Written evidence submitted by Tell MAMA UK

Introduction

1. Tell MAMA (Measuring anti-Muslim Attacks) is a third party reporting service dedicated to supporting victims of anti-Muslim hate crime. Tell MAMA serves victims across the United Kingdom by providing an opportunity to report hate crimes in confidence to a specialist caseworker. In addition, Tell MAMA conducts analysis and research on hundreds of cases of anti-Muslim hatred every year.

2. In 2015 and 2016, we note an increase in the level of anti-Muslim hate incidents, particularly following the terrorist attacks in Paris on 13th November 2015 and after the EU Referendum result on 24th June 2016. There is a synergy between non-violent but extreme anti-Muslim rhetoric online and the incidence of offline physical assaults, verbal abuse and threatening behaviour against Muslims in Britain.

3. Our most recent report, The geography of anti-Muslim hatred: Tell MAMA Annual Report 2015 (published 29th June 2016), details statistics and the impacts of anti-Muslim hate crime on the mobility of Muslims in Britain. Hate crime restricts the security of Muslims in Britain as they use public services such as rail and buses, walk near major roads or visit shopping districts and premises. This creates a sense of alienation and risk for Muslims in Britain, undermining confidence and amplifying intercommunal tensions.

Effectiveness of current legislation and law enforcement policies

4. The CPS has reviewed its hate crime guidelines and will produce a briefing document for lawyers providing advice on the correct flagging and charging of religious hate crimes. This includes an explanation of key words and terms often used during anti-Muslim offences, many of which would be unfamiliar to the average prosecutor, produced in cooperation with Tell MAMA and other groups. In addition, the CPS is revising and updating its racially and religiously aggravated hate crime training courses which will now include specific anti-Muslim case studies. The CPS has established a Hate Crime Assurance Scheme which is meant to help to identify best practices, train prosecutors and review their work, and manage cases. The CPS has also appointed Hate Crime Coordinators with specialist skills and experience.

5. There have been significant improvements in the recording, monitoring and policing of anti-Muslim hatred in recent years. Police forces began disaggregating data on religious hate crimes by faith strand in April 2016 and the Home Office now requires that police forces record data on all five hate crime strands, which will add much-needed consistency across the UK.

6. The new Hate Crime Strategy, Action Against Hate: The UK Government’s plan for tackling hate crimes, published by the Home Office in 2016, makes a number of important developments. The new strategy outlines on a number of new assessments and policies that we believe will increase the consistency of recording hate crime across the UK and mitigate that some of the risks that Muslims face. The key priority areas in the strategy with regard to anti-Muslim hate crime are:

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3 This information is based on consultations between Tell MAMA and the CPS and these guidelines are forthcoming.
5 ibid., 9.
7 Given the purpose and word limits on this this document, it is not possible for us to go into further detail on the merits and faults of the recent strategy. We provide a basic outline above but would be happy to submit further written evidence that provides a detailed response to the new hate crime strategy (Home Office 2016).
• Bullying in schools: Tell MAMA has received an increase in reports of name calling, verbal abuse, threats, and assaults in schools. We believe that stronger action needs to be taken, starting with an evaluation of bullying in schools. This is what the strategy proposes and parliament should ensure that the Home Office undertakes this important work.

• We applaud the focus on public transport and the night-time economy as many victims have reported that they do not feel safe using public transport at night due to the potential for anti-Muslim incidents. Further, Tell MAMA data demonstrates that public transport is a high-risk area for the occurrence of anti-Muslim incidents and crimes. In addition, numerous taxi drivers have reported late night anti-Muslim incidents and crimes to Tell MAMA, most of which involved intoxicated perpetrators.

• New funding streams can support better work to prevent hate crime, share information, engage communities, and support victims. These funding streams should be maintained and where possible, parliament should scrutinise the efficacy of this funding.

• Clearer definitions and procedures are being developed around online hate crime and an 'online flag' has been implemented to improve data collection.

7. As we have identified in submissions to the Home Affairs Committee inquiry on Extremism and for the Joint Committee Human Rights, the analysis and identification of terrorists and extremists from Muslim backgrounds is extensive, but this is not the case for far-right and right-wing extremism. The analysis of right-wing and far-right hate—as the immense spike of racist, xenophobic, and hateful activity after Brexit—should not be limited to neo-Nazi groups as stipulated in the strategy. The concept of non-violent extremism, whose use we have criticised in the Joint Committee of Human Rights, must (if it is to be used at all) be used equally against far-right groups and individuals who violate British values. The current focus on ‘neo-Nazis’ in the strategy reflects a dated understanding of the contemporary milieu that proliferate anti-Muslim hate and vitriol, allowing the far-right, and even some mainstream right-wing politicians, to get away with hateful speech that violates British values.

**Barriers to Reporting**

8. Under reporting to police remains a persistent problem across hate crime strands. Some of the barriers preventing Muslims from reporting include the perception that the police do not take incidents seriously or that the police profile Muslims under counter-extremism policies. Other barriers include cultural and linguistic differences. A study of anti-Muslim hate crimes in London also demonstrates that mistrust in policing has a significant effect on the likelihood of an individual reporting an incident to the police. Some victims will not report to police as they do not want to make a 'fuss' or want their neighbours to witness police entering their house. Others may not report because they feel unable to express deep emotional and psychological traumas in English.

9. Tell MAMA and other third party reporting centres are in a unique position to support victims as a number of staff members can speak Urdu, Bengali and Arabic. We can also report incidents to police on behalf of victims and offer a confidential phone line. As a third party body, Tell MAMA is able to lobby and work with various police forces to improve the data collection of Islamophobic hate crimes and better educate forces about the complexities of this issue.
Role of social media companies

10. Social media companies have taken some of the necessary steps to tackle hate speech online. They have also expressed willingness to counter anti-Muslim views. However, these companies must do more to understand the dynamics of Islamophobic accounts and the networks that they depend on. Anti-Muslim pages, like Britain First, and anti-Muslim accounts exploit social media platforms to spread hate messages. Taking action on high profile accounts in these networks (for example, Twitter users that have been reported to Tell MAMA or the police and have high numbers of followers) can undermine these networks, similar to the strategy taken with self-proclaimed ‘Islamic’ extremism on social media.

11. Tell MAMA documented examples of how the far-right build networks on social media platforms, and often follow high profile, mainstream politicians. Individuals that are considered ‘mainstream’ provide fuel for these networks. Their comments often fuel extreme echo chambers that shape perceptions about Islam and Muslims through vitriol and misrepresentation. This should be considered a form of non-violent extremism and rhetoric that catalyses far-right radicalisation. These echo chambers make counter-speech difficult as they are generally populated by like-minded individuals.17

12. Facebook, for example, has taken positive steps to remove pages sympathetic or directly linked to the nationalist socialist group National Action. Due to privacy settings on Facebook, it is difficult to monitor how many of the incidents we have reported to them have been addressed. Facebook allows users to report ‘hate speech’ and cautions offending users. Facebook has made a strong effort to consult with and support Tell MAMA, but we do maintain that stricter measures can be developed in the future to counter far-right extremism on their platform.

13. Twitter’s functionality allows for greater anonymity than the Facebook platform, which far-right groups and individuals readily exploit. Twitter did not, until recently, have a ‘hate speech’ category for users to report offenders. As of December 2015,18 ‘hateful conduct’ is considered a form of abusive behaviour. This is focused on the promotion of violence against groups (e.g. race, religion, etc.) or accounts whose ‘primary purpose is inciting harm towards others’ on the grounds of race, religion, or other protected characteristics.19 Based on 2015 Tell MAMA data, just over 18 per cent of accounts we report to Twitter were suspended.20 Many of these accounts do not promote violence, but they certainly express extremist beliefs and spread the vitriol and hate rhetoric that fuels anti-Muslim hate crime.

14. Social media platforms should consult further with government and civil society to meet their responsibility to identify extremism on their platforms and develop constructive solutions to the problem. These platforms may be willing to organise funding for civil society groups to undertake projects on counter-speech and reduce hate on these platforms.

15. Ensuring that hate speech, even when it does not call for violence, is a violation of community standards should be a priority for social media platforms. Tweets that did not lead to suspended users in 2015 frequently associated Muslims with paedophilia and violence, with some calling for Muslims to be deported and even murdered. This rhetoric fuels the extremist far-right networks and leads to anti-Muslim hate.

16. While anti-Muslim hate online is a significant concern, there is a risk that too much focus may be placed on incidents online. Based on Tell MAMA data (see point 15), the number of anti-Muslim incidents reported to us online has decreased since 2013. Based on our research, future analysis of online networks should strive to illuminate the networks that sustain anti-Muslim hate online (see point 11), rather than the words or language being used or quantity of racist tweets. Such studies are

17 Tell MAMA (2016), op. cit.
18 ‘Twitter unveils revised rules regarding hate speech in posts’. The Guardian. 29 December 2015.
19 Twitter. ‘The Twitter Rules’. Twitter Help Center. Web page, available at: https://support.twitter.com/articles/18311#
20 This figure is based on case monitoring conducted during 2015.
indicative rather than authoritative descriptions of anti-Muslim and other forms of hate.\textsuperscript{21} This would link well with the existing work the Home Office is doing to identify extremist groups online.\textsuperscript{22} Further work should also examine the reciprocity between online narratives and the instances of anti-Muslim hate crime on a street level.\textsuperscript{23}

**Statistical trends**

17. Our research intends to help police forces identify areas of high risk for anti-Muslim hate. This has been based on extensive outreach and engagement with Muslims across Britain. Monitoring and mapping hate crime allows third party organizations to increase community engagement and support.\textsuperscript{24} This work supports Police and Crime Commissioners and local authorities to use their resources more efficiently allowing tailored support to reduce hate crime. Multi-disciplinary approaches involving different agencies such as NGOs, police, and businesses provide the most effective methods and concrete policies to combat hate crime,\textsuperscript{25} and it is crucial that the voluntary sector and civil society are included in policy development.

18. Tell MAMA has observed a significant increase almost every year since the establishment of the project in 2012. The table below provides more detail:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2012-2013</th>
<th>2013-2014</th>
<th>2014-2015</th>
<th>2015\textsuperscript{26}</th>
<th>2016 (estimate, up to August)\textsuperscript{27}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offline incidents</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online incidents</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>484</td>
<td>734</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>801</td>
<td>627</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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19. From 2012 to 2014, anti-Muslim hate crimes spiked most significantly in 2013-2014 following the murder of Drummer Lee Rigby in May 2013. While there has been significant variance each year, there is an overall increasing trend in the number of reports and verified incidents reported to Tell MAMA. While some of this increase is likely due to a growing awareness of the Tell MAMA service nationwide, the increased reporting we note in 2015 and 2016 demonstrate that the level of anti-Muslim hate crime is rising.

20. In 2015, Tell MAMA developed new methodologies for data collection and analysis. We provide figures on victims and perpetrators here based on our verified 2015 data. We were able to determine gender for 454 of 468 victims. 63 per cent of victims for whom we were able to determine gender identify as female (n=287), 36 per cent identify as male (n=162), and less than one per cent have other gender identities (n=5). Women are the majority of those that experience anti-Muslim hate crime. Of the 287 female victims, 75 per cent of victims were visibly Muslim (n=215), meaning that they wore a hijab, niqab, jilbab, abaya or other religious clothing.\textsuperscript{28} Women are also more likely than men to experience verbal abuse and more likely to face incidents on public transport and places where they are shopping.\textsuperscript{29}

21. The majority of victims for whom we could identify ethnicity are Asian or South Asian (61 per cent). We were not able to identify ethnicity for 42 per cent of victims, making these numbers indicative

\textsuperscript{21} Demos. ‘Hate Speech After Brexit’. Web article, available: \url{http://www.demos.co.uk/project/hate-speech-after-brexit/}. See also, Ganesh, B. (2014). Facebook Report: Rotherham, hate, and the far-right online. London: Tell MAMA.

\textsuperscript{22} Home Office, \textit{op. cit.}, paragraphs 77-78.

\textsuperscript{23} See for example, Awan, I. (2016). 'Islamophobia in Cyberspace'. London: Ashgate.


\textsuperscript{26} In 2015, the Tell MAMA team decided to produce reports on hate crime based on the calendar year (Jan-Dec).

\textsuperscript{27} 2016 statistics are not fully verified as our reporting period has not been completed. The numbers provided are only indicative estimates and subject to change upon the publication of our 2016 Annual Report in 2017. The numbers provided are based on reports from January 2016 to August 2016.

\textsuperscript{28} Tell MAMA (2016), \textit{op. cit.}, 32.

\textsuperscript{29} \textit{ibid.}, 33-34.
rather than authoritative.\textsuperscript{30}

22. Data on perpetrators is much less detailed as victims are not often able to completely recount incidents or may not remember certain details. We counted 626 perpetrators in total. Of these, we were able to identify gender for 505 perpetrators, of which 76 per cent (n=384) are male, and 24 per cent (n=121) are female. We captured ethnicity for 366 of 626 perpetrators (58 per cent). White males make up 243 of 366 perpetrators, which is approximately 66 per cent of all perpetrators for whom we could identify ethnicity. There were 81 white female perpetrators. We find that that 324 of 366, or 89 per cent, of all perpetrators with identified ethnicity are white.\textsuperscript{31}

23. Anti-Muslim incidents are most likely to occur in public areas as a victim is walking along a street or in a park, on public transport, or places of business where the victim is shopping. 111 incidents occurred in a public area (25 per cent), 89 occurred on the transport network (20 per cent, including trains, coaches, buses, trams, and TfL services), 53 occurred in places of business where the victim is a customer (12 per cent), 46 occurred in educational institutions including schools and universities (11 per cent), 45 incidents were attacks specifically on Muslim institutions such as mosques and Islamic schools (10 per cent), 31 incidents affected households and private property (7 per cent), 31 incidents affected victims at their places of work, including discrimination and workplace harassment (7 per cent), 16 incidents occurred when victims were operating or were a passenger in a motor vehicle on a highway or road (4 per cent), 6 incidents occurred in public institutions (1 per cent), 6 incidents occurred in a hospital (1 per cent) and finally 3 incidents (<1 per cent) were classified as ‘other’.\textsuperscript{32}

24. In 2015, working with the Metropolitan Police Service, Tell MAMA developed a geospatial dataset of anti-Muslim incidents in London. Our key findings include that anti-Muslim hate incidents are clustered in areas of high pedestrian traffic, near ‘A’ roads and main arterial routes, areas with high public transport accessibility, and between central London and areas with sizeable Muslim populations (though crimes are not clustered in areas where there are large Muslim populations). There are also a few clusters around well-known sites of worship and mosques.\textsuperscript{33}

25. Our research demonstrates that anti-Muslim hate blends into xenophobia and other forms of racism. It is useful to understand Muslims as a quasi-racialised group considering that their expression of religion (through clothing, for example) causes them to face racist abuse. For example, white women wearing a hijab are often called ‘P*ki’. The fluid borders between racism and anti-religious bias in anti-Muslim hate crime create significant complexities for police data collection.

\textit{Restorative justice}

26. Police guidelines have advised police forces that the use of restorative justice for hate crimes is risky.\textsuperscript{34} While we do believe caution is important, this classification might make police officers very unlikely to use restorative justice to address hate crimes. However, it might be a valuable approach given that an intervention with the attacker might lead to more positive outcomes and higher levels of victim satisfaction.

27. More funding and coordination is needed for restorative justice. Only £10.5 million of the available £23 million has been utilized during 2013-16.\textsuperscript{35} Many people surveyed were not offered restorative justice, but of those offered 79 per cent took part. Of those who participated, satisfaction was over 85 per cent.\textsuperscript{36} Restorative justice interventions may be a palliative to low satisfaction for criminal justice

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{30} \textit{ibid.}, 35.
\bibitem{31} \textit{ibid.}, 36-37.
\bibitem{32} \textit{ibid.}, 38.
\bibitem{33} See \textit{Tell MAMA} (2016), \textit{op. cit.}, 46-51 for more details.
\end{thebibliography}
outcomes: only 52 per cent of victims ‘were very or fairly satisfied with the handling of the matter’ in the criminal justice process.\textsuperscript{37}

28. Restorative justice starts a process by which an offender transforms their attitude with direct, supervised contact with the victim. This is more likely to produce a long term solution, although it may not be effective for all, restorative justice provides an avenue to allow offenders to understand their mistake and reduce reoffending in the future.\textsuperscript{38} Unlike criminal justice, restorative justice allows offenders to sympathize with their victims and understand the detrimental effect they have had on the victims.\textsuperscript{39}

\textit{Conclusion}

29. Anti-Muslim hate is a serious concern in the United Kingdom. Police forces, the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Home Office have worked with civil society to develop better solutions. We are encouraged by this work and hope that it will continue. The statistical trends demonstrate that women are most affected by anti-Muslim hate crime. Our geographical research on hate crime also identifies key hotspots and demonstrates how civil society can contribute to policy development. There are a number of improvements that can be made, however: a more robust understanding of the far-right beyond ‘neo-Nazism’, better training and stricter guidelines for social media companies and the implementation of restorative justice.

\textsuperscript{37} Home Office, op. cit., paragraph 16.