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MEDIA STATEMENT

Hate crime must also be recognised as gender-based violence

Muslim Women's Network UK (MWN UK) is deeply appalled by the rape of a Sikh woman in what appears to be a religiously motivated attack. Our thoughts are with the survivor, who has endured such a traumatic and devastating experience.

During the attack, the perpetrator, John Ashby, also subjected the victim to a barrage of anti-Muslim abuse, targeting her because he believed she was Muslim. This horrific case exemplifies the ways in which religious hatred is often racialised with victims being targeted based on perceptions of their appearance, race, ethnicity or clothing.

Hate crime data shows that a majority of perpetrators who commit racially and religiously motivated hate crime tend to be white men and often women are disproportionately targeted. These realities, alongside this deeply shocking rape case, highlights that hate crimes against minority ethnic women must also be understood and recognised as gender-based violence where racism and misogyny intersect.

We call on the government to take urgent action to improve protections for minority ethnic women. This must include sustained public awareness campaigns, clearer and more accessible pathways for reporting incidents, practical safety guidance, and increased psychological support for victims. The cumulative impact of daily hostility, harmful rhetoric, and disinformation is causing significant anxiety and fear among women, leaving many to feeling unsafe. To date, government action has largely focused on protecting faith-based buildings. While this is important, women themselves are not being protected in the same way.

Urgent action is also needed to address the rise in far-right narratives that contribute to an environment in which such horrific hate crimes can occur.

Anti-Muslim hostility in any setting can be reported to the Muslim Safety Net Helpline (a project by the Muslim Women's Network UK) on 0303 330 0288 and WhatsApp / Text 07311 876 378 and online <https://www.muslimsafetynet.org.uk/report>

Additional Information

1. Media enquiries can be directed to: contact@mwnuk.co.uk or 0121 2369000
2. Muslim Women's Network UK website: www.mwnuk.co.uk
3. Muslim Safety Net Helpline www.muslimsafetynet.org.uk