



Afzal Khan MP
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House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
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Sent by email

1st November 2023

Dear Prime Minister

As you will be aware, November marks Islamophobia Awareness Month in the UK. With hate crime levels against British Muslims having doubled in the past decade, this November serves as an important reminder to reflect on the racism and prejudice that Muslims in Britain face and to recommit to taking bold action to address this insidious hate.

Britain's rich tapestry of cultures, beliefs and traditions is what makes it great. Many of us are proud of this country's religious and cultural diversity, but unfortunately, too many people hold dangerous racist attitudes and these continue to go largely unchallenged. Conspiracy theories about Muslims are often seen propagated by the far right, which has led to worrying social attitudes about Muslims, including 22% of Britons having negative feelings towards Muslims and 30% objecting to their child visiting a mosque.

These racist attitudes have real life consequences for the 3.87 million Muslims who call Britain their home: **90% of UK mosques experienced acts of hate in the last year and most victims of religious hate crimes are Muslims.**

Islamophobia is much more than just hate crime and shows itself in a myriad of ways, from mainstream media reporting about Muslim communities contributing to an atmosphere of rising hostility towards Muslims, job seekers with English-sounding names being offered three times the number of interviews than applicants with Muslim names, and even former Prime Ministers comparing veiled Muslim women to letterboxes in newspaper columns.

In 2019, following extensive consultation with academics, community representatives, legal professionals and politicians at different levels of government, the APPG on British Muslims proposed a definition of Islamophobia which defines Islamophobia as being "rooted in racism and a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness." This definition has since become the preeminent reference point for Islamophobia in the UK and has been adopted by almost every political party (except the Conservative Party), local authorities, trade unions, academics, universities, individual parliamentarians and community groups across the UK.

Regrettably, under your predecessors, this definition was rejected at the UK Government level and instead work was committed to developing a separate definition of Islamophobia. Despite a commitment to appoint two advisors to this work, only one was ever appointed and was subsequently dismissed, and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities confirmed last year that it had abandoned all plans to develop or adopt a definition of Islamophobia.

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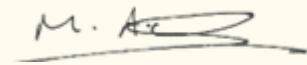
Your appointment as the first Prime Minister from an ethnic minority background was hailed as a success of multiculturalism and as evidence of the value Britain places on giving opportunities to people from a range of backgrounds. Unfortunately for British Muslims, your decision to not take any action to tackle the widespread Islamophobia in British society is hugely disappointing.

Therefore, in Islamophobia Awareness Month 2023, will you commit to adopting the APPG definition of Islamophobia – both internally in the Conservative Party and at UK Government level?

As political representatives, it is our responsibility to safeguard all communities, regardless of their race, religion or background. I hope you use the opportunity of Islamophobia Awareness Month to show your commitment to safeguarding Muslim communities by adopting the APPG's definition of Islamophobia as a first step in rooting out this sinister hatred which threatens our British values.

For a number of years, I have written to successive Prime Ministers at the start of Islamophobia Awareness Month to bring this to their attention. Frustratingly, neither you nor any of your predecessors have seen it important to respond to my letters. I hope you will take the time this year to show your dedication to tackling racism and prejudice and respond to this letter.

Yours sincerely,



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