530243937, www.newmuslimsproject.net). A network for new Muslims.
- Al-Khoei Foundation (Stone Hall, Chevening Road, London, NW6 6TN, tel.: ++44 2073724049, ++44 2073720694). One of the largest international Shi'i Muslim organisations. It operates numerous schools, colleges, universities, Islamic, and community centres around the world.
- Faith Matters (Fourth Floor, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, Bloomsbury, London, WC1H 9BB, tel.: ++44 8000280826, www.faith-matters.org).
- Muslim Council of Wales (Broadway House, Broadway, Cardiff, CF24 1PU, tel.: ++44 2920487667, www.muslimcouncilwales.org.uk/muslimcouncil/). A broad-based umbrella organisation for Islamic organisations in Wales.
- Islamic Relief UK (16 Lower Marsh, London SE1 7RJ, tel.: ++44 2075933232, www.islamic-relief.org.uk/). Charity organisation.
- Human Appeal (1 Cheadle Point, Carrs Road, Cheadle, SK8 2BL. <https://humanappeal.org.uk>). Charity organisation.
- UK Islamic Mission (UKIM, 202 North Gower Street, NW1 2LY, tel.: ++44 2073872157, www.ukim.org/contactus/) The UK Islamic Mission is a national organisation with over 45 branches and Islamic centres working across the United Kingdom. The UK Islamic Mission was formed in 1962. The activities of UKIM are diverse, from building new mosques, relief work, to *da'wa* and youth work.
- CAGE (Premier Business Centre, 47-49 Park Royal Road, London, NW10 7LQ, UK, +44 207 377 6700, www.cageuk.org). An independent advocacy organisation working to empower communities impacted by the so-called War on Terror.
- Tell MAMA (<http://telltママauk.org>). Tell MAMA supports victims of anti-Muslim hate and is a public service which also measures and monitors anti-Muslim incidents.
- Islamic Society of Britain (26 York Street, London, W1U 6PZ, tel.: ++44 3003651098, www.isb.org.uk). The Islamic Society of Britain is a community based

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charity and non-profit company. Established in 1990, it has a British Muslim identity and aims to promote greater understanding and awareness of Islam, to organise, educate and enhance the development of British Muslim communities, to encourage positive contribution to British society and the promotion of social justice.

- Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS) (38 Mapesbury Road, London, NW2 4JD, tel.: +44 2084524493, www.fosis.org.uk). Established in 1963, FOSIS is a body that caters to the needs of Muslim students in further and higher education across the UK and Ireland.
- Muslim Association of Britain (124 Harrowdene Road, Wembley, Middlesex HA0 2JF, tel.: +44 2089089109, www.mabonline.net/).