HATE CRIME, FAITH AND BELONGING

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The Faith & Belief Forum
Formerly 3FF (Three Faiths Forum)

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About the series

This briefing paper is one of a series on faith, belief and belonging in London. The papers are published jointly by The Faith & Belief Forum (formerly 3FF) and the Department of Psychosocial Studies, Birkbeck, University of London. Our thanks to all the roundtable participants whose input enriched these papers, and to Dangoor Education for the grant which makes this series possible.

About the authors

The Faith & Belief Forum (formerly 3FF) has worked tirelessly for over 20 years to build good relations between people of all faiths and beliefs, and to create a society where difference is celebrated. We create spaces in schools, universities, workplaces and the wider community where people can engage with questions of belief and identity and meet people different from themselves. Enabling people to learn from each other in this way is often the most effective way to tackle ignorance and challenge stereotypes – and create understanding and trust between people. For more information, see faithbeliefforum.org.

The Department of Psychosocial Studies, Birkbeck, University of London (BDPS) was founded in 2000 and aims to investigate a wide range of contemporary social, political and personal concerns. The Department is unique in its interdisciplinary focus and draws together academics and clinicians from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds to think together about the relation between social and psychic life. For more information, see bbk.ac.uk/psychosocial/about-us.

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INTRODUCTION

This briefing paper is one of a series on faith, belief and belonging in London. In May and June 2018, The Faith & Belief Forum and the Department of Psychosocial Studies, Birkbeck, University of London hosted a series of roundtables about barriers to belonging for Londoners from different faiths and beliefs. The roundtables brought together local organisations, academics and policy experts 1) to understand better the issues and their impact on local communities, and 2) to share good practice for local initiatives working for social inclusion and belonging. The presentations in the roundtables were shared as podcasts on the Faith & Belief Forum website.[1] The comments and discussion of the roundtables have informed this series.

On 17 May 2018, 23 local organisations, academics and policy experts gathered at Birkbeck College to understand better the impact of hate crime on faith groups and local communities in London, and to share good practice from local initiatives responding to hate crime. The discussion on the day addressed important questions about hate crime, faith and belonging:

- What is hate crime and how does it differ from other types of crime and violence? What is religious hate crime and how does it relate to racial and other types of hate crime?

- Who are the primary victims and perpetrators of religious hate crime?

- What are the main causes of the increase of reported hate crimes?

- What are the impacts of hate crime on belonging for faith groups and people in local communities?

- Which projects and initiatives are addressing hate crimes at the local level? What makes these projects effective?

- How are these projects creating a sense of belonging to individuals and communities affected by hate crimes?

The roundtable included presentations from academics and community organisations. In this paper their comments will be referenced by mentioning their full names. Audio of the presentations from the roundtable can be accessed on the Faith & Belief Forum website.[1]

Presenters and respondents from the roundtable who are mentioned in this paper include:

- Aaron Winter, Senior Lecturer in Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of East London
- Ben Gidley, Senior Lecturer, Department of Psychosocial Studies, Birkbeck, University of London
- Esmond Rosen, Barnet Multi-Faith Forum
- Jagbir Jhutti-Johal, Senior Lecturer in Sikh Studies, University of Birmingham
- Lisa-Raine Hunt, Community Coordinator, Hackney Council
- Michael Whine, Government and International Affairs Director, Community Security Trust
- Muhammad Ali, Project Manager, Faiths Forum for London
- Saira Mir, Founder and Executive Director, PL84U Al-Suffa
- Stephen Frosh, Professor of Psychology, Department of Psychosocial Studies, Birkbeck, University of London

In this paper we discuss the concept of belonging (see ***what is belonging?***) and how it relates to hate crime. Faith and belief groups and minorities in London are increasingly the targets of hate crime, which pose a serious barrier to a sense of belonging. Hate crime represents an active and sometimes violent message of exclusion. These acts communicate to individuals and to communities that they do not belong and that they are not welcome. This message causes people to be afraid and angry, even for people who are not directly affected; it can lead to isolation or reprisals which reinforce a message of exclusion. Hate crime also motivates us to act, as people respond to messages of exclusion with messages of acceptance and inclusion. Our responses to hate crime demonstrate who belongs and what values we share as Londoners.[2]

What is belonging?[2]

Belonging is where 'being' meets 'longing'. We want to be fully ourselves and we want to be accepted by others around us.

Belonging affects everyone. Whether we were born in London or arrived yesterday, we all struggle to belong.

Our sense of belonging is changing. We as human beings are changing and our world is changing around us. In London neighbourhoods change as many people move in and out, and our society changes as technology and the environment changes.

We belong to many places and groups at once. We belong to locations, like a nation, a city or a neighbourhood and we may belong to many different groups at once in our professional and social lives.

Our sense of belonging works on multiple levels. Feeling welcome in our community can affect how we feel about our city or our country. A message that we are not welcome from one person can affect how we feel accepted in our city.

Our sense of belonging may not match others' ideas about us. We may feel that we belong, but other people may tell us that we do not belong. People may look at us and assume that we belong, but we may feel isolated and unwelcome.

Our sense of belonging is affected by systems as well as people. Deprivation and discrimination have important influences. If we do not have equal access to services which others do, our sense of belonging is limited.

We all decide who belongs, but some people have more power to extend belonging than others. In groups the power to decide who belongs is shared between members, yet often a few people have the most power to include or exclude.

How do faith and belief relate to belonging?

We use the term 'faith and belief' as an aspect of people's identity, including all religious and non-religious beliefs.[3] Most scholars agree that faith and belief may contribute to both belonging and exclusion.[4] For many Londoners, their faith or belief provides a sense of belonging and is a source of wellbeing. At times local faith and belief groups may contribute to exclusion and social division, yet people motivated by their diverse faiths and beliefs also make important contributions to creating a sense of belonging for their neighbours.

Research by the Faith & Belief Forum has identified four ways that local faith and belief groups extend and enhance a sense of belonging to Londoners of all faiths and beliefs.[5] These groups improve access for isolated people to life-enhancing services. They alleviate deprivation by opening pathways to employment and housing, and by addressing the causes of poverty. They reduce social tension by connecting neighbours from different backgrounds. They extend a warm welcome to people arriving from other parts of the UK and from other countries.

UNDERSTANDING HATE CRIME AND ITS IMPACT ON BELONGING

In this section, we describe how hate crime affects people of all faiths and beliefs in London. We define hate crime and religious hate crime, describe the main victims and offenders of religious hate crime, explore the causes of the increase of reported religious hate crimes and detail the impact of hate crime on belonging.

Hate crime and religious hate crime

In UK legislation, hate crime is defined as 'any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards someone based on a personal characteristic'.[6] These personal characteristics are summarised in five strands: race, religion, disability, sexual orientation and transgender identity. Different types of hate crimes often intersect with each other. In the roundtable, Aaron Winter mentioned that this overlap is particularly true for Muslims, who often belong to both an ethnic minority and a visible religious minority. Jagbir Jhutti-Johal noted that Sikhs also experience this blurring, which she described as the 'racialisation of religion' (see **hate crime and our multiple identities**).

'Hate crime' is difficult to define. In a hate crime the perpetrator does not necessarily 'hate' the victim; instead, the attack is usually aimed at the group the victim represents or is perceived to be representing. For this reason, hate crimes are described as 'message crimes', that is, criminal offences that are not only intended for the victim but also to send a message to the victim's community.[7]

Hate crime and our multiple identities

The focus of this paper is on religious hate crime, but it is important to understand the broader context of crimes committed against people who are deemed different. Religion is only one aspect of our many identities, such as ethnicity, gender, nationality and sexual orientation. Thinking about how our multiple identities relate to each other helps us to better understand and address hate crimes. Some people are particularly vulnerable to hate crimes because they belong to more than one targeted group, for example people who are South Asian, Muslim and LGBT+. Responses to hate crimes should also be careful about working on one issue in isolation, as this can reinforce the idea that one group is somehow problematic. Because hate crime does not take place in isolation, responses should address its nature as a wider social problem about belonging for people who are deemed different. For more information on multiple identities, see our paper on *Faith, Belief and Inclusion*.[8]

Hate crime is also complicated because of the difference between attitudes and incidents, and between intentions and actions. Aaron Winter noted that hate incidences are not illegal, even though these acts are motivated by someone's characteristics such as race, disability status, age, subculture, religion, gender or sexuality. There is no actual law against hate speech itself in the UK, although different laws have been used to prosecute some forms of hate speech:

- The Public Order Act 1986 forbids the expression of racial hatred against individuals of groups including colour, race, ethnic origin and nationality.
- In 2006, The Public Order Act was amended to include religious hatred.
- In 2008, the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act amended the Public Order Act to forbid the incitement of hatred on the grounds of sexual orientation.

The victim of a hate crime may perceive it be motivated by religious prejudice, but the perpetrator may not have intended it in this way.

In the roundtable, Ben Gidley emphasised that it is important when it comes to religious hate crime – as with hate crime in general – to distinguish between *attitudes* and *incidents.* People may express *attitudes* through prejudice and hostility toward targeted groups, whereas *incidents i*nvolve personal attacks. These attacks may be illegal, but some are not (see **hate speech and religious freedom**). People may also hold negative attitudes about others without expressing these attitudes through attacks. The victim of a hate crime may perceive it be motivated by religious prejudice, but the perpetrator may not have intended it in this way.

Religious (or religiously-motivated) hate crime is based on the victim's religious identity or perceived religious identity. This kind of hate crime both involves verbal and/or physical abuse against victims, for example street harassment, attacking people wearing religious symbols (hijab, turban, kippah, the Star of David, etc.) and making virtual threats online. Religious hate crime also includes degrading and attacking places of worships – such as drawing swastikas on synagogues and mosques.

Hate speech and religious freedom

Although there is almost universal agreement that violent attacks are wrong, there is a continuing debate about the boundaries between verbal hate crime and expressing beliefs. The debate hinges on the tension between protecting people from harmful speech and protecting freedom of expression. Two situations demonstrate the complexity of these issues. Some people believe that religious beliefs are harmful for society. What is the line between criticising a person's religious beliefs (protected by freedom of expression) and hate speech against a religious person? Some faith groups believe that homosexuality is morally wrong. What is the line between freedom of religious expression in sharing this belief and hate speech against LGBT+ people? These complex challenges highlight the need for public conversations and better education about hate speech and hate crime.

Victims and offenders of religious hate crime

The most common types of religious hate crime in the UK are anti-Jewish (also called antisemitic) and anti-Muslim (also called Islamophobic). The most likely victims of religious hate crime are singled out due to their visibility. People wearing symbols or clothes which identify them as part of a religious groups – such as the hijab, the kippah or the turban – are more vulnerable to being attacked. In the roundtable, Ben Gidley noted that in the Jewish community, Orthodox and ultra-orthodox men are amongst those who most frequently are victims of anti-Jewish hatred. Similarly, Muslim women who hear a headscarf (or *hijab*) are most vulnerable in the Muslim community because of this visibility. Sometimes both communities are targeted together using twisted justifications (see **separating causes from justifications of hate crime**). Ben shared how both antisemitism and Islamophobia are present in some far-right rhetoric that blames Jews for an increase in Muslim immigration to Europe.[9]

Separating causes from justifications of hate crime

If we want to understand and to address hate crime, we need to distinguish between its causes and justifications. Incidents of hate crime have multiple causes such as deprivation, lack of education and negative attitudes towards minority groups. These causes are complex and interrelated. However, hate crime is often justified by a false or simplistic story about the targeted group (for example, 'Jews control the media' or 'Muslims do not support British values'). These justifications contain the exclusionary messages communicated by hate crime, and these messages can be reinforced when they are considered as causes of hate crime. Roundtable participants shared an example of this problem which affects the Sikh community. Sikhs are sometimes targeted in hate crime attacks due to being mistaken for Muslims. Educating people about the differences between Sikhism and Islam could reduce attacks on Sikhs, but this might only encourage people to direct their attacks instead toward Muslims. For this reason, effective responses to hate crime should address causes while also challenging hateful justifications.

Other faith groups experience religious hate crime in smaller numbers. Antisemitism and Islamophobia also have an impact on non-Jewish and non-Muslim communities. This is most notable for some Sikhs who might be 'mistaken' for being Muslim and therefore experience anti-Muslim hatred. During the roundtable, Jagbir Jhutti-Johal gave examples of Sikhs who have been victims of anti-Muslim attacks because they 'appeared' to be Muslim (particularly men who are visible due to wearing a turban).[10] In response, some people in the Sikh community have tried to distinguish Sikhs from Muslims by repeating stereotypes about radicalisation and grooming gangs. These attacks of 'mistaken identity' have also spurred the building of relationships between these two communities to address this problem collectively.[11]

While victims of religious hate crime tend to be visible, the offenders are more difficult to identify. Studies on offenders of hate crime have identified two main groups. The first are individuals and groups who use hate crime to promote divisive ideologies – this is commonly described as the 'extremism thesis'.[12] According to this perspective, offenders are most likely to belong to ideological and political groups which believe that they should attack members or perceived members of specific religious groups. The two most commonly mentioned groups are far-right political parties or movements, and radical Islamists and jihadists (particularly in relation to antisemitic attacks).[13]

Many instances of hate crime take place in neighbourhoods and in the workplace, and where the victim is familiar with the offender.

Another and possibly larger group of offenders commit hate crimes in everyday situations. Many instances of hate crime take place in neighbourhoods and in the workplace, and where the victim is familiar with the offender. Ben Gidley mentioned that some hate crimes might be 'situationist opportunistic', that is, people impulsively attack someone who looks 'different' and is standing nearby out of anger, and not driven by ideological convictions. He also noted that the many of these kinds of 'hidden' or 'everyday' hate incidents tend to be carried out in deprived and marginalised communities. These different types of offenders require different responses, as we discuss in the section on responses to hate crime.

Increase of reported religious hate crimes

According to the Home Office's statistical bulletin from 2017, the number of reported hate crimes increased by 29% during 2016/17.[14] There are two main causes of the increase in religious hate crime: motivating incidents and greater awareness. Although we should not view religious hate crime as only a response to major trigger points – such as terror attacks – there is a close connection in spikes of reported hate crimes and particular events. Following the EU referendum in 2016, there was a 29 percent increase in reported hate crimes (the biggest increase since reporting began in 2012), and TellMAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks) recorded a 700% increase in reported anti-Muslim hate crimes after the Manchester terror attack in 2017.[15]

There are two main causes of the increase in religious hate crime: motivating incidents and greater awareness as people more often report hate crimes.

Global events also have an impact on increasing reports of hate crimes. For the Jewish community, escalation in the Israel-Palestine conflict has been the most common factor in the increase of reported anti-Jewish hate crime (such as the wars in Gaza in 2008 and 2014, when there were spikes in hate crime), whereas the Muslim community are affected by jihadi attacks and anti-Muslim political rhetoric in the media. Religious hate crime is 'glocal' (global + local) in character: what happens at the global level has a direct impact on local and everyday relationships. National issues can also have impact, often followed by or directly linked to media publicity. The intense media focus on alleged and actual antisemitism in the Labour Party is considered by the Jewish charity Community Security Trust (CST) to be one factor behind the increase in reported anti-Jewish hate crime in 2017.[16]

The increase in reported hate crime is also due to increased *willingness* to report hate crimes and easier ways to do so. For example, community organisations like the CST and TellMAMA have made it easier for victims of anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim hate crimes to report incidents after experiencing them. They are also active in spreading information about what counts as a religious hate crime, and the help that is available to victims of hate crime. It is therefore not clear whether an increase in reported religious hate crime is a result of a direct increase of the number of victims of hate crimes, or if it is due to more victims reporting their experiences to the police or other organisations (see ***the paradox of publicising hate crime***).

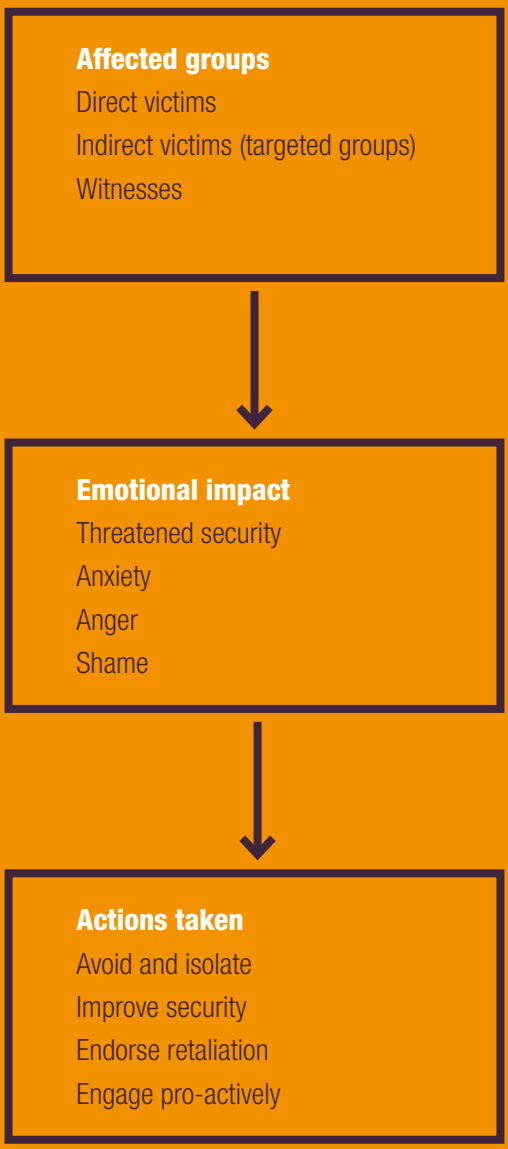
The paradox of publicising hate crime

Roundtable participants discussed a troubling paradox of responding to hate crime. Ignoring hate crime sends a message that such exclusionary messages are acceptable. Yet publicising hate crime brings more attention to the act and its justifications, which can paradoxically increase the spread of hateful messages. Jayda Fransen and Paul Golding, members of the right-wing group Britain First, participated in numerous incidents of hate crime against Muslims, many of which they filmed and shared online. When they were arrested and convicted of these crimes, they and their supporters promoted a message of far-right victimisation and 'Islamic appeasement', which was shared widely on social media and in news coverage.[17] As stories of hate crime spread, they create new opportunities to repeat and amplify exclusionary messages. This paradox highlights the importance of adopting a range of responses to hate crime, which can address hate crimes though the legal system, joined with responses which address exclusionary messages.

Impact of hate crime on belonging

Although the numbers of reported hate crimes are small compared to other crimes, hate crime affects the sense of belonging of all of us to different degrees. Each hate crime communicates a message to the victim and the victim's community that they do not belong. This message and the violent way it is communicated often results in severe emotional and psychological impacts. This damage can motivate people to take actions which can cause further damage to themselves or others, or actions which can make communities stronger. The model on the next page depicts how hate crime affects belonging. This model has been developed from discussions at the roundtable, and from a 2018 study on hate crime by the University of Sussex.[18]

Model: How hate crime affects belonging [18]



Roundtable participants discussed three separate groups who are affected by hate crime. All of us fit into at least one of these groups, but some people are more directly affected than others.

– *Direct victims* are people who have experienced a hate crime personally. Studies have shown that direct victims of hate crime may experience higher measures of depression, anxiety, feelings of vulnerability and panic attacks than victims of similar crimes which are not hate crimes.[19]

– *Indirect victims* have not themselves been a victim of hate crime, but they belong to a targeted community where someone is a direct victim. Maybe they know a victim of hate crime or have heard about someone from their community who has been a victim of hate crime. The Sussex study found that indirect victims can also have severe emotional and behavioural responses which have a negative impact on their mental health and on entire communities.[20]

– *Witnesses* of hate crime are not part of a group targeted by hate crime, but they can also be affected. Millions of people have observed hate crime either in person or via media such as videos shared online. This can provoke intense emotional responses and actions in support of the victim or the perpetrator. The divisive message of hate crime affects witnesses because it challenges their view of who belongs.

The emotional and psychological impacts of hate crime negatively affect a sense of belonging. The Sussex study found that direct and indirect victims of hate crime reported a variety of emotional responses. For example, some expressed anger that innocent people are targeted because of identities, some felt more vulnerable and anxious about their safety, some felt that their communities were under attack and some experienced feelings of guilt and embarrassment. Many also expressed empathy, sadness, respect and sympathy towards hate crime victims from their own communities, regardless if they knew them directly or not.[21]

These emotional impacts motivate people to take action. In the Sussex study, the most common actions were avoidance, increasing security, endorsing retaliation and pro-social action.[22] Some people avoided the places where the hate crime took place or other places where they felt vulnerable. This could mean taking a different route home from work, changing one's appearance or avoiding certain areas or neighbourhoods. Others took action to improve their sense of security by joining self-defence classes, changing locks on their doors and installing security systems at home or in their house of worship.[23] A few people responded by promoting retaliation against the people responsible for the hate crime or against their community. For example, some expressed the wish to verbally abuse the offender, whereas others also wanted to physically abuse them. Many people also reported taking pro-active steps in response to hate crime. The most common ways were joining anti-hate crime groups, becoming more active in charities and rights-based groups, raising awareness in social media (e.g. writing blog posts) and telling family and friends about their experiences. Some joined public events to support community cohesion or community groups working to improve community relations.[23]

The emotional and psychological impacts of hate crime negatively affect a sense of belonging, and they motivate people to take action.

These different responses indicate how powerful the effects of hate crime can be. Hate crime can increase isolation between individuals and communities, spark a cycle of recriminations or motivate responses to improve community relations. These actions can either amplify messages of division or promote belonging. In the next section, we discuss how we can respond proactively to hate crime in London, taking actions which increase our community's sense of belonging.

RESPONDING TO HATE CRIME

Hate crime damages individuals and communities, severely dampening our sense of belonging. Our responses to hate crime present an opportunity to support those affected, promote a message of belonging and make our communities stronger. In this section, we share types of responses to hate crime and many good examples of community-based responses. These responses were shared by roundtable participants and they include case studies of good practice.

Types of Responses

The previous section identified three different groups affected by hate crime. Roundtable participants gave examples of effective responses which are suitable for each group: direct victims, indirect victims and witnesses.

Supporting direct victims

People who have experienced hate crime directly can suffer severe emotional damage and physical injuries. Specialised services can help direct victims to report and recover. Services which help individuals to quickly and easily report a hate crime have multiple benefits. They enable victims to take concrete action where they receive acknowledgement that what happened to them was wrong. These services also connect victims with emotional and practical support (through organisations such as **Victim Support**) to address the impact of the crime on their security and wellbeing. Reporting also helps police, local authorities and charities to identify areas and groups at risk of specific types of hate crimes. The increase in hate crime reporting mentioned earlier provides evidence that these services are becoming visible and more effective. Research also has shown that more work is needed to raise awareness for services available victims of hate crime.[24]

Effective services can offer victims a range of options to take positive action, from sharing their experiences with others to joining campaigns to address hate crime in schools.

Victims of hate crime may have a tendency to isolate themselves and avoid situations and places where the crime took place. Services which offer psychological and practical support can help them to talk about the effect of the crime and to make plans to manage its impact. Victims may feel angry, which can lead to a desire to take action.[3] Effective services can offer victims a range of options to take positive action, from sharing their experiences with others to joining campaigns to address hate crime in schools. Some victims have expressed an interest in restorative justice as an opportunity to

confront their offender in a safe space, or to share their experience and its impact with young people at risk of being offenders. Such services need to be led by the needs and priorities of the victim to be effective, as the process is different for each person.

Partnerships to support direct victims of hate crime

Michael Whine from the Community Security Trust (CST) spoke about their approaches to supporting direct victims of religious hate crime. As the oldest organisation working on hate crime issues in the UK, CST has shared its expertise with other groups through effective partnerships. In 2017, CST and Tell MAMA wrote a practical guide for victims of hate crime, which is available online and has been distributed by police.[25] The guide helps victims to understand the impact of hate crime and who they can turn to for support. The CATCH partnership (see **Resources**) brings together seven organisations supporting victims of hate crime: CST (Jewish), Tell MAMA (Muslim), MIND (mental health), The Monitoring Group (race) Choice in Hackney (disability), Gallop (LGBT+), and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime. This partnership enables easy online/phone reporting of hate crime, and it supports consistent follow-up for victims. CATCH has also helped these organisations to improve their services by sharing ideas and expertise. In the roundtable, Michael gave an example of the value of this support. In 2016, an elderly Jewish man was a victim of hate crime during a road-rage incident in London. The incident made him afraid to leave his home. CATCH helped CST to find a counselling service for support and passed the report to the police. The police were able to arrest the perpetrator, who received a jail term and had to pay compensation.

Supporting indirect victims

For people who are indirectly affected by hate crimes, the emotional and psychological impact can also be severe. Services which work directly with faith groups (**Tell MAMA**, **Community Security Trust**) can help to increase reporting of hate crimes in a sensitive manner, and they can recommend responses which work for local groups. Research has found that community-based interventions are essential to address the cycle of reprisals which hate crimes can generate.[28] These interventions can help local groups to share their fears, identity people who are vulnerable to messages of hate and direct their anger toward responses which benefit the entire community.

Places of worship are often targets of hate crime, which affects the security and wellbeing of all who worship there. Services which provide security to places of worship can help to increase the sense of security as well as to prevent future attacks. Muhammad Ali mentioned that such services need to be sensitive to the needs of communities, and the best ones work directly with places of worship instead of taking a 'one size fits all approach' (see ***responding to hate crime against places of worship).*** In some cases, greater monitoring through CCTV and police presence can increase the sense of threat and suspicion rather than make people feel protected and secure.

Responding to hate crime against places of worship

Muhammad Ali from the Faiths Forum for London shared examples of places of worship which had experienced hate crimes and the importance of community responses. The Al-Hira mosque in Luton suffered an attempted arson attack in 2013. A window had been left open and someone tried to throw a petrol can through the window, and a larger crisis was narrowly averted by a cleaner. There was some disagreement within the mosque leadership about reporting this incident due to concerns about bringing unwelcome attention to the

mosque. The imam decided to share the incident with the police, who were able to find and arrest the person involved. Muhammad also shared the response to this hate crime by the local faith forum, who organised an event in support of the mosque. In another 2013 incident, an arsonist completely destroyed the Al-Rahma Centre in Muswell Hill, which included a mosque and a Somali community centre.[29] In response, the local synagogue organised an interfaith walk in support of the mosque. Other local community organisations including churches and synagogues opened their building for the Al-Rahma Centre to hold after-school Islamic classes for its 200 young people while the centre was re-built. In both cases, effective responses required both the police and local communities to offer extended support and recovery.

Supporting witnesses to respond to negative messages

As our awareness of hate crime rises via viral videos and social media campaigns, local communities play an important part in addressing the messages of exclusion sent by hate crime.

At the local community level, actions which bring together people from different faiths and beliefs to send a message of solidarity and belonging are powerful responses. In 2017, local communities responded to two violent attacks in London within a few days of each other (the London Bridge attack and the Finsbury Park mosque attack) with multi-faith events bringing together neighbours from different faiths and beliefs to show solidarity with the victims and promote a message of belonging. In both cases faith leaders and people from the local community worked together and these events were well-publicised in the media. Local responses at the borough level can also be effective (see ***Walthamstow response to the 'Punish a Muslim Day'*).**

As the exclusionary messages of hate crime are often communicated through social media, online creative responses are important. Social media campaigns such as the 'No Hate Speech UK' youth campaign[30] spread messages of support and solidarity. Individuals also send online messages of support to victims, which function as public displays of support to combat the isolation which can result from hate crime. Other groups work to flag and report online hate speech, a responsibility which social media providers and corporations are beginning to take more seriously (although much more work is needed).[31]

Walthamstow response to the 'Punish a Muslim Day'

Saira Mir from PL84U Al-Suffa shared the story of an inspiring community-led response in Walthamstow to the 'Punish a Muslim Day'. Two residents from Waltham Forest received the letters which were sent around the UK threatening public attacks on Muslims on the 3rd of April. After hearing that some people were afraid to leave their homes due to fear of violence, Saira posted on Facebook the idea of a community-led peaceful vigil, and she received many responses from individuals and organisations all over the borough to join the event. Working together they planned a range of activities to hold on the 3rd of April. They distributed 'Stand against Islamophobia' stickers at train stations and school gates. They met in Waltham Forest Town Square where many participants from all background linked arms and handed out roses to all passers-by. Then they held an open house in two local mosques where people could meet their Muslim neighbours and ask questions. Saira summarised the impact of the day: 'Our community response showed that as humans and neighbours in Waltham Forest we can stand together in solidarity against hate.'

Examples of Good Practice

Roundtable participants shared numerous examples of good practice in responding to hate crime. They highlighted the importance of collaboration between community organisations, faith groups and local government. They also emphasised the importance of community-led initiatives to respond effectively to hate crime in each local area.

Importance of collaboration

Hate crime reinforces a message that communities are isolated and under threat. Responses which bring together different affected groups have a double benefit: they enable better access to services and they communicate that one group is not struggling alone. Local councils like Tower Hamlets (**No Place for Hate**) have brought together faith groups, charities, businesses, local police and other services to increase reporting, improve access to services and facilitate joined-up responses. Groups which support one targeted group (e.g. religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability) have joined together to share expertise and improve services. This collaborative approach also helps to identify and support people who are most affected due to different identities (e.g. religion and LGBT+). Another important area of collaboration is between reporting services and the police. Michael Whine shared about the cooperation between the **Community Security Trust** and the **Metropolitan Police** which has streamlined reporting of religious hate crime, so that reports made to these services can be accurately counted in official figures.

Importance of local initiatives

Roundtable participants also shared the importance of initiatives being led locally. Lisa Raine-Hunt mentioned that the profile of hate crime is different in each borough and often in each neighbourhood; therefore, effective responses should be sensitive to and led by local communities. For example, community-led responses to the 'Punish a Muslim Day' in April 2018 differed in Waltham Forest and Hackney. In Waltham Forest, local groups held a public event in support of the Muslim community (see ***Walthamstow response***). In Hackney, local groups decided rather than an official response they would instead hold an interfaith event raising awareness about responses to knife crime and supporting young people.

Institutions such as local councils and faith forums are key supporters of community-led responses to hate crime. Local councils play an important convening role, bringing together faith communities with other voluntary sector organisations. Local councils can also offer practical support for communities which are being affected by hate crimes. Lisa Raine-Hunt shared that in Hackney they helped faith groups to apply for and access funding to improve security at places of worship. Esmond Rosen highlighted the role of local faith forums to connect faith groups and to develop shared responses to hate crime. In addition, these forums can challenge negative stereotypes about faith groups at the community level, addressing the negative messages spread by hate crime.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have seen how hate crime presents both a barrier to and an opportunity for belonging. Hate crime sends a message of exclusion which tears the fabric of belonging in our city. The troubling increase of reported religious and other hate crimes, and the massive increase in how these incidents are shared and publicised online, have the potential to divide our communities into isolated groups who fear and oppose each other. Hate crime also motivates Londoners into action: to protect and support those affected and to broadcast a powerful message of belonging to drown out the message of hate and to stop cycles of division and recrimination.

Our responses to hate crime demonstrate who belongs and what values we share as Lononers.

Because every Londoner is affected by hate crimes to varying degrees, we all have a part to play in responding to hate crime. Our responses to hate crime demonstrate who belongs and what values we share as Londoners. Any positive response we make to hate crime, however small, promotes the message on the cover of this report – 'we are better than this'. In big and small ways, we can together share a vision of London as a city where everyone belongs, and we can live that vision in our daily lives.

Useful Resources

Reporting Hate Crime

CATCH Partnership: Report all types of hate crime and access support using this online form. The CATCH partnership is run by London charities specialised in addressing hate crime.

Stop Hate UK: Stop Hate UK provides independent, confidential and accessible reporting and support for victims, witnesses and third parties.

True Vision: Report hate crime to the police using this online form. The site also provides information about hate crime.

Tell MAMA: Report anti-Muslim abuse or hate crime online.

Community Security Trust: Report antisemitic abuse or hate crime online

Responding to Hate Crime

Hate crime: a guide for those affected: This report by the Community Security Trust and Tell MAMA explains about religious hate crime and offers advice on supporting those affected.

Looking after one another: The safety and security of our faith communities: This resource by the Inter Faith Network offers practical pointers for responding jointly to attacks on places of worship; working for calm in times of tension; and working to build and strengthen good interfaith relations.

Victim Support: Victim Support offers online resources and direct support for people affected by hate crime and those around them.

Challenging hate speech on social media platforms: This report by the ISBA offers practical advice on responding to online hate speech.

No Hate Speech UK: This young-people led campaign responds to hate speech online.

Endnotes

[1] For the roundtable podcast, see faithbeliefforum.org/podcast-roundtable-on-hate-crime-faith-and-belonging-in-london/.

[2] These concepts are drawn from academic research on belonging. See **Antonsich**, M. (2010), Searching for belonging – an analytical framework. *Geography Compass*, *4*(6), 644–659. doi.org/0.1111/j.1749-8198.2009.00317.x; **Nyhagen**, L. (2018). Citizenship, religion, gender and the politics of belonging: a case study of white, middle-class Christian men in the East Midlands, United Kingdom. *Culture and Religion* 19 (3): pp. 253-272; **Probyn**, E. (1996), *Outside Belongings*. London and New York: Routledge; **Taylor**, H. (2015). *Refugees and the Meaning of Home: Longing and Daily Life in London*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK; and **Yuval-Davis**, N. (2015). Power, Intersectionality and the Politics of Belonging. Aalborg: FREIA - Center for Gender Research, doi.org/10.5278/freia.58024502.

[3] We use the 'faith and belief' to refer to the protected characteristic of 'religion and belief' in the Equality Act 2010. For a list of protected characteristics, see UK Government (2017), The Equality Act 2010: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents

[4] See findings of the Religion and Society Research Programme, including the 2013 report 'Religious discrimination in Britain: What difference does a decade make?': http://www.religionandsociety.org.uk/research_findings/featured_findings/religious_discrimination_in_britain_what_difference_does_a_decade_make. For the role of religion in violence and peace, see Mira (2015), 'The Paradoxical Role of Religion and Spirituality in Conflict, Peacebuilding and Governance': https://www.politics.ox.ac.uk/cis/cis-research-the-paradoxical-role-of-religion-and-spirituality-in-conflict-peacebuilding-and-governance.html.

[5] This research can be found in the 2017 Faith & Belief Forum report on 'Faith, Belief and Belonging', https://faithbeliefforum.org/report/.

[6] Home Office (2017). Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2016/2017. London: Home Office.

[7] Chakraborti, N. & Garland, J. (2015). Hate Crime: Impact, Causes and Responses. London: SAGE.

[8] The paper on 'Faith, Belief and Inclusion' can be found at https://faithbeliefforum.org/report/.

[9] Renton, J. & Gidley, B. (2017). (eds.). Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Europe – A Shared Story? Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

[10] For examples of hate crime against Sikhs in the UK and community responses, see Singh, J. (2017), Sikh Radicalisation in Britain', Lancaster: CREST, https://crestresearch.ac.uk/comment/sikh-radicalisation-in-britain/.

[11] Jagbir gave examples of prominent Sikhs, such as Professor Simranjeet Singh and Jasvir Singh, Chair of CitySikhs, who have spoken publicly about how communities need to come together to address the problem of mistaken identity.

[12] Iganski, P. (2014), Antisemitism and anti-Jewish hatred: conceptual, political and legal challenges, in Phillips, C. & Webster, C. (eds.), New directions in race, ethnicity and crime. London: Routledge, p. 23.

[13] See Mondon, A. and Winter, A. 2017. 'Articulations of Islamophobia: From the Extreme to the Mainstream?' Ethnic and Racial Studies Review, 40(13), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316787858_Articulations_of_Islamophobia_From_the_Extreme_to_the_Mainstream; Mondon, A. and Winter, A. 23 Aug 2017. 'Normalized Hate', Jacobin, https://jacobinmag.com/2017/08/islamophobia-racism-uk-far-right.

[14] Home Office (2017). Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2016/2017. London: Home Office.

[15] Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2016/2017.

[16] Community Security Trust (2019). Antisemitic incidents report 2018, https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2019/02/07/antisemitic-incidents-report-2018.

[17] This story was covered by BBC and the Guardian among other outlets, see https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-43320121; https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/07/britain-first-leaders-convicted-of-anti-muslim-hate-crimes.

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[19] Iganski, P. (2014), Antisemitism and anti-Jewish hatred: conceptual, political and legal challenges.

Endnotes

[20] The Sussex Hate Crime Project: Final Report (2018), p. 35.

[21] The Sussex Hate Crime Project: Final Report (2018), p. 29.

[22] The Sussex Hate Crime Project: Final Report (2018), p. 28.

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[24] Paterson, J.L; Brown, R. and Walters, M.A. (2018), The Short and Longer- Term Impacts of Hate Crimes Experienced Directly, Indirectly and Through the Media, Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, pp. 1-17.

[25] The Sussex Hate Crime Project: Final Report (2018), p. 43.

[26] The Sussex Hate Crime Project: Final Report (2018), p. 43.

[27] Hate Crime: A Guide for Those Affected (2018), https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/a/4/Hate%20Crime%20-%20A%20guide%20for%20those%20affected.pdf

[28] The Sussex Hate Crime Project: Final Report (2018), p. 44

[29] For more on the community response to the Al-Rahma arson attack, see https://www.channel4.com/news/al-rahma-centre-somalians-arson-fire-destroyed-edl

[30] See https://www.nohatespeech.uk/

[31] ISBA (2018), Challenging hate speech on social media platforms, https://www.isba.org.uk/media/1589/challenging-hate-speech-guidance.pdf

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