



THE NEW NORM OF ANTI-MUSLIM HATE

Tell MAMA Report
2025



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Elementary but Urgent: The Time to Say No to all Forms of Hate is Now!

The Tell MAMA report ‘The New Norm of Anti-Muslim Hate’ provides a sobering and detailed assessment of the sharp rise in Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred across the United Kingdom over the past year. With more than 6,000 verified incidents documented in 2024, the figures mark the highest in Tell MAMA’s 12-year history, representing a staggering 165% increase compared to 2022. While these numbers are alarming, the report goes beyond the raw data, painting a complex picture of escalating online and offline intolerance spread across various aspects of daily life.

The breadth of hostility documented is as concerning as its prevalence. Life-threatening attacks, incitement to violence, and dehumanizing rhetoric accompany acts of verbal abuse, harassment, bullying and discrimination. These incidents occurred in various settings—places of worship, public spaces, schools, workplaces, and private homes—and targeted public figures and ordinary citizens, highlighting that no environment or individual is entirely immune. Specific events, such as the horrific Southport murders, the UK General Elections, and the Hamas-led terrorist attacks in Israel on 7 October 2023 and the subsequent war in Gaza, resulted in notable spikes in cases. However, what is most alarming is the sustained baseline of prejudice, which the report attributes to factors such as online misinformation and disinformation, inflammatory public discourse, conspiracy theories, racialized and gendered stereotypes, and sensationalist media narratives.

The report provides a comprehensive analysis not only of the incidents themselves but also of the societal fractures they reveal. It humanizes stark statistics by highlighting the personal impact behind the numbers—stories of trauma, fear, marginalization, and disrupted lives that often go untold. The rise in hate documented in this report is not just a concern for the Muslim community; it has widespread implications for the cohesion and vitality of society as a whole. If unchecked, such behaviors risk normalizing intolerance, undermining efforts to cultivate inclusive, respectful communities, and eroding the social fabric. The persistence of these biases reflects broader societal dysfunctions, echoing the anxieties and prejudices of perpetrators while exposing weaknesses in the systems that fail to prevent such hatred. Similar to other forms of racialized prejudice, anti-Muslim hatred poses a threat not only to the targeted community but also to the democratic and inclusive values that sustain a healthy, thriving society.

What makes the report particularly compelling is its measured tone and scholarly rigour. Despite its alarming findings, it avoids sensationalism, presenting its conclusions through comprehensive data and thoughtful analysis grounded in established research. Its transparent methodology and robust framework inspire confidence in the evidence and recommendations. This careful balance makes the report a valuable resource for a broad audience, including policymakers, academics, educators, and the general public.

The Tell MAMA report not only outlines the problem but also offers actionable solutions. Its recommendations emphasize the need for a whole-of-society approach to tackling Islamophobia. Grounded in international best practices, these proposals advocate for educational campaigns to dismantle stereotypes and counter misinformation, policy changes to address systemic vulnerabilities, and community engagement to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion at all levels. Schools, workplaces, civic institutions, government agencies, and individuals are all called upon to play their part in addressing incidents of hate and the biases that fuel them.

Ultimately, this report is a chronicle of increasing hate and a convincing call to action. It urges us to face the uncomfortable truths about prejudice in our society and to take meaningful and urgent steps toward change. Its findings and proposals compel policymakers, community leaders, educators, and individuals to consider their roles in shaping a future where diversity is valued, equality is upheld, and inclusion becomes a shared responsibility. The time to act is now, and our collective duty is to ensure that hatred and intolerance have no place in the communities we strive to create.



Professor Ahmed Shaheed,
Essex Human Rights Centre and former
United Nations Special Rapporteur on
Freedom of Religion or Belief

A Troubling Year in 2024 - The State of Anti-Muslim Hate

Since 2011 when Tell MAMA was founded, we have assisted and helped over 51,000 Muslims in the United Kingdom when they have been targeted by anti-Muslim hate. We have been the leading service supporting victims of anti-Muslim hate and working with police forces to ensure that they receive access to justice and that perpetrators of anti-Muslim hate are brought to justice.

Yet, the state of anti-Muslim hate in the UK continues to be deeply troubling. My team and I have heard and seen the mental health pain, the emotional disturbances and the physical strife that anti-Muslim hate has caused in the lives of British Muslims simply going about their daily duties. We have heard the fear in their voices, the sense of them ‘feeling under attack’ when repeatedly being targeted and the sense of trauma that has caused the ‘flight’ parts of their emotional responses to be triggered. This has led to a 27% increment in the use of Tell MAMA’s counselling services which have been free to use for those who report to us.

2024 saw the highest number of anti-Muslim hate incidents and cases reported to Tell MAMA with over 6,000 cases reported to us and this report highlights that collectively, the number of anti-Muslim hate cases that Tell MAMA worked through and verified topped over 10,000 cases for 2023 and 2024. This shows that anti-Muslim hate and extremism continue to be on a sharp upward trend in our country. We cannot and should never be complacent or dismissive of anti-Muslim hate as some social and political commentators are. Nor should we forget the very basic fact that Muslim communities should never be dehumanised or marginalised because of their identity.

When Tell MAMA started in 2011, we received some 580 cases in the first year. Over a decade later, we have seen a 10-fold increase in cases and in people that we have assisted. We also know that this is not the full picture and so many other British Muslims simply get on with their lives if they suffer anti-Muslim hate. Others feel frightened to report in cases and some may feel that they do not want to suffer the wrath of the perpetrator again. Yet, Tell MAMA’s figures and data have been instrumental for agencies in His Majesty’s Government to understand more about issues around anti-Muslim hate and in ensuring that Government policies reflect the facts. The experiences of Muslim communities need to be heard and seen in policy making, just as any other community in our country should be.

Tell MAMA has become the ‘canary in the coal mine’ - an independent national project that serves as an early warning indicator for society around the levels and impacts of anti-Muslim hate and in supporting and re-assuring victims so that they do not feel that they are alone. We know that this can also cause greater detachment from wider society and people and this helps no one; it does not help victims of anti-Muslim hate, and it does not help wider society and the social cohesion that is so necessary for a more stable and interconnected society.

We have also noted greater levels of aggression in 2024 cases that we have received, with a greater focus and targeting of visible Muslims and a set of sharp peak points in online anti-Muslim hate. In summary, over 2023 and 2024 there were three major national and international incidents that supercharged anti-Muslim hate in the online space. These included events post 7 October 2023 and the Israel and Gaza war, the Southport murders of young children by an extremist and the subsequent riots, and the ongoing public conversations around child sexual abuse crimes.

We also need to stress that talking about child sexual abuse and highlighting the need to tackle this cancer in society does not make someone anti-Muslim or Islamophobic. However, targeting an innocent member of the public who happens to be Muslim with hate, obscene language and threats around such issues, is unacceptable and, in some cases, criminal. We can therefore all agree that the latter is unacceptable.

We continue to work with our partners and in particular, our Jewish brothers and sisters, in a collective struggle against anti-Muslim hate and antisemitism. We are truly stronger together and we take pride in the firm knowledge that we will always defend the fundamental rights of others. By doing so, we also ensure that we defend the public and social space where people can be who they want to be, whilst challenging all forms of racism, bigotry and hate.

My deep gratitude goes to my team (the research team, the casework team, the outreach team, the counselling team and our volunteers) for their ongoing commitment and for their ongoing support.

I also extend my deep gratitude to all the service users who had the courage to come forward and speak to us in confidence. We will continue to make your voice heard.



Iman A Atta
Director Tell MAMA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New Norm of Anti-Muslim Hate

01

Tell MAMA is a free, confidential, independent, and nationwide support service that supports those impacted by Anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia.

Tell MAMA's work is recognised across government, civil society, and the National Police Chiefs' Council, as our groundbreaking research influences the hate crime agenda.

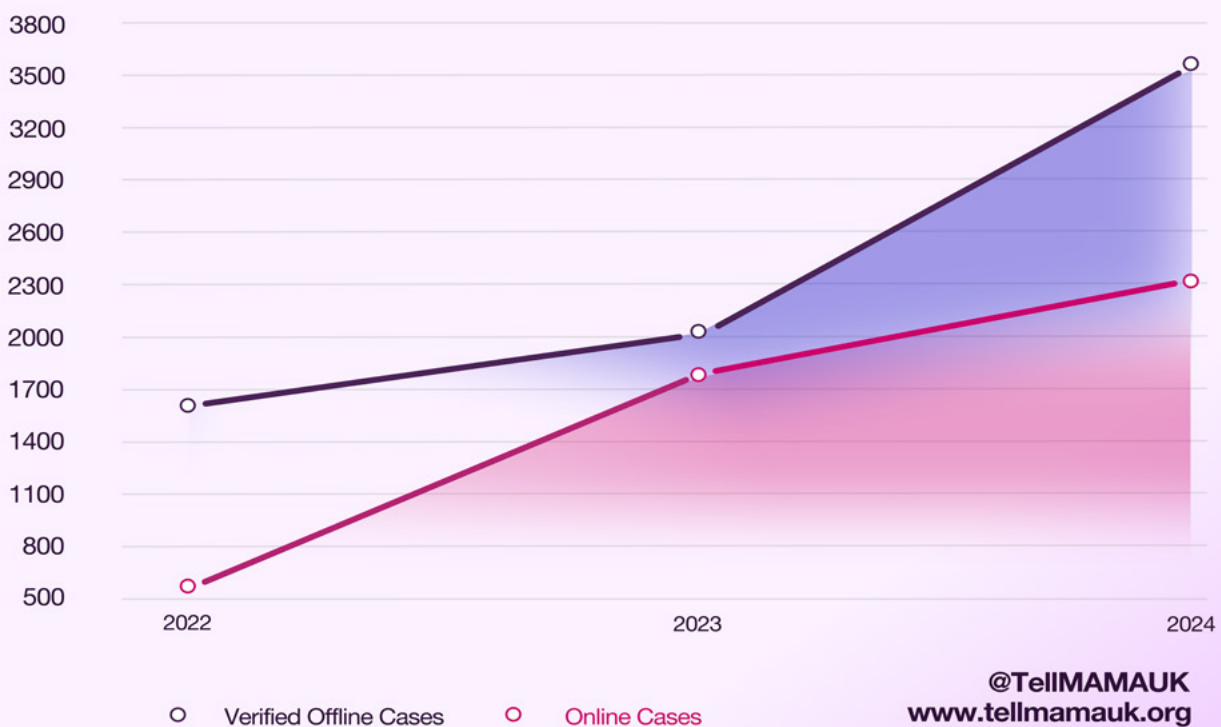
Tell MAMA has been monitoring cases of anti-Muslim hatred across the UK since 2012, with our latest report detailing a decade of our work in this space. We saw a considerable shift in numbers between 2012 and 2022, recording over 20,000 cases throughout this period.

In the previous two years, however, we have witnessed an unprecedented surge in reports, receiving a total number of 10,719 reports.

We saw a dramatic increase in reports between 2022 and 2023; however, in 2024, we received the highest number of anti-Muslim hate cases

In the previous two years, however, we have witnessed an unprecedented surge in reports, receiving a total number of 10,719 reports to our service in just two years.

Verified Cases Reported to Tell MAMA (2022 - 2024)



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ever recorded by Tell MAMA in a single calendar year. We received a total of 6,313 reports, verifying 5,837 cases – demonstrating a shocking increase of 165% of total verified cases since 2022. Of these reports, 3,680 were offline cases and 3,530 verified cases – a 72% increase since 2022.

The influx of cases in 2023 and 2024 is driven mainly by perpetrators emboldened by the Hamas terror attacks on 7 October 2023 and the murders in Southport on 29 July 2024 to target Muslim communities offline and online.

Tell MAMA has played a crucial role in documenting cases, supporting victims, and informing policymakers and law enforcement about emerging trends. This escalation has reinforced the need for confidential and trusted avenues for victims to be able to speak out, mainly when trust in authorities is at its lowest.

During this period, Tell MAMA observed a consistent increase in individuals seeking

additional support due to heightened fears of going about their daily lives in the hostile political climate that existed. As a result, our counselling services experienced a 27% rise in individuals using the service post 7 October.

Notably, for the first time since Tell MAMA's inception, offline cases of anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia in 2024 have targeted men more than women. In the wake of 7 October and the far-right violence and riots in 2024, we have seen a surge in rhetoric that falsely portrays Muslims as terrorists or terrorist sympathisers. The shift towards Muslim men being targeted more than women reflects the deepening impact of harmful stereotypes that fuel societal divisions and reinforce false notions about Muslim identities. In 2023, 506 victims were visibly Muslim. In 2024, 1029 victims were visibly Muslim - this means that between 2023 and 2024, the proportion of victims who are visibly Muslim rose from 30% to 41%, where data was available.

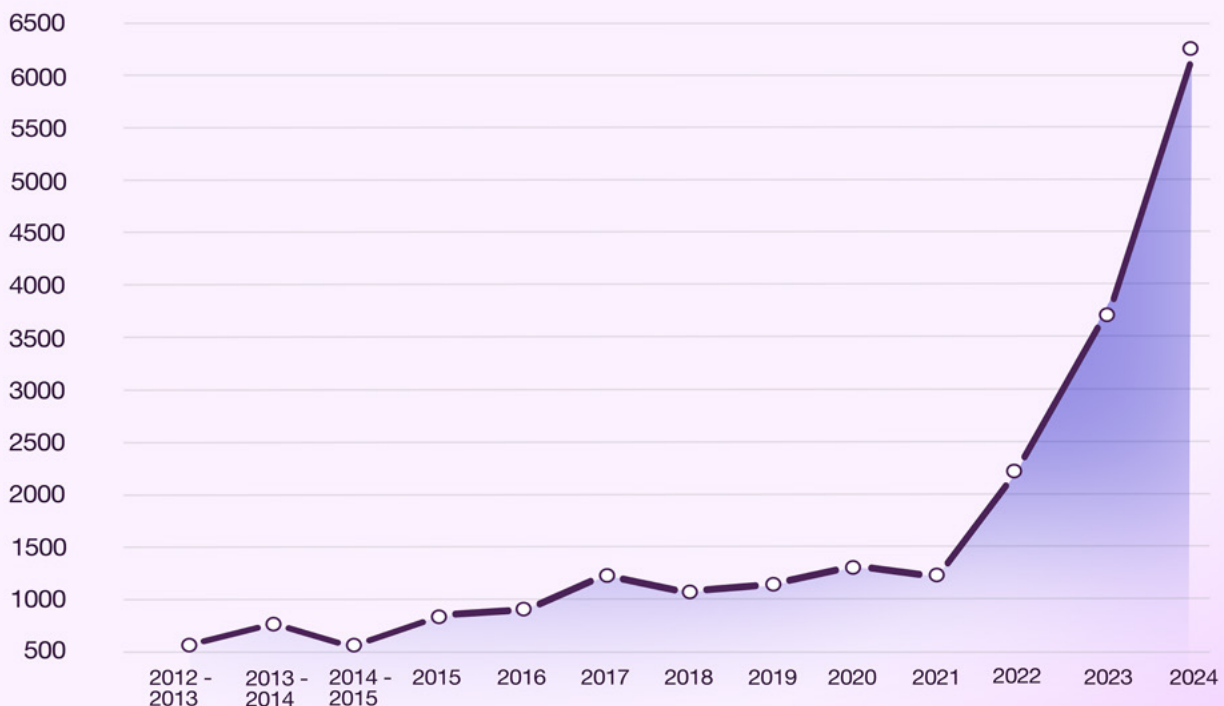
**In 2023, 506 victims were visibly Muslim.
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- this means that between 2023 and 2024,
the proportion of victims who are visibly
Muslim rose from 30% to 41%, where data
was available.**

Key Findings

- Over 51,000 British Muslims and others have used the Tell MAMA services between 2012-2024.
- Across 2023 and 2024, Tell MAMA received a total of 10,719 reports to our service, with 4,406 reports in 2023 and 6,313 reports in 2024 – a 43% increase.
- In 2023, we received 2,443 offline reports, of which we were able to verify 2,048. In 2024, we received 3,680 reports, of which we were able to verify 3,530 – a 72% increase.
- There was a 98% increase in the total number of offline reports made between 2022 (n=1,856) and 2024 (n=3,680).
- Overall, we have seen a shocking 2,253% increase in total offline verified reports received at Tell MAMA from 2012 (n=150) to 2024 (n=3,530).

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Total Number of Cases Reported to Tell MAMA (2012 - 2024)

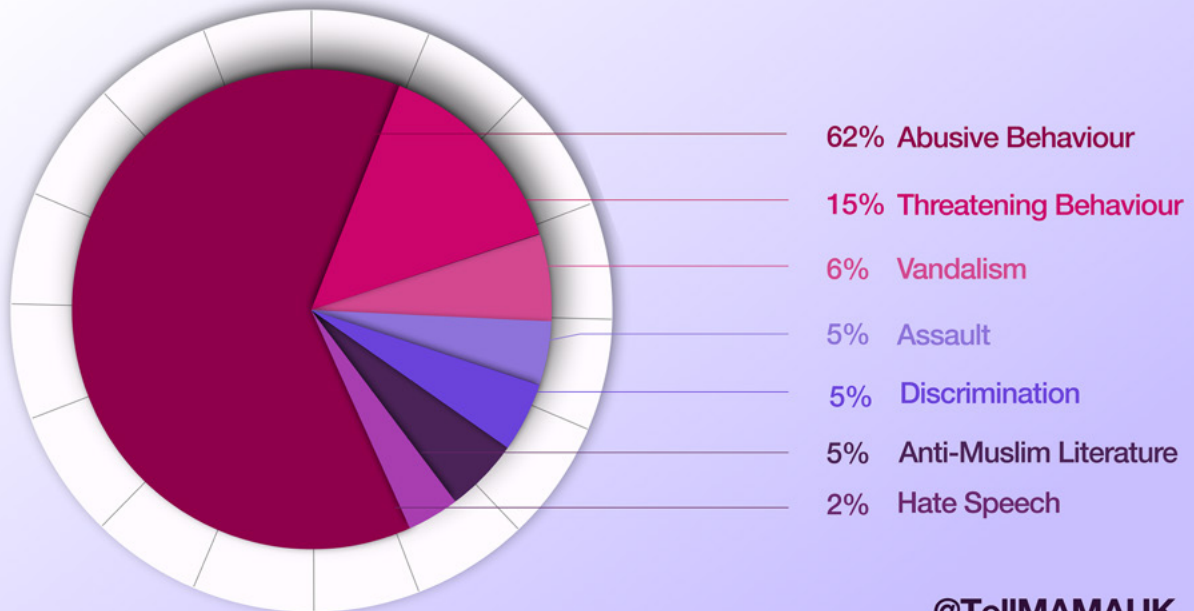


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Total Number of Cases Reported

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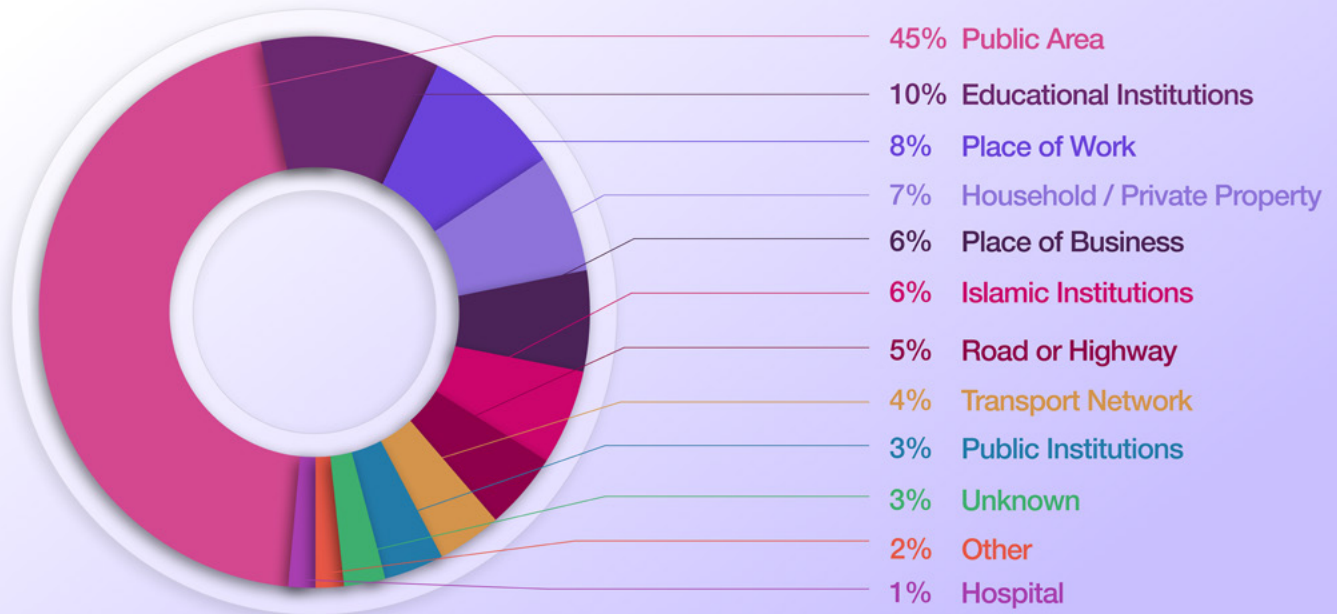
Offline anti-Muslim Cases by Incident Category 2024



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- Verified cases to Tell MAMA increased across all offline incident categories between 2023 and 2024.
 - **Abusive Behaviour** continues to be the most common incident category reported to Tell MAMA, consistent with previous reports. Abusive Behaviour amounted to 69% of total cases in 2023 (n=1,406) and 62% of cases in 2024 (n=2,197) – demonstrating a 56% increase between both years.
 - **Assault** cases increased by 73% between 2023 (n=99) and 2024 (n=171).
 - **Discrimination** cases increased by 38% between 2023 (n=133) and 2024 (n=183).
 - **Vandalism** increased by 60% between 2023 (n=131) and 2024 (n=209).
 - **Anti-Muslim Literature** increased by 90% between 2023 (n=91) and 2024 (n=173)
 - **Hate Speech** increased by 18% between 2023 (n=67) and 2024 (n=79).
 - **Threatening Behaviour** increased more dramatically than any other incident category between 2023 (n=121) and 2024 (n=518), demonstrating a 328% increase.
- In cases where **Threatening Behaviour** was present in addition to the primary or most prevalent incident category, cases rose to 987 in 2024, indicating a 715% increase between 2023 and 2024.

Offline anti-Muslim Cases by Place Category 2024



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- The most common locations for offline anti-Muslim incidents to occur in 2023 and 2024 differ slightly year on year. The most common locations for 2023 are:
 - **Public Areas** (45%, n=913), which includes streets, public parks, and any other public space.
 - **Educational Institutions** (10%, n=207), which includes any college, school, or university that the victim attends.
 - **Places of Work** (8%, n=158), which includes any incident that occurs at a victim's workplace.
 - **Places of Business** (7%, n=133), which includes any privately owned business where the victim does not work.
- The most common locations for 2024 are:
 - **Public Areas** (40%, n=1427).
 - **Household or Private Property** (11%, n=395), which includes any incident that occurs in or around the victim's or another person's domestic dwelling.
 - **Places of Work** (11%, n=388).
 - **Places of Business** and **Road or Highway** which each accounted for 8% of cases, (n=282).
 - The number of cases that occurred at **Transport Networks** similarly increased in both 2023 (n=89) and 2024 (n=197), despite only accounting for a small percentage of total cases reported in each year – 4% and 6% respectively.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The online space has witnessed a dramatic shift in the previous two years. Many of the cases Tell MAMA recorded between 2023 and 2024 took place on X (formerly Twitter), and unlike in previous years, due to the use of the platform to help organise far-right violence, we saw more cases on Telegram than ever before (due to the figures often being statistically insignificant compared to other social media platforms in our datasets).

Disinformation and misinformation proved major flashpoints following the horrific Southport murders on 29 July. Social media use during this time also gave rise to concerns over possible breaches of existing Contempt of Court laws, as our report will highlight examples of how the far-right (and others) named Axel Rudakubana before the courts lifted the anonymity order and before any trial began. After news of his terrorism charges, including for possession of an al Qaeda training manual, we saw incredibly toxic anti-Muslim rhetoric on platforms like X (formerly Twitter) months before Axel Rudakubana pleaded guilty.

The impact and direct aftermath of 7 October were equally evident in the online sphere and how this affected offline behaviours. Post-7 October, we recorded sharp rises in overtly racist and dehumanising language, equating Muslims and Palestinians as Nazis, “future jihadists”, or “terrorists” to examples of animalistic dehumanisation, comparing Palestinians and Muslims to rats needing “stamping out.” The violent language called for the removal of those expressing support for Palestinian rights, and the fear of doxing and harassment made many Muslims fearful of expressing their support for Palestine, calls for justice, and wanting an end to the war. Consequently, we saw more examples in conversations with those who contacted us online or over the phone that they would

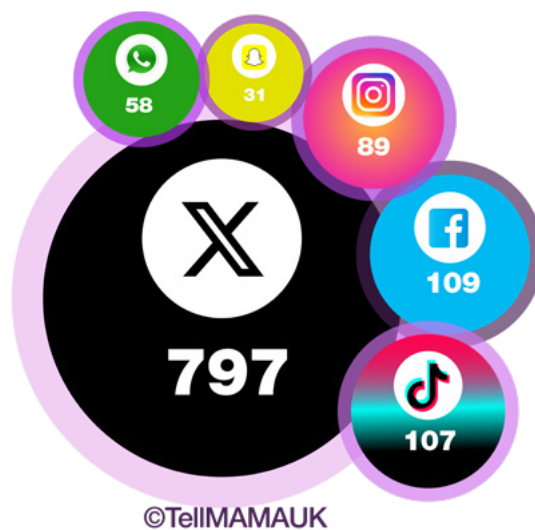
self-censor to avoid any workplace repercussions, fearing for their jobs or employment prospects. We heard from students who were unsure how to talk about Palestine and the war (without fear of being labelled a possible ‘extremist’) and worried that their educational institutions had done little to facilitate the discussions in an inclusive way that allowed students to express all their emotions safely. In previous reports, and again here, we continue to urge schools to help facilitate spaces for such discussions that allow Muslim students to speak up, have their voices heard and share with others, thereby helping build empathy, understanding and trust with staff. That absence, in various cases, undermined trust. It remains of concern also that video clips of children and young people marching for Palestine resulted in a range of disgusting racist and anti-Muslim comments, comparing them to terrorists or, again, dehumanising terms like rats.

With such stark rises compared to the previous year, it remains imperative to understand that such language does not exist in a vacuum. We remind politicians and media figures about the importance of striking a balance to avoid linking Muslim communities more broadly with criminality or as cultural threats, understanding that the importance of freedom of speech comes with a responsibility not to harm others nor imply that Muslim politicians have “infiltrated” politics or have “sinister” or “ulterior” motives because of their faith.

The normalisation of anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia on social media saw an intensification of rhetoric that targeted Muslims in public life. In the build-up towards the general election, we saw far-right accounts wanting to ban Muslims from running for political office outright - this was evident in abusive materials written about and directed towards both male and female Muslim politicians.

Key Findings

- Tell MAMA verified 2,307 online cases across 2024, a vast majority of which emerged following the horrific Southport murders on 29 July, with 57% (n=1,309) occurring between 29 July 2024 and 31 December 2024.
- In 2023, across the year, Tell MAMA verified 1,719 online cases, one hundred of which were verified prior to 7 October, demonstrating a 1619% increase following the attack.
- 2023 saw an 189% increase in online cases, up from 595 verified cases in 2022.
- There was a 288% increase in the total number of online reports made between 2022 (n=595) and 2024 (n=2,307), demonstrating how anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia became normalised online in just two years, owing in part to certain platforms welcoming back known far-right extremists and agitators and following a more inconsistent approach to content moderation.
- In 2023, across each platform, we verified the following cases: X (formerly Twitter n=797), Facebook (n=109), Instagram (n=89), TikTok (n=107), Snapchat (n=31), and WhatsApp (n=58).
- In 2024, across each platform, we verified the following cases: X (formerly Twitter n=991), Facebook (n=201), Instagram (n=131), TikTok (n=317), Snapchat (n=57), WhatsApp (n=41), Telegram (n=10), and Other (n=61).
- Overall, we have seen a 432% increase in total online verified reports received at Tell MAMA from 2012 (n=434) to 2024 (n=2307).



Anti-Muslim Reports on Social Media Platforms 2023



Anti-Muslim Reports on Social Media Platforms 2024

Recommendations

General Recommendations

Perpetrators are more likely 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, concrete actions must follow.

High-profile events, along with associated media coverage, stimulate public discourse on issues such as terrorism, religious expression, and immigration which 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'. Politicians and media outlets must consider how their choice of language influences broader public discourse, particularly after trigger events.

The glorification of terrorism against Muslims and migrant communities, whether in the UK or abroad, goes beyond the remit of hate crime and into the realm of anti-terrorism legislation. Given the growing far-right threat, consideration must follow when investigating such reports, especially in the online world.

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 anti-Muslim hate or discrimination. Those in a privileged position due to their social status will invariably have an advantage when it comes to 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. Cultivating a better institutional knowledge of the situations in which such individuals can be scapegoated or marginalised for broader social ills would enable this.

We must not underestimate the far-reaching impact that anti-Muslim prejudice and Islamophobia have on individuals. Low-level ongoing abuse can escalate with profound consequences. Guaranteeing the safety of individuals is of paramount importance.

Recommendations in the Online Sphere

Government and social media platforms need to implement measures to address the rising issues that face the online space. There needs to be more action to tackle disinformation, provide additional mental health support to people who face online abuse, and extensive work with key partners such as Ofcom. Social media must remain a space that upholds the fundamental rights of all. The online section will provide further specialised recommendations in that section.



INTRODUCTION

The New Norm of Anti-Muslim Hate

A large, stylized graphic of the number '02'. The '0' is a dark purple with a fine, repeating geometric pattern. The '2' is a solid, medium purple. Both numbers have a slight drop shadow and a thin white outline.

Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks) is, first and foremost, a service for victim support.

We monitor and provide independent, confidential and holistic aid to those experiencing anti-Muslim hatred, discrimination, and Islamophobia, and people wishing to contact us for support can access us through our freephone number, SMS, WhatsApp, email, website or social media platforms. Tell MAMA works alongside police forces, statutory bodies, charities and other third-party organisations to offer advocacy, signposting for legal assistance, lobbying, raising awareness, supporting victims through the criminal justice process and providing counselling.

We record a variety of information about the anti-Muslim cases reported to us, which allows us to build a picture year after year.

Recording this data is dependent on the source of the report disclosing this to us, and it will only appear in our reports if they have consented to that. As we have acknowledged previously, this creates some gaps in our data. However, our priority is to protect requests from some service users for dignity, privacy, and confidentiality.

Our reports aim to highlight both the various contemporary drivers of anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia and its various manifestations since we launched in 2012. Tell MAMA's report titled 'A Decade of Anti-Muslim Hate'¹ outlines a considerable shift in the number and type of cases reported to us between 2012 and 2022. We reported a steady rise in cases over the decade and a significant spike in online cases during the pandemic in 2020. One of the most notable trends in 2020 was an uptick in household cases involving neighbours, likely because of the nationwide lockdowns, and this was a trend which continued into 2021.

Furthermore, we discussed a significant development in the language and discourse in cases reported to us across those years. From far-right agitations and terrorism, anti-Muslim



attacks globally, changing political discourse, the Brexit referendum result, ISIS-inspired terrorism and extremism, to the child sexual abuse scandals and targeted anti-Muslim campaigns have all contributed to spikes in reporting to our service when perpetrators feel emboldened to target Muslims, holding them individually or collectively responsible for terrorism, crime and perceived social ills.

In 2024, Tell MAMA launched our 'Manifesto Against Hate'² outlining the challenges facing our work and numerous recommendations for political candidates to sign up to help tackle anti-Muslim hate, for example, increasing ministerial engagement with local communities and appointing a 'Hate Crime' Tsar.

Our latest data, which will provide the focus of this report, demonstrates an evident rise in the number of both online and offline anti-Muslim hate cases reported to us.

In 2022, we received a total of 2,651 cases, and we were able to verify 2,201 cases. Of these, 1,856 were offline cases, with 1,606 verified cases compared with 595 verified online cases (from 795 reports).

¹ Tell MAMA. (2023). A Decade of Anti-Muslim Hate. *Tell MAMA*. Available at: <https://tellmamauk.org/a-decade-of-anti-muslim-hate/>.

² Tell MAMA (2024). Manifesto Against Hate. *Tell MAMA*. Available at: [Tell MAMA's UK General Election Manifesto Against Hate Crimes 2024](#)

In 2023, we received a total of 4,406 reports, of which we verified 3,767, an increase of 71% since 2022 in verified cases.

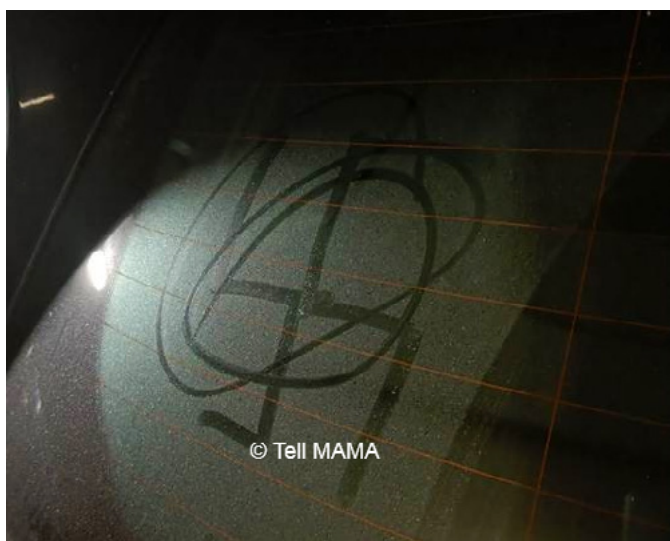
In 2023, we received a total of 4,406 reports, of which we verified 3,767, an increase of 71% since 2022. Of these, we received a total of 2,443 offline cases, verifying 2,048 cases, and 2,290 were online cases, of which our team verified 1,719 cases. Therefore, it demonstrates an increase of 28% in the number of verified offline cases and a rise of 189% in online verified cases between 2022 and 2023.

In 2024, we received the most considerable number of anti-Muslim hate cases ever recorded by Tell MAMA in a single calendar year.

We received a total of 6,313 cases, of which we verified 5,837, a 55% increase in verified cases since 2023 and a shocking rise of 165% since 2022. Of offline cases, we received a total of 3,680 cases. We were able to verify 3,530 of them, showcasing a shocking 72% rise in the number of offline verified cases between 2023 and 2024 and a 120% increase in the number of verified cases between 2022 and 2024. Of the online cases we received, we verified 2,307 cases (from 2,633 reports) - an increase of 34% between 2023 and 2024 and a staggering increase of 190% between 2022 and 2024.

In 2024, we received the most considerable number of anti-Muslim hate cases ever recorded by Tell MAMA in a single calendar year. We received a total of 6,313 cases, of which we verified 5,837, a 55% increase in verified cases since 2023 and a shocking rise of 165% since 2022.

We can attribute this sharp rise in part to several trigger events and how individuals with far-right, racist and bigoted views felt emboldened by the political climate to use such tragedies or political discourse to target Muslim communities, alongside more awareness of the work of Tell MAMA and engagement with various statutory bodies and agencies. Such rises followed the 7 October terror attacks by Hamas and following the war in Gaza (and its expansion into Lebanon) as well as the far-right violence and disorder that followed the horrific murders in Southport, where individuals felt emboldened to weaponise such tragedies and events to target Muslims, migrants and refugees, both collectively and at an individual level, fundamentally shifting the baseline in cases to our service in the months ahead. Furthermore, we documented an increasing number of cases of perpetrators falsely accusing Muslim and Middle Eastern communities of being terrorists, paedophiles, and killers, which are common anti-Muslim and Islamophobic tropes. For example, we received reports of people being shouted at, “Muslim terrorist b*stard”. In another case, a family had their front door vandalised and daubed with “Hamas” and “Killers Terrorists”—another case involved someone vandalising a Muslim woman’s car with a Nazi swastika.



Gender continues to play a key role in the cases reported to us, and there is a qualitative difference in the types of incidents reported by men and women. We found that women who faced anti-Muslim hatred had often experienced significantly higher levels of aggression in comparison to men. In one such instance, Tell MAMA received a report of a Muslim woman and her young daughter exiting their local mosque in East London when a white male made threats to rape and murder them. These examples help us paint a picture of the ways gender, race, ethnicity, and religion intersect to create specific abuse against Muslim women.

Muslim men face specific gendered abuse. Anti-Muslim attacks which target men often seek to associate them with a unique kind of sexual deviance and aggression - this is most clear when looking at the frequency in which Muslim men are likened to “paedophiles and groomers”, as evidenced in cases reported to us where references include “paedophilic terror”, and a “perverse ideology”.

We begin this report by reviewing the literature on anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia and its drivers. Following this, we outline the trends in the data from previous reports. Next, this report outlines and explores the 2023 and 2024 data that Tell MAMA received and verified before finally exploring the discourse, motivation, and ideologies present when analysing the data.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The New Norm of Anti-Muslim Hate

03



Introduction

The types and frequency of anti-Muslim hate reports Tell MAMA receives are impacted in a myriad of ways by the historical attitudes towards Islam and Muslims and how these ideas become enveloped in our understanding of current events. In previous reports, such as our reporting on ‘A Decade of Anti-Muslim Hate’³, we have highlighted the consistent nature of how anti-Muslim hatred manifests and how high-profile events can trigger a surge in reports. Although these high-profile events can be discrete, years apart and/or across national borders, we have noted similar ideological drivers and language across incidents following these events. Below, we draw on some examples of existing literature on anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia to add further context and understanding to our research.

A range of academic research has looked at how Muslim communities in the UK have faced scrutiny regarding alleged links to radicalisation and extremism, terrorism, women’s rights and increasing sexual abuse of women and girls⁴. It continues to be relevant to the incidents reported to us and, therefore, warrants an exploration into what existing literature observes about these topics to help develop our understanding of contemporary drivers of anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia.

We begin by looking at how Muslims came to be ‘othered’ by drawing from a broad but non-exhaustive array of research and literature that brought the issues to the foreground. We also look at contemporary attitudes towards immigration and asylum seekers and how these attitudes draw on hostility towards Muslims. Finally, we explore the gendered nature of anti-Muslim hatred.

³ Tell MAMA. (2023). A Decade of Anti-Muslim Hate. *Tell MAMA*. Available at: <https://tellmamauk.org/a-decade-of-anti-muslim-hate/>

⁴ Morey, P. and Yaqin, A. (2011). *Framing Muslims: Stereotyping and representation after 9/11*. Harvard University Press.

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'Othering' Muslim Communities

Anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia have been simmering in the UK since at least the 1980s, and much of the rhetoric surrounding Islam in the UK is not new.^{5,6} The racialised 'othering' of Muslims has arisen from a multitude of events. In an example of scholarly work on this topic, Garner and Selod (2015) argue that racialisation remains a crucial analytical tool in so far as it helps us understand the processes in which, irrespective of their physical appearance, country of origin and economic situation, Muslims are homogenised and degraded by Islamophobic discourse and practices in their daily lives.⁷ For example, South Asian Muslims who are now portrayed negatively as potentially violent and threatening used to be promoted as models of hardworking, family-oriented, 'model integrators' in previous decades, in contrast with the fabricated media framing and anti-Black, racist moral panics around mugging in the 1970s.^{8,9}

This 'othering' can be further understood through the lens of Orientalism. 'Said's theory of Orientalism (1978) expressed that Western scholarship about the 'Orient' (countries east of Europe) had been successful in discursively constructing the East as diametrically opposed to the enlightened and civilised West.¹⁰ Through this Orientalist lens, if the West was to be seen as liberal, tolerant and democratic, the (Islamic) East *must* be the opposite: illiberal, intolerant and undemocratic. Muslims who were viewed through this lens came to be associated with



barbarism, terrorism and violence and were thus framed as an existential threat to the West.¹¹

It is through this framing that attitudes towards Muslims as separate and external to the national identity became an issue of 'Us vs 'Them'. As a result, the 'nature and boundaries of 'Islam' came to be drawn without the perspectives of Muslims.¹² It therefore creates an impression that without 'curbing the 'influence' of Islam on the nation (such as access to halal foods, Islamic clothing and places of worship), Islam 'will turn Britain' into a violent and unbearable place to live for 'Us'.^{13,14} It situates Islam (and, therefore, Muslims) as incompatible with British society.

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

⁶ Poynting, S. and Mason, V. (2006). 'Tolerance, Freedom, Justice and Peace? Britain, Australia and Anti-Muslim Racism since 11 September 2001', *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 27(4), pp.365–391.

⁷ Garner, S. and Selod, S. (2015). 'The racialization of Muslims: Empirical studies of Islamophobia,' *Critical Sociology*, 41(1), pp.9–19.

⁸ Ahmed, T. S. (2005). 'Reading Between the Lines: Muslims and the Media' in *Muslim Britain: Communities Under Pressure*. Zed Books: London.

⁹ Hall, S., Critcher, C., Jefferson, T., Clarke, J. and Roberts, B. (2017). 'Policing the crisis: Mugging, the state and law and order'. Bloomsbury Publishing.

¹⁰ Said, E.W. (1978). 'Orientalism'. New York: Pantheon Books.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Pantazis, C. and Pemberton, S. (2009). 'From the 'Old' to the 'New' Suspect Community: Examining the Impacts of Recent UK Counter-Terrorist Legislation', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 49(5), pp.646–666.

¹³ Ameli, S.R., Marandi, S.M., Ahmed, S., Kara, S. and Merali, A. (2007). 'The British media and Muslim representation: The ideology of demonisation'. IHRC.

¹⁴ Mahmood, S. (2015). 'Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report'. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Anti-Muslim Hate After 9/11 and 7/7

There has been much scholarly work done on how Orientalist attitudes towards Muslims as ideologically extreme and unenlightened intensified following the September 11 terror attacks in what emerged as a sweeping ‘war on terror’. The war on terror has become the primary conflict of the twenty-first century. As Kallis (2018) explains, 9/11 was a “critical watershed in the trajectory of Islamophobia” - not because the intellectual discourse had significantly changed but rather because radical right-wing populists had become emboldened in their hostility to Islam.¹⁵ In the UK, this reaction heightened after the 7/7 terror attacks.

According to Pentazis and Pemberton (2009)¹⁶, media rhetoric and securitisation laws, amongst other things, have explicitly focused on ‘Islamic fanaticism’ as a core threat to Western Liberal democracies, which has fuelled racist, anti-immigration and prejudicial rhetoric about Muslims. Furthermore, Roy (2013)¹⁷ says Islam is othered as ‘not European’ and seen as incompatible with Britishness. Fekete (2004)¹⁸, for example, notes that in the UK, this political dialogue surrounding Islam and Muslims has been successful in framing them as the ‘enemy within’ and has worked to justify increased securitisation of Muslims through counter-terrorism legislation against the ‘suspect community’.

Much scholarly work has also looked at the role of securitisation¹⁹ – be it in the role of counter-terror apparatus or the influence

on Islamic clothing bans in parts of Europe²⁰. Other research on securitisation drew attention to ‘everyday’ forms of securitisation in public life and within education (Sjøen 2020)²¹ amidst critiques of safeguarding policies (Jusué 2022)²² and responses to it more generally (Balazard and Pearce, 2023).²³

The securitisation of Islam and Muslim communities is visible through legislation such as the Terrorism Act of 2000. Choudhury and Fenwick (2011)²⁴ explored the impact of section 44 of the Terrorism Act (since repealed), which granted powers of stop and search without reasonable suspicion. They found that in 2001, stop and searches of young Muslim men had reached levels of over half a million, and yet none led to convictions relating to terrorism. They continued that this had become the primary way young Muslim men engaged with the police at this time.

²⁰ Edmunds, A.J. (2021). ‘Precarious bodies: The securitization of the “veiled” woman in European human rights’, *The British Journal of Sociology*, 72(2), pp.315-327.

²¹ Sjøen, Martin M. (2020). ‘When counterterrorism enters the curriculum: Exploring risks and practices of the securitisation of education’.

²² Rodrigo Jusué, I. (2022). ‘Counter-terrorism training “at your kitchen table”: the promotion of “CT citizens” and the securitisation of everyday life in the UK’, *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 15(2), pp.290-310.

²³ Balazard, H. and Timothy, P. (2023). ‘Confronting Islamophobia and its consequences in East London in a context of increased surveillance and stigmatisation’, *Ethnicities*, 23(1), pp.88-109.

²⁴ Choudhury, T. and Fenwick, H. (2011). ‘The Impact of Counter-terrorism Measures on Muslim Communities’, Manchester: Equality and Human Rights Commission

¹⁵ Kallis, A. (2018). ‘The radical right and Islamophobia’, *The Oxford handbook of the radical right*, 1, pp.42-60.

¹⁶ Pantazis, C. and Pemberton, S. (2009). ‘From the ‘Old’ to the ‘New’ Suspect Community: Examining the Impacts of Recent UK Counter-Terrorist Legislation’, *The British Journal of Criminology*, 49(5), pp.646–666.

¹⁷ Roy, O. (2013). *Holy ignorance: when religion and culture part ways* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.61-65.

¹⁸ Fekete, L. (2004). ‘Anti-Muslim racism and the European security state’, *Race & Class*, 46(1), pp.3-29.

¹⁹ Edmunds, A.J. (2012). ‘The ‘new’ barbarians: governmentality, securitization and Islam in Western Europe’, *Contemporary Islam*, 6, pp.67-84.



Anti-Refugee and Anti-Migrant Discourse

Asylum seekers, refugees, and immigrants²⁵ have been at the forefront of political discussion for at least as long as Tell MAMA has been reporting since 2012, and the rhetoric surrounding migrants and refugees is highly politicised. Since the so-called ‘refugee ‘crisis’ in 2015, the number of people crossing the English Channel into Britain from France has increased as safe and legal routes have been limited.²⁶ Pickering (2001) demonstrates that across three decades of media reporting, people seeking asylum in a new country after fleeing their homes have been constructed as a “deviant” population.²⁷

It has been well documented that asylum seekers and immigrants are viewed through a suspicious lens, often associated with violence. For example, the International Policy Institute (2004)²⁸ explains that in UK news, asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants are portrayed as ‘dangerous ‘criminals’ and that Britain is therefore ‘under attack’. Others have elucidated that since 9/11, asylum seekers have frequently been linked to terrorism^{29,30}, and Weber and Bowling (2004)³¹ argue that the categories of “asylum seeker” and “terrorist” have been collapsed.

²⁵ These words are often used interchangeably, despite each having a distinct meaning.

²⁶ Parker, S., Bennett, S., Cobden, C.M. and Earnshaw, D. (2022). ‘It’s time we invested in stronger borders’: media representations of refugees crossing the English Channel by boat’, *Critical Discourse Studies*, 19(4), pp.348-363.

²⁷ Pickering, S. (2001). ‘Common sense and original deviancy: News discourses and asylum seekers in Australia’, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 14(2), pp.169-186.

²⁸ International Policy Institute. (2004). ‘Media Image, Community Impact. Assessing the impact of media and political images of refugees and asylum seekers on community relations in London’, Kings College London: London.

²⁹ Esses, V.M., Medianu, S., and Lawson, A.S. (2013). ‘Uncertainty, Threat, and the Role of the Media in Promoting the Dehumanization of Immigrants and Refugees’, *Journal of Social Issues*, 69(3), pp.518-536.

³⁰ Blumell, L.E., Bunce, M., Cooper, G. and McDowell, C. (2020). ‘Refugee and asylum news coverage in UK print and online media’, *Journalism Studies*, 21(2), pp.162-179.

³¹ Weber, L. and Bowling, B. (2004). ‘Policing migration: A framework for investigating the regulation of global mobility’, *Policing and society*, 14(3), pp.195-212.

In Tell MAMA’s 2024 Manifesto Against Hate³², we warned about the divisive discourse which conflates the sensitive issue of immigration with anti-Muslim rhetoric. We support the right of politicians and the public to discuss their views around immigration and highlight that these discussions need to be held responsibly.

Gendered Anti-Muslim Hate and Islamophobia

Gender plays a key role in the frequency and types of reports from Muslim men and Muslim women³³, and the experiences Muslim women face are qualitatively different from those Muslim men face.³⁴ Anti-Muslim attacks which target men often seek to associate them with a unique kind of sexual deviance and aggression – likened to groomers and rapists or, more broadly, violent threats or terrorists. In contrast, Muslim women are more often targeted with sexist and misogynistic language as well as for their visible religiosity.

Muslim women’s experiences differ in that they are driven by racialised forms of sexism and misogyny, as well as anti-Muslim hate. Our data reveals an overlap between anti-Muslim hatred, racism, and misogyny, such as “P*ki b*tch” and “Muslim b*tch.” This is further highlighted in the frequency of sexualised threats, in particular rape threats directed at women. In one such case, a Muslim woman was followed out of the mosque by a man mumbling about “you people”, and when she challenged him on this, he told her “I’m going to rape you” and “You devil, you devil worshippers; I’m going to kill you”. Muslim women are, therefore, targeted by anti-Muslim hate for being Muslim, for being women, *and* for being Muslim women.

It is well reported that women across all ages, ethnic or religious groups and locations are

³² Tell MAMA (2024). Manifesto Against Hate. *Tell MAMA*. Available at: **Tell MAMA’s UK General Election Manifesto Against Hate Crimes 2024**

³³ Tell MAMA. (2023). A Decade of Anti-Muslim Hate. *Tell MAMA*. Available at: <https://tellmamauk.org/a-decade-of-anti-muslim-hate/>

³⁴ Alimahomed-Wilson, S. (2020). ‘The matrix of gendered Islamophobia: Muslim women’s repression and resistance’, *Gender & Society*, 34(4), pp.648-678.

primarily the targets of street harassment, both sexual and non-sexual. The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSWE) (2023) figures presented by the Office for National Statistics demonstrate that the prevalence of sexual harassment (both online and offline) was approximately three times greater amongst women (8%) than men (3%) in the last 12 months.³⁵ Hopkins (2016)³⁶ argues that conversations surrounding gendered violence and street-level harassment can often focus on it as an issue *within* religious or ethnic groups rather than *across* them. Recent scholarship, building upon Kimberlé Crenshaw's exploration of intersectionality³⁷, highlights the way gender is embedded in race, religion, and ethnicity within processes of domination and shapes each other through a mutual constitution.³⁸ For example, Perry (2014)³⁹ explains how veiled Muslim women are understood as not fulfilling the construction of "ideal womanhood" in Western cultures. Therefore, Muslim women are victimised by a culture of misogyny and sexism by virtue of being women and are further targeted by virtue of being Muslim. Any work aiming to tackle increasing levels of anti-Muslim hatred must also seek to address growing levels of sexism and misogyny to ensure the needs of Muslim women are addressed fully.

A further reason Muslim women may be more likely to experience anti-Muslim hate is that they are more often 'visibly Muslim' through physical presentation, such as wearing Islamic



clothing.⁴⁰ For men, being visibly Muslim might mean wearing Islamic clothing or sporting a beard, and for women, it might be wearing a hijab, niqab, and/or abaya. Women were more likely than men to be wearing Islamic clothing and, therefore, more identifiable as Muslim. In 2020, for example, where data was available, 228 of the cases reported to us were visibly Muslim - 53% wore a headscarf (hijab), 30% were wearing a beard, and 3% were wearing a face veil (niqab).⁴¹

Muslim head and/or face coverings, namely the hijab and especially the niqab, have become a central focus of Islamophobic discourse in recent years. Throughout the war on terror, Meer, Dwyer, and Modood (2010) explain that Islamic clothing, especially when worn by women, has been posited as an example of an extreme belief system, religious fanaticism and a marker of the threat of terrorism.⁴² Furthermore, Zempi (2014)⁴³ reports that media discussions about Islamic extremism are often paired visually with images of Muslim women wearing veils,

³⁵ Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 7 December 2023, ONS website, statistical bulletin, Available at: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/experiencesofharassmentinenglandandwales/december2023

³⁶ Hopkins, P. (2016). 'Gendering Islamophobia, racism and White supremacy: Gendered violence against those who look Muslim', *Dialogues in human geography*, 6(2), pp.186-189.

³⁷ Crenshaw, K. (1989). 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics', *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, pp.138-67.

³⁸ Collins, P.H. (2000). *'Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment'*, New York: Routledge.

³⁹ Perry, B. (2014). 'Gendered Islamophobia: hate crime against Muslim women', *Social Identities*, 20(1), pp.74-89.

⁴⁰ Tell MAMA. (2023). *A Decade of Anti-Muslim Hate. Tell MAMA.* Available at: <https://tellmama.org/a-decade-of-anti-muslim-hate/>

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Meer, N., Dwyer, C. and Modood, T. (2010). 'Embodying Nationhood? Conceptions of British National Identity, Citizenship and Gender in the 'Veil Affair'', *The Sociological Review*, 58(1), pp.84-111.

⁴³ Zempi, E.C. (2014). 'Unveiling Islamophobia: The victimisation of veiled Muslim women', (Doctoral dissertation, University of Leicester).

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and Perry (2014) explains that “covering one’s head” has been advanced as tacit support for religious fundamentalism and terrorism. Muslim women are also commonly characterised as subjugated by and submissive to “extreme” Muslim values, which Zempi and Chakraborti (2014)⁴⁴ posit may embolden perpetrators to act out their misogynistic and Islamophobic ideology against them. As Islamic dress has been cast as a threat to ideas about national cohesion and integration⁴⁵, Muslim women are rendered the “ideal” victim of street harassment.⁴⁶

Being attuned to the ways gender and race, religion and/or ethnicity shape one another is integral to how we build strategies for eradicating anti-Muslim hate and Islamophobia.⁴⁷

The Gendered Abuse of Muslim Men

Just as it is crucial to address the intersections of gender and anti-Muslim hate when discussing Muslim women, gendered anti-Muslim hate is central to Muslim men’s experiences. A common theme amongst incidents reported to Tell MAMA by Muslim men is that they face accusations of being a “groomer”, with an added level of vulnerability for older, community members as well as those working in the nighttime economy, principally stemming from the rhetoric surrounding horrific child sexual abuse cases which have permeated cultural and political discourse since 2011.⁴⁸

How men experience anti-Muslim abuse, harassment and violence in gendered forms is widely explored in academic work, notably on the totalising, stigmatising, criminalising



narratives the far-right and other groups push on Muslim men in response to the horrific crimes of child sexual exploitation, abuse and violence. Tell MAMA has previously demonstrated how, online, and offline, the far-right has weaponised this crime to target Muslim men working in the night-time economy or their Islamic faith more broadly,⁴⁹ and how these racialised, stigmatised narratives about Muslims more broadly held communities directly and collectively responsible. This rhetoric has also escalated to include documented calls for violence and destruction or the targeting of Islamic institutions.⁵⁰

A range of literature on the topic includes Cockbain (2013) following the investigations published by The Times newspaper into horrific cases of child sexual abuse crimes in Rotherham in 2011. As highlighted by Salter and Dagistanli (2015)⁵¹, the ethnicity and religion of the perpetrators in these high-profile cases sparked intense public discourse about the relationship between sexual abuse perpetration and ethnicity and religion. According to Sian, Law, and Sayyid (2012)⁵², the awful child

⁴⁴ Zempi, I. and Chakraborti, N. (2014). *‘Islamophobia, victimisation and the veil’*. Springer.

⁴⁵ Zempi, I. (2018). ‘The lived experiences of veiled Muslim women as ‘undeserving’ victims of Islamophobia’, *Revisiting the ‘Ideal Victim’*, Policy Press, pp. 63-82.

⁴⁶ Zempi, I. and Chakraborti, N. (2014). *‘Islamophobia, victimisation and the veil’*. Springer.

⁴⁷ Mason-Bish, H. and Zempi, I. (2019). ‘Misogyny, racism, and Islamophobia: Street harassment at the intersections’, *Feminist Criminology* 14(5), pp.540-559.

⁴⁸ Cockbain, E. and Tufail, W (2020). ‘Failing victims, fuelling hate: Challenging the harms of the ‘Muslim grooming gangs’ narrative’, *Race & Class* 61(3), pp.3-32.

⁴⁹ Tell MAMA. (2023). A Decade of Anti-Muslim Hate. *Tell MAMA*. Available at: <https://tellmamauk.org/a-decade-of-anti-muslim-hate/>

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Sian, K., Law, I. and Sayyid, S. (2012). ‘The Media and Muslims in the UK, working paper’, *Centre for Ethnicity and Racism Studies, University of Leeds*, March 2012.

sexual exploitation present in these cases was “imagined as a uniquely Muslim crime”. Additionally, Cockbain (2013)⁵³ argues that victims from ethnic minorities (and white perpetrators) were downplayed to further frame the problem as white girls targeted by Asian men. Miah (2015)⁵⁴ explains that these crimes were portrayed through an “oppositional discourse”, which stood in contrast with other highly publicised child sexual exploitation cases which involved perpetrators who were often white (such as in Operation Yewtree and Fernbridge). In the reporting of these cases, the whiteness of the perpetrators was not centred in the reporting.⁵⁵

According to Bhattacharyya (2008)⁵⁶, one of the most popular explanations for the behaviour of these ‘Dangerous Brown Men’ has its roots in Orientalist constructs of race and sex⁵⁷. Consequently, some studies found that Muslim men expressed feeling isolated and alienated.⁵⁸

Discussions in the Media

A vast body of research explores the influence of the news media and how it frames issues. For example, Haji et al. (2021) investigated the media’s representation of Muslims a decade after the 7/7 terror attacks. They found how dehumanising, distrustful discourses received more coverage than humanising, trusting discourses, which they argued put further emphasis on ‘in’ and ‘out’ group dynamics.⁵⁹ Ahmed and Matthes (2017) researched the media’s portrayal of Muslims and

found that most studies investigated themes of ‘migration, terrorism, and war.’ Nonetheless, they re-iterate that the media first frames Muslims negatively via the continuous portrayal of Islam alongside violence.⁶⁰

In our most recent and wide-ranging report covering a decade of our work, Tell MAMA highlighted concerns around media framing and the misuse of stock images of Muslims during the Covid-19 outbreak and ensuing lockdowns.⁶¹ The negative portrayal created an opportunity to scapegoat Muslims for the broader health crisis taking place in the UK at the time by suggesting they were breaking lockdown rules and disproportionately responsible for spikes in cases.⁶² Tell MAMA has previously highlighted how a stock image of two Muslim women appeared in multiple news outlets globally in generalised Covid-19 coverage.⁶³ On other topics, like discussions and the representations of asylum seekers, Peterie and Neil (2020) argued that political discourses help shape media and risks influencing perceptions,⁶⁴ drawing from earlier research from the likes of Klocker and Dunn (2003).⁶⁵ Moreover, research shows that people vastly overestimate minority populations in the UK,⁶⁶ including Muslims (and vastly overstate demographic change⁶⁷), and grossly overestimate the number of asylum seekers.⁶⁸

⁵³ Cockbain, E. (2013). ‘Grooming and the ‘Asian sex gang predator’: the construction of a racial crime threat’, *Race & Class*, 54(4), pp.22-32.

⁵⁴ Miah, S. (2015). ‘The groomers and the question of race’, *Identity Papers: a journal of British and Irish studies*, 1(1), pp.54-65.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Bhattacharyya, G. (2009). *Dangerous brown men: exploiting sex, violence and feminism in the ‘war on terror’*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

⁵⁷ Miah, S. (2015). ‘The groomers and the question of race’, *Identity Papers: a journal of British and Irish studies*, 1(1), pp.54-65.

⁵⁸ Tufail, W. (2015). ‘Rotherham, Rochdale, and the racialised threat of the ‘Muslim Grooming Gang’’, *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, 4(3), pp.30-43.

⁵⁹ Haji, R., McKeown, S., Matthews, A. and Platten, S. (2021). ‘(De) humanization and (dis) trust: Representations of Muslims in the UK newspapers following the 7/7 London bombings’. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 27(2), p.256.

⁶⁰ Ahmed, S. and Matthes, J., (2017). Media representation of Muslims and Islam from 2000 to 2015: A meta-analysis. *International communication gazette*, 79(3), pp.219-244.

⁶¹ Tell MAMA. (2023). A Decade of Anti-Muslim Hate. *Tell MAMA*. Available at: <https://tellmamauk.org/a-decade-of-anti-muslim-hate/>.

⁶² Ibid. 146.

⁶³ Ibid. 148-151.

⁶⁴ Peterie, M. and Neil, D. (2020). ‘Xenophobia towards asylum seekers: A survey of social theories.’ *Journal of Sociology* 56(1), pp.23-35.

⁶⁵ Klocker, N. and Dunn, K.N. (2003). ‘Who’s driving the asylum debate? Newspaper and government representations of asylum seekers’, *Media International Australia*, 109(1), pp.71-92.

⁶⁶ Duffy, B. (2018) *The perils of perception: Why We’re wrong about nearly everything.* Atlantic Books.

⁶⁷ Ipsos MORI. (2026). “Perceptions are not reality: what the world gets wrong.” Ipsos MORI. Last modified December 14, 2016. Available at: www.ipsos.com/en-uk/perceptions-are-not-reality-what-world-gets-wrong

⁶⁸ Ipsos MORI. (2013). “Perceptions are not reality: The top 10 we get wrong.” Available at: www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/migrations/en-uk/files/Assets/Docs/Polls/ipsos-mori-rss-kings-perils-of-perception-methodology-note.pdf

A PICTURE OF 2023 AND 2024

The New Norm of Anti-Muslim Hate



High-Profile Events

7 Oct Terror Attacks

Following the 7 October terror attacks by Hamas and the war in Gaza that followed, Tell MAMA received record levels of reports. In the first 100 days following 7 October, we received over 2,000 cases, which is the highest number ever recorded in any 100 days by Tell MAMA.⁶⁹ Between 7 October 2023 and 30 September 2024, Tell MAMA recorded 4,971 cases of anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia.⁷⁰

The Home Office looked at the aggregated number of religious hate crimes from 31 police forces across England and Wales between April 2023 and March 2024 and found deeply troubling rises in hate crimes towards Muslim and Jewish communities.⁷¹ Furthermore, the overall number of offences in this period was 13% higher (n=3,866) than for the same period a year prior (n=3,432). Figures from the Metropolitan Police also show a spike in reports of hate crimes targeting Muslim and Jewish communities.⁷² In October 2023, they recorded 205 Islamophobic hate crimes, and in November 2023, this rose again to 245 cases, compared to 95 cases recorded in September and 100 cases recorded in August. Avon and Somerset police also report an increase in Islamophobic hate crimes following 7 October, rising from 58 between October 2021 and September 2022 to 112 between October 2023 and September 2024.⁷³

Some high-profile and shocking cases reported to Tell MAMA included a Muslim woman in Islamic clothing on public transport who had

a newspaper with headlines about the Hamas terror attacks waved at her by another woman, who then went on to make a direct threat to kill the Muslim woman. In a separate case of abuse and harassment, we received reports of a man who had shouted “Hamas terrorist” at a Muslim woman in a hijab and proceeded to follow her in an intimidating manner. Further cases of street-level abuse included many reports where Muslim women had been harassed on the streets and called “terrorists”, “bombers”, and “Hamas sympathisers”.

A noticeable and deeply concerning shift in cases reported to Tell MAMA was the targeting of individuals in public for speaking Arabic. From our earliest bulletins, published after 7 October, we highlighted anti-Palestinian, anti-Arab racism manifesting in different ways, including when speaking Arabic in public spaces – either with peers, family or on the telephone.

In one such case, we supported the owner of a Palestinian restaurant in London, who received daily death threats over the telephone.⁷⁴ The owner, Haleem Kherallah, spoke of the anguish his staff felt and how disruptive it proved to their business, adding: “I just feel like we are not allowed to talk. It’s frightening. It’s intimidating. One of my staff didn’t turn up the next day; he was so frightened. He felt intimidated.”⁷⁵

Cases of threatening behaviour can be horrifying and can have long-term impacts on people’s lives, mental health and wellbeing. We have received cases, for example, where individuals have become very fearful of leaving their homes or going about their day-to-day activities because of the threats they received. Although the threat of violence towards Muslim communities is sadly not new, the frequency has increased dramatically over the past year. It could, however, also point to an increase in the levels of hate against Muslim communities because of the levels of hostility increasing after 7 October.

⁶⁹ Tell MAMA. (2024). “Tell MAMA recorded almost 5,000 anti-Muslim cases a year on from 7 October. *Tell MAMA*. Available at: <https://tellmamauk.org/tell-mama-recorded-almost-5000-anti-muslim-cases-a-year-on-from-7-october/>

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Home Office. (2023). ‘Official Statistics. Hate crime, England and Wales, year ending March 2024’, published October 10, 2024. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-year-ending-march-2024/hate-crime-england-and-wales-year-ending-march-2024

⁷² Metropolitan Police Service. (2024). ‘Monthly Crime Data New Cats’. Last modified January 6, 2025. Available at: <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/metropolitan.police.service/viz/MonthlyCrimeDataNewCats/Coversheet>

⁷³ BBC. (2024). ‘Islamophobic and anti-Semitic hate crimes rising’, Last modified December 30, 2024. Available at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cp83p4v4lno

⁷⁴ Lynn, Guy. “Palestinian Takeaway in London Gets Death Threats Every Day.” BBC News. Last modified October 20, 2023. Available at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-67172707

⁷⁵ Ibid.

A PICTURE OF 2023 AND 2024

Concerningly, we received many cases which include Muslims being associated with disease and dirt, for example, “Monkeypox”, “Smelly”, “Filth”, “Virus”, “Scum”, and “Dirty b*stards”. Scholars have elucidated that references to minority groups as microbes and toxins falsely suggest that they are capable of polluting or making the majority group ill in some way, which can fuel harmful racist discourse about the need to ‘purify’ societies from these ‘viruses’.⁷⁶ Furthermore, there has been a sharp rise in the dehumanising language which likens Muslims to animals, for example, dogs, rabbits, rats, monkeys, hogs and fleas.

Our findings show how the war on Gaza has left some people questioning their safety and sense of belonging in the UK – a feeling compounded by the far-right violence in parts of the country following the horrific stabbings and murders in Southport. Hate crime remains vastly underreported, and individuals have begun to cease reporting to the police due to the daily occurrence of the abuse they receive. The long-term impacts on social and community cohesion and economic insecurity risk more significant threats to communities that the government must not overlook in the months and years ahead.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Abdalla, M., Ally, M. and Jabri-Markwell, R. (2021). ‘Dehumanisation of ‘Outgroups’ on Facebook and Twitter: towards a framework for assessing online hate organisations and actors’, *SN social sciences*, 1, pp.1-28.

⁷⁷ Tell MAMA. (2024). “Tell MAMA recorded almost 5,000 anti-Muslim cases a year on from 7 October. *Tell MAMA*. Available at: <https://tellmamauk.org/tell-mama-recorded-almost-5000-anti-muslim-cases-a-year-on-from-7-october/>

Nine months after 7 October, in July 2024, Tell MAMA and Survation surveyed 550 British Muslims about the significant rise in anti-Muslim hate post 7 October.⁷⁸ The Survation poll was conducted between 15 July and 29 July 2024; 60% of those surveyed said they thought anti-Muslim hate in British society has increased in the last year, 27% said they had experienced an anti-Muslim hate incident in the previous year, and almost 69% of British Muslims who received verbal attacks did not report these to the police. These findings demonstrate that vast levels of anti-Muslim hatred are being perpetrated and that there is growing unease amongst British Muslims about their level of safety. It is the responsibility of statutory, private, and civil society groups to take the needs of British Muslims seriously and to offer support to help achieve justice for those victims of anti-Muslim hatred.

⁷⁸ Tell MAMA. (2024). ‘Survey of British Muslims After October 7th Shows A Rise In Anti-Muslim Abuse. Last Updated August 2, 2024. Available at: <https://tellmamauk.org/survey-of-british-muslims-after-october-7th-shows-a-rise-in-anti-muslim-abuse/>



A PICTURE OF 2023 AND 2024



General Election 2024

In the run-up to the 2024 UK General Election, there were several incidents of candidates and campaigners publicly espousing anti-Muslim hate and Islamophobia. Much of this divisive rhetoric centred on the idea that Muslims have apparently failed to ‘integrate’ into British life and are undeserving of British citizenship. Tell MAMA discussed the rhetoric of ‘integration’ in our 2024 Manifesto Against Hate.⁷⁹ At other times, Muslims as a whole group were likened to Hamas, which invokes anti-Muslim and Islamophobic tropes that Muslims are more likely to support terrorism. We also saw some politicians victimised by anti-Muslim hatred in the run-up to the elections.

We uphold the right of politicians and the public to speak about immigration and highlight the need for these conversations to happen in such a way as not to promote factually inaccurate and inflammatory rhetoric about Muslim communities. This political discourse is incredibly divisive and seeks to frame Muslims as an out-group and others as something external or incompatible with our national identity. The language used by some goes far beyond what would reasonably be called free speech and was rightly condemned. As we have reported previously, such language also has impacts in the real world and Tell MAMA will continue to call out such divisive and heavily loaded comments publicly.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Tell MAMA (2024). Manifesto Against Hate. *Tell MAMA*. Available at: [Tell MAMA's UK General Election Manifesto Against Hate Crimes 2024](#)

⁸⁰ Tell MAMA (2024). Manifesto Against Hate. *Tell MAMA*. Available at: [Tell MAMA's UK General Election Manifesto Against Hate Crimes 2024](#)



Southport

Following the abhorrent murders of three girls (and the stabbing of others, including adults and children) at a dance workshop in Southport in July 2024, racialised falsehoods began spreading online about the perpetrator. False claims included that he was an “asylum seeker” and was “known to MI6”. Tell MAMA has written before about the role online misinformation and disinformation played in sparking a swathe of anti-Muslim sentiment.⁸¹ How this misinformation and disinformation spread and its effect on the online world is explored in detail in the online section of this report.

On 30 July, after a peaceful vigil for the three murdered girls in Southport, the far-right intent on violence and harm turned their attention to the local mosque. Rocks, bottles and bricks were thrown at the mosque, and a police van was set alight – the Liverpool Echo provided a detailed, horrifying report of the fear local Muslims felt inside the mosque as the far-right violence unfolded.⁸² Locals, outraged and disgusted by the far-right violence, stood together to clean up the streets and express their solidarity with Muslim communities.⁸³

In the following days, more far-right-inspired violence and disorder targeted hotels accommodating refugees in other parts of the country, with the far-right using online platforms like Telegram to organise, promote racist and terrorist materials, and give advice about avoiding arrest.

In Manchester, mobs gathered at a Holiday Inn hotel where asylum seekers were being housed and they were chanting “Shame on you” and “We want our country back”, resulting in arrests

⁸¹ Tell MAMA. (2024). “How information and disinformation about the Southport stabbings went viral”. *Tell MAMA*. Available at: <https://tellmamauk.org/how-misinformation-and-disinformation-about-the-southport-stabbings-went-viral/>

⁸² Thorp, Liam. “Terrified Mosque Members ‘prayed’ Rioters Wouldn’t Get Inside.” *Liverpool Echo*. Last modified August 6, 2024. Available at: www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/we-prayed-wouldnt-inside-terrifying-29688669

⁸³ Hamilton, Claire, and Ewan Gawne. “Southport Residents Clean-up Streets Amid Protest ‘heartbreak’.” *BBC News*. Last modified July 31, 2024. Available at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c720p4y3jx4o.

A PICTURE OF 2023 AND 2024

for violent disorder.⁸⁴ Similar shocking scenes of violent disorder followed in Aldershot, which later included the jailing of a racist man who expressed his desire to “murder” immigrants and “smash up mosques”.⁸⁵ Violent disorder and riots continued into the weekend. The most shocking and violent example of the far-right disorder and far-right-led mob violence involved attacks on a hotel in Rotherham, which the Guardian reported involved 700 people.⁸⁶ They were throwing objects at the hotel and smashing windows, and reports came out that rioters had attempted to set the hotel on fire.⁸⁷ Shocking eyewitness testimonies emerged in the press.⁸⁸ The joint highest prison sentence totalled nine years, given to Levi Fishlock, who the judge said had “played a part in almost every aspect of the racist mob violence on that terrible day in August,” and became the second individual jailed for arson with intent to endanger life.⁸⁹

Another hotel in Tamworth, Staffordshire, which was housing asylum seekers, was targeted with petrol bombs and had its windows smashed.⁹⁰ Between 30 July and 7 August 2024, it was reported that 27 towns and cities across the UK faced an estimated 29 anti-immigration demonstrations, violence and riots promoted and attended by far-right agitators, according

to a report in the House of Commons Library.⁹¹ At least one 1,280 arrests followed, and 796 people were charged for their role in the violence and disorder.⁹² Sir Mark Rowley, who leads the Metropolitan Police, made clear that: “The vast majority of them are criminals with a violent history. Violence against women and girls, football violence,” he added, “They don’t look like an average bunch of citizens to me. They’re basically largely a bunch of racially motivated criminal thugs.”⁹³ In November 2024, the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) revealed that the total cost to police forces during the summer riots stood at £31.7m across all affected force areas, a figure likely to rise.⁹⁴ A report from His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) said that the risks of disorder proved “greater than the police believed” and involved “extreme nationalist sentiment, aggravated activism or serious disorder” which pre-date the murders in Southport.⁹⁵

⁸⁴ Holt, J. (2024). “Protest in Manchester erupts into scenes of violence as man dragged off bus and rocks and bottles pelted at police”. Manchester Evening News. Last modified July 31, 2024. Available at: www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/protest-manchester-erupts-scenes-violence-29653735

⁸⁵ White, M. (2024). “Man who vowed to kill migrants jailed for two years”. BBC News. Last modified September 23, 2024. Available at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c39lv2jl3wmo

⁸⁶ Sinmaz, E. and Vinter, R. (2024). “Rioters try to torch Rotherham asylum seeker hotel amid far-right violence”. The Guardian. Last modified August 4, 2024. Available at: www.theguardian.com/uk-news/article/2024/aug/04/rioters-try-to-torch-rotherham-asylum-seeker-hotel-amid-far-right-violence

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Haynes, Dan. “The Boy at the Window.” Sheffield Tribune. Last modified December 8, 2024. Available at: www.sheffieldtribune.co.uk/the-boy-at-the-window/

⁸⁹ PA Media. “Rotherham Rioter Who Tried to Burn Down Asylum Seeker Hotel Jailed for Nine Years.” The Guardian. Last modified December 12, 2024. www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/dec/12/rotherham-rioter-levi-fishlock-who-tried-to-burn-down-asylum-seeker-hotel-jailed-for-nine-years

⁹⁰ Cullinane, A. and McIntyre, A. (2024). “Police vow to find Holiday Inn petrol bomb rioters”. BBC. Last modified August 5, 2024. Available at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c6p222mplymo.

⁹¹ Downs, W. (2024). “Policing response to the 2024 summer riots”. House of Commons Library. Available at: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/policing-response-to-the-2024-summer-riots/>.

⁹² National Police Chiefs’ Council. (2024). “Arrests and charges related to violent disorder continue”. NPCC. Last modified August 30, 2024. Available at: <https://news.npcc.police.uk/releases/arrests-and-charges-related-to-violent-disorder-continue>

⁹³ Dodd, Vikram. “Rioters After Southport Attack ‘largely Racially Motivated Thugs’, Met Chief Says.” The Guardian. Last modified September 19, 2024. Available at: www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/sep/19/rioters-after-southport-attack-largely-racially-motivated-thugs-met-chief-says

⁹⁴ National Police Chiefs’ Council. “Communities Urged to Stay Alert to Online Misinformation.” National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC). Last modified November 20, 2024. Available at: <https://news.npcc.police.uk/releases/police-chiefs-urge-communities-to-stay-alert-to-online-misinformation>

⁹⁵ Davis, Margaret. “Southport Riots Review Finds Police Underestimated Risk of Disorder.” The Standard. Last modified December 18, 2024. Available at: www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/police-southport-theresa-may-boris-johnson-london-b1200620.html

Figures reported by various police forces indicate a spike in Islamophobic hate crimes following the riots. In August 2024, the Metropolitan Police recorded 190 Islamophobic hate crimes, up from 110 recorded Islamophobic hate crimes in June and 112 recorded in July.⁹⁶ Greater Manchester police recorded, on average, 39 Islamophobic offences a month from January to July 2024 before rising sharply to 85 in August 2024.⁹⁷ Additionally, Devon and Cornwall Police reported between one and five cases a month between January and July 2024, which then rose to 15 cases in August 2024.⁹⁸

Immediately following the riots, the number of cases of anti-Muslim hate reported to us spiked dramatically. In just two weeks, we received over 650 instances of anti-Muslim hate where Muslim communities felt unsafe, as visibly Muslim women were being threatened as they went about their day-to-day activities. Understandably, this level of anti-Muslim hatred had profound impacts on Muslim communities and migrant communities in the UK.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Metropolitan Police Service. (2024). 'Monthly Crime Data New Cats'. Last modified January 6, 2025. Available at: <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/metropolitan.police.service/viz/MonthlyCrimeDataNewCats/Coversheet>

⁹⁷ Al-Othman, H. (2024). 'Police forces report sharp rise in religious hate crimes across the UK', The Guardian. Last modified December 30, 2024. Available at: www.theguardian.com/society/2024/dec/30/police-forces-report-sharp-rise-in-religious-hate-crimes-across-uk

⁹⁸ Ferguson, E. (2024). 'Hate crime offences recorded in Devon and Cornwall doubled', The Packet. Last modified December 30, 2024. Available at: www.falmouthpacket.co.uk/news/24823669.hate-crime-offences-recorded-devon-cornwall-doubled

⁹⁹ Harding, T. (2024). "UK Riots: Muslims 'fear going to mosques' as far-right violence grips UK". The National. Last modified August 4, 2024. Available at: www.thenationalnews.com/news/uk/2024/08/04/muslims-fear-going-to-mosques-as-far-right-riots-grip-uk



Windows smashed by rioters at hotel in Rotherham (Photo credit to PA)¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ BBC News. (2024). "PM slams 'far-right thuggery' after hotel violence". BBC News. Last modified August 4, 2024. Available at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/crg44dx9lz9o

A PICTURE OF 2023 AND 2024

Immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees are often seen as de facto Muslims despite coming from broad and diverse backgrounds across the globe fleeing war or persecution. However, this perceived synonymity between Muslims and immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees endures and feeds into the broader anti-Muslim rhetoric that Muslims will “never be British”.

In one case received at Tell MAMA, a visibly Muslim woman was walking down the street with her two children and husband slightly behind her when a man slowed his car to shout, “F*** off home, f*** off”. Another visibly Muslim woman was walking with her child when a man passing her whispered in her ear, “Bloody Muslim, go back home”.

Eight weeks after the riots erupted, Tell MAMA surveyed 750 Muslims across the UK. We reported that 71% of those surveyed felt that anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia had become more widespread, and 62% had said that the potential risk of harm to Muslims has increased.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ ITV News (2024). “Most Muslims feel Islamophobia has increased after the summer riots sparked by Southport attack”. ITV News. Last modified November 20, 2024. Available at: www.itv.com/news/granada/2024-11-20/islamophobia-has-increased-after-southport-riots-survey-finds

We reported that 71% of those surveyed felt that anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia had become more widespread since the anti-immigration protests and riots, and 62% had said that since the unrest the potential risk of harm to Muslims has increased.

Gendered Anti-Muslim Hate and Violence against Women and Girls

References to Islamic clothing have been a relatively consistent feature in our data, and it is more likely that women are the ones wearing Islamic clothing and, therefore, facing abuse over it. In one example, a Muslim woman in Islamic clothing was assaulted on a London bus, during which one of the perpetrators made inflammatory statements to her, including, “You Muslims are troublemakers”. In another case, a woman walking with her friend was exposed to anti-Muslim and misogynistic abuse when a man spat in her face and called her a “Muslim b*tch.”

In other cases, a Muslim woman was assaulted and told that Muslims “are not wanted here” and that she should use her scarf to strangle herself, which she reported to the police.

In the Greater Manchester area, two Muslim women described how a white male in his thirties spat towards them multiple times whilst hurling verbal abuse at them. On a bus in West London, a perpetrator assaulted a Muslim woman by forcibly grabbing her headscarf.

Gendered anti-Muslim violence, abuse, threats, and violence spiked considerably after 7 October. Muslim women reported threats of rape and murder.



Anti-Muslim hate targeted at women reported to Tell MAMA was also more likely to contain sexual aggression than hate targeted at men, further highlighting the gender differences in anti-Muslim hate cases.

Women are the primary victims of street harassment, and Muslim women are simultaneously targeted due to their religious, racial, or ethnic position.¹⁰² This intersection of misogyny and racism makes Muslim women, particularly at risk for gendered violence and how anti-Muslim hatred is modulated through the lens of gender and sexism.¹⁰³

This consistent sense of threat faced disproportionately by Muslim women works to undermine their sense of safety in the public sphere. As Bowman (1993)¹⁰⁴ explains, street harassment influences women to modify their appearance in public as a safety measure - this takes on a heightened meaning for Muslim women where altering their appearance may mean becoming less ‘visibly Muslim’, for example, removing their headscarf or niqab, which Mason-Bish and Zempi note.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Crenshaw, K.W. (2013). ‘Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color’, *The public nature of private violence*, pp. 93-118, Routledge.

¹⁰³ Hopkins, P., Botterill, K., Sanghera, G. and Arshad, R. (2015). ‘Faith, ethnicity and place: young people’s everyday geopolitics in Scotland’, *Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne*.

¹⁰⁴ Bowman, C.G. (1993). ‘Street harassment and the informal ghettoization of women’, *Harvard Law Review*, pp.517-580.

¹⁰⁵ Mason-Bish, H. and Zempi, I. (2019). ‘Misogyny, racism, and Islamophobia: Street harassment at the intersections’, *Feminist Criminology*, 14(5), pp.540-559.

METHODOLOGY

The New Norm of Anti-Muslim Hate

05



Tell MAMA confidentially records a variety of information about the anti-Muslim and Islamophobic cases reported to us, which allows us to build a picture of yearly trends. It includes incident categories and types, whether they are online or offline, and victim and perpetrator characteristics. 'Offline' or 'Street-based' reports can mean cases that occurred in person between the victim(s) and perpetrator(s), including, for example, verbal abuse, harassment, discrimination or physical violence. It also could involve vandalism (such as vandalism targeting Islamic institutions, the homes of Muslims or property owned by

Muslims), anti-Muslim literature (such as stickers, posters or material posted through letterboxes) and hate speech (which stirs up hatred towards Muslims collectively rather than against an individual Muslim person).

Recording this data depends on the source of the report disclosing this to us, and it will only appear in our reports if they have consented to it. As we have acknowledged previously, this creates some gaps in our data; however, our priority is to protect victims' requests for dignity, privacy, and confidentiality.



Definitions of 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 or beliefs.
- **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.
- **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 to target Muslims collectively rather than a singular individual.

Cases will be assigned one of these incident category labels. However, often, cases of anti-Muslim hate include more than one type of abuse; for example, they may be verbally abused (categorised here as abusive behaviour) whilst being physically abused (categorised here as assault). It is important to recognise, therefore, that there is inevitably an element of subjectivity in the categorisation of each of these cases as we attempt to put each case into one of the above categories. To ensure we do not flatten the complexity of each case through such categorisation, we also record more detailed 'specific actions' faced by service users, such as 'unfair treatment', 'injury' and 'damage to property'. Incidents may involve several of these specific actions.



Definitions of offline Anti-Muslim place categories:

- **Public Area:** An incident that occurs in public, pedestrianised areas, including town centres, parks, or shopping areas.
- **Transport Network:** An incident that occurs on public transport networks, including railways, buses, coaches, trams, the London Underground, and stations.
- **Place of Business:** An incident that occurs in a shop, restaurant, or other privately owned business where the victim does not work.
- **Household or Private Property:** An incident that occurs in or around the victim's or another person's domestic dwelling.
- **Place of Work:** An incident that occurs in the victim's workplace, including public spaces, if the victim is a taxi driver or police officer, for example.
- **Educational Institution:** An incident that occurs within a college, school, or university that the victim attends.
- **Road or Highway:** An incident involving one or more vehicles on a roadway or car park.

- **Islamic Institution:** An incident targeting an Islamic institution such as a mosque, cemetery, cultural centre, or Islamic school.
- **Public Institution:** An incident that occurs within a public building, such as a Jobcentre Plus or council office, where the victim does not work.
- **Hospital:** An incident that occurs in the health service buildings, including hospitals, GP surgeries or health clinics.

The following sections will include a detailed breakdown of the types of cases we received, where they took place, and data about perpetrators and victims. To complement the quantitative analysis of reports, most of this report will be based on qualitative thematic analysis of the case notes we receive in our reports. We rely heavily on the testimony of victims or witnesses to form our analysis to emphasise the need to support our service users in making their voices heard and help show the impact that low-level prejudice and racism can have on people's daily lives.

THE EVOLVING TRENDS OF ANTI-MUSLIM HATE IN 2023 AND 2024

The New Norm of anti-Muslim Hate

06



Street-Based (Offline) Anti-Muslim Hate Reported to Tell Mama in 2023 And 2024

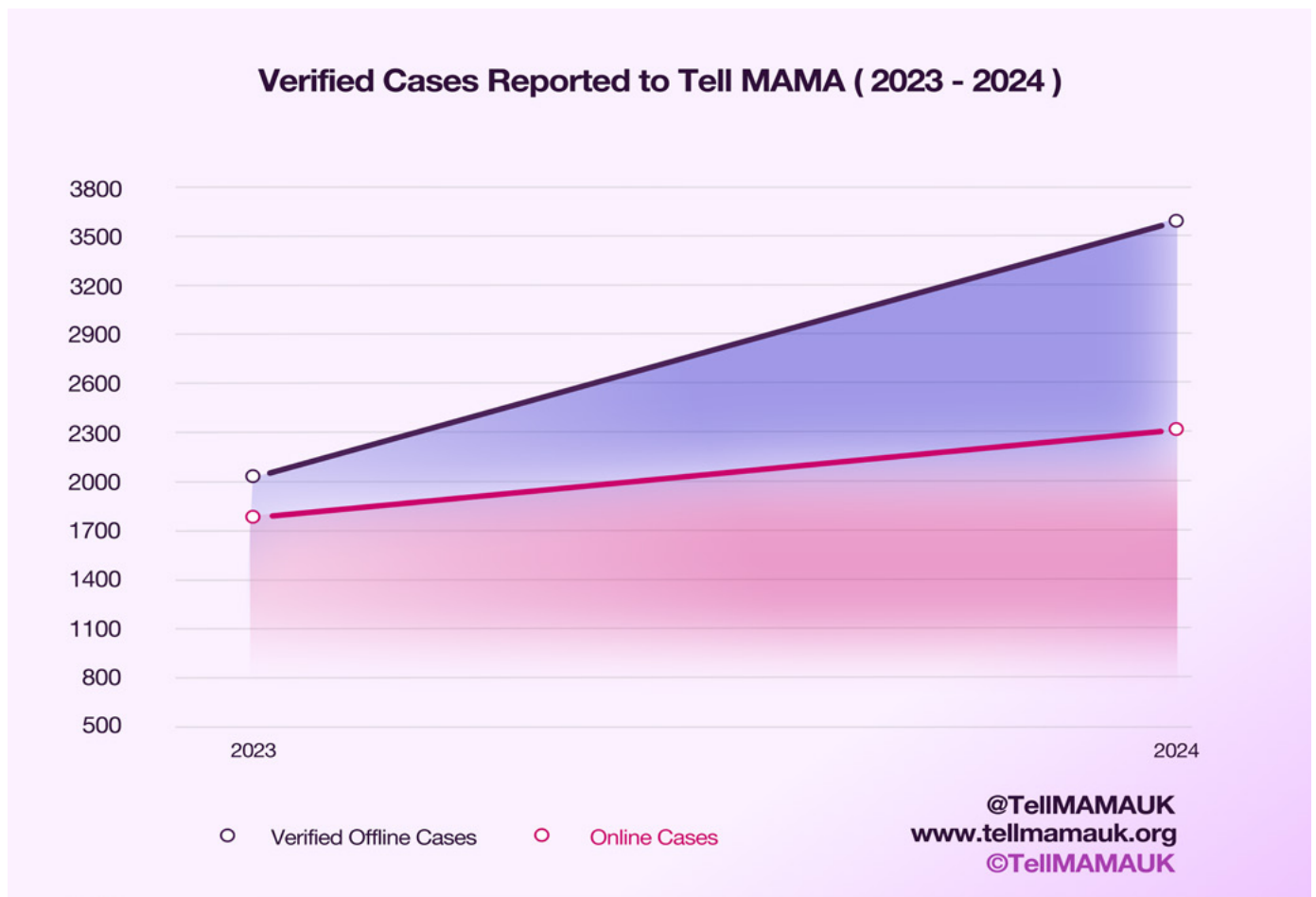
Overall, we have seen a shocking 2253% increase in total offline verified reports received at Tell MAMA from 2012 (n=150) to 2024 (n=3530).

In 2022, we received a total of 2,651 cases, and we were able to verify 2,201 cases. Of these, 1,856 were offline cases, of which 1,606 were verified, and 795 were online cases, of which 595 were verified.

In 2023, we received a total of 4,406 reports, of which we verified 3,767, an increase of 71% since 2022 in verified cases. Of these, we received a total of 2,443 offline cases, of which 2,048 were verified. It demonstrates an increase of 28% in the number of verified offline cases between 2022 and 2023.

In 2024, we received the most considerable number of anti-Muslim hate cases ever recorded by Tell MAMA in a single calendar year. We received a total of 6,313 cases, of which we verified 5,837, a 55% increase in verified cases

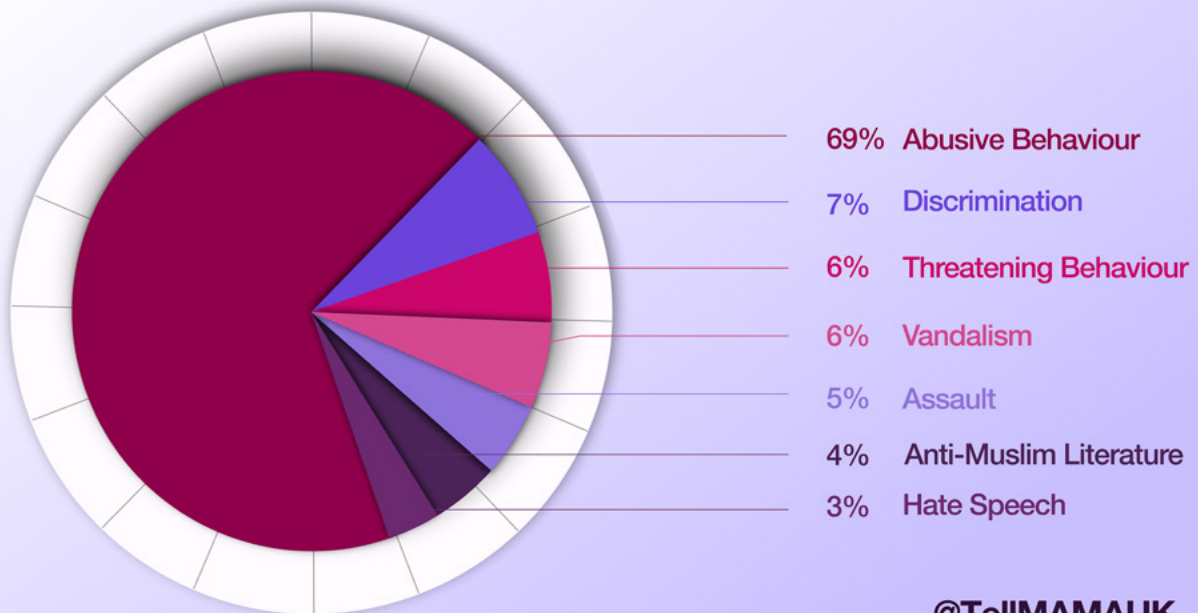
THE EVOLVING TRENDS OF ANTI-MUSLIM HATE



since 2023 and a shocking rise of 165% since 2022. Of offline cases, we received a total of 3,680 cases. We were able to verify 3,530 of them, showcasing a shocking 72% rise in the number of offline verified cases between 2023 and 2024 and a 120% increase in the number of verified cases between 2022 and 2024.

This considerable increase of anti-Muslim cases in 2023 and into 2024 begins immediately following the 7 October terror attacks. It sets a new norm in the level of reporting of anti-Muslim hate. That baseline shift in higher-than-average reports continued into 2024, with Tell MAMA recording an increase in cases following the horrific murders in Southport during the summer months and the subsequent far-right violence and rioting.

Offline anti-Muslim Cases by Incident Category 2023



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Anti-Muslim Incidents and Locations

Incident Categories

Abusive Behaviour

Abusive behaviour in both 2023 and 2024 was the most common incident category reported to Tell MAMA. In 2023, 69% of cases (n=1,406) reported to us were for abusive behaviour, and in 2024, 62% of cases (n=2,197) were for abusive behaviour. Abusive behaviour is a broad category and includes both verbal and non-verbal abuse perpetrated due to the victim's perceived Muslim identity. Overall, this category figure remains in line with findings from previous reports, which note that abusive behaviour has always been our most common category. Between 2023 and 2024, there was a 56% increase in the number of cases of abusive behaviour Tell MAMA received - this is also an increase from 2022 when we received 1,072 cases of abusive behaviour (67%). There was then a 31% increase in the number of cases

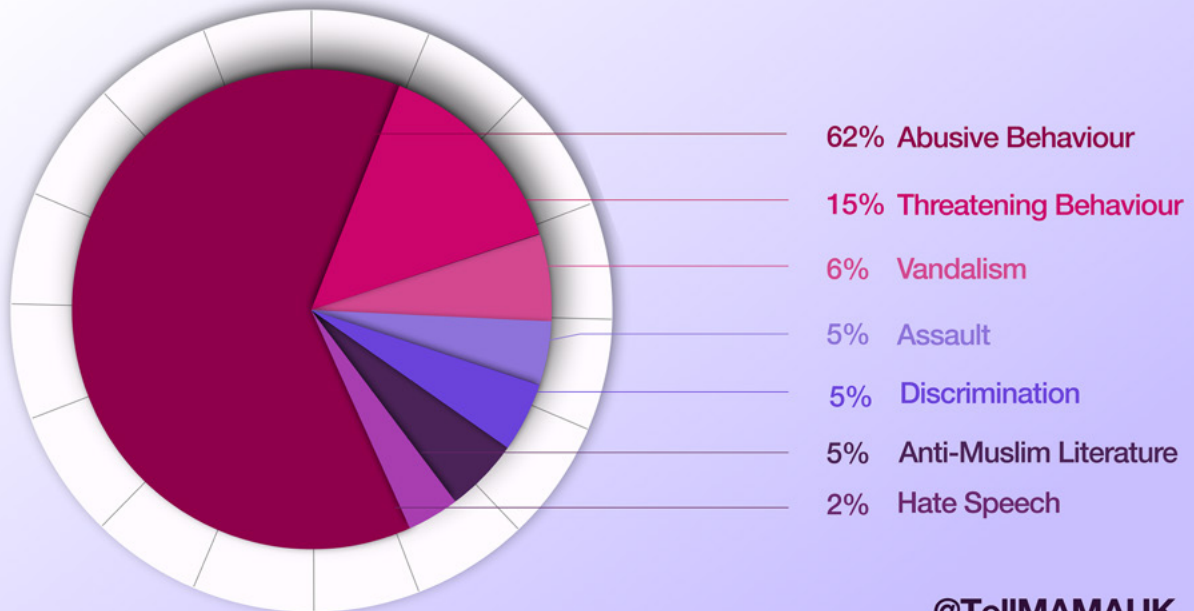
between 2022 and 2023 and a 105% increase in the number of abusive behaviour cases between 2022 and 2024.

Abusive Behaviour case study: A racist who spat at and called a Muslim bus driver a "Muslim terrorist b*stard" and subjected staff at a betting shop to racist abuse before damaging the building received a 10-month prison sentence. Tell MAMA assisted the prosecution by providing them with a community impact statement.

Assault

A physical attack characterises assault and can range from spitting or throwing objects to a violent assault. Like reports of abusive behaviour, we also saw a dramatic increase in the number of cases of assault between 2022 and 2024. In 2022, Tell MAMA received 53 cases of assault (3% of the total verified cases that year); in 2023, we received 99 cases of assault (5% of the total verified cases that year); and in 2024, we received 171 cases of assault (5% of the total verified cases that year).

Offline anti-Muslim Cases by Incident Category 2024



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It, therefore, means there was an 88% increase between 2022 and 2023, a 73% increase in cases between 2023 and 2024 and overall, a 223% increase in the number of cases between 2022 and 2024.

Assault case study: A Muslim woman described how a man assaulted her after throwing a used tissue at her face and slapping her before walking away in London, adding he was murmuring something before the assault occurred.

Threatening Behaviour

Threatening behaviour includes direct and indirect threats of physical violence. In 2022, we received 87 cases of threatening behaviour (5% of the total verified cases that year), which increased by 39% to 121 cases in 2023 (6% of the total verified cases that year). In 2024, we received a further 518 cases of threatening behaviour (15% of total verified cases that year), which is an increase of 328% since 2023. The number of threatening behaviour cases reported

to us, therefore, increased by 495% between 2022 and 2024. In 2024, threatening behaviour became the second largest proportion of cases, which is the first year since we started reporting that this has been the case. Moreover, it is also the single most significant increase in the number of cases across a single incident category in a single year. It is worth highlighting that we recorded a staggering 987 cases of threatening behaviour in 2024 - this is a 715% increase in the number of reports which contain threatening behaviour between 2023 and 2024.

Threatening Behaviour case study: A man was arrested and sentenced to two years and six months in prison after threatening to burn mosques. The threats involved the following language: "We are English patriots, and we are coming after you. We are going to burn down the mosques. We are going to kill you guys. We are coming for you; we are going to wipe you out. We are going to take back our country".

Discrimination

In 2022, Tell MAMA received 87 cases of discrimination (5% of the total verified cases that year), which then increased by 53% to 133 cases in 2023 (7% of the total verified cases that year). In 2024, the number of cases rose again, and we received 183 cases (5% of the total verified cases that year). It, therefore, means that the number of discrimination cases we received went up by 38% between 2023 and 2024 and 110% between 2022 and 2024. In 2022 and 2023, discrimination was proportionally the second-largest incident category, and in 2024, it was the fourth-largest incident category, falling behind threatening behaviour and vandalism. A significant theme in a post-7 October climate was the fear Muslims felt in expressing pro-Palestine statements, fearing its impacts on their employment, job prospects or, in some examples, their visa status. That insecurity was also felt in the online world, especially on social media and platforms like LinkedIn.

Discrimination case study: A charity employee reached out to us after being subjected to anti-Muslim hate comments while speaking to a client over the phone. It further escalated with targeted anti-Muslim letters sent to the workplace describing Muslim communities as “very terror proud and violent absorbed”, amongst other anti-Muslim tropes listed in other letters. We supported and advocated on behalf of our client, especially given the fact that the charity did not take the proper steps and measures to address the ongoing harassment and anti-Muslim hate employees experienced.

Vandalism

Vandalism includes damage or desecration of property motivated by anti-Muslim prejudice. It can involve anti-Muslim graffiti, damage to property or the dumping of pork products on properties perceived to be associated with Muslims. In all years between 2022 and 2024, vandalism made up 6% of cases, though the number of cases rose year on year. In 2022, there were 89 cases of vandalism, which grew by 47% to 131 cases in 2023. It rose again

by 60% in 2024 to 209 cases, which means, therefore, that the number of vandalism cases we received increased by 135% between 2022 and 2024. In 2024, vandalism became the third-largest incident category.

Vandalism case study: In May 2024, a Muslim family reported to Tell MAMA that someone had used a rock to break a window in their home where they had hung a pro-Palestine kite. A photograph of the broken window shared with Tell MAMA shows where they hang their “Free Palestine” kite.



Anti-Muslim Literature

Anti-Muslim literature involves written or visual anti-Muslim content; it could be in the form of letters, leaflets, or posters, for example, and may be displayed publicly or distributed to individuals. In 2022, Tell MAMA received 101 cases of anti-Muslim literature (6% of total verified cases that year). In 2023, this fell slightly to 91 cases (4% of total verified cases that year). In 2024, though, it rose again to 173 cases (5% of total verified cases that year). It means that, despite the slight drop in 2023, the number of anti-Muslim literature cases we received between 2022 and 2024 increased by 71%.

Anti-Muslim literature case study:

In February 2023, following the devastating earthquakes in Turkey and Syria, racist and anti-Muslim hate letters were sent to mosques in London to mock the victims who died in the earthquake and “wished” that more Muslims had died.

THE EVOLVING TRENDS OF ANTI-MUSLIM HATE

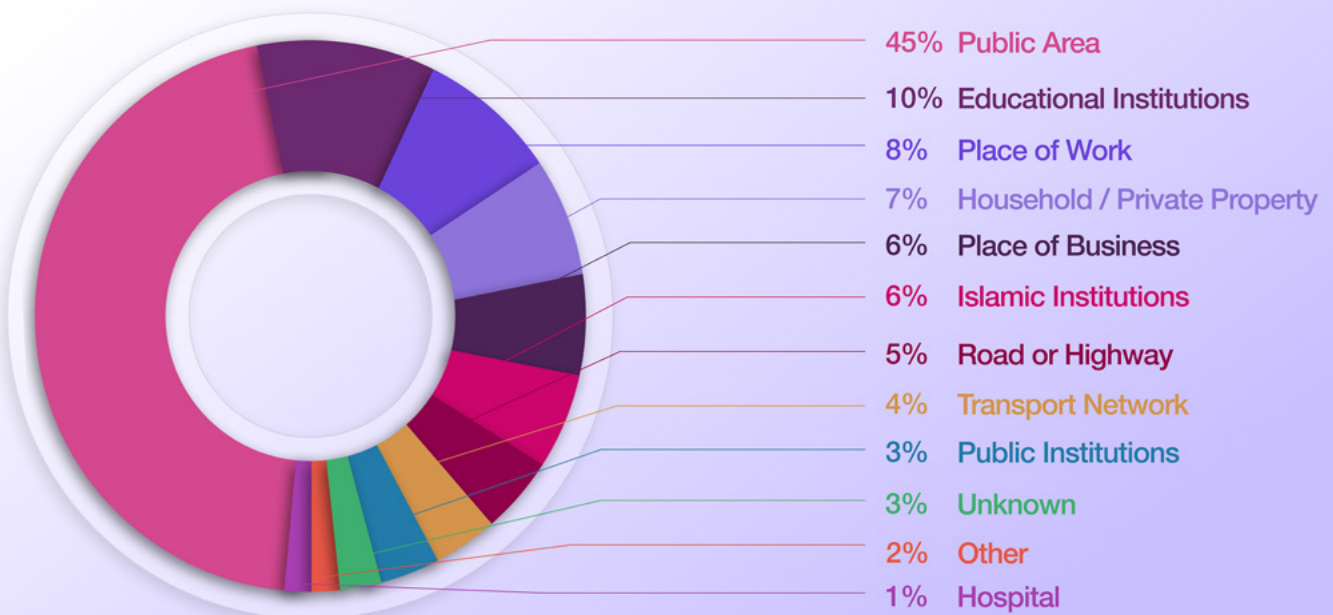
Hate Speech

Hate speech is directed at an audience rather than individuals or small groups of people perceived to be Muslim, with the aim of stirring up anti-Muslim prejudice. Hate speech is the only incident category where the number of offline cases we received decreased between 2022 and 2023, though there was a slight increase between 2023 and 2024. In 2022, we received 117 cases of hate speech (7% of total verified cases that year), which in 2023 fell by 43% to 67 cases (3% of total verified cases that year). In 2024, they rose slightly (by 18%) to 79 cases (2% of total verified cases that year).

Location of Offline Anti-Muslim Cases

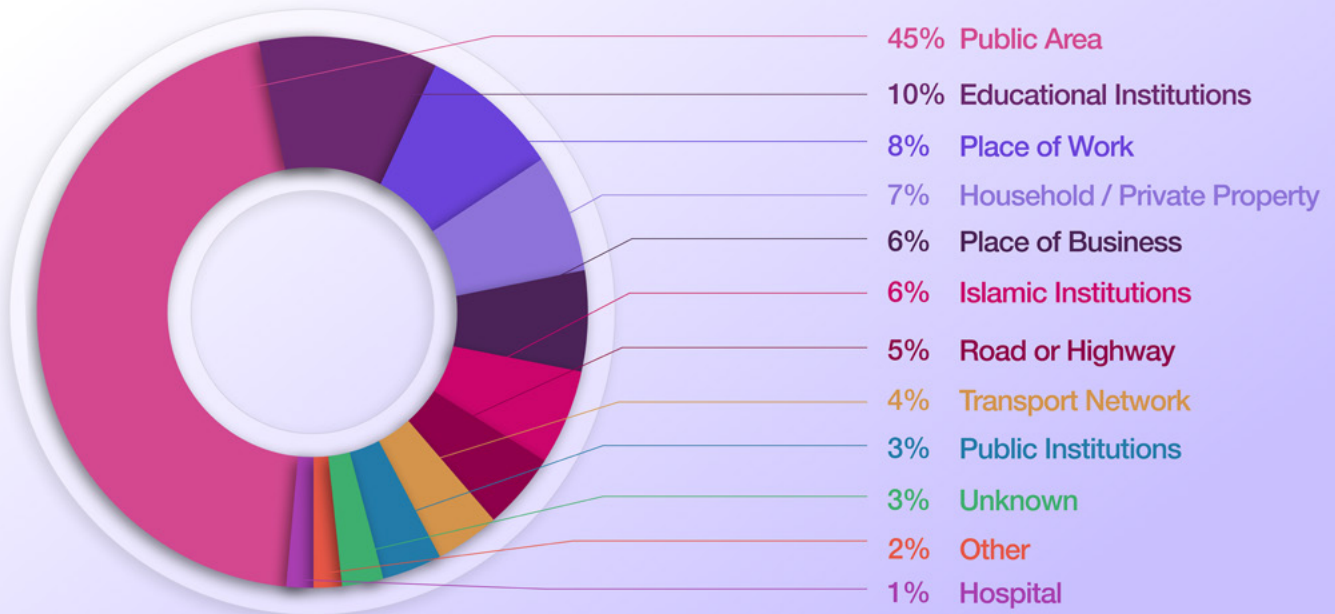
In both 2023 and 2024, public areas were the most common place for an incident to occur. A public area is any public, pedestrianised area, such as town centres, parks, or shopping areas. Still, it does not include, for example, transport networks, places of business, roads, or highways, Muslim institutions, or public institutions. Cases that occur in a public area can often involve a perpetrator walking or driving by the victim. In 2023, 45% of cases occurred in a public area (n=913), and in 2024, 40% of cases took place in a public area (n=1,427). Although

Offline anti-Muslim Cases by Place Category 2023



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Offline anti-Muslim Cases by Place Category 2024



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public areas made up a similar proportion of the cases in both 2023 and 2024, there was a 56% increase between the two years.

Public places are the most likely place for a case to occur, and this was also true between 2012 and 2019, where, on average, 31% of cases occurred in a public place - marking a shift away from the household or private property being the most likely place for a case to occur, as was the case in both 2020 and 2021 during the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. As we have noted previously, busy public settings have truly little oversight from authorities, and the relative anonymity of the perpetrators may embolden them to perpetrate anti-Muslim hate in public.

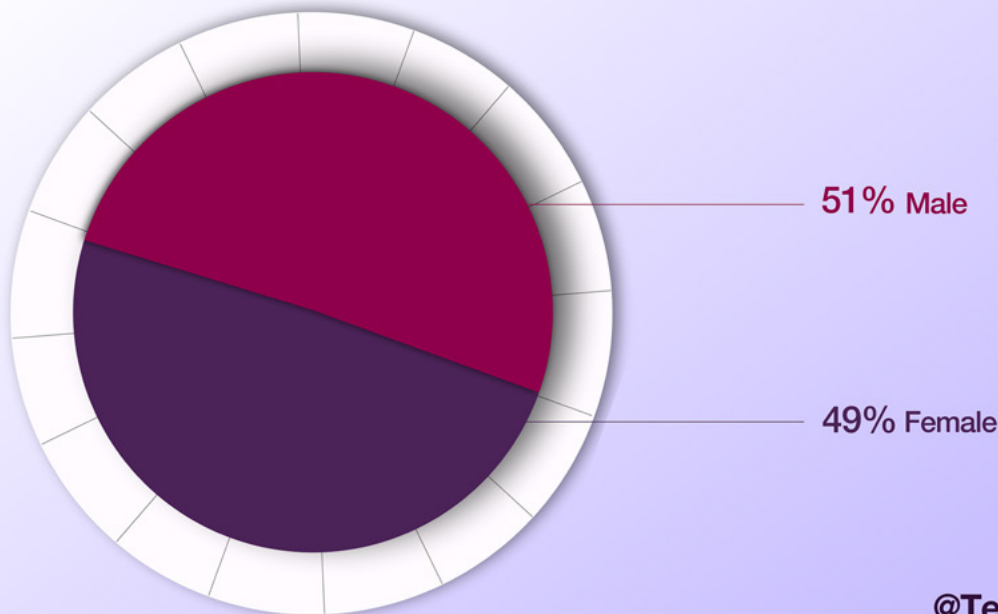
Household or private property was the second most likely place for a case to occur in 2024, making up 11% of cases (n=395), and in 2023,

it was the fourth largest place category at 7% of cases (n=141). That figure represents a 180% increase in cases occurring in households or private properties.

In 2024, after household or private property, the following highest number of cases occurred in places of work at 11% (n=388). In 2023, cases of workplace anti-Muslim hate made up 8% of the cases (n=158).

Cases occurring on transport networks increased by over 121% between 2023 and 2024. In 2023, 89 cases (4%) were reported to have taken place on transport networks, and in 2024, this had risen to 197 cases (6%). As Tell MAMA has discussed in previous reports, attacks on transport networks can be particularly distressing as victims often cannot escape their attackers if they are, for instance, on a bus or train with them.

Gender of Victims of anti-Muslim Hate 2023



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Victims and Perpetrators

Victims

In 2023, 3% of cases (n=55) were against a group of people, and 97% of cases were against a person (n=1,652). In 2024, 5% of cases (n=93) were against a group of people, and 95% of cases (n=1,616) were against a person. Of those individual victims, in 2023, 51% were male (n=841) and 49% were female (n=811). In 2024, 53% of victims were male (n=1,269) and 47% were female (n=1,118).

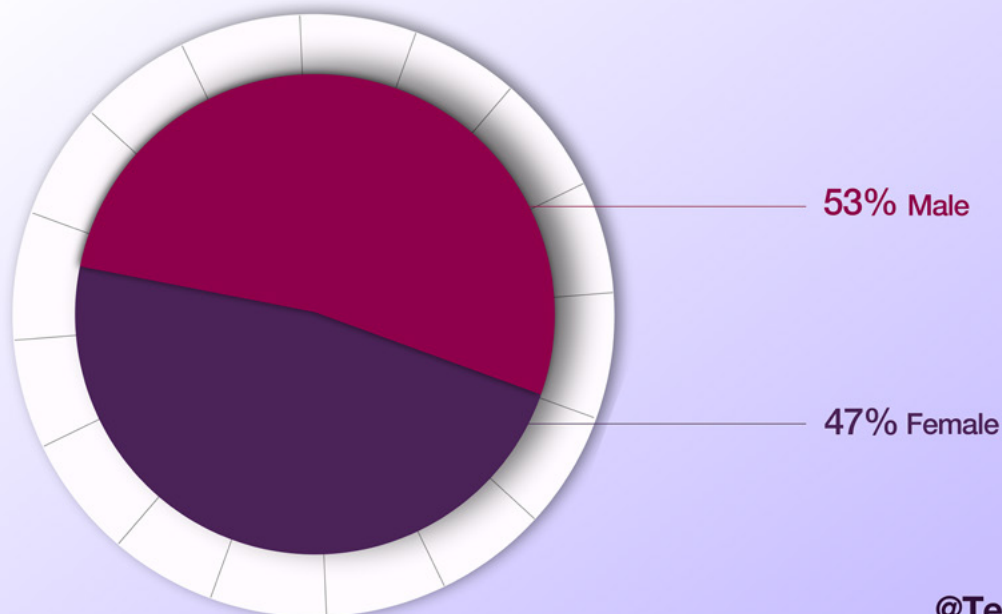
In 2024, we have recorded more offline cases of anti-Muslim hate against men than against women. In a post-7 October and a post-Southport climate, we saw the intense proliferation of anti-Muslim tropes smearing Muslim communities collectively or individually as supportive of terrorism or as terrorists. This trope affects both Muslim men and Muslim women. However, Muslim men are more likely to be associated with violence and danger, as discussed in the literature review. The extreme

hostility towards Muslim communities immediately following 7 October, and carried over throughout 2024, therefore, may have contributed to an increased targeting of Muslim men compared to what we have documented in previous years.

In 2023, 506 victims were visibly Muslim, and in 2024, 1029 victims were visibly Muslim, where we have the data available. This means that between 2023 and 2024, the proportion of victims who are visibly Muslim rose from 30% to 41%. For men, this might be wearing Islamic clothing and sporting a beard, and for women, it might be wearing, for example, a headscarf (hijab), a face veil (niqab), and/or an abaya. Women were more likely than men to be wearing Islamic clothing and, therefore, more identifiable as Muslim.

Between 2023 and 2024, the ethnicities of victims remained relatively stable. Where we have the data available, victims were most likely to be South Asian; in 2023, there were 201 South Asian victims (20%), and in 2024, there were 218 South Asian victims (20%). That

Gender of Victims of anti-Muslim Hate 2024



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figure is in line with our previous data, which has consistently seen Asian people in the UK as the most likely targets of Anti-Muslim hate. To break this down further, service users who identified as Pakistani were the largest group within this cohort, with 73 cases in 2023 and 97 cases in 2024, respectively (up 33%). The second-largest cohort was service users who identified as Bangladeshi, with 29 cases in 2023 and 58 cases in 2024, respectively (a 100% rise). Those who identified as Arab or Middle Eastern represented 11% (n=112) and 14% (n=152) of those who reported to Tell MAMA in 2023 and 2024, respectively.

We have received reports of anti-Muslim hatred across all ethnic backgrounds across these years, from those who identified as Indian, Somali, white, and Turkish, demonstrating how racism and racialised forms of abuse, harassment and violence target ethnicity and religious identities of those contacting our service, including examples of overtly racist language like the P-word and the N-word interwoven with religiously-targeted slurs and abuse.

Perpetrators

Although we receive reports of anti-Muslim hate perpetrated by people from a variety of ethnic groups, perpetrators are overwhelmingly likely to be white. In 2023, where the information has been provided to us, 60% were white, and in 2024, 65% were white (n=621 and n=1066, respectively).

Where we were supplied with the data, in 2023, 6% of cases were perpetrated by a group (n=71) and 93% of cases were perpetrated by a single perpetrator (n=1,035). In 2024, 5% of cases were perpetrated by a group (n=93) and 95% of cases (n=1,616) were perpetrated by an individual.

In 2023, where an individual perpetrated cases, 61% of them were perpetrated by someone male (n=632) and 39% were perpetrated by someone female (n=403). In 2024, where an individual perpetrated cases, 62% involved someone male (n=1,003), and 38% were perpetrated by someone female (n=613). This proportion of male-to-female perpetrators has remained relatively stable since we have been reporting.

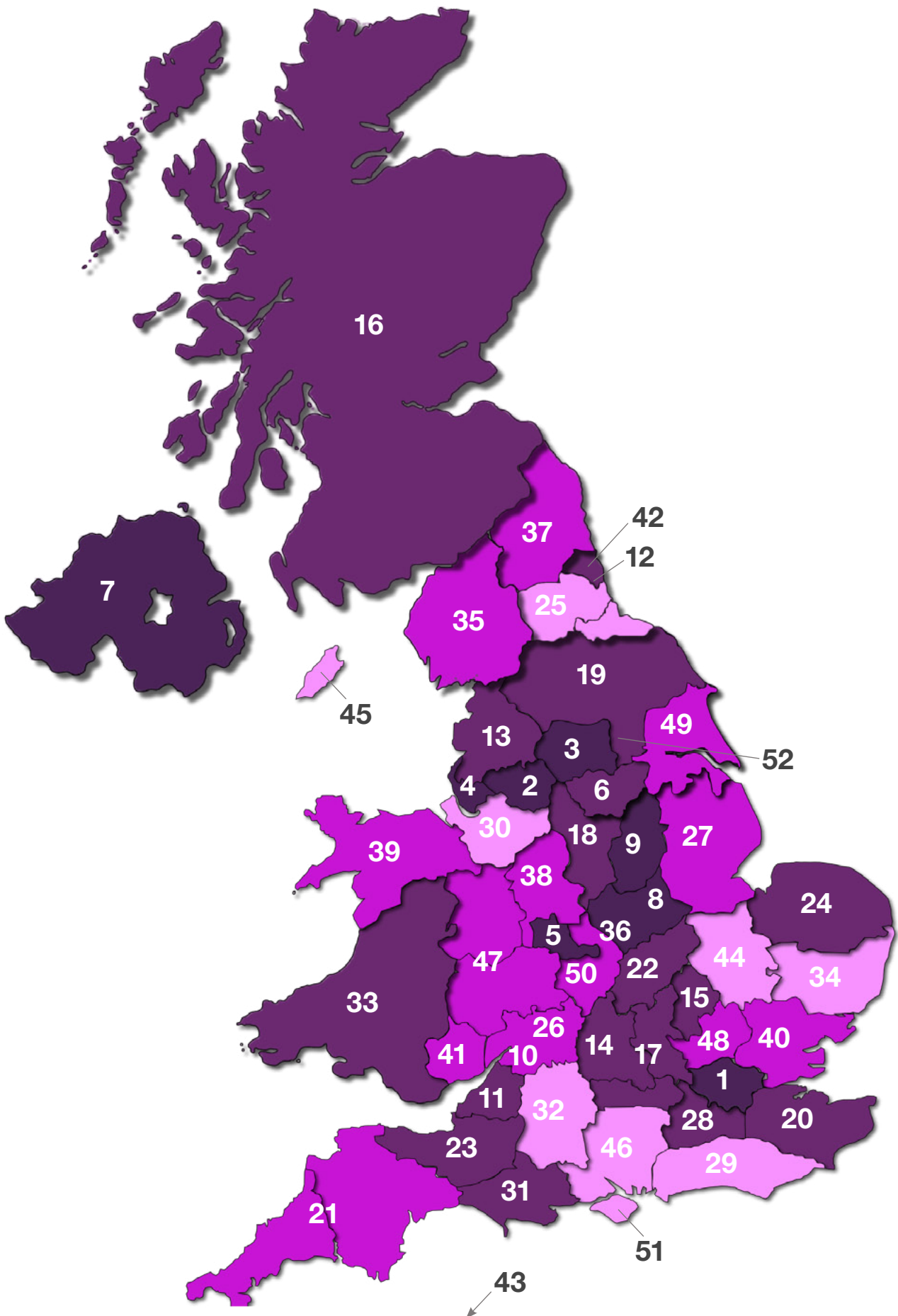
THE EVOLVING TRENDS OF ANTI-MUSLIM HATE

Geographies

The map below provides a geographic breakdown of cases verified by Tell MAMA for the years 2023 and 2024.

Location	2023	2024
1. Greater London	1028	1819
2. Greater Manchester	312	401
3. West Yorkshire	211	313
4. Merseyside	59	101
5. West Midlands	39	81
6. South Yorkshire	17	57
7. Northern Ireland	31	51
8. Leicestershire	23	41
9. Nottinghamshire	21	39
10. Bristol	9	31
11. Avon & Somerset	7	31
12. Sunderland	7	31
13. Lancashire	12	28
14. Oxfordshire	11	27
15. Bedfordshire	9	27
16. Scotland	14	26
17. Thames Valley	9	24
18. Derbyshire	9	21
19. North Yorkshire	7	21
20. Kent	7	21
21. Devon & Cornwall	5	21
22. Northamptonshire	7	19
23. Somerset	7	19
24. Norfolk	6	19
25. Durham	3	19
26. Gloucestershire	5	18

Location	2023	2024
27. Lincolnshire	5	17
28. Surrey	11	16
29. Sussex	3	16
30. Cheshire	3	16
31. Dorset	8	15
32. Wiltshire	3	15
33. Wales	6	13
34. Suffolk	3	13
35. Cumbria	3	9
36. Rutland	3	9
37. Northumbria	4	8
38. Staffordshire	3	8
39. North Wales	3	8
40. Essex	4	7
41. Gwent	3	7
42. Tyne and Wear	2	7
43. Jersey	1	6
44. Cambridgeshire	1	5
45. Isle of Man	1	5
46. Hampshire	1	5
47. West Mercia	3	4
48. Hertfordshire	3	3
49. Humberside	3	3
50. Warwickshire	1	3
51. Isle of Wight	1	3
52. Cleveland	1	2



THE EVOLVING TRENDS OF ANTI-MUSLIM HATE

The top five locations for 2023 were:

- Greater London
- Greater Manchester
- West Yorkshire
- Merseyside
- West Midlands

The top five locations for 2024 were:

- Greater London
- Greater Manchester
- West Yorkshire
- Merseyside
- West Midlands

In some cases, it was not possible to identify a specific location where they occurred, usually because they were online or on the rail networks.

Across 2023 and 2024, Tell MAMA verified 286 cases on the rail networks (reflected in the figures for the British Transport Police, who work across all rail networks) that involved abuse, threats, and violence. We had cases involving members of the public targeted for their support of Palestine, and subjected to verbal abuse and more menacing threats of violence. In some cases, we reported such abuse to the police on behalf of those impacted (with their informed consent). The targeting of Muslims in key public transport areas continues to demonstrate how anti-Muslim abuse and Islamophobia harm the social mobility of Muslims – a trend we analysed and wrote about in greater length in previous reports. One of the most shocking and high-profile examples of racist abuse towards Muslim communities who attended marches to express their support for Palestine occurred at Waterloo Station in London on Armistice Day. Ian Beim, 57, and Kevin Sweeney, 61, both pleaded guilty to two racially aggravated order offences, receiving suspended sentences,

community orders and fines in January 2024.¹⁰⁶ The prosecution outlined how the perpetrators became aggressive towards the protesters, calling them “terrorists” and inferring they ‘were not born in this country’ as their aggression grew when challenged.¹⁰⁷ The judge told them they were “particularly unpleasant and intimidating” and that by pleading guilty, they “accept they were racist”.¹⁰⁸ The viral nature of the videos that captured the abuse caused added distress amongst communities, especially driving many towards seeking a positive outcome in the justice system. Other cases we received included a Muslim man commuting to work in December 2023 who reported how a male perpetrator called him a “terrorist” and a “Jew killer” when using the central line on the London Underground because he wore a

keffiyeh. After challenging the perpetrator, their friend apologised, but no other passengers intervened. Tell MAMA provided support to a Muslim woman who filmed a woman making a throat-slit gesture towards her on the London Overground. In 2024, we verified examples of Muslims being spat at and abused for supporting Palestine and travelling to or from demonstrations. Other examples in 2024 included individuals targeted for their religious identity – including their headscarf or face veil (niqab) – to a Muslim man assaulted and spat at amidst a flurry of racist abuse on the London Underground in the early part of the year.

We provide tailored safety tips and advice to the public when using the rail networks. Developed in partnership with the British Transport Police, these tips and advice can be accessed and downloaded for free from the resources section of our website.

¹⁰⁶ BBC News. "Men Who Racially Abused Pro-Palestine Protesters Avoid Jail." BBC News. Last modified January 15, 2024. Available at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cx8vzrvl10zo

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Wright, Gwyn. "Men Who Shouted Racist Abuse at Pro-Palestinian Protesters Avoid Prison." The Independent. Last modified January 15, 2024. Available at: www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/men-waterloo-station-israel-westminster-magistrates-court-hamas-b2478837.html

ONLINE ANTI-MUSLIM HATRED

The New Norm of Anti-Muslim Hate

07

Summary and Recommendations

In the past two years, Tell MAMA received online cases that dwarf any previous datasets, with the most significant documented spikes occurring after Hamas's deadly terror attacks on 7 October 2023 and the subsequent war in Gaza and its widening into Lebanon, and in 2024 following the horrific murder of children in Southport and the abhorrent disinformation campaigns and how the far-right used social media to call for violence towards Muslims and their places of worship, to hotels housing refugees and those in legal and charitable positions assisting vulnerable refugees and migrants. The levels of anti-Muslim and Islamophobic material sent to Tell MAMA in the online sphere are at record levels across more

than a decade of our work,¹⁰⁹ demonstrating the immense strain and impacts digital hate continues to have on Muslim communities. It must serve as a wakeup call to government and social media platforms regarding what is needed to address this rising issue and what tangible steps must follow – including more to tackle disinformation, mental health support, and ensuring work with key partners, Ofcom and others as the Online Safety Act changes go ahead throughout the year ahead. Social media is crucial in the daily lives of many and must remain a space that upholds the fundamental rights of all.

¹⁰⁹ Tell MAMA (2023). "A Decade of Anti-Muslim Hate". Available at: <https://tellmamauk.org/a-decade-of-anti-muslim-hate/>

Social media is crucial
in the daily lives of many
and must remain a
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ONLINE ANTI-MUSLIM HATRED

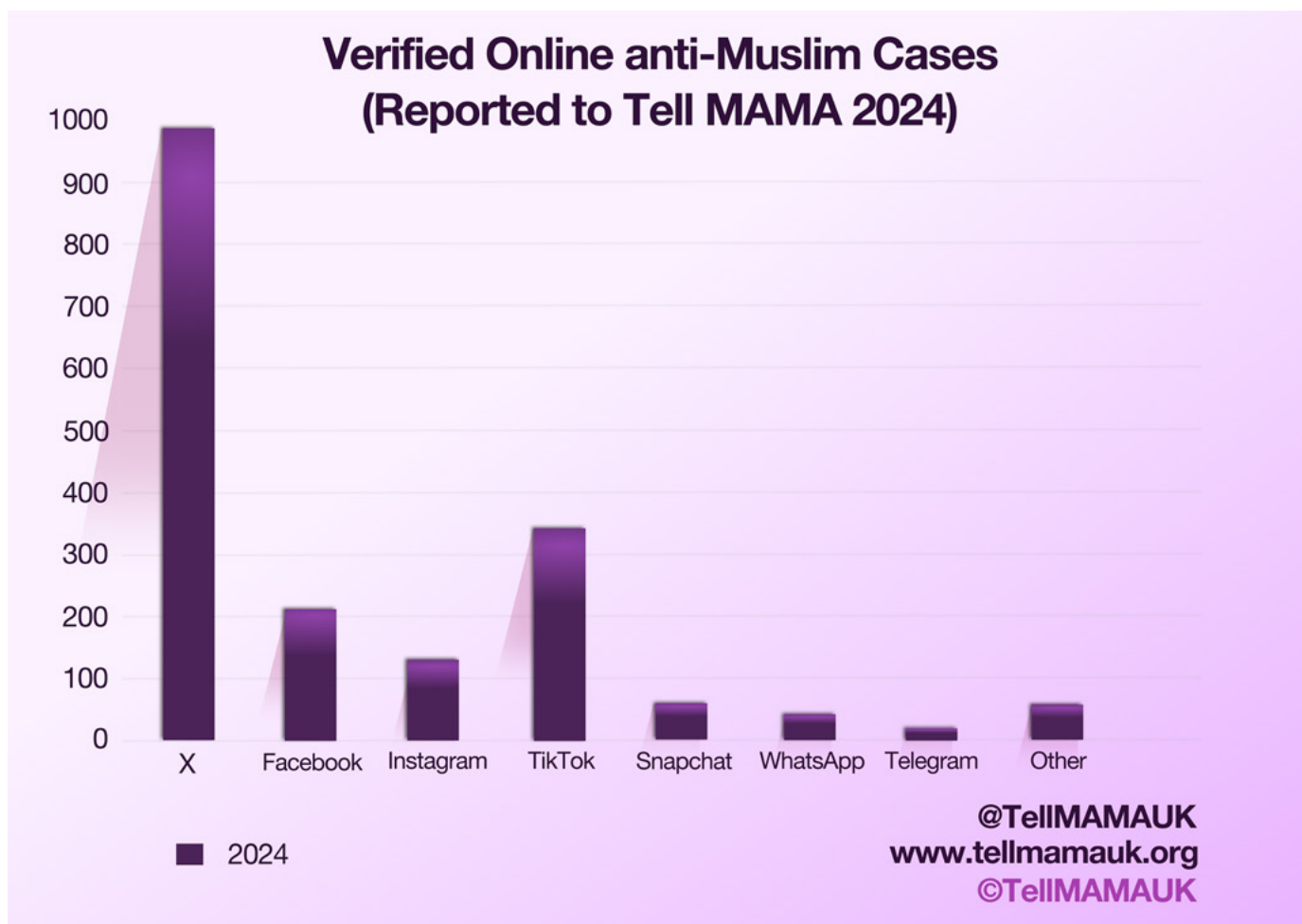
Online Anti-Muslim Hate Reported to Tell Mama In 2024

Across 2024, Tell MAMA recorded and verified 2,307 cases, a vast majority of which occurred after the Southport murders on 29 July. We verified 1,309 numbers between 29 July 2024 and 31 December 2024. We remind readers that in a post-7 October climate and the subsequent war in Gaza, the baseline figure for a yearly comparison is considerably above figures recorded years prior. Therefore, we urge caution when trying to make direct annual comparisons. Instead, understand that both trigger points had and continue to have profound impacts on Muslim communities and, more broadly, how normalised tropes and language around criminality, terrorism, and cultural and racialised otherness permeate across social media. We draw attention to the ongoing problem of misinformation and

disinformation on social media as conspiracies and conspiratorial language, which have emerged in more mainstream discussions. The horrors of the murders in Southport left a nation grieving, yet for some, they used platforms like Telegram to instigate violence towards Muslims and refugees, to try and shatter social bonds. Unlike in previous years, Tell MAMA received more cases from Telegram than ever before (though we stress that cases from that platform in previous years were negligible).

Across each platform, we verified the following cases: X (formerly Twitter n= 991), Facebook (n=201), Instagram (n=131), TikTok (n=317), Snapchat (n=57), WhatsApp (n=41), Telegram(n=10).¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Tell MAMA received numerous reports from the public given the violent, racist and pro-terror content shared on the Telegram “Southport Wake Up” channel. However, due to multiple reports of the same content, we verified each example as a singular case.



Online Anti-Muslim Hate Reported to Tell Mama In 2023

Across the year, Tell MAMA verified 1,719 online cases, verified 100 reports before 7 October, and demonstrated a 1619% rise. While in 2022, Tell MAMA received 795 online reports, verifying 595 cases.

In the online world, from October to December 2022, we verified 44 cases (from 50 reports). In contrast, in 2023, during that three-month window post-7 October, it reached 1,019 cases by 31 December (a 2215.9% rise). However, to reiterate previous statistical bulletins published since 7 October, materials ranged from “racist, dehumanising memes to calls for violence towards Muslims”. On X (formerly Twitter), we identified overt white supremacist and far-right account holders who pushed racist conspiracies of so-called “replacement” or stigmatised Muslim communities as security risks, criminals, potential terrorists or terrorist sympathisers.

A sharp degree of dehumanising, criminalising and racialised language linking Muslims to terrorism, or broadly, supportive of Hamas, appeared in both offline and online datasets.

‘F***

Islam, F***

Palestine,

F*** off

to a Muslim

country

and protest’.

Self-censorship to a fear of job insecurity and precarity amidst concerns about how schools facilitated or, from the perspective of some students and their parents contacting us, prevented spaces to discuss Israel-Palestine and the war undermined trust and confidence. Moreover, this extended to universities. In a post-7 October climate, we received reports of Muslims self-censoring their views on Israel, Palestine, and the war online due to a fear of job insecurity and precarity, as genuine fears and concerns remain about the loss of income, job prospects, visa status, educational achievements, or university placements.

Beyond the numbers, the shocking rise in cases caused significant alarm and distress for Muslim communities and Middle Eastern communities, rupturing their sense of security, mobility to go about their days and fears about their views on Palestine, potentially resulting in workplace bias or lost income – a fear shared with those in places of education and amongst students. Coupled with an underlying distrust in governmental policies and the fact that hate crimes remain vastly underreported, it creates additional anguish and frustration for communities wanting their voice heard to grieve and express solidarity with Palestinians, especially in the media, as they turn to Tell MAMA to get support, advice, counselling referrals and signposting to other services or engaging with the police on their behalf.

In the online sphere, we saw numerous examples of accounts (some displaying far-right proclivities or otherwise) mirroring the language of some politicians and newspaper headlines, not singling out individuals but inferring that Muslims broadly support terrorism. A popular meme that typified such animus took the Palestinian flag and superimposed the text ‘F*** Islam, F*** Palestine, F*** off to a Muslim country and protest’.

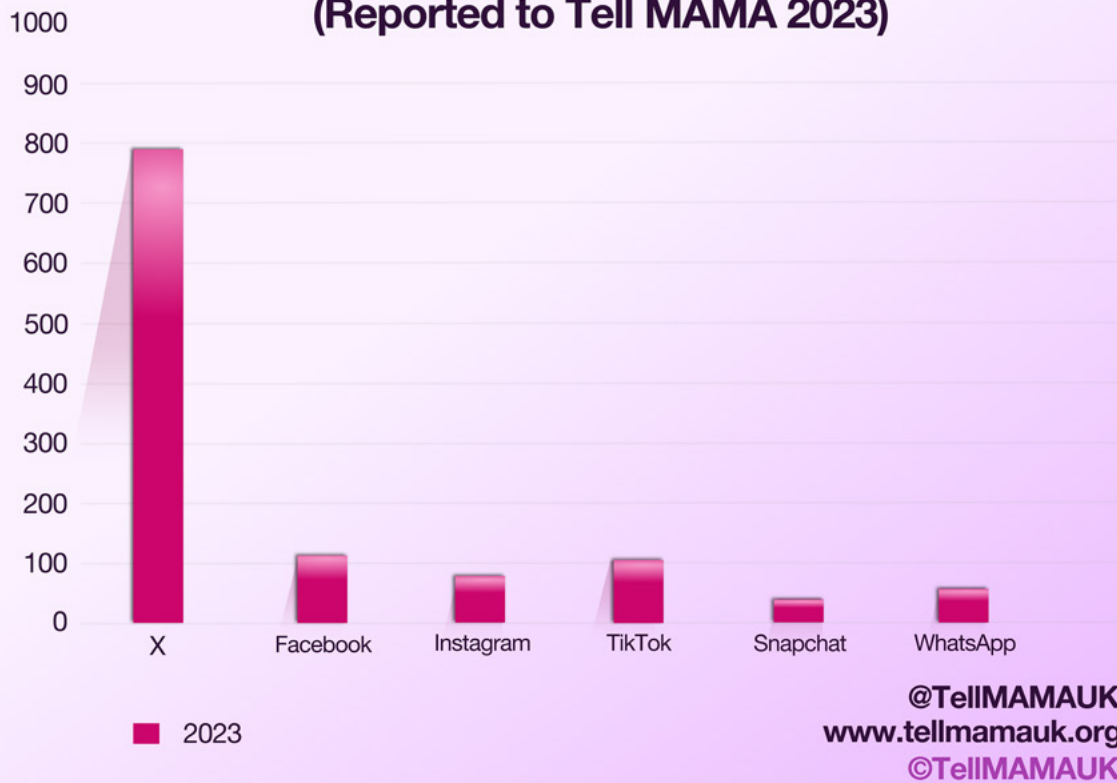
There is an added responsibility not to inflame tensions that, whilst upholding the fundamental rights of freedom of speech, do not impinge on the rights of others nor propagate harm because of their ethnicity, religion or other protected characteristics.

More generally, since the language will so often appear online, it falls on those with large platforms in the media or politics to refrain from language that suggests Muslim politicians are somehow “infiltrators” or cultural menaces or threats because of their Islamic faith. Whilst there will always be disagreements in politics, we must also take pride in the diversity of belief and background of those elected. There is an added responsibility not to inflame tensions that, whilst upholding the fundamental rights of freedom of speech, do not impinge on the rights of others nor propagate harm because of their ethnicity, religion or other protected characteristics.

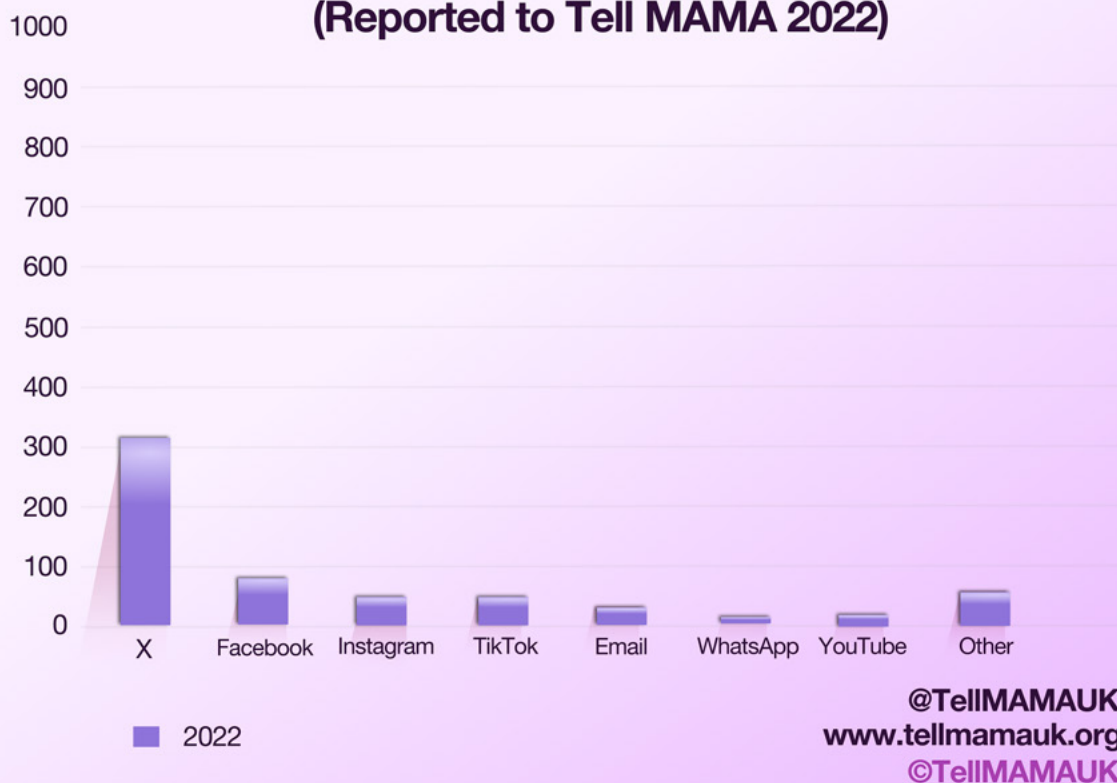
Across each platform in 2023, we verified the following cases: X (formerly Twitter, n=797), Facebook (n=109), Instagram (n=89), TikTok (n=107), Snapchat (n=31), and WhatsApp (n=58).

Across each platform in 2022, we verified the following cases: X (formerly Twitter, n=311), Facebook (n=77), Instagram (n=43), Email (n=27), WhatsApp (n=14), YouTube (n=19), TikTok (n= 43), Other (n=61).

Verified Online anti-Muslim Cases (Reported to Tell MAMA 2023)



Verified Online anti-Muslim Cases (Reported to Tell MAMA 2022)



ONLINE ANTI-MUSLIM HATRED

Introduction

In 2024 alone, Tell MAMA recorded 2307 cases across the major social media platforms, with a clear majority occurring on X (formerly Twitter). Our analysis of two years of online reports to our service (and echoes our earlier research) is further confirmation that Muslims across public life – be it politics or other public-facing roles or as private citizens using the platforms for business, educational or social use faced abuse, harassment or, in some cases, threats directed at them using racialised, conspiratorial or dehumanising language about them as Muslims or more broadly linking their Islamic faith to satanism, criminality, or Nazism. As with other reports, this section will refer to various case studies our researchers and team verified as occurring within the United Kingdom between 1 January 2022 and 31 December 2024. The overall figure represents the totality of cases sent to Tell MAMA before verification, including removing cases from non-UK-based accounts that did not use anti-Muslim or Islamophobic tropes or language or fell outside of our timeframe of this reporting cycle when received. Therefore, it allows us to provide a more rigorous and timely analysis of the varieties of anti-Muslim trends and dehumanising tropes that reflected major flash points and changes globally or domestically – be it the war in Gaza or responses to the stabbings and murders in Southport, including from mainstream media or political figures. The analysis will also draw attention to the extreme ideological motivators of individuals or groups who used their preexisting ideological agendas to attach themselves to ongoing debates, tragedies, or significant events in hopes that such language or deliberate and malicious acts of disinformation would distort, polarise, or poison public discussions and expressions of grief or anger to encourage the targeting of Muslims and their Islamic institutions more broadly.

Furthermore, this section will explore how Muslim men and women face anti-Muslim hate online, with the former depicted overwhelmingly in AI-generated materials as violent, terrorist, or violent



sexual threat, whereas with regards to the latter arose mechanistic forms of dehumanisation that fed into wider racist conspiracies about birth rates. Whilst outside the report's focus, we will also highlight how some platforms, like Facebook, respond to the Online Safety Bill by creating a different way for users to report harmful and hateful materials. Throughout 2025, we will continue to monitor and observe how social media platforms respond to change given the March deadline for their illegal harm assessment forms and to implement relevant safety measures, with further modifications following throughout the year, according to the regulator Ofcom.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ www.ofcom.org.uk/online-safety/illegal-and-harmful-content/countdown-to-a-safer-life-online

The Continued Rise of Far-Right Conspiracies Around Demographics

Across two years of online data analysis, we found variations of conspiracies about demographics in extreme far-right and more mainstream social media accounts, with account holders making overt reference to the racist conspiracy of the so-called “Great Replacement Theory” that helped inspire multiple deadly acts of white supremacist terrorism globally.¹¹² The author and extremism scholar Cynthia Miller-Idriss called it the “leading” far-right conspiracy about demographics globally.¹¹³ Precursors to this theory include the myth of “Eurabia”, which found more mainstream respectability in certain circles,¹¹⁴ and a genre of writing academics like Bangstad (2013) called Islamophobic;¹¹⁵ it perpetuates the fear of Muslim communities “replacing” Christian populations in Europe in a wave of post-9/11 “neo-nationalism,” according to Bergmann (2018)¹¹⁶ at the ‘behest’ of so-called political and cultural elites (Bergmann 2021)¹¹⁷ as Davis (2024) outlined how this rhetoric of “replacement” and “Eurabia” and its subsequent domestication appeared in the language of some mainstream political leaders and media figures on the far and radical right in Europe and North America.¹¹⁸ Of equal importance is Larsson’s (2012) argument that conspiracies of “Islamisation” and within the broader Eurabia literature serve a metonymic function about cultural and demographic change

that externalises Muslims as strictly ‘foreign’ to Europe that collapses Muslims as individuals into a collective group.¹¹⁹ Beirich (2022) asserts how white supremacists built transnational movements online and offline through racist conspiracies about demographic change.¹²⁰ Davey and Ebner (2019) explored the role of far-right politicians and political figures on Twitter in promoting the so-called “Great Replacement conspiracy (namely Heinz-Christian Strache, Marion Maréchal-Le Pen, Björn Höcke, and Dries Van Langenhove) through explicit or implicit language.¹²¹ Moreover, the report argued that such politicians and political figures were “key” factors in mainstreaming this conspiracy theory through their speeches (online and offline) and, crucially, in policies, whilst the authors identified five others who used related conspiratorial language in political campaigns. Moreover, the role of far-right media was also deemed an important factor.¹²² Alarming, the wide-ranging report also looked at the role of think tanks in Sweden in promoting the conspiracy.¹²³ In comparison, an earlier linguistical study of the Eurabia conspiracy doctrine on Twitter, Monaci, Morreale, and Persico (2023) found that politicians were not the major drivers compared to ideologically motivated individuals who instrumentalised and amplified the conspiracy, identifying them with a cluster of journalists or individuals that hold “hyper-partisans” positions and work to polarise political debates and the role of US-based content disseminated in Europe helped spread the conspiracy doctrine, according to the researchers.¹²⁴

¹¹² Langer, Armin. "Populist conspiracy myths in far-right terrorist manifestos: A transnational perspective." *ELAD-SILDA. Études de Linguistique et d'Analyse des Discours—Studies in Linguistics and Discourse Analysis* 9 (2024).

¹¹³ Miller-Idriss, Cynthia. "White supremacist extremism and the far right in the US." *Farmington Hills: Gale Primary Sources/Cengage* (2021).

¹¹⁴ Lee, Benjamin. "A day in the “swamp”: Understanding discourse in the online counter-Jihad nebula." *Democracy and Security* 11, no. 3 (2015): 248-274.

¹¹⁵ Bangstad, Sindre. "Eurabia comes to Norway." *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 24, no. 3 (2013): 369-391.

¹¹⁶ Bergmann, Eirikur. "The Weaponization of Conspiracy Theories." *Populism and Conspiracy Theory* (2023): 60.

¹¹⁷ Bergmann E (2021) The Eurabia conspiracy theory. In: A Önerfors and A Krouwel (eds) *Europe: Continent of Conspiracies*. London: Routledge.

¹¹⁸ Davis, Mark. "Violence as method: the “white replacement”, “white genocide”, and “Eurabia” conspiracy theories and the biopolitics of networked violence." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (2024): 1-21.

¹¹⁹ Larsson, Göran. "The fear of small numbers: Eurabia literature and censuses on religious belonging." *Journal of Muslims in Europe* 1, no. 2 (2012): 142-165.

¹²⁰ Beirich, Heidi. "White supremacy as a worldwide movement." *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Social and Political Movements* (2013): 1-7.

¹²¹ Davey, Jacob, and Julia Ebner. "The Great Replacement': The violent consequences of mainstreamed extremism." *Institute for Strategic Dialogue* 7 (2019): 1-36.

¹²² *Ibid.* 16.

¹²³ *Ibid.* 16.

¹²⁴ Monaci, Sara, Domenico Morreale, and Simone Persico. "The Eurabia Conspiracy Theory: Twitter's Political Influencers, Narratives, and Information Sources." *Media and Communication* 11, no. 4 (2023): 73-85.

ONLINE ANTI-MUSLIM HATRED



Across two years of online cases, we have uncovered numerous examples of implicit and overt references to the above conspiracy from account holders with small to large followings. Examples of both rhetorical forms included statements taken from tweets like “If I drive from the Town Centre to the Outskirts and see hardly ONE WHITE PERSON then I know we’re in BIG TROUBLE!” accompanied by a decontextualised image of Muslim communities (reported in January 2022, from a suspended far-right account holder) and “Everyone is moaning about the Albanians, they are not the threat to the British way of life, and certainly not capable of the Indigenous genocide we are witnessing, these people are your Indian PM, Home office... Home Secretary...Admit it, he was right...it’s a whitewash” (a far-right tweet from late 2022 invoking Enoch Powell). An ex-councillor used the alternative social media platform Gettr

to spread the conspiracy with the hashtag “#TheGreatReplacement” in response to the then-First Minister Nicola Sturgeon showing solidarity with the young students at St Albert’s Primary in Pollokshields, who faced such a torrent of racist abuse online that staff contacted the police in late 2022.¹²⁵ Other examples came from anonymised accounts with small followers who direct abuse towards groups or individuals with statements like “Birth rate dangerously low, mass immigration rising which only means replacement” (reported in February 2022, Twitter eventually suspended the account for multiple policy breaches around hateful conduct). In April 2023, the leader of Britain First, an extreme far-right party and movement,

¹²⁵ McCall, Chris. “Nicola Sturgeon Condemns ‘vile’ Racist Abuse Aimed at Glasgow Primary School.” Daily Record. Last modified October 6, 2022. www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/nicola-sturgeon-condemns-vile-racist-28169527



falsely accused the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) of committing “treason” by “helping the invasion of our country” and “people trafficking” on Twitter, ending the tweet the hashtag “#TheGreatReplacement” which gained almost two million views in April 2023 – Tell MAMA received numerous concerns from the public over this highly inflammatory material. Donations to the RNLI increased, according to Civil Society Media.¹²⁶ Britain First also targeted the RNLI online in 2021.¹²⁷ That same year, donations to the RNLI exponentially

rose.¹²⁸ An implicit example from 2023 involved a suspended far-right Twitter account holder who had a history of racist and homophobic materials and called for violence towards Muslims whilst the “indigenous” men used violence to protect their “homelands” whilst they remained in the majority (reported to Tell MAMA in November 2023). Throughout 2023, we had reports of an individual based in Scotland who often promoted the far-right and used the replacement conspiracy language, including that London Mayor Sadiq Khan conspired to remove “the indigenous population” and “replace it”, adding that people should “fight back” against Muslims communities before “they replace us.”

¹²⁶ Wait, Sam. “RNLI Sees Rise in Donations Amid Petition to Remove Its Charitable Status.” Civil Society. Last modified April 21, 2023. www.civilsociety.co.uk/news/rnli-sees-rise-in-donations-amid-petition-to-remove-its-charitable-status.html.

¹²⁷ Dearden, Lizzie. “RNLI Vows to Continue Channel Rescues Amid New Hate Campaign by Britain First.” The Independent. Last modified December 4, 2021. www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/rnli-channel-rescues-britain-first-b1969357.html

¹²⁸ Hall, Rachel. “Donations to RNLI Rise 3,000% After Farage’s Migrant Criticism.” The Guardian. Last modified July 29, 2021. www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jul/29/rnli-donations-soar-in-response-to-farages-migrant-criticism

A tweet made from that account in October 2023 agreed with calls to burn down mosques, which we forwarded to the police. In 2024, it did not come from accounts with fringe numbers on Twitter. In some examples, the most explicit references to the so-called “Great Replacement” came from the likes of Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (aka Tommy Robinson), with one such post accruing over four hundred thousand views and using terminology about Europe’s apparent “suicide”. When seeking to understand how such racist conspiracies re-emerge or more broadly, see the research of Jackson (2015) - if not engaging in Holocaust denialism, he argued, some Anglophone post-war fascists evoked “existential conflict” by propagating myths that white communities faced ongoing cultural genocides or ethnocides (language, he argues, appeared interchangeably in their propaganda).¹²⁹ Moreover, with examples of these discursive shifts in the UK and the United States, with the emergence of the French New Right in 1968 came a departure from the norm through discursive influences in political circles in the hopes of ushering in “racial purity in Europe through a revolutionary rejection of liberal democratic political systems” by influencing the direction of populist far-right parties, broader social discussions, and the mainstream media in France.¹³⁰ Crucially, he adds, within this milieu came evocations of the racist myth within broader language and terminologies like “ethnocide” and “erasure” of white communities.¹³¹ For Bar-On (2013), the New Right aims to use a revolutionary form of politics that would shatter liberal democracy through a form of populism that weakens democratic structures, public views around multiculturalism, immigration, and national (and regional) identity to ‘rescue’ European societies from a so-called ‘cultural genocide’.

¹²⁹ Jackson, Paul. “‘White genocide’: Postwar fascism and the ideological value of evoking existential conflicts.” In *The Routledge history of genocide*, pp. 207-226. Routledge, 2015.

¹³⁰ Ibid. 216.

¹³¹ Ibid. 217.

Furthermore, they contend that those who prefer liberalism and multiculturalism commit ‘ethnocide’ or a ‘self-inflicted form of cultural genocide’.¹³² Moreover, Griffin (2000) outlined how the New Right, whilst not homogeneous (attracting academics from institutions to individuals), still propagates a form of hard-right cultural hegemony (over political hegemony) through the role of the media and cultural institutions by uniting in opposition liberal ideas of multicultural societies and immigration.¹³³ More broadly, Griffin sees the internet as the ‘ultimate’ way for the “metapoliticization of fascism” to further ideas about the apparent “salvation of nations, ethnic groups, Europe, the West, or the White race” beyond traditional political movements, parties or leaders, with the internet helping the ideas transcend traditional borders – internationalising ideas and diversifying the sects of fascism online.¹³⁴

Other historians posit that racist myths about so-called “white genocide” appeared under different guises also in the twentieth century, including in the works of prominent US-based neo-Nazis like Edward Fields in the 1960s,¹³⁵ David Lane’s infamous ‘White Genocide Manifesto’ in 1988¹³⁶ and the 2010s, as Stern (2022) argued, the broad far-right and “alt-right tent” in the United States repurposed “white extinction” narratives in response to census data from the works of Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard in the 1920s about so-called “race suicide”.¹³⁷ Moreover, their research highlighted other examples of how such racist texts from

¹³² Ibid. 186.

¹³³ Griffin, Roger. “Interregnum or endgame? The radical right in the ‘post-fascist’ era.” *Journal of Political Ideologies* 5, no. 2 (2000): 163-178.

¹³⁴ Ibid. 171.

¹³⁵ Pitcavage, Mark (@egavactip). Twitter post. August 31, 2023, 3:06 pm. <https://twitter.com/egavactip/status/1697249198490714548>

¹³⁶ Pruden, Meredith L., Ayse D. Lokmanoglu, Anne Peterscheck, and Yannick Veilleux-Lepage. “Birds of a feather: A comparative analysis of white supremacist and violent male supremacist discourses.” In *Right-wing extremism in Canada and the United States*, pp. 215-254. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022.

¹³⁷ Stern, Alexandra Minna. “From ‘Race Suicide’ to ‘White Extinction’: White Nationalism, Nativism, and Eugenics over the Past Century.” *Journal of American History* 109, no. 2 (2022): 348-361.

the early twentieth century that parroted these “white extinction” conspiracies appeared in contemporary and obscure publishing houses in the UK and the United States in 2012 and 2016, respectively.¹³⁸ The “arc” of so-called “race suicide” vis-a-vis “white extinction” and its influence on Stephen Miller during the first Trump administration, they contend,¹³⁹ relates to one of the United States’ most infamous and influential white supremacists and eugenicists, Harry Laughlin.¹⁴⁰ As Professor Kathryn Paige Harden wrote in *Aeon* in 2021, “evil beliefs about racial purity are not a historical relic.”¹⁴¹ Chatters, Taylor and Schulz (2022) draw a similar distinction: of a “historical lineage” of beliefs that connects contemporary white supremacy (and belief in such racist conspiracies) with the nativist politics, pro-eugenic attitudes, and fears of “declining white political power” in the early decades of the twentieth century in the United States.¹⁴² That connecting thread extends to the far and radical populist right in Europe, including Germany. It involves drawing on the works of Ferber (1998)¹⁴³ and Ahmed and Pisoiu (2021), who argue that parties like *Alternative für Deutschland* use apocalyptic rhetoric that draws parallels to the white supremacist conspiracy of “forced race-mixing” whereby immigrants and refugees pose a cultural and economic threat – a so-called ‘demise’ facilitated by those rescuing refugees, the ‘elite’ and the ‘left’.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁸ Ibid. 349.

¹³⁹ Ibid. 356.

¹⁴⁰ Laughlin infamously, according to Miller (1994), was instrumental in ensuring racist, anti-Jewish legislation in 1924 passed blocking entry for Jewish communities fleeing antisemitic pogroms in Russia. Miller, Adam. “The pioneer fund: Bankrolling the professors of hate.” *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* 6 (1994): 58-61

¹⁴¹ Paige Harden, Prof Kathryn. “What Do We Do with the Science of Terrible Men? | *Aeon Essays*.” *Aeon*. Last modified March 11, 2021. <https://aeon.co/essays/what-do-we-do-with-the-science-of-terrible-men>

¹⁴² Chatters, Linda M., Robert Joseph Taylor, and Amy J. Schulz. “The return of race science and why it matters for family science.” *Journal of Family Theory & Review* 14, no. 3 (2022): 442-462.

¹⁴³ Ferber, Abby L. “Constructing whiteness: The intersections of race and gender in US white supremacist discourse.” *Ethnic and racial studies* 21, no. 1 (1998): 48-63.

¹⁴⁴ Ahmed, Reem, and Daniela Pisoiu. “Uniting the far right: how the far-right extremist, New Right, and populist frames overlap on Twitter—a German case study.” *European societies* 23, no. 2 (2021): 232-254.

Moreover, Nissen (2020) highlighted how far-right identitarians like *Generation Identity* push racist replacement conspiracies¹⁴⁵ to the defensive discursive political strategies of the far-right in Finland using the language of othering and cultural essentialism within talking points of so-called “replacement” to demonise Muslims and refugees and societal threats.¹⁴⁶

Whereas, in the online world, memes help to disseminate such racist conspiracies through, as Goetz (2021) asserts, the weaponisation of demographics helped cleave a space for the far and radical right to discuss social issues, women’s rights, and reproductive policies within broader discussions around immigration and culture in the hope of normalising racist talking points.¹⁴⁷ In addition, framing such discussions through the iconography and rhetoric of “menacing metaphors” around death, conflict, and a ‘fight’ for survival echoes that of the Nazis, as does their desire to reinforce such regressive and nativist gender roles.¹⁴⁸

Some of the most vitriolic, harmful, and violent language came in response to what academics from Hewitt (2005)¹⁴⁹ to Rhodes (2010)¹⁵⁰ highlighted around “white backlash” or “resentment” and its relationship to racism and nationalism. In a wide-ranging synthesis of academic research on the topic, Rhodes and Anne Hall (2020), with a focus on English nationalism, described how “white victimhood” inverted the notions of racism and racialised inequalities by foregrounding the

¹⁴⁵ Nissen, Anita. “The Trans-European Mobilization of “*Generation Identity*”.” *Nostalgia and hope: Intersections between politics of culture, welfare, and migration in Europe* (2020): 85-100.

¹⁴⁶ Pettersson, Katarina. “The discursive denial of racism by Finnish populist radical right politicians accused of anti-Muslim hate-speech.” *Nostalgia and hope: Intersections between politics of culture, welfare, and migration in Europe* (2020): 35-50.

¹⁴⁷ Goetz, Judith. “‘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 (2021).

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. pp 64-65.

¹⁴⁹ Hewitt, Roger. “White Backlash and the Politics of Multiculturalism.” *Cambridge UP* (2005).

¹⁵⁰ Rhodes, James. “White backlash, ‘unfairness’ and justifications of British National Party (BNP) support.” *Ethnicities* 10, no. 1 (2010): 77-99.



central idea that white communities embody the disadvantaged group (their emphasis) globalisation, multiculturalism, immigration, and neoliberalism set against the decline of traditional manufacturing bases and the rise of liberal and cosmopolitan elites in politics.¹⁵¹ Moreover, the marginalisation of “indigenous” white populations, the authors contended, ran in contrast to the belief that minority groups, notably Muslims, hold favour with specific institutions and liberal elites, who “benefit” from the “unfair” allocation of resources.¹⁵² For many years, Tell MAMA has recorded and verified examples of this narrative, including from extreme far-right nationalists who welded notions of this victimhood to broader myths about welfare and housing allocations. In November 2023, we flagged such an account that shared a tweet that read “Muslim England - Facts & Figures” that pushed demographic myths and superimposed a crescent moon and

star on a national map, presenting misleading information on Muslim political figures, Sharia courts, the number of mosques and benefit payments, which the charity Full Fact robustly challenged.¹⁵³ Returning to the aforementioned tweet, it generated over sixty-nine thousand impressions. It made grossly unsubstantiated claims – for example, claiming that Muslims intend to have larger families with the intent of claiming more benefits. The language deliberately intends to inflame, entrench division, and evoke an innate emotional response towards Muslims. Ahmed (2013) argued that emotions are relational and involve reactions, such as moving away from or toward objects, and how fear, like any emotion, can influence the direction of such interactions.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Rhodes, James, and Natalie-Anne Hall. “Racism, nationalism and the politics of resentment in contemporary England.” In *Routledge international handbook of contemporary racism*, pp. 284-299. Routledge, 2020.

¹⁵² *Ibid.* 292.

¹⁵³ Full Fact. “List of Claims About Muslims in Britain Reappears on Social Media.” Full Fact. Last modified December 21, 2023. <https://fullfact.org/online/muslims-in-uk-facebook-list/>

¹⁵⁴ Ahmed, S. (2013). *The cultural politics of emotion*. Routledge.

The Normalisation of Abuse of Muslim Politicians Online

In 2024, we observed a stark rise in and the intensification of language calling for the banning and removal of Muslims from political life alongside examples of racist, dehumanising, and anti-Muslim content sent to political figures like Sadiq Khan, Zarah Sultana, and Apsana Begum. A clear majority of such posts emerged before the General Election. Such examples included a viral discriminatory and racist post that made clear that even if Muslims had lived in the UK for over a century, they must not hold political office in any capacity. Such ahistoricism erases the long history of Islam and Muslims in Britain and is a form of othering that seeks to deny Muslims core fundamental rights and deny their agency to get involved in public life. As the rumours grew of an impending summer election, we saw heightened rhetoric on X (formerly Twitter) that included statements lamenting how more Muslims in office “is the last thing we need” or racialised posts that externalised Muslims as cultural others that should only involve themselves in politics in their “own country”. A further example included a meme from a far-right account that shared an image that read, “BAN MUSLIM MP’S THEY REPRESENT MUSLIMS NOT THE NATIVE THEIR LOYALTY IS TO THEIR OWN.” Moreover, it is essential to see how such dehumanising and discriminatory language is a byproduct of more extremist language that calls for the forced removal and deportation of Muslims. We verified twelve cases that overtly used language like “deport” or “deportations” or called for the complete removal of Muslims or Islam, which members of the public found on X. In a verified case reported on 25 January, a far-right account holder called for the forced deportation of individuals in Whitechapel in East London in reply to a post from a popular right-wing page that sought to spread misinformation and culture war talking points about national identity over bilingual signage at the station. Bengali signage has been present at Whitechapel station since 2022 to celebrate the immense

contributions¹⁵⁵ of Bengali communities locally.¹⁵⁶ Nasrin Khan, a policy officer, told East London Lines: “In Tower Hamlets, Bengalis make up more than 33% of its population. So, it’s quite vital that their community recognises their interests,” adding, “As a British Bangladeshi, I am thankful to everyone who worked behind this achievement.”¹⁵⁷ Nor is this the only example, In Southall,¹⁵⁸ following upgrades to the station in 2021, Karamjit Singh of the Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha, told the Rail Technology Magazine, “The heart of Southall is its people, and we are pleased to see our Punjabi language as a signature focal point.”¹⁵⁹

The bilingual train signage in Southall has existed for several decades.¹⁶⁰ We can also pinpoint other bilingual train signs over the decades, including the “Welcome to the Underground / Bienvenue dans le Métro” at Waterloo Station in the early 2000s in London¹⁶¹ and outside of London, in 2011, a tiny town in the Cotswolds added bilingual signage to help

¹⁵⁵ Mir, Adila. "Roots in Resilience: A Brief History of the British-Bangladeshi Community in London's East End." History. Last modified December 8, 2020. www.ucl.ac.uk/history/news/2020/dec/roots-resilience-brief-history-british-bangladeshi-community-londons-east-end

¹⁵⁶ Keane, Daniel. "Whitechapel Gets Bengali Signage Ahead of Elizabeth Line Opening." The Standard. Last modified March 16, 2022. www.standard.co.uk/news/london/whitechapel-station-new-bengali-signage-elizabeth-line-opening-b988553.html

¹⁵⁷ Laux, Georgina. "Bengali Signage Installed at Whitechapel Tube Station Ahead of Elizabeth Line Opening – Eastlondonlines." Eastlondonlines. Last modified March 25, 2022. www.eastlondonlines.co.uk/2022/03/bengali-signage-installed-at-whitechapel-tube-station-ahead-of-elizabeth-line-opening

¹⁵⁸ Chaudhary, Vivek. "How London's Southall Became 'Little Punjab'." The Guardian. Last modified April 4, 2018. www.theguardian.com/cities/2018/apr/04/how-london-southall-became-little-punjab

¹⁵⁹ Donald, Kiva. "Network Rail: Southall Station Makeover Ahead of Elizabeth Line Opening." Rail Technology Magazine. Last modified August 27, 2021. www.railtechnologymagazine.com/articles/network-rail-southall-station-makeover-ahead-elizabeth-line-opening

¹⁶⁰ BBC News. "Rail Firm's Punjabi Signs U-turn." BBC News. Last modified September 11, 2007. <https://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/6989246.stm>

¹⁶¹ London Transport Museum. "Information sign; Enamel sign from Waterloo station reading 'Welcome to the Underground / Bienvenue dans le Métro', circa 2000." London Transport Museum. Accessed January 7, 2025. www.ltmuseum.co.uk/collections/collections-online/signs/item/2011-5432

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Japanese tourists arriving at the train station,¹⁶² there is bilingual signage at the station near Bicester Village, which is extremely popular for Chinese tourists and many others.¹⁶³

More broadly, in 2014, the academic Oliver O'Brien, drawing on census data, visualised and mapped the linguistic varieties of languages spoken after English within a 200m radius of tube stations.¹⁶⁴

On the topic of the cases related to Muslim politicians and political figures, one of the most high-profile examples concerned the disgraceful comments from Lee Anderson MP about Sadiq Khan “being controlled by Islamists” that resulted in him losing the Conservative party whip (Anderson would later become an MP in the Reform Party).¹⁶⁵ Anderson doubled down, insisting he had support from the public and other MPs, following his appearance on GB News in February, drawing broad condemnation across the Labour Party and from the then prime minister Rishi Sunak.¹⁶⁶ For many years, Tell MAMA has warned of the consequences of language from parliamentarians, especially when it risks inflaming tensions or links Muslim communities more broadly to extremism or terrorism, whilst ensuring the importance of free and fair debate of topics.

We received numerous reports from the public after an individual called for the removal of Sadiq Khan via the ballot box or with a bullet, with both outcomes “pleasing” them. It is,

therefore, unsurprising to see such an individual also dehumanise and debase politicians more broadly as “parasites”. Some reporting this material to us had informed the police, but it remains unclear if any follow-ups occurred.

Across two years of online data, far above any other Muslim political figure in that dataset, Sadiq Khan faced a disproportionate amount of anti-Muslim material written about him or sent to him that the public alerted us of, with 38 verified examples. The second highest figure for male Muslim political figures in that time frame was the former Scottish First Minister Humza Yousaf (n=9). Regarding Muslim women MPs and those in political office, we received a small number of cases that targeted Zarah Sultana, Apsana Begum and Naz Shah directly. More broadly, previous research has highlighted despicable and disproportionate amounts of racist, abusive, and harmful material female parliamentarians face on social media, especially from minority backgrounds. We recorded overtly racist language towards Sadiq Khan and Humza Yousaf, namely the P-word.

In contrast, for female Muslim MPs, tropes of disloyalty or proclivities or support of terrorism appeared, as anti-Muslim language towards Apsana Begum also referenced her headscarf. Irrespective of gender, commonalities of abuse include the language of cultural and religious otherings that portray the politicians or their faith as threats to the cohesiveness of society or to blame for social ills or criminality. In other examples, the far-right would not name Sadiq Khan but refer to him as the “Muslim mayor” in materials that drew on conspiracies of so-called “Islamisation” or of two-tier favouritism in the UK, especially in a religious context – for example, taking a photo of Khan praying alongside other Muslim men out of context. An example was a photograph of Khan praying at a public iftar anyone could attend. It was used by the far-right to make a point about Christianity in Saudi Arabia. Other examples included individuals perpetuating the Lee Anderson statements to a far-right account using dehumanising racist language that also included calling

¹⁶² Storrar, Krissy. “Cotswolds Railway Station Puts Up Signs in Japanese.” The Mirror. Last modified January 26, 2012.

www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/cotswolds-railway-station-puts-up-103850

¹⁶³ Samuelson, Kate. “Why Chinese Tourists Absolutely Love This Luxury Outlet 46 Minutes Outside London.” TIME. Last modified February 16, 2018. <https://time.com/5162337/bicester-village-chinese-new-year-tourism/>

¹⁶⁴ O'Brien, Oliver. “Tube Tongues.” Last modified October 26, 2014. <https://oobrien.com/2014/10/tube-tongues/>.

¹⁶⁵ Courea, Eleni. “Tory MP Lee Anderson Claims ‘Islamists’ Have Got Control of Sadiq Khan.” The Guardian. Last modified February 23, 2024. www.theguardian.com/politics/2024/feb/23/tory-mp-lee-anderson-claims-islamists-have-got-control-of-sadiq-khan

¹⁶⁶ Walker, Peter, and Ben Quinn. “Lee Anderson Says Public Supports Him over Sadiq Khan Comments.” The Guardian. Last modified February 27, 2024. www.theguardian.com/politics/2024/feb/27/lee-anderson-says-public-supports-him-over-sadiq-khan-comments

Khan a “goblin”. In April 2024, the Observer newspaper claimed that staff and activists for the Conservatives ran a private Facebook group in opposition to ULEZ that became full of racism towards Sadiq Khan and misinformation amidst support for the vandalism of ULEZ cameras.¹⁶⁷ Sadiq Khan fell victim to despicable deepfake audio that included disparaging remarks about Remembrance weekend and that marches in support of Palestine must get priority - the BBC investigation revealed how the deepfake audio had grown in popularity amongst the far-right on social media, which, in turn, resulted in more online abuse towards him.¹⁶⁸ Khan told the BBC that the deepfake audio risked creating “serious disorder” and inflaming tensions.¹⁶⁹ A year earlier, a Greater London Authority report found that Sadiq Khan received more than 300,000 pieces of openly racist or racially-oriented abuse on social media after becoming London

Mayor - as overtly racist or racialised abuse that referenced ULEZ increased by almost 200%.¹⁷⁰ The general election period saw vast quantities of online abuse to Sadiq Khan, Diane Abbott, Rishi Sunak, Suella Braverman and Keir Starmer – who received 85,000 abusive posts between them, researchers from The University of Sheffield found.¹⁷¹ Moreover, researchers looked at milder forms of abuse (liars) to severe abuse that was racist and misogynistic – with almost one in five examples containing extreme misogyny or sexually explicit messages – as Abbott, Braverman, Khan and Sunak all faced racist posts, including overt calls for their forced removal from the UK.¹⁷² In response to the report’s findings, the Local Government Association called for “healthy political debate

¹⁶⁷ Das, Shanti, and Jon Ungeod-Thomas. "Tory Staff Running Network of Anti-Ulez Facebook Groups Riddled with Racism and Abuse." The Observer. Last modified April 27, 2024. www.theguardian.com/politics/2024/apr/27/tory-staff-running-network-of-anti-ulez-facebook-groups-riddled-with-racism-and-abuse

¹⁶⁸ Spring, Marianna. "Sadiq Khan Says Fake AI Audio of Him Nearly Led to Serious Disorder." BBC News. Last modified February 13, 2024. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-68146053

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Walker, Peter. "Rise in Racist Abuse Against Sadiq Khan Linked to London Clean Air Zone Expansion." The Guardian. Last modified July 5, 2023. www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/jul/05/rise-in-racist-abuse-against-sadiq-khan-linked-to-london-clean-air-zone-expansion

¹⁷¹ Courea, Eleni. "Deluge of Abuse Sent on X to Prominent UK Politicians in Election Period." The Guardian. Last modified September 9, 2024. www.theguardian.com/society/article/2024/sep/09/abuse-x-uk-politicians-election-period

¹⁷² Ibid.

The Electoral Commission report following the summer General Election reported that in the online sphere, where two-thirds of electoral candidates who responded (n=717) to the survey, faced abuse.

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and an end to abuse and intimidation.”¹⁷³ The Electoral Commission report following the summer General Election reported that in the online sphere, two-thirds of electoral candidates who responded (n=717) to the survey, faced abuse.¹⁷⁴ Be it in public spaces or online, candidates from minoritised backgrounds were more likely than other demographics to describe experiencing all of the intimidation scenarios the commission presented to respondents, and in the online sphere, faced disproportionate amounts of social media abuse about their ethnicity (55%) or religion (41%) than all respondents (15% and 10%).¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Local Government Authority (LGAcomms). “Politicians were subjected to a deluge of abuse on X during the general election period, a study of online abuse in politics has found.” X, September 9, 2024, 4:17 pm. <https://x.com/LGAcomms/status/1833162936291840410>

¹⁷⁴ The Electoral Commission. “Report on the 2024 UK Parliamentary general election and the May 2024 elections.” The Electoral Commission. Last modified January 9, 2025. www.electoralcommission.org.uk/research-reports-and-data/our-reports-and-data-past-elections-and-referendums/report-2024-uk-parliamentary-general-election-and-may-2024-elections

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

During the reporting cycle for this report, Tell MAMA received numerous reports targeting Humza Yousaf and his wife Nadia El-Nakla, who is Scottish-Palestinian, who both described their struggles to get family members out of Gaza when the war began following Hamas’s deadly terror attacks on 7 October, with some able to leave in November 2023 after two unsuccessful attempts at entering Egypt via the Rafah Border Crossing.¹⁷⁶ Glasgow-born Yousaf became an MSP locally aged 26 and became Scotland’s youngest First Minister. He won 71 votes from fellow MSPs in March 2023 and became the first Muslim to lead a major UK political party and the first ethnic minority leader of a devolved government, according to the BBC.¹⁷⁷ Yousaf resigned as First Minister in May 2024

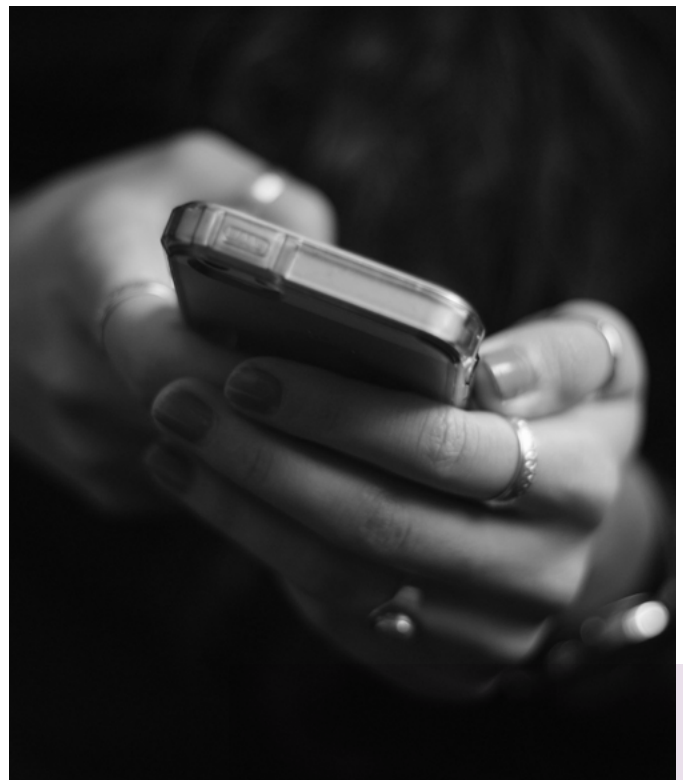
¹⁷⁶ Mitchell, Jenness. “‘My Life Has Changed Forever’: Humza Yousaf’s Mother-in-law Describes Escape from Gaza.” Sky News. Last modified November 20, 2023. <https://news.sky.com/story/my-life-has-changed-forever-humza-yousafs-mother-in-law-describes-escape-from-gaza-13012151>

¹⁷⁷ BBC News. “Who is Humza Yousaf, Scotland’s New First Minister.” BBC News. Last modified March 13, 2023. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-64874821

Emotion, Conflict Language Online

In an example of what academics describe as a “mediated conflict” online, Tell MAMA received a report concerning a discriminatory post on X (formerly Twitter) in February 2023 that called for a referendum to enable the forced removal and deportation of millions of ‘Muslims and illegal migrants who bleed us dry’. Almost one year later, upon further review, the material has faced no action, and the message “You reported this Post” remains.

Scholars and academics have long examined how individuals interact with and on social media platforms. Papacharissi (2015) wrote extensively on performativity on platforms like Twitter, noting that these online spaces serve to “collapse or public and private performances,” which, in turn, create both challenges to and opportunities to engage in different forms of sociality through affect and emotion.¹⁷⁸ Moreover, Abdel-Fadil (2019) wrote about the interplay between affect and emotion online, focusing on religious and identity-based conflicts and how performativity reflects a spectrum of emotions, ranging from anger, indifference, pride, or sadness, based on the ideological persuasions of those feeling the affect.¹⁷⁹ The myriad of emotions, especially in a collective or group of individuals, believe that their symbols of identity face an actual or imminent threat; it generates fear which can, in some examples, shape online responses and, crucially, they argue, whilst potentially unfounded, feels hyper-real to those who project such fears onto others, especially for those heavily invested in an identity or worldview, it does indeed feel real to them.¹⁸⁰ Drawing on previous research, Abdel-Fadil (2016) observed that those participating in mediated conflicts online likely had an ideological motivation or emotion that incorporated not just performativity but a more profound role that ensures such



online conflicts endure in hopes that such perspectives gain further attention¹⁸¹ deploy strong emotive language, distort and mislead to play on emotions of fear to trigger what Abdel-Fadil (2019) described as an “affective reality” – as some get pulled so far into such affective realities that they fail to identify satirical and false information;¹⁸² having reviewed some of the replies to the post with the grossly misleading stats, it served instead to generate more anger and discriminatory responses – with a vocal minority calling for mass deportations or more generalised anti-Muslim remarks.

Further references to such themes will appear in other sections of the report as we turn our attention to the cases flagged with us regarding more intensified anti-Muslim language and examples of complaints from the public about news coverage or headlines.

¹⁷⁸ Papacharissi, Zizi. “Without you, I’m nothing: Performances of the self on Twitter.” *International journal of communication* 6 (2012): 18.

¹⁷⁹ Abdel-Fadil, Mona. “The politics of affect: The glue of religious and identity conflicts in social media.” *Journal of Religion, Media and Digital Culture* 8, no. 1 (2019): 11-34.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. 29.

¹⁸¹ Abdel-Fadil, Mona. “Conflict and affect among conservative Christians on Facebook.” *Online-Heidelberg Journal of Religions on the Internet* 11 (2016).

¹⁸² Abdel-Fadil (2019). 28.

Escalating Digital Anti-Muslim Hate and Racism After 7 Oct 2023

As stated earlier, **with a 1619% rise after 7 October 2023 (from 1,179 verified cases)**, we will present a non-exhaustive breakdown of the types of cases verified. We hope that the examples will help draw attention to racialised, abusive, harmful and conspiratorial materials appearing on social media.

The nature of this category helps us identify when materials demonstrate dehumanising, genocidal or violent intent (either in the propagation of violence or incitement to violence) towards Muslims or their faith institutions and affirm the deep problem of how the far-right and more mainstream radical right iterations across major social media platforms. Examples of reports Tell MAMA received included an overtly fascist

account that had a Twitter avatar with the text “fit in or f*** off” and targeted a Muslim person by writing, “You are not welcome in this country. You never have been and that will never change,” before adding, “You offer nothing but rape and death.” Twitter suspended the account holder following our investigation, and we passed it to the police to investigate.

In a post-7 October climate, we saw flagrantly racist and dehumanising content on X (formerly Twitter) comparing Muslims and Palestinians to rats in need of “stepping on” from an account holder who called for the banning of Islam and halal products to the forced removal of all Muslim MPs, who faced no sanction.

“You are not welcome in this country. You never have been and that will never change,” before adding, “You offer nothing but rape and death.”

In contrast, a tweet calling for the bombing of Muslims praying outdoors when protesting in support of Palestine took minutes for X (formerly Twitter) to remove. X (formerly Twitter) suspended a far-right account for various breaches, including a tweet that began with “Stop bombing Gaza” chant the Third World inbreds of East London yesterday,” before insinuating that the Muslims protesting had links to the terrorism carried out on 7/7.

We observed a growing use of violent language towards Muslim communities – including overt expressions of wanting violent resistance towards those who marched in support of Palestine (irrespective of their background). For example, a video on X of children and young

people protesting for Palestine resulted in many vile, dehumanising and racist comments, including a so-called “Islamic invasion” and the threat of “slaughter”, with Muslim children also called “rats” or “future Jihadis”. Other examples came imbued with racist denial of Palestinian identity (e.g., “Fakestine”) to many examples of the Palestinian flag becoming a meme to tell Muslims and others to “f*** off” and leave Britain elsewhere whilst including language like “F*** Islam.”

A notable tactic of far-right and similarly ideologically adjacent accounts involved taking photos of Muslims praying in public, encouraging calls for violence.



Best place to go bang i think

12:25 AM · Oct 19, 2023 · 69 Views



“Stop bombing Gaza” chant the Third World inbreds of East London yesterday.

5 minutes walk from Aldgate East tube station where their relatives blew up British people on a tube train...

Another example included an X user who asked if water cannons would “help” and attached an out-of-context image of Muslims praying in the street. However, the image of Muslims praying in the street was, in actuality, taken in France in 2017 following a series of protests in a Parisian suburb¹⁸³ after we ran it through reverse image tools like TinEye.

In other examples of such decontextualised images, we recorded a case of someone wishing for racist violence and “P*** bashing” to return to deal with Muslims demonstrating in support of Palestine. A video of Muslims praying in the street during a pro-Palestine demonstration saw one influential media account on X (who re-shared from a far-right

account) used the conspiratorial replacement rhetoric in December, generating millions of views – a disturbing demonstration of how such highly inflammatory rhetoric gets normalised.

Other inflammatory and conspiratorial language flagged with us included how the British public is “sick to death of the Islamic faith trying to take over” in hopes of creating a “jihad war.”

Muslim journalists also faced harassment on social media, with high-profile examples flagged with us, including accusations of being pro-Hamas or of expressing sympathy with Hamas, belittling their professionalism because of their faith.

Muslim and non-Muslim service users also expressed frustrations about how some media used language like “Jihadi” or “Jihadist” marches to describe those expressing pro-Palestine sentiments at public protests.

¹⁸³ AFP. “France to ‘prevent’ Muslim street prayers in Paris suburb.” Free Malaysia Today. Last modified November 20, 2017. www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/world/2017/11/20/france-to-prevent-muslim-street-prayers-in-paris-suburb

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Various service users expressed their concerns, more so in the aftermath of 7 October, about the need for journalists and public figures to mediate their language better, show empathy, and not push false or misleading information—concerns many raised during high-profile marches in London.

One notable example occurred in December 2023 when decontextualised videos of Shia Muslims holding a procession in central London (an annual tradition) went viral with spurious and racialised claims of so-called ‘Islamification’. It is a reminder that journalists are also not immune from propagating such falsehoods online, and there is an additional emphasis, especially for senior journalists, to ensure that online conduct does not use rhetoric that stigmatises Muslims

more broadly and also of the need for religious education and understanding.

Some of the biggest complaints about content communities found in the online sphere arose from examples that linked Muslims to violence in expressly religious terms (or otherwise) in newspaper columns or language from specific media figures or journalists on social media – especially with examples of stigmatising language like “death cults” and “bloodlusts” risk more polarisation. Other examples flagged with Tell MAMA included right-wing media figures linking the idea of taking refugees from Gaza as “cultural suicide” to commentary linking Muslims and the Labour Party to terrorism, rape and criminality in the weeks that followed 7 October.



The Weaponisation of AI-Generated Images to Target Muslim Communities

A noteworthy trend in cases verified by Tell MAMA over several months concerns the role of racialised, stigmatising forms of AI-generated images about Muslim communities. Whilst artificial intelligence is not exactly new, modern forms of machine learning in contemporary AI tools are not without issue; as Benjamin (2019) points out, human-generated datasets perpetuate the biases and prejudices of those who compiled them and, thus, reinforce existing racial, gender and socio-economic biases.¹⁸⁴ That same bias issue extends to big data, which Lee (2018) defines as real-time data collected via online interactions with websites, social media platforms, online shopping, and search engine results. This data is then harvested for commercial or public use (including governmental, healthcare, or scientific reasons).¹⁸⁵ The negative consequences, however, include upholding biases and disparate, discriminatory treatment for those with protected characteristics (be it ethnicity, faith, gender or sexual orientation).¹⁸⁶

An extremely popular tool is the creation of AI-generated artwork or photographs via text-to-image generative models – via synthesis¹⁸⁷ or contrastive learning,¹⁸⁸ but as Bianchi et al. (2022) demonstrated, such platforms like DallE amplify negative social stereotypes about minoritised communities irrespective of overt or non-overt identity language (for example, perpetuating tropes linking Blackness to poverty

in contrast to whiteness and success).¹⁸⁹ Research published last year by Luccioni et al. (2024) found Stable Diffusion and Dall-E 2, identifying a bias towards white and male groups.¹⁹⁰ Biases in image captions¹⁹¹ and image searches, respectively, perpetuate or reinforce stereotypes along gender and ethnicity.¹⁹² Furthermore, to help mitigate such biases, Bird et al. (2023) created a typology covering discrimination and exclusion, the harms of misuse and finally, misinformation and disinformation,¹⁹³ and reaching out to under-represented groups in the stakeholder process, which they acknowledge offers “limited remedies” if the underlying datasets remain riddled with biases whilst also addressing the broader social impacts such growth in these platforms create, notably job loss.¹⁹⁴ A consistent approach, they contend, involves changing strategies with reform and evaluation of the broader social impacts and harms.¹⁹⁵ We must, therefore, remind readers that the harms are very real and often profound for those marginalised and targeted. Examples researchers identified include bias on gender and ethnicity when generating images about specific jobs (offering an evaluation dataset to offset preexisting web image-text

¹⁸⁴ Benjamin, Ruha. "Assessing risk, automating racism." *Science* 366, no. 6464 (2019): 421-422.

¹⁸⁵ Lee, Nicol Turner. "Detecting racial bias in algorithms and machine learning." *Journal of Information, Communication and Ethics in Society* 16, no. 3 (2018): 252-260.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ramesh, Aditya, Mikhail Pavlov, Gabriel Goh, Scott Gray, Chelsea Voss, Alec Radford, Mark Chen, and Ilya Sutskever. "Zero-shot text-to-image generation." In *International Conference on Machine Learning*, pp. 8821-8831. PMLR, 2021.

¹⁸⁸ Zhang, Han, Jing Yu Koh, Jason Baldridge, Honglak Lee, and Yinfei Yang. "Cross-modal contrastive learning for text-to-image generation." In *Proceedings of the IEEE/CVF conference on computer vision and pattern recognition*, pp. 833-842. 2021.

¹⁸⁹ Bianchi, Federico, Pratyusha Kalluri, Esin Durmus, Faisal Ladhak, Myra Cheng, Debora Nozza, Tatsunori Hashimoto, Dan Jurafsky, James Zou, and Aylin Caliskan. "Easily accessible text-to-image generation amplifies demographic stereotypes at large scale." In *Proceedings of the 2023 ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency*, pp. 1493-1504. 2023.

¹⁹⁰ Luccioni, Sasha, Christopher Akiki, Margaret Mitchell, and Yacine Jernite. "Stable bias: Evaluating societal representations in diffusion models." *Advances in Neural Information Processing Systems* 36 (2024).

¹⁹¹ Hendricks, Lisa Anne, Kaylee Burns, Kate Saenko, Trevor Darrell, and Anna Rohrbach. "Women also snowboard: Overcoming bias in captioning models." In *Proceedings of the European conference on computer vision (ECCV)*, pp. 771-787. 2018.

¹⁹² Zhao, Dora, Angelina Wang, and Olga Russakovsky. "Understanding and evaluating racial biases in image captioning." In *Proceedings of the IEEE/CVF International Conference on Computer Vision*, pp. 14830-14840. 2021.

¹⁹³ Bird, Charlotte, Eddie Ungless, and Atoosa Kasirzadeh. "Typology of risks of generative text-to-image models." In *Proceedings of the 2023 AAAI/ACM Conference on AI, Ethics, and Society*, pp. 396-410. 2023.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid. 10-11.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. 11.



pairing biases).¹⁹⁶ In gender stereotypes, for example, the changing ways gender appears in occupational image results, can influence perceptions about such workplace distributions offline.¹⁹⁷ Such occupational biases appeared on DALL-E Mini, with most occupational representations as “primarily or solely” focused on white people,¹⁹⁸ which, as Hutchinson et al. (2022) posit, risks a Western-centric form of stereotype reinforcement.¹⁹⁹

Regarding racism and bias in facial recognition, the consequences for those impacted are much more expansive. In March 2024, news broke that the Black Uber Eats driver Pa Edrissa Manjang received a settlement over racial bias in the algorithm that prevented him from logging in and securing work, with the company suspending Manjang’s account over various “mismatches”.²⁰⁰ Help came from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and his union, and Mr Manjang received an out-of-court settlement. When reflecting on an arduous case, he hoped that his case would be a learning tool for the EHRC in “strengthening the rights and protections of workers concerning AI, particularly ethnic minorities.”²⁰¹ For many years,

¹⁹⁶ Cho, J., Zala, A. and Bansal, M., 2023. Dall-eval: Probing the reasoning skills and social biases of text-to-image generation models. In Proceedings of the IEEE/CVF International Conference on Computer Vision (pp. 3043-3054).

¹⁹⁷ Kay, Matthew, Cynthia Matuszek, and Sean A. Munson. "Unequal representation and gender stereotypes in image search results for occupations." In Proceedings of the 33rd annual acm conference on human factors in computing systems, pp. 3819-3828. 2015.

¹⁹⁸ Cheong, Marc, Ehsan Abedin, Marinus Ferreira, Ritsaart Willem Reimann, Shalom Chalson, Pamela Robinson, Joanne Byrne, Leah Ruppanner, Mark Alfano, and Colin Klein. "Investigating gender and racial biases in DALL-E Mini Images."

¹⁹⁹ Hutchinson, Ben, Jason Baldrige, and Vinodkumar Prabhakaran. "Underspecification in scene description-to-depiction tasks." *arXiv preprint arXiv:2210.05815* (2022).

²⁰⁰ McCallum, Shiona. "Payout for Uber Eats Driver over Face Scan Bias Case." BBC News. Last modified March 26, 2024. www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-68655429

²⁰¹ The Equality and Human Rights Commission. "Uber Eats courier wins payout with help of equality watchdog, after facing problematic AI checks." The Equality and Human Rights Commission . Last modified March 26, 2024. www.equalityhumanrights.com/media-centre/news/uber-eats-courier-wins-payout-help-equality-watchdog-after-facing-problematic-ai

Uber workers have protested racism and bias in algorithms that deprived them of work.²⁰²

In 2022, the Guardian newspaper reported concerns that a Chinese-owned security company had advertised ethnicity-based facial recognition CCTV to companies in the UK and Europe amidst allegations of involvement in ethnic cleansing across Xinjiang, the Guardian reported.²⁰³ In 2023, Kent councils announced that it would stop using cameras from Hikvision.²⁰⁴

Human rights groups like Liberty also called on police forces not to use facial recognition software over concerns about disproportionately towards ethnic minorities.²⁰⁵

The examples flagged with Tell MAMA make full use of the technology to push racialised, stigmatising, and criminalising tropes about Muslims – externalising Muslim men and women as distinct cultural, demographic threats to mythologised, monocultural themes of national identity. One such example deployed overtly racist, anti-Black tropes about rape.^{206,207}

Moreover, similar accounts pushed an identical image, replacing Black Muslim men with South Asian Muslim men targeting a white woman in Union Jack clothing. Both examples tie into what Leidig (2021) identified as how the “European far-right portrays Muslim male sexuality as an existential threat to “native,” white European women, who are in constant fear of sexual

subjugation.”²⁰⁸ More broadly, within a UK context, other research, both within digital²⁰⁹ and offline spaces, looked at the constructions that broadly demonise all Muslim men as violent sexual menaces.²¹⁰ To reiterate, we verified overt examples of racist and dehumanising materials linking Muslim men to paedophilia and bestiality. In some examples, individuals used shocking cases of anti-Muslim and Islamophobic abuse in public to justify their racist, hateful views. The example that follows was sent to Tell MAMA in May 2024, used the P-word, called for mass deportations and referred to Islam as a “cancer” by using a crescent moon emoji as the first letter. Other discriminatory language included “Muslims bring nothing of value to the UK” and jumped on the hashtag “#twotierjustice”. We also alerted the police to the content. Convicted criminals like Terry Eury, in their eyes, told “the truth,”²¹¹ whilst Muslims are cultural menaces in grievance narratives about welfare. As the Crown Prosecution Service made clear, Terry Eury was guilty of an Islamophobic tirade that targeted Muslim women and others who attended a pro-Palestine rally in April 2024.²¹²

Other removed content from X included a tweet that called Muslims “groomers” who take money from other Muslims for bestiality whilst also donating money to Palestinian causes. Other materials flagged in 2024 included pro-Stephen-Yaxley-Lennon (Tommy Robinson) material that used the language of grooming gangs and a so-called “Muslim invasion”.

²⁰² Barry, Eloise. "Uber Drivers Say a 'Racist' Algorithm Is Putting Them Out of Work." Time. Last modified October 12, 2021. <https://time.com/6104844/uber-facial-recognition-racist/>

²⁰³ Hern, Alex. "Chinese Security Firm Advertises Ethnicity Recognition Technology While Facing UK Ban." The Guardian. Last modified December 4, 2022. www.theguardian.com/world/2022/dec/04/chinese-security-firm-advertises-ethnicity-recognition-technology-while-facing-uk-ban

²⁰⁴ BBC News. "Hikvision: Kent Councils to Replace CCTV Cameras Made by Chinese Firm." BBC News. Last modified February 20, 2023. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-kent-64664477

²⁰⁵ BBC News. "Facial Recognition Tech: Liberty 'police Racism' Claim." BBC News. Last modified April 7, 2023. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-65214494

²⁰⁶ Patton, Tracey Owens, and Julie Snyder-Yuly. "Any four black men will do: Rape, race, and the ultimate scapegoat." *Journal of Black Studies* 37, no. 6 (2007): 859-895.

²⁰⁷ Tilton, Emily CR. "Rape myths, catastrophe, and credibility." *Episteme* (2022): 1-17.

²⁰⁸ Leidig, Eviane. "From love jihad to grooming gangs: Tracing flows of the hypersexual Muslim male through far-right female influencers." *Religions* 12, no. 12 (2021): 1083.

²⁰⁹ Carter, Denise Maia. "(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 (2017): 21-36.

²¹⁰ Ralph-Morrow, Elizabeth. "The right men: How masculinity explains the radical right gender gap." *Political Studies* 70, no. 1 (2022): 26-44.

²¹¹ Tell MAMA gave the Crown Prosecution Service a community impact statement that was read aloud in court. The Crown Prosecution Service. "Man Sentenced for Islamophobic Tirade at Women on Romford High Street." The Crown Prosecution Service. Last modified May 21, 2024. www.cps.gov.uk/london-north/news/man-sentenced-islamophobic-tirade-women-romford-high-street

²¹² Ibid.



Dehumanising Language and The Far-Right Terror Threat

Of the fifty verified cases that made overt references to refugees, we found most had an underlying far-right agenda, used dehumanising language, and linked refugees to social ills, crime, and terrorism. One example, later removed from Twitter, compared refugees to an “infestation” and of “breeding like rats until the environment surrounding is unsustainable.” We observed similar rhetoric in a post from a far-right account holder who would spam dehumanising and racialised memes, in one example, replying to a post from the Home Office wishing Muslim communities Eid Mubarak with images linking refugees and Muslims to crime and terrorism. Other racist content included the sharing of a generalised Trojan horse meme.²¹³ It added object labels to call refugees “terrorists” – variations of this

²¹³ Matt, and Rose Abrams. "Trojan Horse Object Labels." Know Your Meme. Last modified July 18, 2018. <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/trojan-horse-object-labels>

meme have appeared in different online spaces for several years now. Post 7 October, Tell MAMA became aware of a user who called for violence against Muslims when they protested for Palestinian rights. A further review of their account unearthed posts calling refugees “invading Muslim armies” and months earlier using the racist P-word on Twitter.

More broadly, in an era of political polarisation and the growth of right-wing and far-right populism, scholars explored the role of political rhetoric and the perception of a threat from immigration such as Lucassen and Lubbers (2012)²¹⁴ and Rico (2024).²¹⁵ Gómez-Martínez

²¹⁴ Lucassen, Geertje, and Marcel Lubbers. "Who fears what? Explaining far-right-wing preference in Europe by distinguishing perceived cultural and economic ethnic threats." *Comparative political studies* 45, no. 5 (2012): 547-574.

²¹⁵ Rico, Guillem. "Ideological identification, type of threat, and differences in how anger and fear relate to anti-immigrant and populist attitudes." *American Behavioral Scientist* (2024): 00027642241240344.

& de la Villa Moral-Jiménez (2018)²¹⁶ analysed how exposure to dehumanised depictions of immigrants helped foster negative attitudes toward immigrants more broadly. Moreover, other studies found that dehumanisation plays an active role in navigating threat perception and negative attitudes towards immigration more broadly (Louis, Esses and Lalonde, 2013).²¹⁷ Meanwhile, research by Prati et al. (2016) looked at how using counter-stereotypic categories of outgroups reduced prejudice towards them.²¹⁸

There also remains an overlap between the online and offline worlds. We continue to see how far-right extremist groups harass and target vulnerable refugees in temporary accommodations like hotels, with videos uploaded to websites and social media – with branded videos for Twitter. It risks giving them a bigger, more mainstream audience, as years prior, such material appeared solely on their websites or alternative platforms with smaller online footprints. Moreover, an existing body of literature looks at the potential overlap of digital vigilantism, blurring the offline and online worlds in far-right spaces. For example, Vicenová (2020) looked at the real-world risks in Slovakia,²¹⁹ as Tanner and Campana (2019) explored the role of exclusionary societal and digitised vigilantism in Quebec.²²⁰

Equally, the threat of far-right terrorism remains, be it the likes of Andrew Leak or those convicted of offences that included support of or a desire to replicate the Christchurch terrorist. Several high-profile cases in 2023 resulted in criminal convictions for the latter. We begin in January with the conviction of the neo-Nazi Elliot Brown – the 25-year-old encouraged Dean Morrice (convicted in 2021²²¹) and others on a far-right Telegram channel on how to build how to produce the explosive thermite.²²² Forensics on Brown's phone found copies of the terror attacks in Halle, Germany and Christchurch, New Zealand, respectively.²²³ In March, a teenage neo-Nazi, aged just 15 when they plotted to murder their ex-girlfriend and attack two mosques in Bradford, West Yorkshire, with a gun they sought to purchase online in 2022, was found guilty.²²⁴ If they could not procure a gun, they intended to use a vehicle as a weapon to attack worshippers.²²⁵ The prosecution detailed how they glorified the Christchurch terrorist as a "saint", even producing their screed or "manifesto", and of their desire to purchase a camera to livestream the terror attacks.²²⁶ In November, their identity became public – Joe Metcalfe, the BBC reported, who lived with his parents in Bradford, received a Prevent referral

²¹⁶ Gómez-Martínez, Carmen, and María De La Villa Moral-Jiménez. "Dehumanization and Islamophobia: attitudes towards the Syrian refugee crisis/Deshumanización e islamofobia: actitudes ante la crisis de los refugiados sirios." *International Journal of Social Psychology* 33, no. 2 (2018): 215-239.

²¹⁷ Louis, Winnifred R., Victoria M. Esses, and Richard N. Lalonde. "National identification, perceived threat, and dehumanization as antecedents of negative attitudes toward immigrants in Australia and Canada." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 43 (2013): E156-E165.

²¹⁸ Prati, Francesca, Richard J. Crisp, Felicia Pratto, and Monica Rubini. "Encouraging majority support for immigrant access to health services: Multiple categorization and social identity complexity as antecedents of health equality." *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 19, no. 4 (2016): 426-438.

²¹⁹ 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.

²²⁰ Tanner, Samuel, and Aurélie Campana. "Watchful citizens" and digital vigilantism: a case study of the far right in Quebec." *Global Crime* 21, no. 3-4 (2020): 262-282.

²²¹ Quinn, Ben. "Neo-Nazi Ex-Ukip Member Jailed for 18 Years for Terror Offences." *The Guardian*. Last modified June 14, 2021. www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jun/14/ex-ukip-member-dean-morrice-given-23-year-sentence-for-terror-offences

²²² Tell MAMA. "Far-right Terror: Neo-Nazi Jailed for Encouraging Others to Make Explosives." Tell MAMA. Last modified January 17, 2023. <https://tellmamauk.org/far-right-terror-neo-nazi-jailed-for-encouraging-others-to-make-explosives/>

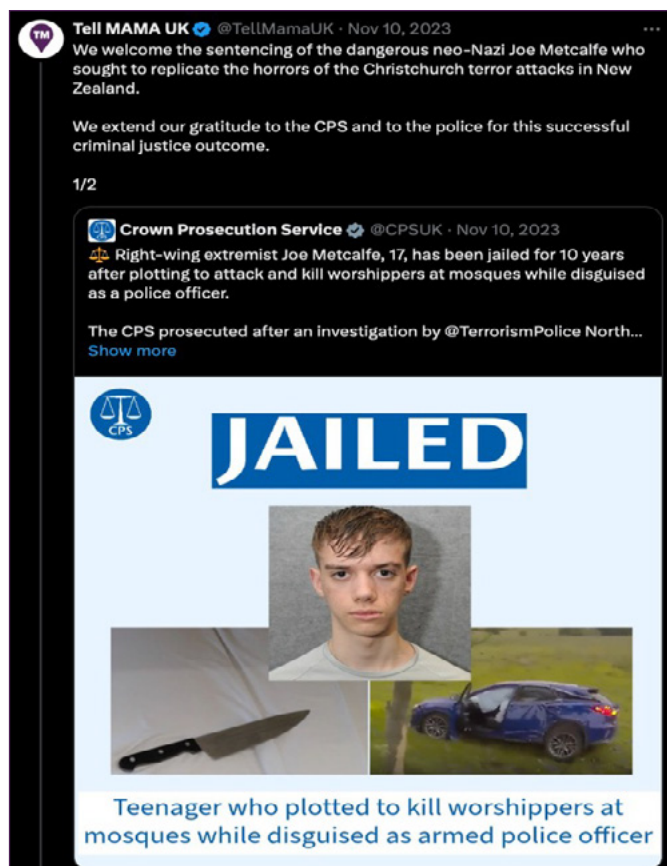
²²³ Gardham, Duncan. "Extremist Jailed After Encouraging Man to Make a Bomb - Using Smart Speaker to Read out Instructions." *Sky News*. Last modified January 17, 2023. <https://news.sky.com/story/extremist-jailed-after-encouraging-man-to-make-a-bomb-using-smart-speaker-to-read-out-instructions-12788839>

²²⁴ Tell MAMA. "Neo-Nazi Teen Guilty of Plotting Terror Attacks on Mosques in West Yorkshire." Tell MAMA. Last modified March 30, 2023. <https://tellmamauk.org/neo-nazi-teen-guilty-of-plotting-terror-attacks-on-mosques-in-west-yorkshire/>

²²⁵ Ball, Tom, and Duncan Gardham. "Boy Stole Father's Car to 'plot Terror Attack on Mosque'." *The Times*. Last modified March 13, 2023. www.thetimes.com/uk/law/article/boy-stole-fathers-car-to-plot-terror-attack-on-mosque-wp8599pmz

²²⁶ Gardham, Duncan. "Far-right Teenager Found Guilty of Plotting Terror Attack on Mosques and Ex-girlfriend." *Sky News*. Last modified March 30, 2023. <https://news.sky.com/story/far-right-teenager-found-guilty-of-plotting-terror-attack-on-mosques-and-ex-girlfriend-12845560>

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in 2021 after his school raised concerns but lied to his anti-terrorism support officer and continued to share extremist far-right material online.²²⁷

In March, the Irish media reported²²⁸ that a British national guilty of terror offences for a Christchurch-related terror plot and the creation of violent child abuse images received a ten-year prison sentence.²²⁹

Vaughn Dolphin, who accidentally blew up his aunt's kitchen whilst making gunpowder,

²²⁷ Laversuch, Chloe. "Joe Metcalfe Jailed for Plotting Mosque Terror Attack Dressed As PC." BBC News. Last modified November 10, 2023. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leeds-67383055

²²⁸ Reynolds, Paul. "Man Jailed over Firearm Possession, Child Abuse Images." RTE.ie. Last modified March 28, 2023. www.rte.ie/news/2023/0328/1366877-mark-wolfe-court

²²⁹ Tell MAMA. "British Neo-Nazi Terrorist and Paedophile Jailed in Ireland over Mosque Plot." Tell MAMA. Last modified April 3, 2023. <https://tellmamauk.org/british-neo-nazi-terrorist-and-paedophile-jailed-in-ireland-over-mosque-plot/>

received a prison sentence of eight-and-a-half years for various far-right terror offences.²³⁰ In the family shed, officers found an improvised musket and bomb-making chemicals in a fridge in his bedroom. Dolphin made anti-Muslim comments online (via neo-Nazi Telegram channels) and sought to sell weapons to the proscribed neo-Nazi terror group in the United States.²³¹ Dolphin had also downloaded the Christchurch terror attack videos and lamented how it lacked "music".²³²

In May, twenty-year-old Luke Skelton received a four-year prison sentence following a plot to blow up a police station in the hope of starting a "race war", which began when he was seventeen.²³³ A committed neo-Nazi, he lavished praise on fascists like Oswald Mosley and Adolf Hitler, praised Enoch Powell and approved of the Christchurch terrorist.²³⁴ Staff at his school made a Prevent referral in November 2020, but he allegedly only had his first meeting with staff the following March, which left him ample time to draft his plans.²³⁵

²³⁰ Tell MAMA. "Neo-Nazi Guilty of Terror Offences After Making Explosives in Aunt's Kitchen." Tell MAMA. Last modified May 12, 2023. <https://tellmamauk.org/neo-nazi-guilty-of-terror-offences-after-making-explosives-in-aunts-kitchen/>

²³¹ Gardham, Duncan. "Vaughn Dolphin Guilty of Terrorism After Making Gunpowder in Kitchen." The Times. Last modified April 28, 2023. www.thetimes.com/uk/law/article/right-wing-extremist-who-cooked-up-explosives-in-his-kitchen-convicted-of-terrorism-jkgdbq371

²³² Gardham, Duncan. "Vaughn Dolphin: White Supremacist Who Blew Up Family Kitchen Convicted of Terrorism Charges." Sky News. Last modified April 28, 2023. <https://news.sky.com/story/vaughn-dolphin-white-supremacist-who-blew-up-family-kitchen-convicted-of-terrorism-charges-12868439>

²³³ Tell MAMA. "Far-right Terrorist Guilty of Plotting Attack He Hoped Would Start 'race War' in Britain." Tell MAMA. Last modified May 16, 2023. <https://tellmamauk.org/far-right-terrorist-guilty-of-plotting-attack-he-hoped-would-start-race-war-in-britain>

²³⁴ Brown, Mark. "Teenager Accused of UK Terror Plot Took Photos of Police Station, Court Told." The Guardian. Last modified May 3, 2022. www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/may/03/teenager-accused-uk-terror-plot-took-photos-police-station-court-told-luke-skelton

²³⁵ Dearden, Lizzie. "Teenager 'planned Far-right Terror Attack' After Being Mentored by Prevent Scheme." The Independent. Last modified May 3, 2022. www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/terror-plots-uk-far-right-prevent-b2070712.html

In June, two neo-Nazis, aged 65²³⁶ and 60²³⁷ were guilty of terrorism and other offences at separate trials, both of whom had copies of the Christchurch terrorist's screed or "manifesto".

Towards the end of 2023, Malaki Edwards, an 18-year-old white supremacist, received a prison sentence for terrorism offences, as details emerged post-conviction that he possessed copies of the terrorist screeds related to Norway and Christchurch.²³⁸

Overall, Tell MAMA identified over twenty individuals convicted of far-right terror offences who possessed either the Christchurch terror video or screed or sought to carry out copycat terror attacks.²³⁹ Two further examples, resulting in convictions in 2024, will appear in a later analysis.

A noteworthy change on X (formerly Twitter) relates to its inconsistent moderation of harmful content – in some cases flagged by Tell MAMA – we saw content removal within an hour, hours or days. In other cases, months would pass, and the platform provided no clear updates on reviews. Concerning the latter, a tweet about young Muslims and other young people making their voices heard about Palestine in London wrote that Islam had "invaded" the UK, supported by the government, which in turn will see Islam "slaughter whites" in November 2023. A tweet from February where a far-right extremist suggested that they would burn copies of the Quran remains online – and the subject of an ongoing police investigation – as we uncovered their calls to burn buildings

housing refugees. A Scottish user, in response to a public appeal about a missing teenager in London, replied to the Metropolitan Police that they should, instead, search the local mosque – the content did not get removed.

Gendered and Racialised Abuse of Muslim Men and Women Online

Selod (2020) argued the importance of understanding how gender (and, by extension, gendered consequences) interconnects with racialisation through a post-9/11 climate, with men racialised as security or terror threats, whereas for Muslim women in hijabs, racialised as a cultural other or menace to the United States, with experiencing racialised securitisation at places such as airports.²⁴⁰ From constructions of dangerous masculinities - see, for example, Yurdakul and Korteweg (2021),²⁴¹ to the role of gender, Baker (2021) posited in the latter that whiteness (with its core and peripheries) represented the hierarchies of humanity and reason and related it to how different Muslim women appear in narratives of violence, gender and security based on the varying processes of racialisation.²⁴²

X (formerly Twitter) did eventually limit the reach of (but did not entirely remove) a post that pushed demographic conspiracies about Muslims, attaching a despicable cartoon depicting a Muslim man (racialised by his ethnicity and beard) controlling different Muslim women (in niqabs) through a mechanical dial as "baby factories." Such dehumanising material falls within the category of "mechanistic dehumanisation", which Bustillos et al. (2023) describe as when individuals get depicted as unfeeling robots or

²³⁶ BBC News. "Neo-Nazi Conspiracy Theorist Who Had Gun in Bedroom Jailed." BBC News. Last modified May 30, 2023. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-merseyside-65730051

²³⁷ Gardham, Duncan, and security Journalist. "Conspiracy Theorists Dubbed 'Bonnie and Clyde' Guilty of Plotting to Destroy 5G Masts and Encouraging Attacks on MPs." Sky News. Last modified June 1, 2023. <https://news.sky.com/story/conspiracy-theorists-dubbed-bonnie-and-clyde-guilty-of-plotting-to-destroy-5g-masts-and-encouraging-attacks-on-mps-12894359>

²³⁸ Jenkins, Sammy, and PA Media. "A-level Student Guilty of Terror Offences Detained for Seven Years." BBC News. Last modified November 3, 2023. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-wiltshire-67309172

²³⁹ Tell MAMA. "Recent Neo-Nazi Terror Convictions Show Christchurch's Ongoing Propaganda Influence." Tell MAMA. Last modified July 31, 2023. <https://tellmamauk.org/recent-neo-nazi-terror-convictions-show-christchurchs-ongoing-propaganda-influence/>

²⁴⁰ Selod, Saher. "Gendered racialization: Muslim American men and women's encounters with racialized surveillance." In *The mechanisms of racialization beyond the Black/White binary*, pp. 48-65. Routledge, 2020.

²⁴¹ Yurdakul, Gökçe, and Anna C. Korteweg. "Boundary regimes and the gendered racialized production of Muslim masculinities: Cases from Canada and Germany." *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* 19, no. 1 (2021): 39-54.

²⁴² Baker, Catherine. "The contingencies of whiteness: Gendered/racialized global dynamics of security narratives." *Security dialogue* 52, no. 1_suppl (2021): 124-132.

machines without identifiable human traits.²⁴³ Other research found how overt and more “daily” forms of dehumanisation occur – in some cases subconsciously, to research on infrahumanisation – that deals with the intricacies of secondary human emotion and how said emotions to their ingroup over those in the outgroup (Demoulin et al., 2004).²⁴⁴ That influential paper also found that when individuals associate “uniquely human” emotions with outgroups, it requires additional effort and more control. It suggests that denying said human emotional qualities to those in the outgroup arose outside of spontaneity.²⁴⁵ For Haslam (2006), mechanistic dehumanisation involved emotional distancing and other emotions, not necessarily disgust.²⁴⁶ However, studies have found that such forms of dehumanisation (beyond animalistic) saw individuals unwilling to support victims of natural disasters (Andrighetto et al., 2014).²⁴⁷ Or in calls for punitive, not restorative, forms of justice (Vasiljevic and Viki, 2013).²⁴⁸

Regarding anti-Muslim animus and Islamophobia more directly, Vezzali et al. (2022) drew on a range of existing literature on how meta-humanisation can help shatter intergroup hostilities as it ascribes more humanity to the outgroup.²⁴⁹ Conversely, however, infrahumanisation, which Delgado et al. (2020) defined as the differences in how individuals

attribute human characteristics to ingroups and outgroups, creates the perception that the outgroup is not as human.²⁵⁰ Infrahumanisation can propagate collective guilt towards outgroups or show acceptance for the ingroup’s past misdeeds (Castano and Giner-Sorolla, 2006).²⁵¹

When it came to political discussions, before, during or after the general election, we saw gendered examples of AI-generated images of Muslim men in religious clothing, racialised as primarily South Asian or Arab, walking alongside the white cliffs of Dover (or coming off of boats) when discussing immigration more broadly. We also recorded disgusting examples of anti-Muslim abuse and misogyny, with X suspending the account of an individual who told a Muslim journalist to “s*** off your Muslim terrorists.”

Southport

The horrific murders of Elsie Dot Stancombe, Bebe King, and Alice da Silva Aguiar (all under the age of ten), alongside the attempted murder of ten others (children and two adults) by Axel Rudakubana, then 17, horrified and shocked the nation. In the online sphere, we observed, documented and flagged how quickly those with far-right and unclear ideological motivations pushed disinformation and misinformation, some of which intended to inflame emotion and target Muslims and refugees. Before we analyse the information sent to Tell MAMA following the stabbings and murders on 29 July, we will look at the broader literature on what defines and differentiates disinformation and misinformation and the wider consequences, as we observed with the despicable role of far-right Telegram channels in the aftermath. Due to the sheer volume of cases received in the aftermath, the following section will be non-exhaustive. Still, it will give audiences an idea of what Tell MAMA received from the public and how we exposed

²⁴³ Bustillos, Antonio, Stéphanie Demoulin, Lucía López-Rodríguez, Alexandra Vázquez, and Anna Zlobina. "Approaching dehumanizing interactions: Joint consideration of other-, meta-, and self-dehumanization." *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences* 49 (2023): 101233.

²⁴⁴ Demoulin, Stéphanie, Jacques-Philippe Leyens, Maria-Paola Paladino, Ramón Rodríguez-Torres, Armando Rodríguez-Perez, and John Dovidio. "Dimensions of “uniquely” and “non-uniquely” human emotions." *Cognition and emotion* 18, no. 1 (2004): 71-96.

²⁴⁵ Ibid. 91.

²⁴⁶ Haslam, Nick. "Dehumanization: An integrative review." *Personality and social psychology review* 10, no. 3 (2006): 252-264.

²⁴⁷ Andrighetto, Luca, Cristina Baldissarri, Sara Lattanzio, Steve Loughnan, and Chiara Volpato. "Humanitarian aid? Two forms of dehumanization and willingness to help after natural disasters." *British journal of social psychology* 53, no. 3 (2014): 573-584.

²⁴⁸ Vasiljevic, Milica, and G. Tendayi Viki. "Dehumanization, moral disengagement, and public attitudes to crime and punishment." In *Humanness and dehumanization*, pp. 129-146. *Psychology Press*, 2013.

²⁴⁹ Vezzali, Loris, Dora Capozza, Gian Antonio Di Bernardo, Rossella Falvo, Sofia Stathi, and Gordon Hodson. "Strategies for the promotion of humanity attribution to outgroups." *European Review of Social Psychology* 33, no. 2 (2022): 215-254.

²⁵⁰ Delgado, Naira, Armando Rodríguez-Pérez, Jeroen Vaes, Jacques-Philippe Leyens, and Verónica Betancor. "Priming effects of violence on infrahumanization." *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 12, no. 6 (2009): 699-714.

²⁵¹ Castano, Emanuele, and Roger Giner-Sorolla. "Not quite human: infrahumanization in response to collective responsibility for intergroup killing." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 90, no. 5 (2006): 804.

the role of online falsehoods more broadly. For Fallis (2015), disinformation is intentional – it wants to mislead people – and risks eroding trust and stifling the ability of individuals to share information.²⁵² Furthermore, they argue that an equally vital component of disinformation is how it presents information that intends to or will likely create false beliefs that should concern us as it threatens information quality.²⁵³

The term “fake news” is also contested amongst academics and scholars. For example, Tandoc, Lim, and Ling (2018) contend that it furthers an agenda (despite its news-based origins). Misinformation can spread online due to user polarisation and confirmation bias (Del Vicario et al., 2019).²⁵⁴

Emergency services responded to calls at 11:47 am of the stabbings, with Merseyside Police publishing a statement at 13:07 confirming the arrest of a male with a knife. However, at 13:42, as captured by the New York Times, false speculation claimed that it was a “Muslim culprit”.²⁵⁵ Seven minutes later, a prominent far-right account outside of the UK posted, “The attacker is alleged to be a Muslim immigrant.” The archives of this tweet, captured before its deletion, confirm that it had at least six million impressions. At 14:09, a UK-based far-right account wrote that a “Muslim immigrant” was supposedly responsible for the stabbings based on information they read on X – generating almost four hundred thousand impressions and hundreds of retweets.²⁵⁶ At 14:30, we received reports about a post that claimed Rudakubana was a “non-British citizen.” Another viral post of

note that included the word “migrant” came from a now-deleted LinkedIn post from an individual who claimed the presence of his children during the stabbings, which the BBC added the family did not attend the class as it was at capacity.²⁵⁷ Screenshots of the LinkedIn would follow in comments calling for mass deportations.²⁵⁸ Our investigation saw a similar pattern: screenshots of Facebook comments attached to tweets speculating about the perpetrator’s religion and ethnicity. At 16:15, we identified a post with no text replying to fervent speculation, indicating that the suspect was not white, in hopes of fuelling more anti-Muslim and anti-refugee sentiment, lifted from a local Facebook page with no further context provided. At 16:23, a Delhi-based website tweeted claimed the misleading LinkedIn post was “confirmed,” amassing over five hundred thousand views - and at 17:03, the page shared photos asking the public to verify claims this was the Southport perpetrator when, in actuality, were photos from the horrific stabbing of children at a French park in Annecy. An Irish account shared a distressing WhatsApp voice note from someone in Southport and called for the forced removal of Muslims and Islam from Europe at 16:37, which encouraged some individuals within the UK to call for mass deportations on X. Sometime just before 17:00, an infamous viral post boosted the visibility of a fake name, “Ali Al-Shakati” which they described finding on X from a “fellow lockdown sceptic” with a caveat about the veracity of the central claim in an interview with The Times newspaper.²⁵⁹ They later faced no criminal charges following their arrest due to “insufficient evidence”.²⁶⁰

²⁵² Fallis, Don. “What is disinformation?.” *Library trends* 63, no. 3 (2015): 401-426.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Vicario, Michela Del, Walter Quattrociocchi, Antonio Scala, and Fabiana Zollo. “Polarization and fake news: Early warning of potential misinformation targets.” *ACM Transactions on the Web (TWEB)* 13, no. 2 (2019): 1-22.

²⁵⁵ Lee Myers, Steven, Adam Satariano, Leo Dominguez, and Rumsey Taylor. “How Online Hatred Toward Migrants Spurs Real-World Violence.” *The New York Times - Breaking News, US News, World News and Videos*. Last modified August 14, 2024. www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/08/09/technology/migrants-racism-social-media-violence.html

²⁵⁶ We have removed identifying information from such accounts for this report.

²⁵⁷ Thomas, Ed, and Shayan Sardarizadeh. “Southport Riot: How a LinkedIn Post Helped Spark Unrest - BBC Tracks Its Spread.” *BBC News*. Last modified October 25, 2024. www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c99v90813j5o

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Witherow, Tom, Shayma Bakht, and Mark Sellman. “The Mother of Three Who Sparked Havoc with False Claim About Southport Suspect.” *The Times*. Last modified August 2, 2024. www.thetimes.com/uk/crime/article/mother-of-three-sparked-havoc-with-false-claim-about-southport-suspect-bd6kkzgp

²⁶⁰ Burnell, Paul, and PA Media. “No Charge over Spreading of Southport Misinformation.” *BBC News*. Last modified September 18, 2024. www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/crl8nwx6ynzo

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Nevertheless, archives captured before its deletion showed that the post gained almost one million impressions. As our reporting from 31 July 2024 revealed, it remains plausible that clickbait websites like Channel3Now scraped viral tweets like the above for information without additional fact-checking protocols, with Chanel3Now publishing the false name shortly after 17:00.²⁶¹ The BBC further analysed the impacts of the Channel3Now falsehood and the broader damage.²⁶² Including that, it potentially encouraged the summer riots and far-right, racist violence.²⁶³ In various reports to Tell MAMA, we saw how screenshots of the Channel3Now false headline were attached to posts encouraging violence, calling for mass deportations or other broader racialised statements about Muslim communities and refugees. Other examples flagged with us included account holders making pro-Tommy Robinson statements whilst sharing the misleading LinkedIn screenshot alongside the fake Ali Al-Shakati name.

²⁶¹ Tell MAMA. "How Misinformation and Disinformation About the Southport Stabbings Went Viral." Tell MAMA. Last modified July 31, 2024. <https://tellmamauk.org/how-misinformation-and-disinformation-about-the-southport-stabbings-went-viral/>

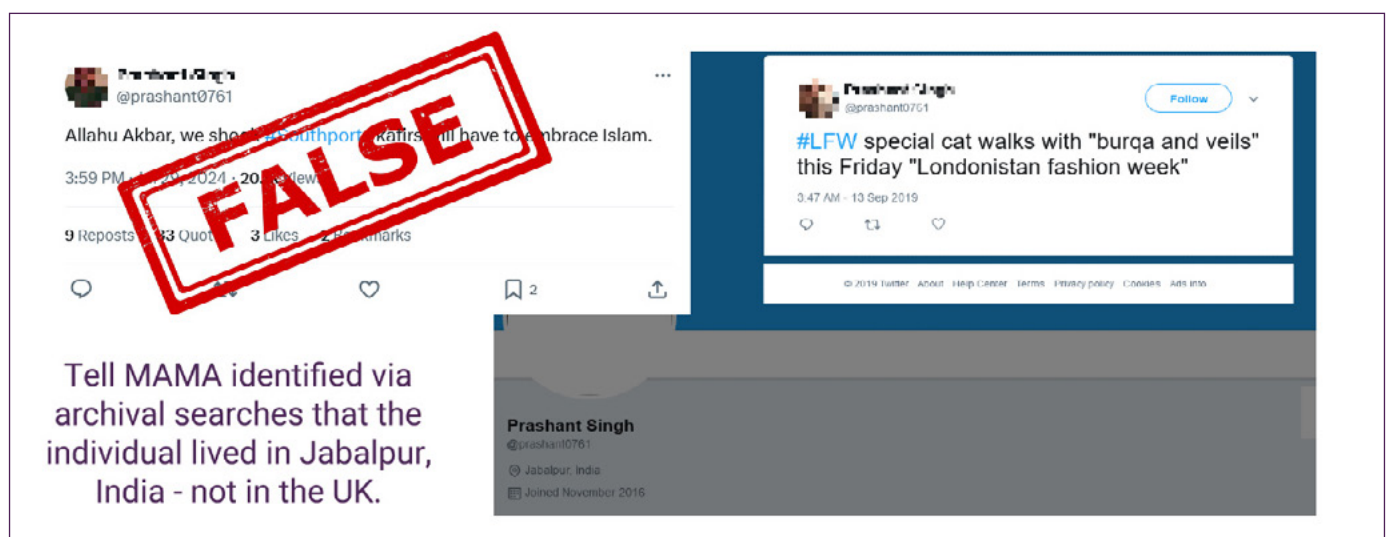
²⁶² Spring, Marianna. "The Real Story of the Website Accused of Fuelling Southport Riots." BBC News. Last modified August 7, 2024. www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c5y38gjp4ygo

²⁶³ Gregory, Andy. "Website Accused of Fuelling Southport Riots Denies Being Affiliated to Russia." The Independent. Last modified August 8, 2024. www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/southport-stabbing-suspect-channel3now-misinformation-riots-b2593207.html

The racist Ali Al Shakati (Ali-Al-Shakati or Ali Al Shakati, as some individuals wrote online) falsehood followed a similar pattern of claims: that he "arrived" a year prior on a boat, that MI6 (or MI5) knew of him, as did local mental health services in Liverpool (despite Merseyside Police confirming that he was born in Cardiff and having lived in a rural village in West Lancan²⁶⁴).

Nevertheless, there was also a second version of it. A second version of the racist falsehood claimed that the perpetrator was, in fact, "Jordanian Palestinian" and known to MI5 (not MI6) and a "Channel migrant" – a key spreader of this falsehood also tagged in the RNLI – amassing over two million impressions shortly after 17:00 as other accounts, as a little after 17:30, we captured examples of accounts spreading the false name (or quote tweeting those who did) who called for riots, deportation or broader violent sentiments (for example, time to fight back). In the minutes before this, we saw examples of far-right adjacent accounts spreading the fake name and amassing almost five hundred thousand impressions before both account holders quietly deleted said posts. At 17:38, a post spreading the false name with a caveat had reached hundreds of thousands as the false name continued to circulate. Despite the police confirming that Rudakubana was born in Cardiff, we saw various examples

²⁶⁴ Haslam, Ben. "Alex Rudakubana Was My Neighbour. I Have Memories I Want to Forget." Liverpool Echo. Last modified January 24, 2025. www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/lived-nextdoor-axel-rudakubana-30820276



of accounts denying this, with claims that he was, in fact, Syrian, as one X post claimed that he was “Palestinian” and not from Cardiff nor Bank, and should, therefore, after any conviction, face deportation.

Writing in response to the disinformation and falsehoods online in the aftermath, Tell MAMA published a detailed article that showcased the global nature of it – including an individual based in India who pretended to be Muslim and glorified the stabbings before X suspended the account.²⁶⁵

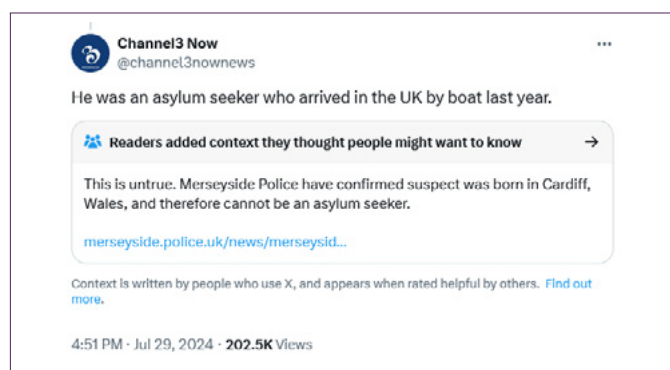
Moreover, websites hosted by Robert Spencer and Pamela Geller, two individuals who remain banned from entering the UK due to their anti-Muslim views, both cited the Channel3Now falsehood before deleting them.²⁶⁶

We identified further examples of non-UK-based far-right accounts that had attempted to stir up anti-Muslim and Islamophobic sentiments during the evening. An infamous account with several hundred thousand followers shared a decontextualised video of Sadiq Khan speaking about diversity and Islam shortly before 19:30 before posing a question to their audience. The tactic is nothing new, as keyword searches revealed that the tactic occurred months before and again in October 2024. The 29 July clip, however, gained at least one million views, encouraging racist comments that included calls to deport Khan to individuals posting anti-Muslim conspiracies of taqiyya.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁵ Tell MAMA. “How Misinformation and Disinformation About the Southport Stabbings Went Viral.”

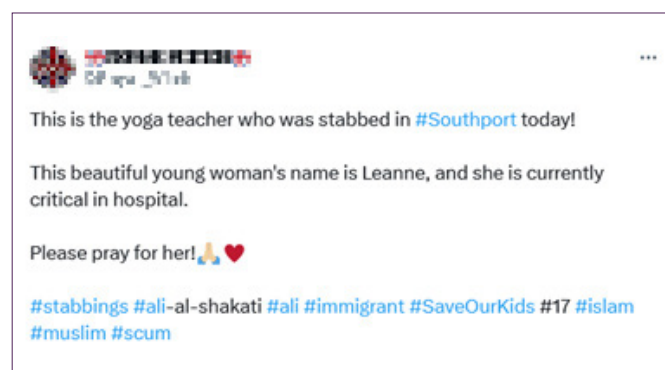
²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Tell MAMA. “Melanie Phillips and the Taqiyya Odyssey.” Tell MAMA. Last modified December 3, 2019. <https://tellmamauk.org/melanie-phillips-and-the-taqiyya-odyssey/>



Late in the evening of 29 July, Tell MAMA received a report from the public concerning content from a far-right account that, after posting a photo of one of the adult survivors, used the false name alongside hashtags like “#immigrant,” “#Islam,” “#Muslim,” and “#scum,” in a clear inflammatory example of how far-right and hard-right accounts on Twitter continued to push anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim sentiments hours after Merseyside Police confirmed that the perpetrator was Cardiff-born. In a further example, the Channel3Now falsehood also existed as a headline screenshot, adding further confirmation bias for accounts who wanted heads “to roll” if proven true – generating at least one million impressions. Other far-right tactics within the immediate hours of the stabbings involved taking photographs of politicians holding “refugees welcome” signs (or similar sentiments) and attaching them to inflammatory commentary around the Southport stabbings. Moreover, we observed vicious misogyny towards the home secretary Yvette Cooper, on Twitter, including numerous “b*tch” slurs and calls for her deportation as a “betraye” alongside Muslim communities.

By lunchtime on the following day, Merseyside Police confirmed the falsehood around the name circulating on social media, encouraging individuals to avoid speculation online. It was around this time that Tell MAMA reported a racist post from a woman in London who wrote, “Deport all Muslims to their home country’s,” and called Sadiq Khan the P-word. Similar to the aforementioned post above, this individual used hashtags like “#southportattack,” “#Southport,” “#Muslim,” “#Terrorism,” “#England,” and



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“#KnifeAttack.” Furthermore, this post quoted a tweet that had weaponised the Home Office’s protective funding scheme for places of worship, having taken a screenshot of the post (dated 11 March 2024) that announced £117 million over four years to boost security for mosques, faith schools and community centres. With the timestamp removed, the post sought to push two-tier narratives of favour towards Muslims with the text, “But f*** all to protect our kids”, with a Southport-related hashtag, seeking to externalise Muslims as outside of the national identity, and therefore, an ongoing threat.



Tell MAMA received several reports about an X post that called for “mass deportations” and “zero immigration of young lone males from Islamic developing countries”, which sought to exploit the grief of Southport by linking Muslims to crime and terrorism more broadly.

Before the courts lifted the anonymity on the identity of the murderer Axel Rudakubana, then 17 (who received automatic anonymity under the law given their age at the time) as no child aged between 10 and 17 who faces criminal charges will have their details revealed outside the courts, yet on Twitter, before that order arrived on 1 August, many accounts, notably on the far-right to non-ideologically aligned individuals speculated, with many breaching the anonymity to name him. Here is where we return to Channel3Now, who, on 30 July, published Rudakubana’s name in a hashtag. On that day, an account linked to a notorious far-right racist, later jailed for encouraging rioting,²⁶⁸ published Rudakubana’s name, noting that the consequences “might get me in some kind of trouble” and in preparation for this report, the post (still accessible online) had over six million impressions alone. It also did not stop people from circulating more falsehoods.²⁶⁹ The courts did not lift the anonymity order until the afternoon of 1 August.²⁷⁰ Again, however, it must be stressed that the far-right violence and disorder that began against the Southport Mosque occurred before Rudakubana’s name emerged. Telegram proved a key tool for racists to plan and attempt to coordinate violence and prove a breeding ground for extreme racism and terrorist content, which the following subsection will detail further examples.

²⁶⁸ Stewart, Gary. “'Keyboard Warrior' Who Told Southport to 'get out on the Street'.” Liverpool Echo. Last modified August 16, 2024. www.liverpooecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/keyboard-warrior-35-who-told-29757418

²⁶⁹ Reuters Fact Check. “Fact Check: Man detained in Ireland since 2023 incorrectly identified as Southport suspect.” Reuters . Last modified August 1, 2024. www.reuters.com/fact-check/man-police-custody-since-2023-incorrectly-identified-southport-suspect-2024-08-01

²⁷⁰ Kirk, Tristan. “Southport Stabbing Suspect, 17, Named in Court and Trial Date Set.” The Standard. Last modified August 1, 2024. www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/southport-murders-stabbing-teenager-named-b1174215.html



How the far-right used Telegram to call for riots, violence and racism

The most infamous Telegram channel that helped inspire the far-right violence following the Southport murders was called “Southport Wake Up”, which a neo-Nazi named Andrew McIntyre operated – he received a seven-and-a-half-year prison sentence in January 2025 after pleading guilty to encouraging violent disorder and possessing a knife.²⁷¹

Due to the severity and nature of the racist material and threats to mosques, immigration lawyers and hotels hosting refugees, this section will briefly detail what appeared on this channel as Tell MAMA’s investigations team worked closely to keep the police and counter-terrorism alert to the threats. Various images from Google Maps or news articles listed the geographic locations of various mosques and hotels housing refugees, as well as services to assist immigrants and refugees surrounded by flame emojis. Several TikTok accounts promoted calls for violence towards mosques, and Muslims had

usernames like “Victory or Death” and “Infidel” before the platform swiftly removed them. It is unclear, however, if Andrew McIntyre operated these TikTok accounts.

On X (formerly Twitter), McIntyre created an account on 1 August to spread their racist propaganda and incitement to violence alongside overt racist speech and harassment of others, including antisemitic and anti-Black racist abuse – with the platform hiding, but not removing a post containing the N-word.²⁷² Violent language saturated their account with highly inflammatory statements like “Violence is right when it is time, now is the time,” and “the time for violence is NOW.”²⁷³ He also used dehumanising anti-Muslim language like “Muzz rats” – such language, alongside forms of racist hate speech, has appeared in academic research from Maronikolakis, Baader, and Schütze (2022)²⁷⁴ and Yu, Sen, and Wagner

²⁷¹ Burnell, Paul. “Southport: Taxi Driver Who Stoked Riots is Jailed.” BBC News. Last modified January 6, 2025. www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cr56g4v28g7o

²⁷² Tell MAMA. “Southport: Neo-Nazi Who Stoked Riots Online Jailed for over 7 Years.” Tell MAMA. Last modified January 8, 2025. <https://tellmamauk.org/southport-neo-nazi-who-stoked-riots-online-jailed-for-over-7-years/>

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Maronikolakis, Antonis, Philip Baader, and Hinrich Schütze. “Analyzing hate speech data along racial, gender and intersectional axes.” *arXiv preprint arXiv:2205.06621* (2022).

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(2024).²⁷⁵ Across major Tell MAMA reports, we highlighted how “Musrats (and similar variations)” appear in many far-right digital spaces as a broader form of dehumanisation.

The channel shared terrorist material, including the Christchurch terror attacks – responsible for the murder of 51 Muslims in New Zealand in March 2019, with the caption, “WHITE LEGEND F*** ISLAM F*** JEWS” and glorifying the name of the white supremacist terrorist responsible.

Other alarming statements like “Kill All Muslims,” “The mosques must burn,” and “Burn all mosques” surrounded by fire emojis appeared in the channel. Further examples of neo-Nazi propaganda included a white supremacist meme captioned: “TRIBE UP, ARM UP, WHITE LADS.”²⁷⁶

The channel included language that sought to see politicians “hung” as traitors, including despicable language about the home secretary Yvette Cooper.

Following McIntyre’s conviction, the Liverpool Echo newspaper extensively reported on his racist views and calls for anti-Muslim violence online, including using other accounts to interact with other far-right pages, including a pro-Tommy Robinson channel, encouraging violence towards Muslims, distributing free copies of the Quran in Liverpool.²⁷⁷

A special Sky News reported on a related Telegram channel that an individual was listing fireworks for sale, with posts appearing next to maps of mosques.²⁷⁸

The BBC revealed a Finnish neo-Nazi’s involvement in the “Southport Wake Up”, which included holding an admin position on the channel and having uploaded a document with advice on carrying out arson attacks.²⁷⁹ Tell MAMA’s investigation into the role of neo-Nazis and the far-right abroad also revealed that the same Finnish neo-Nazi used their channel to encourage trolling of the police’s online hate crime reporting hub True Vision – with the aim of flooding it with malicious materials to undermine efforts to respond to the far-right violence and disorder.²⁸⁰ That investigation also found calls for racist violence within the UK, as we initially reported on 7 August 2024, that two days prior, the page expressed more violent escalations, with one member writing, “We should target the central hub of these p*kis like Bradford and Birmingham.”²⁸¹

An additional Tell MAMA investigation also found how this Finnish neo-Nazi used TikTok to spread racist hate in the UK, captioning on video, “DO NOT GIVE UP YOUR HOMELAND DEAR ANGLOS! #england We stand with you!” with a racist German-language song “Deutschland den Deutschen, Ausländer raus!” (“Germany for the Germans, foreigners out!”), as highlighted by Le Monde months prior.²⁸²

Returning to Andrew McIntyre, the Liverpool Echo reported, how he used Telegram to promote the planned violent disorder at the Southport Islamic Society Mosque, writing, “Rise up English lads. 8pm tomorrow, St Luke’s Road, Southport.”²⁸³ Moreover, he shared plans to target the mosque on TikTok via materials

²⁷⁵ Yu, Zehui, Indira Sen, Dennis Assenmacher, Mattia Samory, Leon Fröhling, Christina Dahn, Debora Nozza, and Claudia Wagner. “The Unseen Targets of Hate: A Systematic Review of Hateful Communication Datasets.” *Social Science Computer Review* (2024): 08944393241258771.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Everett, Adam. “Thug Who Claimed ‘no Face, No Case’ Begins Prison Sentence.” Liverpool Echo. Last modified January 6, 2025. www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/thug-posted-lies-online-watched-30720592

²⁷⁸ Doak, Sam, and OSINT Producer. “Inside the Telegram Groups Apparently Used to Plan Unrest After Southport Stabbings.” Sky News. Last modified August 2, 2024. <https://news.sky.com/story/inside-the-telegram-groups-apparently-used-to-plan-unrest-after-southport-stabbings-13189439>

²⁷⁹ Thomas, Ed. “BBC Confronts Neo-Nazi Who Gave UK Rioters Arson Tips.” BBC News. Last modified October 2, 2024. www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cp819gpp8yro

²⁸⁰ Tell MAMA. “How Neo-Nazis and Far-right Agitators Abroad Use Telegram to Target Muslims in the UK.” Tell MAMA. Last modified August 8, 2024. <https://tellmamauk.org/how-neo-nazis-and-far-right-agitators-abroad-use-telegram-to-target-muslims-in-the-uk/>

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Wieder, Thomas. “Germany Struck with Outrage After Racist Chants on a Jet Set Holiday Island.” Le Monde.fr. Last modified May 29, 2024. www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/05/29/outrage-after-racist-chants-on-an-island-where-affluent-german-vacations_6672960_4.html

²⁸³ Everett, Adam. “Thug Who Claimed ‘no Face, No Case’ Begins Prison Sentence.” Liverpool Echo.

promoted on a pro-Tommy Robinson page.²⁸⁴ Other examples included listing the address of the mosque with fire emojis.²⁸⁵

Further reporting looked at the role of those abroad agitating on Telegram²⁸⁶ to the rampant antisemitism in the “Southport Wake Up” channel.²⁸⁷ Another high-profile conviction from those within the group involved Ehsan Hussain, who posted under a pseudonym, called for violence and used the P-word in hopes of provoking more violence in areas like Alum Rock, the BBC reported.²⁸⁸

Across different media outlets²⁸⁹ came further analysis²⁹⁰ about how the far-right makes use of platforms like Telegram and other platforms,²⁹¹ especially during the height of far-right violence and disorder.

An analysis by ISD found that in the ten days that followed the Southport murders, anti-migrant and anti-Muslim hate rose by 246% and 276%, respectively, and peaked on 4 and 5 August.²⁹²

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Hooper, Sarah. "Foreign Actors' Using Social Media to Share Anti-immigration Narratives in UK." *Metro*. Last modified August 7, 2024. <https://metro.co.uk/2024/08/07/foreign-backed-actors-using-social-media-share-anti-immigration-narratives-uk-21375756/>

²⁸⁷ Li Bartov, Shira. "After UK riots against Muslims and refugees, local Jews grapple with familiar extremism." *The Times of Israel*. Last modified August 16, 2024. www.timesofisrael.com/after-uk-riots-against-muslims-and-refugees-local-jews-grapple-with-familiar-extremism

²⁸⁸ Stephanie Wareham, and PA Media. "Birmingham Man Jailed for Telegram Race Hate Posts Amid Riots." *BBC News*. Last modified September 18, 2024. www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c9qvlq57ewyo

²⁸⁹ Davey, Jacob, and Julia Ebner. "How Telegram Fosters Online Extremism." *New Statesman*. Last modified August 29, 2024. www.newstatesman.com/comment/2024/08/how-telegram-fosters-online-extremism

²⁹⁰ Leloup, Damien. "UK Riots: Far Right Stirs Up Hatred on Social Media." *Le Monde.fr*. Last modified August 7, 2024. www.lemonde.fr/en/pixels/article/2024/08/07/uk-riots-far-right-stirs-up-hatred-on-social-media_6710909_13.html

²⁹¹ Johnston, Neil, and Robbie Nichols. "How a Telegram group sparked fears of more far-Right riots." *The Telegraph*. Last modified August 8, 2024. www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/08/08/southport-wake-up-telegram-channel-post-far-right-rallies

²⁹² ISD & CASM Technology. "Evidencing a Rise in Anti-Muslim and Anti-migrant Online Hate Following the Southport Attack." *ISD*. Last modified December 4, 2024. www.isdglobal.org/digital_dispatches/evidencing-a-rise-in-anti-muslim-and-anti-migrant-online-hate-following-the-southport-attack

A detailed, horrifying account from Muslims inside the Southport mosque describes their fears when harassment and violence escalated, which the *Liverpool Echo* described as ranging from Islamophobic hate crimes to violent mobs attempting to break down the front door as items “resembling makeshift petrol bombs” and bricks broken several windows.²⁹³

Andrew McIntyre’s “actions encouraged many people to plan and then to commit offences of both violent disorder and criminal damage.”²⁹⁴

Anti-racism rallies²⁹⁵ across the country and in cities like Liverpool²⁹⁶ also created a strong counter message²⁹⁷ to the far-right riots and violence, encouraging hope and solidarity.²⁹⁸

After the riots

When news broke that Axel Rudakubana was charged with terrorism offences in October 2024 (to which he would plead guilty in January 2025), including possession of an Al Qaeda training manual and the production of ricin, a range of inflammatory commentary emerged on X with statements like “Islamic murderer,” “Islamic terror links,” “It was Islam,” or to unsubstantiated rumours that Rudakubana had converted to Islam. The rhetoric around “lies” or “cover-ups”

²⁹³ Thorp, Liam. "Terrified Mosque Members 'prayed' Rioters Wouldn't Get Inside." *Liverpool Echo*. Last modified August 6, 2024. www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/we-prayed-wouldnt-inside-terrifying-29688669

²⁹⁴ Brown, Mark. "'Key Architect' of Riots After Southport Attack Jailed for Seven and a Half Years." *The Guardian*. Last modified January 6, 2025. www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/jan/06/key-architect-of-riots-after-southport-attack-jailed-for-seven-and-a-half-years

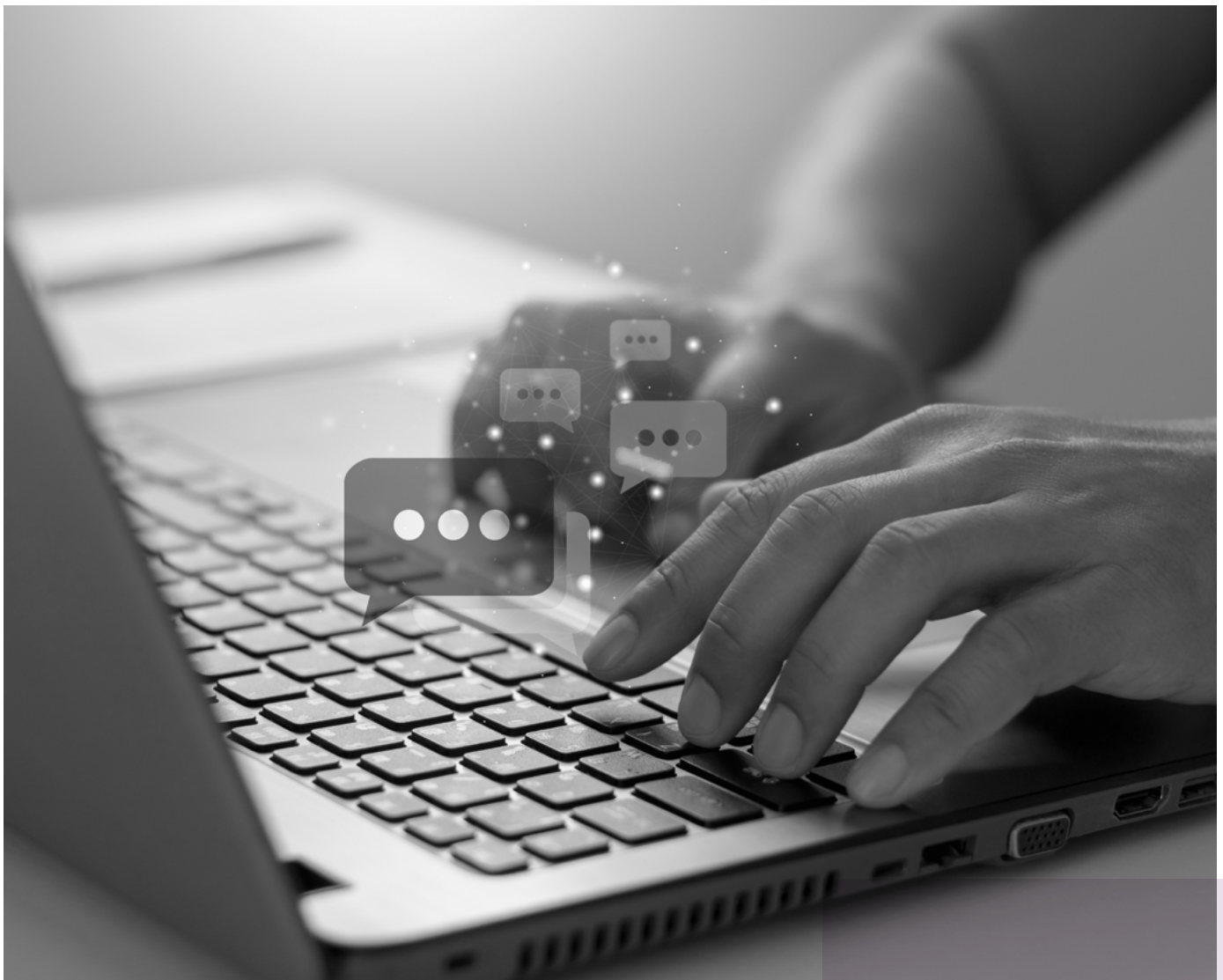
²⁹⁵ Murray, Jessica, and Neha Gohil. "Anti-racists Mobilise to Counter 'unprecedented' UK Far-right Rallies." *The Guardian*. Last modified August 2, 2024. www.theguardian.com/uk-news/article/2024/08/02/anti-racists-mobilise-to-counter-protests-at-unprecedented-far-right-rallies

²⁹⁶ Graves, Steve. "Liverpool Protest Told 'this City is Built on Solidarity'." *Liverpool Echo*. Last modified August 5, 2024. www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/liverpool-anti-racism-protest-told-29671092

²⁹⁷ Middleton, Joe. "The Day Britain Fought Back: Public Praised for Anti-racism Gatherings." *The Independent*. Last modified August 8, 2024. www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/uk-riots-anti-racism-walthamstow-london-b2593146.html

²⁹⁸ Sinmaz, Emine. "England's Anti-racism Rallies: 'People Were Anxious, but Afterwards I Had Hope'." *The Guardian*. Last modified August 8, 2024. www.theguardian.com/politics/article/2024/08/08/uk-anti-racism-rallies-people-were-anxious-but-afterwards-i-had-hope

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also permeated from some political and media figureheads (including some MPs), which not only risks undermining public trust in the legal process but has legal consequences around Contempt of Court. The prime minister made this in a speech in the House of Commons as Jonathan Hall KC, the independent reviewer of terrorism legislation, called for more transparency about what they could share within the remits of existing laws.²⁹⁹ Merseyside Police stated on 29 October that, contrary to online speculation, nothing “was

²⁹⁹ Davis, Margaret. “PM Warns MPs They Can Either Support Southport Police or Undermine Their Work.” *The Standard*. Last modified October 30, 2024. www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/axel-rudakubana-keir-starmer-government-robert-jenrick-mps-b1191040.html

hidden” from the public. They followed “extensive guidance” from the CPS to ensure restrictions remained to protect court proceedings.³⁰⁰ The CPS reissued its guidance on X and its website, reminding the public to avoid sharing commentary or information online that risked prejudicing the trial.³⁰¹

³⁰⁰ Merseyside Police. “Statement from Chief Constable Serena Kennedy and partners following further charges for Axel Rudakubana.” Merseyside Police. Last modified October 29, 2024. www.merseyside.police.uk/news/merseyside/news/2024/october/statement-from-chief-constable-serena-kennedy-and-partners-following-further-charges-for-axel-rudakubana

³⁰¹ The Crown Prosecution Service. “CPS Authorises Two Further Charges Against Axel Rudakubana.” The Crown Prosecution Service. Last modified October 29, 2024. www.cps.gov.uk/mersey-cheshire/news/authorises-two-further-charges-against-axel-rudakubana

Online Convictions After Southport Murders

Some of the most high-profile convictions for online offences included the jailing of James Aspin after he called on others to join him and “burn down every f***** mosque in Newcastle,” he also posted racialised and criminalising content that stigmatised Muslims and refugees more broadly on TikTok.³⁰² He had pleaded guilty to stirring up religious hatred (a section 29E of the Public Order Act 1986 offence) on 13 August after someone reported their TikTok content to the police.³⁰³ During the sentence remarks, the judge made clear that their statements proved “hugely offensive and dangerous,” adding that he “referenced people who practice Islam as being largely responsible for awful crimes committed in this country,” adding that he spoke of asylum seekers in a “despicable” manner.³⁰⁴

Geraint Boyce received a two-year prison sentence after calling for the burning of mosques and the worshippers inside on Facebook. The 43-year-old pleaded guilty to a charge of publishing written material that sought to stir up religious hatred.³⁰⁵ He also called for the sinking of boats along with the refugees on board. The judge made clear that Boyce encouraged “activity that would threaten or endanger life.”³⁰⁶

Another mosque-related case saw the jailing of 53-year-old Julie Sweeney, who, after seeing photos of the clean-up in Southport following the despicable far-right violence and disorder,

wrote, “It’s absolutely ridiculous. Don’t protect the mosques. Blow the mosque up with the adults in it.”³⁰⁷ Sweeney received a 15-month prison sentence following a guilty plea related to an S181 offence under the Online Safety Act 2023 (sending a communication threatening death or serious harm).³⁰⁸ The judge remarked: “You threatened a mosque, wherever it was. It truly was a terrible threat,” adding that such “keyboard warriors” must be responsible for their “disgusting and inflammatory language.”³⁰⁹

On 9 August 2024, the BBC reported that the first two people jailed for racist social media posts that related to Southport or the riots involved the jailing of 26-year-old Tyler Kay and 28-year-old Jordan Parlour, who received prison sentences of 38 months and 20 months, respectively.³¹⁰ Parlour called for arson attacks on hotels housing refugees, which the judge denounced as “utterly repulsive, racist and shocking posts that have no place in civilised society, including on social media.”³¹¹ Following his jailing, Detective Chief Superintendent Rich Tompkins of Northamptonshire Police made clear: “It is about standing up for what is right and protecting our communities from fear of violence. After all, freedom of speech is not freedom to spread racial hatred.”³¹² Jordan

³⁰² Tell MAMA. “James Aspin Jailed over TikTok Threats to Burn Down Every Mosque in Newcastle.” Tell MAMA. Last modified November 19, 2024. <https://tellmamauk.org/james-aspin-jailed-over-tiktok-threats-to-burn-down-every-mosque-in-newcastle/>

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ “Rex -v- James Aspin.” Courts and Tribunals Judiciary. Last modified November 18, 2024. www.judiciary.uk/judgments/rex-v-james-aspin

³⁰⁵ Tell MAMA. “Man Jailed over Facebook Posts That Called for the Burning of Mosques and Murder of Worshippers.” Tell MAMA. Last modified October 11, 2024. <https://tellmamauk.org/man-jailed-over-facebook-posts-that-called-for-the-burning-of-mosques-and-murder-of-worshippers/>

³⁰⁶ Fairclough, Stephen. “Tonypandy Man Jailed After ‘burn Mosques’ Facebook Posts During Riots.” BBC News. Last modified October 10, 2024. www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cm2499671e00

³⁰⁷ Brown, Mark. “Woman, 53, Jailed over ‘blow the Mosque Up’ Facebook Post After Southport Riots.” The Guardian. Last modified August 14, 2024. www.theguardian.com/uk-news/article/2024/aug/14/woman-53-jailed-over-blow-the-mosque-up-facebook-post-after-southport-riots

³⁰⁸ Cheshire Police. “Woman jailed for hate related communications.” Cheshire Police. Last modified August 14, 2024. www.cheshire.police.uk/news/cheshire/news/articles/2024/8/woman-jailed-for-hate-related-communications

³⁰⁹ Sky News. “‘Keyboard Warrior’ Carer Jailed for 15 Months over ‘blow the Mosque Up’ Facebook Post.” Sky News. Last modified August 14, 2024. <https://news.sky.com/story/uk-riots-man-26-who-kicked-female-officer-and-keyboard-warrior-woman-53-among-those-jailed-as-more-sentences-handed-out-13196940>

³¹⁰ Comerford, Ruth. “UK Disorder: Two Men Jailed for Stirring Up Hatred Online.” BBC News. Last modified August 9, 2024. www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cy76dxkppjo

³¹¹ BBC News. “Northampton Man Jailed After Inciting Racial Hatred Online.” BBC News. Last modified August 9, 2024. www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cvgxw1xj4z0o

³¹² Northamptonshire Police. “Man, 26, sentenced for stirring up racial hatred.” Northamptonshire Police. Last modified August 9, 2024. www.northants.police.uk/news/northants/news/in-court/2024/august/man-26-sentenced-for-stirring-up-racial-hatred/

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Parlour used social media to encourage others to attack a hotel housing refugees and shared messages linking migrants to crime, rape and grievances about housing which he pleaded guilty to stirring up racial hatred and a prison sentence of twenty months.³¹³

Also, on 9 August 2024, the first case believed to have originated in Wales online, as 34-year-old Richard David Williams shared a racist “joke” and a derogatory anti-migrant meme in a local Facebook group, encouraging others to riot, resulting in a three-month prison sentence.³¹⁴

A former soldier who wrote, “I’m racist as f***, only to those who disrespect society,” online and who pleaded guilty to distributing written material intended to stir up racial hatred before the murders in Southport and thereafter, received a prison sentence of two years.³¹⁵ A day after the murders in Southport, he wrote, “Civil war is here. The only thing that’s missing is bullets. That’s the next step.”³¹⁶ Daffron Williams had shared racialised, anti-Muslim AI-generated images on Facebook, linking Muslim men to menacing threats to white children in Union Jack clothing.³¹⁷ A press release from South Wales Police made clear: “It’s not a case of preventing ‘freedom of speech’ as a small minority of people will claim. Freedom of speech is not freedom to spread racial hatred.”³¹⁸



Wayne O’Rourke, 35, received a three-year prison sentence after pleading guilty to publishing material on social media with the intent of stirring racial hatred. O’Rourke posted disinformation about the Southport murders, encouraged rioting, and routinely posted other racist material on an X account that boasted over 90,000 followers.³¹⁹ He called for the mass deportations of those “traitors” who stood alongside Muslim communities and suggested that the Southport murderer was Muslim; he also named the perpetrator before the courts lifted the anonymity.³²⁰ Tell MAMA alerted the police in 2023 to racist and harmful materials on their X account targeting Muslim, Black and other minority communities. During the trial, it also emerged that O’Rourke earned around £1,400 per month on the platform.³²¹

³¹³ Courts and Tribunals Judiciary. “REX -V- JORDAN PARLOUR SENTENCING REMARKS.” Courts and Tribunals Judiciary. Last modified August 9, 2024. www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Jordan-Parlour.-Media-Posts.-Final.pdf

³¹⁴ Richards, Matthew. “UK Riots: Online Agitator from Wales Jailed for Three Months.” BBC News. Last modified August 9, 2024. www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c3ej8zp4971o

³¹⁵ Evans, Tomos. “Former Soldier Jailed for Stirring Up Racial Hatred with Facebook Posts.” Sky News. Last modified November 18, 2024. <https://news.sky.com/story/former-soldier-jailed-for-stirring-up-racial-hatred-with-facebook-posts-13256178>

³¹⁶ Hayhurst, Claire. “Former Soldier Jailed for Social Media Posts Inciting Racial Hatred.” The Standard. Last modified November 18, 2024. www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/southport-attacks-daffron-williams-facebook-civil-war-b1194680.html

³¹⁷ BBC News. “Former Soldier Admits Stirring Up Racial Hatred on Facebook.” BBC News. Last modified August 12, 2024. www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ckgwywnkpgo

³¹⁸ South Wales Police. “Man sentenced for stirring up racial hatred.” South Wales Police. Last modified November 20, 2024. www.south-wales.police.uk/news/south-wales/news/2024/november/man-sentenced-for-stirring-up-racial-hatred/

³¹⁹ Mistry, Pritti. “Lincoln ‘keyboard Warrior’ Jailed for Part in UK Disorder.” BBC News. Last modified August 16, 2024. www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c5y3gre3y9yo

³²⁰ “Three Year Prison Sentence for X User Who Incited Racism Online.” Tell MAMA. Last modified August 19, 2024. <https://tellmamauk.org/three-year-prison-sentence-for-x-user-who-incited-racism-online/>

³²¹ Vamplew, Richard. “‘Keyboard Warrior’ Who Stirred Up Racial Hatred During Protests Jailed.” Lincolnshire Live. Last modified August 16, 2024. www.lincolnshirelive.co.uk/news/lincoln-news/lincoln-keyboard-warrior-who-stirred-9489922

Misleading Media Headline and Social Media Weaponisation

Throughout August and in the months ahead, Tell MAMA published various analyses on its website and X, documenting examples of where misleading headlines that did not capture the totality or seriousness of post-riot convictions and how those from the far-right or other ideological alignments weaponised headlines to push narratives and conspiracies around “two-tier policing” across the UK. We will detail some examples below that intend to be demonstrative, not exhaustive, of an issue, and some positive examples of newspapers amending headlines to reflect the severity of the crimes better. The most high-profile example involved Elon Musk himself boosting a misleading claim about sentencing given to a couple who pleaded guilty to violent disorder.

David Spring, 61, was described in the local press as a “far-right thug” and received an 18-month prison sentence after pleading guilty to violent disorder following violence in Westminster.³²² However, the aforementioned headline did not mention violent disorder, nor did another headline that a notorious far-right account shared a screenshot on X (providing no additional context), generating over one million impressions; that headline read “Sutton man, 61, who chanted ‘who the f*** is Allah’ jailed.”³²³ In actuality,³²⁴ Spring joined others in breaching the protest conditions by breaking away from the designated area – with some attacking the police with glass bottles and cans. Spring made threatening and hostile gestures towards officers

and abused them before joining in with known far-right chants³²⁵ of “Who the f*** is Allah” and “You’re not English anymore”.³²⁶ When passing the sentence, the judge reiterated that violent protest will never be acceptable, nor will violence towards police officers, and a custodial sentence would serve to deter others away from similar violent disorder.³²⁷

In a second high-profile example,³²⁸ BBC London News issued a correction (but no apology) on X after a viral post (gaining 4.3 million impressions before deletion) read, “A 67-year-old man has been jailed after chanting ‘you’re not English any more’ at police officers during a violent demonstration in London.”³²⁹ The post even received a community note, with users linking to the details of the case from the CPS. However, the problems also extended to its headline and opening, which read, “Protester jailed after chanting at police” and “A 67-year-old man has been jailed after chanting ‘you’re not English any more’ at police officers during a violent demonstration.”³³⁰ Consequently, on X, various accounts used a screenshot of the inaccurate with rallying cries like “20 months for chanting at the police.” In truth, the career criminal David Notley, 67, was on licence for drug offences when he joined the far-right violence at Whitehall and later pleaded guilty to violent disorder and a religiously aggravated offence.³³¹ On X, BBC London News deleted the original post three days later, adding a tweet

³²² Cuddeford, Callum. “Retired Train Driver Jailed After Shouting ‘Who the F**k is Allah!’” My London. Last modified August 14, 2024. www.mylondon.news/news/south-london-news/retired-train-driver-jailed-after-29735271

³²³ Bolton, Josh. “Sutton Man, 61, Who Chanted ‘who the F*** is Allah’ is Jailed for 18 Months.” Your Local Guardian. Last modified August 13, 2024. www.yourlocalguardian.co.uk/news/24516089.sutton-man-61-chanted-who-f-allah-jailed

³²⁴ On X, Tell MAMA did several threads detailing examples of how the far-right and other accounts weaponised inaccurate or misleading headlines. For David Spring, see Tell MAMA. “Here is why headlines like ‘Sutton man, 61, who chanted ‘who the f*** is Allah’ jailed’ do not tell the full story.” X (formerly Twitter). Last modified August 15, 2024. <https://x.com/TellMamaUK/status/1824042061651153106>

³²⁵ Pearson, Elizabeth. “Extremism and toxic masculinity: The man question re-posed.” *International Affairs* 95, no. 6 (2019): 1251-1270.

³²⁶ Bolton, Josh. “Inside Court As Protesters Sentenced After London Disorder.” News Shopper. Last modified August 13, 2024. www.newshopper.co.uk/news/24515551.london-disorder-recap-court-protesters-sentenced

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Tell MAMA. “This tweet has one million impressions, but the wording does not tell the story.” X (Formerly Twitter). Last modified August 20, 2024. <https://x.com/TellMamaUK/status/1825829985640210804>

³²⁹ The 4.3 million figure is taken from an archived version of the now-deleted post available via <https://archive.is/Z0jKI>

³³⁰ Adams, Lewis, and PA Media. “Protester jailed after chanting at police.” BBC News. Last modified August 19, 2024. <https://archive.is/Pqcyb>

³³¹ Cuddeford, Callum. “Man, 67, is Sent to Prison for Far Right Disorder in London.” My London. Last modified August 19, 2024. www.mylondon.news/news/east-london-news/redbridge-man-67-once-jailed-29766429

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below that read: "We have deleted this post after the headline on our story was updated to more clearly reflect the charges in this case."³³² The updated headline read, "Protester jailed

over violent disorder," as the opening paragraph began instead, "A 67-year-old man has been jailed for violent disorder at a demonstration where he chanted "you're not English any more" at police officers."³³³

³³² BBC London News. "We have deleted this post after the headline on our story was updated to more clearly reflect the charges in this case." X (Formerly Twitter). Last modified August 22, 2024. <https://x.com/BBCLondonNews/status/1826612177018704039>

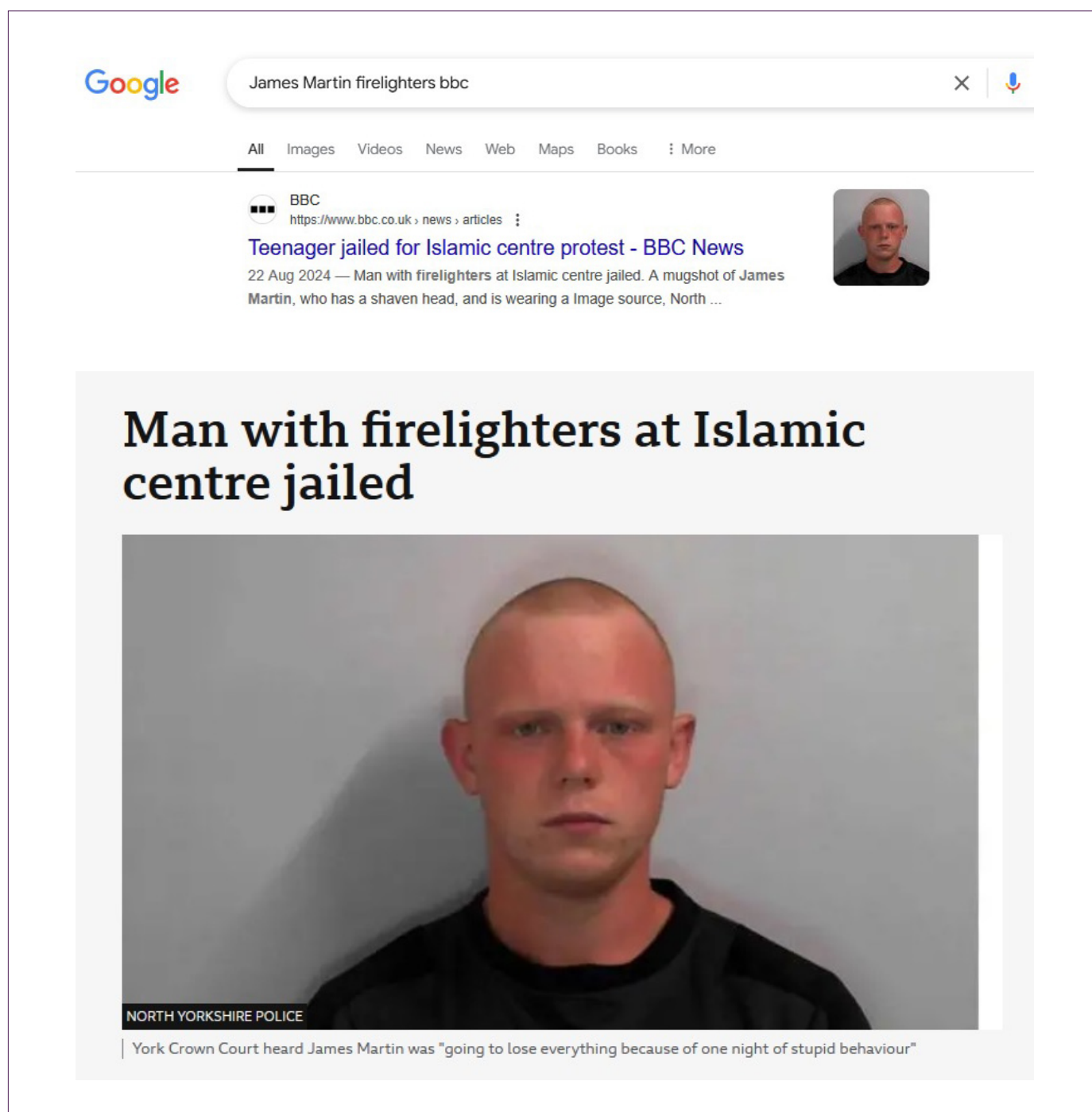
³³³ Adams, Lewis, and PA Media. "Man Jailed for Violent Disorder at London Protest." BBC News. Last modified August 19, 2024. www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c4gq8rn4y0jo

The screenshot shows a tweet from BBC London (@BBCLondonNews) posted on August 19, 2024, at 6:04 PM. The tweet's headline reads: "A 67-year-old man has been jailed after chanting 'you're not English any more' at police officers during a violent demonstration in London." Below the headline is a video thumbnail of an older man with white hair. A caption below the video reads: "London disorder: Protester jailed after chanting at police". The tweet has 2,030 reposts, 1,090 quotes, 7,716 likes, and 970 bookmarks. A context box is visible, stating: "Readers added context they thought people might want to know". The context text reads: "Misleading headline. The man was fined £100 after pleading guilty to a religiously aggravated public order offence for Islamophobic chanting. The reason he was jailed for 20 months is after pleading guilty to violent disorder - not for 'chanting at the police'." A link is provided: cps.gov.uk/london-south/n.... A note at the bottom of the context box says: "Context is written by people who use X, and appears when rated helpful by others. Find out more."

Third, screenshots of an inaccurate headline that initially read, “Teenager who waved England flag near North Yorkshire Islamic centre jailed”, went viral on X, with some far-right accounts generating over three million impressions. YorkMix corrected their headline after Tell MAMA contacted them, changing it to reflect better what occurred: “Jailed: Teenager with firefighters who waved England flag near North Yorkshire

Islamic centre.”³³⁴ The BBC also amended their original headline that omitted the perpetrator’s possession of firefighters near the Islamic centre from “Teenager jailed for Islamic centre protest” to “Man with firefighters at Islamic

³³⁴ YorkMix. “Jailed: Teenager with Firefighters Who Waved England Flag Near North Yorkshire Islamic Centre.” YorkMix. Last modified August 27, 2024. <https://yorkmix.com/north-yorkshire-teenager-who-waved-england-flag-near-islamic-centre-jailed-for-two-years/>.



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Teenager jailed for Islamic centre protest - BBC News

22 Aug 2024 — Man with firefighters at Islamic centre jailed. A mugshot of James Martin, who has a shaven head, and is wearing a Image source, North ...

Man with firefighters at Islamic centre jailed



NORTH YORKSHIRE POLICE

York Crown Court heard James Martin was "going to lose everything because of one night of stupid behaviour"

Teenager who waved England flag near North Yorkshire Islamic centre jailed



James Martin

Jailed: Teenager with firefighters who waved England flag near North Yorkshire Islamic centre



James Martin

centre jailed.”³³⁵ James Martin, 22, had shouted obscenities at worshippers inside just after 10 pm, and after his initial arrest (to prevent a breach of the peace), he continued to cause problems. Officers then found a clear plastic bag with firelighters in his pocket.³³⁶ The judge said Martin, who pleaded guilty to racially/religiously aggravated harassment, having an article with intent to destroy/damage property, and obstructing a constable in the execution of their duty, had “disgraced” the English flag, which belongs to everyone, adding that had he gone ahead with starting a fire, the consequences might have proven “fatal”.³³⁷

Fourth, Elon Musk boosted disinformation about a couple jailed for violent disorder, writing “Wow” after quoting a post that claimed they had shouted “We want our country back”, receiving a 20-month prison sentence.³³⁸ In actuality, Dean Lockett had, according to the prosecution, hurled missiles towards a nearby mosque as he and his partner, Deana Evans, shouted, “We want our country back,” and accused Muslims of being paedophiles, as both also attempted to obstruct a police van.³³⁹ Nor did the Stoke on Trent Live headline “Couple chanting ‘we want our country back’ jailed after Hanley riots” fully capture the totality of their crimes. One far-right account used the article to push conspiracies about the judiciary, generating almost five hundred thousand engagements on X. Staffordshire Police added that Evans assaulted

an officer when they arrived to arrest them.³⁴⁰

Elon Musk, who owns X, also briefly re-posted far-right disinformation from Britain First’s co-leader, falsely suggesting that Prime Minister Keir Starmer intended to deport far-right rioters to the Falkland Islands with a fake Telegraph headline, the Guardian reported.³⁴¹ Politics.co.uk revealed that the post remained up for just over thirty minutes, generating almost two million impressions before Musk deleted it.³⁴² The Telegraph confirmed that it had never published such material,³⁴³ as Fiona Parker (whose name appeared in the fake headline) called for more accountability for social media accountability for falsehoods, adding how she also faced abuse on X, including comments about her looking “good in a burqa”.³⁴⁴ Parker added: “The violence and anger fuelled by the disinformation on the Southport killings should remind us all of the serious and sinister consequences of sharing lies.”³⁴⁵

Archives revealed that prior to deletion, the fake Telegraph headline generated 2.4 million impressions on X.

³³⁵ Dickinson, Katie, and PA News. “Scarborough: Teenager Jailed for Islamic Centre Protest.” BBC News. Last modified August 22, 2024. www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cwy3191ew5go

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Booth, Harry. “Teen Who Marched Near North Yorkshire Islamic Centre Had Firelighters in Pocket.” Gazette & Herald. Last modified August 22, 2024. www.gazetteherald.co.uk/news/24535405.scarborough-teenager-protestor-jailed-york-crown-court

³³⁸ Tell MAMA. “Elon Musk Boosted Disinformation About Couple Who Pleaded Guilty to Violent Disorder.” Tell MAMA. Last modified September 2, 2024. <https://tellmamauk.org/elon-musk-boosted-disinformation-about-couple-who-pleaded-guilty-to-violent-disorder/>

³³⁹ Stoke on Trent Live. “Couple Chanting ‘we Want Our Country Back’ Jailed After Hanley Riots.” Stoke on Trent Live. Last modified August 30, 2024. www.stokesentinel.co.uk/news/stoke-on-trent-news/couple-chanting-we-want-country-9521154

³⁴⁰ Staffordshire Police. “Couple jailed for collective four years for violent disorder in Stoke-on-Trent.” Staffordshire Police. Last modified August 30, 2024. www.staffordshire.police.uk/news/staffordshire/news/2024/august/couple-jailed-for-collective-four-years-for-violent-disorder-in-stoke-on-trent

³⁴¹ Courea, Eleni. “Elon Musk Shares Fake News About England Rioters Being Sent to Falklands.” The Guardian. Last modified August 8, 2024. www.theguardian.com/technology/article/2024/aug/08/elon-musk-shares-faked-telegraph-story-rioters-falklands-camps

³⁴² Self, Josh. “Elon Musk deletes post spreading fake news about UK ‘detainment camps’.” Politics.co.uk. Last modified August 8, 2024. www.politics.co.uk/news/2024/08/08/elon-musk-deletes-post-spreading-fake-news-about-uk-detainment-camps

³⁴³ Cumming, Ed. “The fake Telegraph article that was shared by Elon Musk – and went viral.” The Telegraph. Last modified August 8, 2024. www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/08/08/elon-musk-telegraph-article-fake-viral

³⁴⁴ Parker, Fiona. “The false Telegraph story that put me at the centre of a fake news storm.” The Telegraph. Last modified August 9, 2024. www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/08/09/how-i-found-myself-at-the-heart-of-a-fake-news-storm

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

“Harmful, dehumanising and racist language on social media can evolve into offline violence and even terror. We will continue to work with civil society, social media platforms and Police forces on addressing harmful content that leads to violence.”

Iman Atta, Tell MAMA Director



RECOMMENDATIONS

The New Norm of Anti-Muslim Hate



General Recommendations

Anti-Muslim incidents frequently occur in busy public spaces. These include public areas such as shopping areas, in and around public transport networks, roads or highways, and restaurants.

Perpetrators are more likely 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.

High-profile events, along with associated media coverage, stimulate public discourse on issues such as terrorism, religious expression, and immigration which 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'. Politicians and media outlets must consider how their choice of language influences broader public discourse, particularly after trigger events.

The glorification of terrorism against Muslims and migrant communities, whether in the UK or abroad, goes beyond the remit of hate crime

and into the realm of anti-terrorism legislation. Given the growing far-right threat, consideration must be given when investigating such reports, especially in the online world.

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 anti-Muslim hate or discrimination. Those in a privileged position due to their social status will invariably have an advantage when it comes to 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. Cultivating a better institutional knowledge of the situations in which such individuals can be scapegoated marginalised for broader social ills would enable this.

We must not underestimate the far-reaching impact that anti-Muslim prejudice and Islamophobia have on individuals. Low-level ongoing abuse can escalate with profound consequences. Guaranteeing the safety of individuals is of paramount importance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Employers and Businesses

Employers have a moral obligation to ensure that all employees feel respected and that differences in belief, religious or otherwise, are welcomed and respected. Encouraging staff to embrace diversity and to learn about each other's backgrounds can help encourage empathy, which may discourage the normalisation of anti-Muslim attitudes and cultural stereotypes that are perceived to be negative.

Employers and all members of staff should be reminded of their liability for acts of unlawful discrimination, bullying, harassment, and victimisation of their fellow employees, members of the public, or customers. Such a reminder may help to 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 should take complaints from staff seriously and create an environment where people are aware of internal grievance processes. Moreover, HR officers who are independent and, therefore, neutral about any underlying and systemic prejudicial attitudes should be made available to employees who have grievances against other employees or management.

Informing employees of their legal rights pertaining to workplace discrimination should be considered a priority, and information regarding such rights should be made more readily available, whether that be 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 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.

Recommendations for Educational Institutions

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 both students and staff.

Parents often mention that their complaints are undermined or dismissed. 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, especially if complaints are made against staff.

Schools and educational institutions should provide training to their staff or seek expert advice on how to deal with anti-Muslim hate or discrimination.

Teachers can also set an example by reminding students that bullying, racism, anti-Muslim hate, and other forms of hatred will not be tolerated; such statements may help victims feel less isolated.

Promoting religious literacy outside formal lessons may help facilitate meaningful dialogue and constructive debate among students.

Online recommendations

Over the past two years, Tell MAMA received online cases that dwarf any previous datasets, with the most significant documented spikes occurring after Hamas's deadly terror attacks on 7 October 2023 and the subsequent war in Gaza and its widening into Lebanon, and in 2024 following the horrific murder of children in Southport and the abhorrent disinformation campaigns and how the far-right used social media to call for violence towards Muslims and their places of worship, to hotels housing refugees and those in legal and charitable positions assisting vulnerable refugees and migrants. The levels of anti-Muslim and Islamophobic material sent to Tell MAMA in the

online sphere are at record levels across more than a decade of our work, demonstrating the immense strain and impacts digital hate continues to have on Muslim communities. It must serve as a wakeup call to government and social media platforms regarding what is needed to address this rising issue and what tangible steps must follow – including more to tackle disinformation, mental health support, and ensuring work with key partners, Ofcom and others as the Online Safety Act changes go ahead throughout the year ahead. Social media is crucial in the daily lives of many and must remain a space that upholds the fundamental rights of all.



RECOMMENDATIONS

To reiterate previous reports, we continue to urge social media platforms to invest in schemes with the government and other specialist services to provide resources to improve social media literacy skills and commit to helping improve how communities can report disinformation to the relevant platforms.

Better enforcement of platform guidelines around materials that incite hatred, harm, glorify terrorism, and encourage harassment and doxing to improve platform trust.

Improve the ways users can report such material in line with the Online Safety Act.

platform did not remove. The new form uses the same set of Community Standards when reviewing all reports, which, following the re-election of Donald Trump in the United States, came under additional scrutiny. Moreover, until the new form, the text lacks precision: “Calling for violence, threats to kill or to share abusive content about a person, group of people or animals” as it does not refer to someone’s or a group’s protected identity, for example. Therefore, we urge Meta to review the wording of the above to ensure it reflects those targeted for their identity (ethnicity, religion or belief, sexuality or gender identity, disability). The platforms must also do more to raise the visibility

Better enforcement of platform guidelines around materials that incite hatred, harm, glorify terrorism, and encourage harassment and doxing to improve platform trust.

On Meta-owned platforms, following the early implementation of the Online Safety Act, UK-based users get an additional reporting option at the bottom of the reporting page, which, if clicked, takes users to a different form. It has automated and human moderation and allows someone to report content that contains harassment, threatening behaviour, stalking, drugs, child or teen sexual exploitation, adult sexual exploitation, criminal activity, weapons, violence or hate, calls for violence, terrorism or “sowing discord” or manipulating perceptions linked to the interests of the UK (amongst other categories). It allows users to select if someone was either depicted or targeted in or by the content (alongside other choices). The new reporting system is not without concerns. However, in preparation for this report, we reported a disturbing AI-generated video from a self-styled “comedy” page uploaded on 1 December 2024 that depicted a crane destroying a boat carrying refugees, which the

of reporting content under the Online Safety Act and ensure communities are aware of the changes. It remains wholly unacceptable that material depicting violence towards refugees or other minorities, as mentioned above, remains on the platform. The platform must continue engaging with third-party specialist support services whilst ensuring that such pages are able to flag materials the public raises with us, as despite flagging the same material from the official Tell MAMA Facebook page, it did not appear in the Support Inbox.

On X (formerly Twitter), its owner and multi-billionaire Elon Musk faced criticism and condemnation across politics and in news outlets over his language³⁴⁶ and the sharing

³⁴⁶ Knight, Sam. “Elon Musk’s Latest Terrifying Foray Into British Politics.” *The New Yorker*. Last modified January 10, 2025. www.newyorker.com/news/the-lede/elon-musks-latest-terrifying-foray-into-british-politics

of misleading information³⁴⁷ about the horrific crimes of child sexual abuse and exploitation, including criticism from the government and those in the shadow cabinet.³⁴⁸ The Prime Minister also condemned the broader issue around “the sharing of misinformation” and condemned the threats to Jess Phillips MP,³⁴⁹ the Safeguarding Minister, as news broke soon after that a man was facing charges for making alleged threats to her over email.³⁵⁰ Musk also called for the release of the far-right agitator Stephen Yaxley-Lennon.

Time and time again, we have called for the moderation of language from those in public not to inflame tensions nor risk undermining community cohesion, especially on social media. When dealing with crimes, the horrors of child sexual abuse must not become tools for those to exploit for political or ideological gain when the priority, instead, should be giving voice to and supporting victims and survivors and ensuring accountability for failings in policing and local authorities, as our statement made clear.³⁵¹

Across multiple reports and research, Tell MAMA detailed numerous examples of Muslim men targeted and threatened with language that falsely accused them of being paedophiles, with some perpetrators also using racist language, including the P-word. In January, we received reports from Muslim communities targeted with such disgusting,



abhorrent language directed at them because of their ethnicity and religious identity.³⁵² Such language can have deadly consequences, including the racist murder of grandfather Mushin Ahmed, who was called a “groomer”. In the online world, in December 2024 alone, Tell MAMA verified 75 cases that used overtly racist, dehumanising and stigmatising materials about Muslim men in general, linking them to child abuse and, in some instances, bestiality. Other examples included broader discriminatory or abusive language or memes.

On social media, during the general election season, we saw commentary from media figures that fell far beneath the standards expected that risked pitting Muslim and Jewish communities against each other, with Muslims described as “unsophisticated”. It forms part of a broader issue of how sections of the media speak about Muslim communities when such communities remain vastly underrepresented in these fields.

We urge Google to help improve the ways communities can report hateful and harmful content on platforms like YouTube in line with the Online Safety Act and commit to helping promote digital literacy skills.

We encourage Ofcom to engage further with specialised services to create a better understanding of the impacts racism and hate have on minority communities whilst helping to bring transparency and understanding to the legislative changes in the year ahead.

³⁴⁷ Gilbert, David. "Elon Musk Is Posting Nonstop Falsehoods About 'Grooming Gangs'." WIRED. Last modified January 3, 2025. www.wired.com/story/elon-musk-disinformation-uk-grooming-gangs/

³⁴⁸ Francis, Sam. "Elon Musk 'misinformed' on Grooming Gangs, Says Wes Streeting." BBC News. Last modified January 3, 2025. www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/czxdzng92lno

³⁴⁹ Crerar, Pippa, Rajeev Syal, and Aletha Adu. "Starmer Condemns 'lies and Misinformation' As He Hits Back at Musk." The Guardian. Last modified January 6, 2025. www.theguardian.com/politics/2025/jan/06/starmer-condemns-lies-and-misinformation-as-he-hits-back-at-musk

³⁵⁰ BBC News. "Devon Man Charged with Malicious Communications Towards Jess Phillips." BBC News. Last modified January 7, 2025. www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c7862wqlqy2o

³⁵¹ Tell MAMA. "Statement: Supporting Victims of Child Sexual Abuse and Challenging Anti-Muslim Hatred, Moving Forward." Tell MAMA. Last modified January 15, 2025. <https://tellmamauk.org/statement-supporting-victims-of-child-sexual-abuse-and-challenging-anti-muslim-hatred-moving-forward/>

³⁵² Ibid.



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