

**REVIEW OF THE UK GOVERNMENT UNDER THE UN INTERNATIONAL  
COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS 56th Pre-  
Sessional Working Group (12 Oct 2015 - 16 Oct 2015)**

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Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) is a not-for-profit campaign, research and advocacy organisation founded and based in the United Kingdom. It was set up in 1997 and works for redress of human rights violations and a better understanding of rights and norms across confessional, ethnic, national, political and other boundaries.

IHRC has consultative status with the UN – ECOSOC.

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## **Introduction**

The Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) is an independent, not-for-profit, campaign, research and advocacy organisation based in London, UK. We work with different organisations to campaign for justice for peoples around the world regardless of their racial, confessional or political background.

Our aims are centred on the divine imperative to establish justice, and our inspiration derives from the Quranic injunctions that command believers to rise up in defence of the oppressed.

“And what reason have you that you should not fight in the way of Allah and of the weak among the men and the women and the children, those who say: Our Lord! cause us to go forth from this town, whose people are oppressors, and give us from Thee a guardian and give us from Thee a helper.” [Qur’an 4:75]

In an era in which Islam and Muslims are continually berated for violating human rights, IHRC's research and analyses illustrates that in fact in many instances the opposite is true. In the modern world, it is Muslims who bear the brunt of human rights abuses.

This shadow report relates to the covenant rights of Muslim and ethnic minority communities in the UK.

## **Executive Summary**

Recent years have witnessed an unprecedented rise in Islamophobia and discrimination against Muslims in the UK. Much of this has come from the very top of government with policies being based on Islamophobic tropes and ideological motives to assimilate communities viewed as culturally different. Anti-terrorism policy has been a key instrument of this otherisation. The result has been to render it impossible for Muslims in the UK to live free from discrimination.

Academic research shows that Muslims are the most discriminated ethno-cultural group in the British labour market, a position that arises from increasing hostility towards them.

Asylum seekers continue to face onerous legal restrictions in accessing employment. At the same time the UK welfare regime offers them a lower level of subsistence assistance than their settled counterparts.

New amendments to anti-terrorism legislation (TPIMs) to restore the government's power to forcibly relocate terrorism suspects represent an assault on the integrity of the family.

Harsh controls on the rights of spouses/civil partners to join their spouses/civil partners in the UK continue to cause heartache and separation for families.

The government's statutory anti-extremism programme, PREVENT, prevents Muslims from exercising the right to see their children educated in conformity with their religious and moral convictions. PREVENT also inhibits Muslims from taking part in cultural life by designating certain religious values, opinions and activities as extremist.

## 1. Part II Article 2

Recent years have seen an unprecedented surge in discrimination against Muslims in the UK. Because Muslims in the UK are mainly the descendants of immigrants from Britain's former colonies this effectively means that they face double discrimination, on the basis of their ethnicity and religion.

Despite the UK's claim to have robust anti-discrimination legislation, the current legislative and executive trend vis a vis Muslims in the UK is one of eroding the covenant right to non-discrimination.

In particular the predicating of anti-terrorism policy/legislation on Islamophobic tropes relating to extremism has disproportionately and negatively impacted the Muslim minority both in terms of inciting public opinion against Muslims and thereby creating a climate in which discrimination can flourish, and the framing of laws that are discriminatory in letter and practice.

The counter-terrorism strategy in place since 2003, codenamed CONTEST, is based on the assumption that the main terrorism threat faced by the UK comes from so-called Islamic extremism. More precisely, this extremism is said to have its roots in an extremist ideology that seeks legitimacy in the Islamic faith. By extension, the entire Muslim community is identified as the possible locus of terrorism and finds itself smothered by the increasingly wide net that is designed to tackle the problem.

The rationale which views the whole Muslim community as a possible security threat is constantly reinforced by the government of the day and senior politicians. In a speech at a security conference in Slovakia on 19 June Prime Minister David Cameron pointed the finger of blame at members of the Muslim community who "quietly condone" extremism, who "don't go as far as advocating violence, but who do buy into some of these prejudices".

On 29 June in an article in the Telegraph the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson said society must not shy away from using the words "Muslim" or "Islamic" when describing the terrorists responsible for extremist attacks. "That just lets too many people off the hook," he said. "If we deny any connection between terrorism and religion, then we are saying there is no problem in any of the mosques; that there is nothing in the religious texts that is capable of being twisted or misunderstood; that there are no religious leaders whipping up hatred of the west, no perverting of religious belief for political ends."

The idea that terrorist acts carried out by Muslims find support and are somehow incubated in a sympathetic or acquiescent Muslim community defies all the available evidence. A survey conducted for the BBC by the polling organisation Comres and published on 25 February 2015 showed that Muslims hold an overwhelming opposition to extremism. Ninety-five percent of Muslims polled in the survey stated they feel a loyalty to Britain and 93% agreed that Muslims should obey British laws. Yet nearly half of them (46%) felt that it was difficult being a Muslim in Britain because of prejudice against Islam.

The findings chime with surveys run by IHRC since 2004 that have consistently shown that the vast majority of British Muslims respect the law and see little or no contradiction between being

a good British citizen and being a practising Muslim, with many citing their faith as a reason for their loyalty. The results belie the Islamophobic stereotypes created and perpetuated by politicians and the media that Muslims are a fifth column, and the increasingly normalised treatment of the community as a security threat.

The resulting policies have had the collective impact of legitimising and institutionalising discrimination against Muslims. Since before the attacks of September 11, 2001 on the United States, anti-terrorism laws have disproportionately targeted Muslims. Since 2001, some 70% of all arrests under terrorism legislation have been of non-whites. The existing legislation has effectively legitimised religious profiling of Muslims and created a social climate in which it is acceptable to treat them with suspicion and hostility.

One example is Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act 2000, which gives border officials the right to detain and question individuals they suspect of involvement in terrorism has in practice disproportionately targeted Muslims and ethnic minorities.

In 2013, according to official statistics, (THE TERRORISM ACTS IN 2013 REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEWER ON THE OPERATION OF THE TERRORISM ACT 2000 AND PART 1 OF THE TERRORISM ACT 2006 JULY 2014), more than 47,000 people were stopped at Britain's ports under Schedule 7 powers. Under the schedule, UK police can stop, examine and search passengers at ports, airports and international rail terminals. There is no requirement for an officer to have a "reasonable suspicion" that someone is involved with terrorism before they are stopped.

Broken down by ethnicity, 55 percent of those stopped under Schedule 7 were non-white. Of those people who were detained under the power, 82 percent were non-white.

In his review of terrorism laws (THE TERRORISM ACTS IN 2013 REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEWER ON THE OPERATION OF THE TERRORISM ACT 2000 AND PART 1 OF THE TERRORISM ACT 2006 JULY 2014), the independent reviewer David Anderson Q.C. acknowledged the disproportionate number of non-whites being stopped:

- "a) Self-defined members of minority ethnic communities continue to constitute a majority of those examined under Schedule 7, and a very large majority of those detained and fingerprinted.
- b) It is overwhelmingly likely that examinations, and especially detentions, are imposed on members of some minority ethnic communities – particularly those of Asian and "other" (including North African) origin – to a greater extent than would be indicated by their numerical presence in the travelling population.
- c) This contributes to ill-feeling in these communities, and to a sense that their members are being singled out for police attention at the border."

Since Schedule 7 stops only resulted in 1.19 percent of people being detained, and two people being convicted (0.0043 percent of those stopped) it is reasonable to conclude that in application the powers are ineffective, disproportionate and discriminatory.

The dismantling of the Schedule 7 National Accountability Board which oversaw the implementation of Schedule 7 has also meant that whatever little public oversight there was has

now been removed. It is important to note that the above figures do not include people who are asked short screening questions at airports. If these were recorded and broken down by ethnic group, the number of non white people affected negatively by Schedule 7 is likely to be far greater.

The same report showed that non-whites made up 69% of all people who have been arrested, charged and convicted for terrorism related offences between September 2001 – December 2013. This does not mean that non whites are more likely to be terrorists, but could mean that the laws that are currently in place disproportionately target them. UK terrorism laws have moved from dealing with terrorism to tackling extremism, and such extremism is identified increasingly as Muslim conservatism and alternative political views/beliefs, especially those that are opposed to the government's foreign policies in respect of Muslims overseas. As these attitudes and views come to be viewed as outside the pale, so to do Muslims, giving the government the desired justification to treat them differentially.

The differential treatment has also been embedded in social life through the PREVENT programme. PREVENT is a key part of the UK anti-terrorism strategy and is concerned with preventing people from becoming radicalised. In practice this means coming under the influence of extremist Muslim views. The government defines extremist as “vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces” (Prevent duty guidance, Guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales on the duty in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism, HM Government). PREVENT's expansion has seen it move from a voluntary to a statutory duty under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act (2015). This imposes an obligation on local authorities, educational institutions, the health sector, prisons and probation and police to report clients they deem to fall under that definition.

It is unprecedented in recent history for the UK to implement what is effectively a screening process for a minority group. Leaving aside the obvious repercussions for freedom of thought and expression, the PREVENT programme institutionalises discriminatory treatment of Muslims. It subjects their everyday dealings with civilian professionals such as local authority officials, doctors and teachers, to a security control and in doing so undermines the basis of the professional/client relationship for Muslims and compromises the outcome of the social activity they are undertaking.

The UK's instrumentalisation of extremist violence by a very small number of Muslims to institutionalise anti-Muslim discrimination has also helped to create a social phobia against Muslims which in turn has created a climate that can incite acts of xenophobia and Islamophobia, including discrimination and violence against Muslims and their places of worship.

Violence against Muslims has included murder. In April 2013, 75-year-old Mohammed Saleem was stabbed to death as he made his way home from evening prayers in Birmingham. His attacker, Pavlo Lapshyn, was found to be motivated by a hatred of Muslims and also found guilty of planting bombs near mosques in the area. In June 2013, the Al-Rahma Islamic Centre in Muswell Hill, London was destroyed in a fire. The letters EDL (English Defence League - a violent

far-right anti-Muslim organisation) were found sprayed on the building. In June 2014, Saudi Arabian student Nahid Almanea, was stabbed to death in a park in Colchester, Essex, apparently targeted because she wore the Islamic burkha.

IHRC has been recording levels of hate crimes and discrimination against Muslims since 1997. Our most recent projects surveyed Muslims in the UK in 2010 and again in 2014. Among the key findings of the 2010 survey (Getting the Message: The Recurrence of Hate crimes in the UK by S.R. Ameli, E.Mohseni Ahooei, Ehsan Shahghasemi and Maryam Rahimpour) are that Muslims continue to face hostility in everyday life on the grounds of their faith and that this hostility has risen to disturbing levels.

In 2010, 13.9% of respondents said they had witnessed physical attacks against Muslims - in 2014 this figure was 17.8%. There have been at least two murders of Muslims on the grounds of their faith.

In 2010, 44.5% of respondents reported having witnessed verbal attacks against Muslims. In 2014 this figure had risen to 56%.

In 2010, 57.1% of respondents said they had seen or heard some form of Islamophobia. By 2014 this figure had jumped to 82.1% or over four in every five people.

In 2010, 66.9% said they had seen negative stereotypes about Islam and Muslims in the media. In 2014 this figure was 93.3%.

In 2010, 37.2% of Muslims surveyed said they had witnessed discrimination against Muslims at work. In 2014 this increased to 41.3%.

In 2010, 37.2% reported having witnessed discrimination against Muslims in an educational setting. In 2014 this figure was up to 45.8%.

A 2014 survey by the polling organisation Ipsos MORI (Perils of Perception, 2014) found that people in the UK overstate the proportion of Muslims in their country by a factor of four. People from the UK also think immigrants make up twice the proportion of the population as is really the case – and that many more people are unemployed than actually are. We believe that these exaggerated perceptions are partly a function of the official demonisation of these groups.

**Recommendations:**

1. IHRC, along with other organisations and civil society and non political figures, is of the view that sufficient laws exists under the UK's criminal code to prosecute crimes of actual or planned political violence and as such all anti-terrorism laws must be repealed, as they simply serve to create a two tier criminal justice system.
2. The government should immediately disband the whole PREVENT programme. PREVENT rests on racist and Islamophobic assumptions. By demonising Islam as innately violent the programme has contributed to the legitimisation of institutional discrimination against Muslims.
3. Demand that the government cease formulating policies and making remarks that are based on racist/Islamophobic stereotypes and are socially divisive in practice.



## 2. Article 6

(a) Current levels of antipathy towards Muslims make it impossible for Muslims to avail themselves of the right to employment. Statistics show that they are the most discriminated ethno-cultural group in the British labour market.

A study published in November 2014 using data from the Office for National Statistics' Labour Force Survey of more than half a million people, revealed that Muslim men were up to 76% less likely to have a job of any kind compared to white, male British Christians of the same age with the same qualifications. For Muslim women falling the "other" and "Pakistani" ethnic category the corresponding figure was 65% (Ethno-religious identities and persisting penalties in the UK labor market, by Dr Nabil Khattab and Professor Ron Johnston, The Social Science Journal, 11 November 2014).

Of all those Muslims in work only 23 per cent and 27 per cent of Muslim Bangladeshis and Muslim Pakistanis, respectively, had a salaried job. The disparity between Muslims and other ethno-cultural groups gets more pronounced as one climbs up the professional scale.

The authors concluded that discrimination was "likely to stem from placing Muslims collectively at the lowest stratum within the country's racial or ethno-cultural system due to growing Islamophobia and hostility against them....They are perceived as disloyal and as a threat rather than just as a disadvantaged minority."

The research confirms IHRC's own findings that the prevailing security prism through which successive governments have viewed Muslims has fostered a social climate in which they can be demonised on the basis of their faith in a manner that is considered unacceptable for other ethno-cultural groups. An Islamophobic discourse has been 'normalised' that perpetuates bigotry towards Muslims and results in an intensified climate of antipathy marginalising them from many areas of everyday life.

IHRC finds the prevalence of institutional discrimination in employment disturbing because it excludes Muslims from the most important area of economic life - the ability to earn a livelihood - which has adverse repercussions for many other areas such as physical and mental health, family wellbeing, and living standards.

### **Recommendations:**

Demand that the UK government refrain from remarks that are based on negative tropes and have the effect of whipping up public sentiment against one social group or another. Disparaging comments made by politicians creates a social climate in which acts of hate are encouraged. Politicians should cease using social cohesion as a fig leaf for attacks on multiculturalism and within that the non-assimilation of the Muslim minority.

## **(b) Asylum seekers**

As a general rule, asylum seekers are not allowed to work in the UK. They can only apply for permission to work if they have waited for over 12 months for an initial decision on their asylum claim, or they have been refused asylum but have not received a response to further submissions submitted over 12 months ago and they are not considered responsible for the delay in decision-making.

The UK government's standard target for making determinations on asylum applications is six months. Successive administrations have resisted calls for the 12-month no-employment restriction to be reduced.

The recast Reception Conditions Directive, which must be implemented by EU Member States by 20 July 2015, reduces the waiting time to nine months. The UK, Ireland and Denmark are not participating in the recast Directive.

Currently, even if permission to work is granted it only allows asylum seekers to take up jobs on the UK's official shortage occupation list. This is highly restrictive since most of the designated posts are highly skilled and many asylum seekers lack the qualifications and/or education to meet the employment criteria.

Asylum seekers are currently supported by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS). They are not allowed to claim mainstream welfare benefits. Asylum seekers benefits are paid by central government's National Asylum Support Service (NASS) to cover their accommodation and support costs. The amounts are significantly below what a person on Income Support receives and are below the official poverty line.

## **Recommendations**

1. Apply pressure on the UK to adopt the Reception Conditions Directive
2. Pressure the UK government to allow asylum seekers granted permission to work free and unfettered access to the jobs market
3. Pressure the government to increase levels of welfare payments to asylum seekers awaiting determination of their claim.

### **3. Article 7**

In 2010, 37.2% of Muslims surveyed said they had witnessed discrimination against Muslims at work. In 2014 this increased to 41.3%.

This finding, and our handling of discrimination cases, confirms our view there is a clear causal link between rising Islamophobia and discrimination against Muslims in the workplace.

IHRC continues to legally represent victims of discrimination in the workplace. Cases include the 2015 settlement of a claim by a Muslim waitress who was told she could not bring halal meat to work and had to eat pork instead. She was called a terrorist and a member of ISIS/ISIL, subjected to insulting comments about Allah (God) and the Prophet Muhammad, Muslims were referred to as 'bedouins' and it was claimed that all Muslims are fanatics and forced people to convert to Islam. To aggravate her grievances the abuse was perpetrated in front of other staff.

In another case concluded in July 2014 a lecturer at a London university sought our assistance after being given a workload over and above what was acceptable according to the university's own standards for workload management. In contrast, white colleagues were given a substantially lighter workload and told that they should not take on more.

#### **4. Article 10**

##### **(a) TPIMs**

Under an amendment in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, the UK government has restored the power to relocate terrorism suspects under its Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures (TPIMs). TPIMs operate outside due process in that they are placed on terror suspects who officials decide can neither be charged nor deported. The measures give the Secretary of State the power to require an individual suspected of being involved in terrorist activity to live in a residence in a locality that the Secretary of State otherwise considers appropriate, up to 200 miles away from his/her normal place of residence.

Until they were scrapped in 2012 relocation powers were widely used by the government. Of the 52 control order subjects between 2005 and 2011, 23 were relocated for national security or practical reasons, not counting those who moved voluntarily. Relocation was very strongly resented by those who were subject to it and by their families.

Forcing suspects who have not stood any trial, let alone been charged with any offence, to relocate, sometimes without their families is a direct infringement of section 1, article 10. It breaks up families, often involves the relocation of a parent away from dependent children, and deprives the family of a breadwinner.

Those subjected to TPIMs often find that their demonisation in the media and the inevitable stigmatisation that arises from being labelled terrorists, effectively excludes them from the employment market.

##### **Recommendation:**

Revocation of the TPIMs overnight residence measure contained in the TPIM Act as amended in Section 16 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

## **(b) Spouse immigration controls**

Since July 2012 spouses/civil partners of UK nationals intending to join them in the UK must demonstrate available maintenance funds equivalent to an income of at least £18,600 per year (plus an extra £3,800 for one dependent child and extra £2,400 for each additional child). The income threshold is onerous, not least because it is set higher than the level of the national minimum wage. In fact according to the annual Survey for Hourly Earnings indicated that around 40-45% of UK residents earn less than £18,600. The requirement, which is subject to an ongoing challenge in the Courts, is one of the reasons the UK is now considered to have the least 'family-friendly' immigration policies in the developed world, according to the 2015 Migrant Integration Policy Index. The requirement has made it impossible for thousands of UK citizens whose spouses, and in many cases children, are overseas to bring them to the UK to join them on a permanent basis.

Since 2010 spouses/civil partners of UK nationals intending to join them have also been subject to an English language requirement.

The English language requirement applies only to non-EU nationals who are not nationals of majority English-speaking countries and/or who don't hold a degree taught in English that is equivalent to a UK bachelor's degree or above. They must have a speaking and listening qualification in English at B1 CEFR or higher, or an equivalent level qualification.

We believe that the requirement is an unnecessary and unwarranted obstacle to families seeking to join them in the UK and a violation of Article 10.

This belief also applies to the requirements in place since October 2013 for spouses/civil partners who wish to settle in the UK to demonstrate that (a) they have a speaking and listening qualification in English at B1 CEFR or higher, or an equivalent level qualification, and (b) they have sufficient knowledge of life in the UK as evidenced by passing Life in the UK test'.

## **Recommendation**

The UK should be pressured to immediately remove the minimum income requirement for spouses/civil partners as well as both the English language and Life in the UK knowledge requirements.

## 5. Article 13

The extension of the PREVENT programme into a statutory duty for schools is designed to hinder Muslim parents from pursuing "the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions."

The problem is perhaps best highlighted by the so-called Trojan Horse plot in 2014, which exposed an official desire to use concocted concerns about extremism as a pretext for removing Muslim governors and staff and stripping Islamic influences and practices from the management, teaching and curricula. The plot preceded the expansion of PREVENT under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and could be viewed as preparing the public to accept the legislation.

The 'Trojan Horse' affair started out as an anonymous and implausible letter claiming to expose an alleged plot by Muslim extremists to Islamicise state schools. The letter is presented as a plan of attack sent from a Birmingham circle of extremist plotters to counterparts in Bradford, instructing them how to carry out a similar takeover of Bradford schools, by hijacking boards of governors in state schools in mainly Muslim areas and removing opposition. Local authorities did not take the letter seriously. It was only when the letter found its way to the Dept of Education that it began to make waves. The fabricated letter (which is strewn with inaccuracies) was spun into an insidious plot concocted by Muslim extremists to seize control of British schools. The letter was then strategically leaked to the media with the aim of creating a national panic that would prepare public opinion to accept a government crackdown.

Four separate official enquiries were ordered into the claims made in the letter, but when no evidence of extremism was found, the government moved the goalposts. In the words of the Guardian's education editor Richard Adams, "the focus for investigation has slipped from extremism to 'an awareness of the risks associated with extremism' in the elided phrase now used by OFSTED inspectors to condemn the schools most heavily involved, such as Park View academy. In the process, the Department for Education's definition of extremism has shifted from actual bomb-throwers to religious conservatives" (<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/jun/08/trojan-horse-extremism-political-storm-michael-gove-ofsted>). Despite the absence of any evidence to support the allegations, five schools in Birmingham were placed under special measures and their innocent, mainly Muslim governors, left stigmatised and facing the sack.

The same scenario, in which Islamic values and not extremism appear to be under investigation, appears to be playing out in other parts of the UK. In the London borough of Tower Hamlets, OFSTED inspectors have taken issue with policy documents written by the Muslim Council of Britain describing how Muslim parents could be stimulated to press the "views and aspirations of Muslim parents and the local community" on reluctant schools and recommending that schools should not teach "potentially harmful forms of music" which "promote immoral behaviour" or include "unethical and un-Islamic lyrics". Schools were criticised for failing to promote 'British values' or the primacy of British law. One school was judged not to be taking the necessary steps to protect pupils from "extremist influences and radicalisation" in failing to take action over a pupil who had posted on social media that fellow students shouldn't attend a school leaving party because it involved music. Following the publication of OFSTED's findings, staff and parents at one of the Birmingham schools were told by staff that they would be

reported to police under the PREVENT strategy if they questioned whether an alleged new uniform policy excluded the hijab.

PREVENT has effectively placed an 'Islamic values' control on schools. The definition of extremism as religious, mainly Muslim, conservatism and the fact that it is primarily directed at Muslim pupils and parents, leaves little doubt it is being used as a pretext to limit the influence of Muslim values in schools.

**Recommendations:**

The PREVENT programme should be abolished on the grounds that it is Islamophobic in origin and an instrument of discrimination and oppression.

## 6. Article 15

a) Under the pretext of tackling terrorism, PREVENT hinders Muslim communities from taking part in cultural life. The PREVENT duty clashes with the duty of educational institutions to ensure that all clients/users are treated equally and without discrimination.

PREVENT has effectively put pressure on educational institutions to control Islamic expression (and it is invariably Islamic expression that is targeted) by becoming the arbiters of what is acceptable and what is extremist. Universities for example, have banned certain external speakers from speaking on their premises, because their views have been deemed to be politically or socially unacceptable. They have also raised concerns about conservative practices such as segregated seating arrangements at some Muslim-managed events.

b) In everyday life the pervasive nature of Islamophobic discourse and its internalisation has resulted in Muslims being prevented or hindered from taking part in cultural life.

For example an academic conference organised by the Islamic Human Rights Commission tackling the alarming rise in Islamophobia in December 2014 had to be relocated after the host venue, Birkbeck College, London, withdrew permission for it to be held there. The turnaround came after calls were made on social media by Britain First, a xenophobic far right group which styles itself as the 'British Resistance, to demonstrate at the event. Britain First was being supported by another extreme right wing group, Casuals United, an alliance of football hooligans from various clubs, formed to tackle what they see as growing Muslim influence in Britain. In recent months the groups have adopted a policy of using bullying tactics to force venues to cancel Muslim-organised events and intimidate Muslim communities.

The cancellation came after Birkbeck College held discussions with a PREVENT officer from the local council, prompting the criticism that instead of challenging threats and intimidation from a tiny far-right group it was more concerned with seeking out evidence of radicalisation and extremism among the conference organisers and participants.

c) Officials caving in to Islamophobia instead of standing up to it results in the same outcome as that being sought by the racists/Islamophobes.

For example in February 2014, the theme park Legoland located in Windsor, cancelled a planned Muslim fun day after being subjected to threats and intimidation from members of the far right if the event was allowed to go ahead. The Muslim Research and Development Foundation, a registered charity, had planned a family day at the Berkshire theme park on 9 March. Legoland said a "small group" had spread "deliberate misinformation" about the event to stop it going ahead. It decided to cancel the event after discussions with Thames Valley Police.



**Recommendation:**

Recommend that local authorities, official agencies of state, and private organisations tackle Islamophobic and racist threats to Muslim cultural practice by confronting them and not by penalising the victims.

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