



25th March 2025

MEDIA STATEMENT

MWN UK CEO Appointed to Islamophobia Definition Working Group

Muslim Women's Network UK (MWN UK) is pleased to announce that our CEO, Baroness Shaista Gohir, has been appointed as a member of the [government's Anti-Muslim Hatred/Islamophobia Definition Working Group](#), chaired by Dominic Grieve KC. Given the escalating hostility towards Muslims, which is likely at an all-time high, defining Islamophobia or an alternative appropriate term is necessary. We therefore welcome the beginning of this critical work.

Muslim women, in particular, face heightened abuse and hostility, leaving many feeling unsafe. However, Muslim experiences remain underreported. Our September 2024 report, [Anti-Muslim Hate – Concerns and Experiences](#), revealed that 80% of victims do not report anti-Muslim hate incidents. Also, when Baroness Gohir submitted a parliamentary question about cases reported to the [Equality Advisory & Support Service](#) (EASS) related to religion or belief discrimination, the response provided showed they were very low in number and declining - [2021 \(2.9%\), 2022 \(2.0%\) and 2023 \(1.8%\)](#). Of these, the proportion of complaints from Muslims was not even recorded, highlighting a serious gap in data collection and response.

Baroness Gohir said: *"The heightened fear and anxiety caused by anti-Muslim hate incidents are forcing some Muslim women to modify their daily routines—avoiding certain areas or even withdrawing from public life altogether. The rights and freedoms of Muslims must not be curtailed in this way, as this will ultimately harm social integration and community cohesion."*

When Muslims do report incidents, they are often not acted upon or taken seriously due to the absence of a widely accepted definition of Islamophobia/Anti-Muslim hatred—one that both protects individuals and upholds freedom of speech. A clear definition would not only strengthen protections against anti-Muslim discrimination but also improve reporting rates.

If anyone is affected by Anti-Muslim prejudice / hate, they can contact the [Muslim Women's Network Helpline](#) on 0800 999 5786, info@mwnhelpline.co.uk

Additional Information

- Media enquiries can be directed to: contact@mwnuk.co.uk or 0121 2369000
- Muslim Heritage Month toolkit <https://www.muslimheritagemonth.org.uk/muslim-heritage-month-toolkit>
- Muslim Women's Network UK is a national charity: <https://www.mwnuk.co.uk>