

# Tackling Hate Crime in Partnership with South Manchester Communities Seminar Report

Saturday 14 August 2021  
British Muslim Heritage Centre  
Manchester



## Background

Tackling hate crime is one of our priorities and we believe that racism, including Islamophobia, in all its forms and manifestations constitutes the most serious threats to local, national and international peace. We will continue to work with our multi-faith and non-faith partners, including our political leaders and the media, to ensure that we are united in tackling racism and hate whenever and wherever it raises its despicable head.

Tackling hate crimes cannot be done by an individual organisation or the victims themselves, it must be a partnership approach, that is why we are pleased to embark on “Supporting Vulnerable People and Strengthening Partnership (S-VASP) Programme”. The programme supports vulnerable people subjected to hate crimes and strengthens the relationship between our diverse communities with a particular focus on vulnerable women in central Manchester. The programme partners include Greater Manchester Police (South Division), Manchester City Council and Victim Support. Our thanks to all those that took part in the seminar for their excellent contribution.



Nasar Mahmood OBE, Chair, British Muslim Heritage Centre



Cllr Rabnawaz Akbar, Manchester City Council



Saima Alvi, Vice-chair, British Muslim Heritage Centre.



Richard Timson , City of Manchester  
South District Commander, Greater Manchester Police




## Introduction

The Chair, Elinor Chohan MBE, DL welcomed everyone to the conference and remind the participants of keeping each other safe and suggested to everyone to use the face masks and hand sanitizers on the table because the treat of Covid-19 is still a concern. However, it as not compulsory to do so since the Government guidelines have been relaxed . She was really pleased to meet the participants in person people face after such a long shutdown. This was the British Muslim Heritage Centre first Seminar after a very challenging year due to the pandemic.

Elinor Chohan provided a background to racist and religious hate incidents which involve hostility and prejudice based on person's race or religion. It was noted that anyone can be the victim of a racist or religious hate incident. For example, someone may wrongly believe you to be a part of a certain racial group. Or someone may be targeted because of their religion or racial group. A racial group means a group of people who are defined by reference to their race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin. This includes, refugees and asylum seekers, Jews and Sikhs.

A religious group means a group of people who share the same religious belief such as Muslims, Hindus and Christians. It also includes people with no religious belief at all. Racist or religious hate incidents can take many forms including: -

- verbal and physical abuse
- bullying
- threatening behaviour
- online abuse
- damage to property



She stated that a hate crime can be a one-off incident or part of an ongoing campaign of harassment or intimidation. Hate incidents are not only carried out by strangers. It could be carried out by a neighbour, a teacher or someone that we consider a friend. So, when racist or religious hate incidents become criminal offences; they are known as hate crimes.

The seminar provided a comprehensive opportunity for understanding what the direct and indirect impacts are and why they are likely to occur. The seminar had important implications for the ways in which policy makers and practitioners respond to the impacts of hate-based victimisation. By understanding the types of emotions that hate incidents typically give rise to, and how each of these emotions predict certain behavioural and attitudinal responses, it is hoped that this report will help to enhance community and statutory responses to hate crime. He concluded her opening remarks and introduced the first speaker, Maqsood Ahmad OBE, Chief executive of the British Muslim Heritage Centre.

## Maqsood Ahmad OBE, Chief Executive

Emphasised that the Hate Crime in the Muslim Community was selected as a major point of discussion because it is the most commonly targeted group that experiences hate crimes. While he recognised that the Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities also face racism and discrimination, the Muslim Community has distinct characteristics that have allowed the BMHC to compare and contrast differences in both frequency of experiences of hate crimes and their impacts. For this reason, the BMHC chose to focus separately on Muslim individuals' experiences and reactions to anti-Muslim/Islamophobic hate crimes.

Manchester's Muslim Community comprises of groups that can be formal or informal, large or small, and include, for example, religious groups. Through sharing a group identity, individuals form attachments to the group and its members as a collective. Thus, when something good or bad happens to the group (or any of its members), it is felt by others as if it is happening to them and so can affect how they think, feel, and act – especially if the group is particularly important and meaningful to them.



For instance, if a person is attacked because they are from a particular faith group – as in the case of Islamophobia – other group members may feel like it is an attack on themselves and so are likely to be impacted in similar ways to that of the direct victim. Reactions to such attacks include increased feelings of anxiety, which are likely to result in individuals avoiding certain locations, and anger which may motivate individuals to provide support for victims and the community in general. Maqsood gave some examples of how hate crimes manifest themselves and how they impact the thoughts, feelings and actions of the Muslim Community: -

Physical assault and acts of vandalism can be described as either hate-motivated OR as random crimes

Hate crimes can be perpetrated either by one individual OR a group of perpetrators.

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Online hate material against the Muslim Community is usually unpleasant and can negatively impact the entire community.

Tougher prison sentences for hate crimes as compared to sentences for non-hate crimes should be considered as the use of “enhanced” prison sentences for perpetrators of hate crimes might act as a deterrent.

# Superintendent Umer Khan

## Greater Manchester Police

Hate crimes and hate incidents are major issues for GM Police because of their unique impact on victims as well as the community. Superintendent Khan began by explaining the differences between hate crimes and hate incidents and how to respond to both. A hate crime is a criminal offense committed against persons, property or society that is motivated, in whole or in part, by an offender's hatred against an individual's or a group's race, religion, ethnic/national origin, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation.

Hate crime statutes provide enhanced penalties for crimes in which victims are selected because of a perpetrator's hatred against a victim's perceived race, religion or ethnicity. Many states also classify as hate crimes those in which a victim is selected based on a perception of his/her sexual orientation. Hate crime definitions often encompass not only violence against individuals or groups but also crimes against property, such as arson or vandalism, particularly those directed against community centres or places of worship.

Supt. Khan felt that accurate and comprehensive police reporting is essential to understanding the prevalence and patterns of hate crimes both locally and nationally.

Hate crimes differ from other crimes in their effect on victims and on community stability. For Example:

Hate crimes are often especially brutal or injurious.

Victim(s) usually feel traumatised and terrified.

Families of victims often feel frustrated and powerless.

Others in the community who share the victim's characteristics may feel victimised and vulnerable.

Hate incidents can escalate and prompt retaliatory action.

Hate crimes and hate incidents create community-wide unrest.





A swift and strong response by the police can help stabilise and calm the community as well as aid in a victim's recovery. Failure to respond to hate crimes within set guidelines may jeopardise public safety and leave officers open to increased scrutiny and possible liability. Hate incidents involve behaviors motivated by hatred against a victim's race, religion, ethnic/national origin, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation, are extremely damaging to good community relations. Hostile or hateful speech, or other disrespectful/discriminatory behavior, damages community cohesion.

Police officers are trained to thoroughly document evidence in all cases where there is an element of hatred (for example, racially or religiously motivated incidents).

Police officers and have an important role to play in responding to hate incidents and crimes. By doing the job efficiently and carefully, police can reinforce the message that hate crimes will be investigated aggressively, thus enhancing the likelihood of a successful prosecution in the criminal law courts.

A victim's perception is an important factor to consider; but we must be aware that victims may not recognise the crime as motivated by hatred. Victims should not be asked directly whether they believe they were the victim of a hate crime; but it is sometimes more appropriate to ask if they have any idea why they might have been victimised.

Victims and perpetrators may appear to be from the same race, ethnicity/nationality, or religion; but it is the perpetrator's perception of difference (whether accurate or not) motivating his or her criminal behavior that would constitute a hate crime.

Victims of hate crimes are targeted because of a protected characteristic of their identity. These attributes cannot be changed. Victims often feel degraded, frightened, vulnerable and suspicious. This may be one of the most traumatic experiences of their lives. Community members who share with victims the characteristics that made them targets of hate (race, religion, ethnic/national origin, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation) may also feel vulnerable, fearful and powerless. In this emotional atmosphere, police officers are trained to deal carefully with the situation and to interact and communicate diligently with victims, their families and members of the community.

The community's perceptions about of the Police depends on a variety of factors. Some individuals, who become victims of a hate crime, sometimes perceive the police to be less effective at dealing with hate crimes.

This is why it is important for the police to provide a continuing point of contact throughout the investigation and prosecution phase, and where the police can facilitate a victim's co-operation with the criminal justice system. This assists with the healing process and promote credibility in the CJS.

The Police participate in meetings or other forums designed to address the community-wide impact of hate incidents or crimes. The Police share information, as appropriate, with schools about cases where students or staff were victims or perpetrators of hate crimes. The Police collaborate with community leaders to mobilise resources that can be used to assist victims and prevent future hate incidents and crimes.







## Dr Fatima Khan

Dr Khan who is an academic at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) used the following definition of hate crime and hate incidents, which is adapted from the College of Policing's guidance on hate crime:

*“Any criminal offence, or non-crime incident, which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice”*

Dr Khan's research examined the effects of prejudice and hostility directed against the Muslim Community and termed these crimes 'Islamophobic' hate crime. The use of these definitions of hate crime and hate incidents was important to her research as the study explored various types of hate-motivated conduct ranging from verbal abuse and online (cyber) abuse (which may or may not amount to a crime) through to property offences and crimes of violence.

Although a great deal of Dr Khan's research illustrated the highly damaging effects of hate crimes on direct victims, previous empirical investigations have overlooked or simply assumed how hate crimes affect other people in the targeted group. Dr Khan's main aim was to explicitly examine the indirect effects of hate crimes on the Muslim community. In doing so, she aimed to: -

- Understand the wider impacts of hate crime
- Raise awareness of hate crimes and their effects on communities
- Provide information on the attitudes and confidence levels amongst these communities on policing, criminal justice sanctions and government policy
- Work with individuals, community organisations, and the criminal justice agencies to develop and improve initiatives designed to combat hate crimes
- Stimulate further academic discussion and research on the effects of hate crime

Elizabeth Cameron is speaking at a podium during a panel discussion. She is wearing a black and white patterned dress and has long dark hair. A man in a suit and glasses is seated at a table in front of her, looking towards her. The background is a plain wall.

## Elizabeth Cameron Chair, GM Race Equality Panel

Elizabeth started off by saying that she was delighted to be here today and to reflect on various aspects of what society describes as hate crime. She went onto say that hate crime is a subject that has long concerned her, both as a woman of colour and as a social rights activist. Since being appointed as Chair of the GM Race Equality Panel, Elizabeth has made it one of her priorities to deal with tackling hate crime and she emphasised that it will remain a particular focus for her during her entire tenure as Chair.

Elizabeth welcomed this seminar and stated that hate crime of any kind, directed against any person, community or religion has absolutely no place in society. The main points of Elizabeth's presentation were as follows: -

Elizabeth examined the rise of 'race hate' that has emerged and flourished in British society in recent years. It was noted that many of the issues around race hate crime relate to deep-seated structural factors like socio-economic marginalisation and perceived challenges to hegemonic British identity. Dominant political discourses, as expressed and perpetuated within sections of the tabloid press and government policy surrounding immigration and asylum, facilitate this form of racism in the presence of other causal factors.

Tackling hate crime has always been a priority for the Mayor of Manchester, who set out his ambition in his manifesto prior to the Manchester Mayoral Elections in May 2021.

The right starting point for a discussion on racism is to ask, what is hate crime. Otherwise, it becomes difficult to understand whether or not everyone is talking about the same thing, or that we are catching all of the behaviours that need to be addressed and stamped out. It is good therefore to go back to the definition of hate crime:

***The most common and agreed definition of hate crime is:  
“any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person’s race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; disability or perceived disability and any crime motivated by a hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender”***

Perception and prejudices are important aspects of hate crime – they are barriers that must not be overlooked, and that society needs to address these barriers through education and training.

Elizabeth works extensively with GM Police to improve the collective response to hate crime and to improve recording of hate crime, so that a fuller picture of the scale of the problem can be presented and analysed.

Elizabeth continues in her efforts to bring together the operational leads within the Criminal Justice System (CJS) that deal with hate crime in order to establish a joined-up approach between GM Police, the CPS and other agencies to investigate and prosecute hate crime.

GM Police have a duty to ensure that the recording of religious hate crime includes the faith of a victim. The CPS has a robust programme of work in response to all strands of hate crime, including updating all of its legal guidance.

Elizabeth went onto describe her personal experiences of racism as a child growing in Manchester and advocated strengthening family and community ties to build resilience in children: -





Whether person of colour or a white person, it's important to start talking with children about race and racism early on and to continue the conversation as kids grow.

Talking to children about racism may seem daunting, but if parents and guardians can ensure that conversations are sensitive to a child's maturity level, then they will be able to address this difficult topic.

It's important to help children understand the world around them and prepare them for the difficult experiences that they may face. By doing this, parents also help make society more equitable by addressing race and racism with them.

One of the best ways to improve a child's confidence and foster a positive racial identity is to make sure they feel supported and connected to others. It important to undertake activities together as a family. Sign children up for activities like sports, dance, or art classes in the community. And get them to spend time with positive role models in the community.

## Cllr Yasmine Dar: Manchester City Council

Cllr Dar gave a heartfelt speech about her personal experiences of hate crime and hate incidents. It was noted that hate crimes take many forms, ranging from name calling and online trolling to more violent attacks and even murder. Hate crimes can have significant effects on victims, other people who know the victims, and others who hear about the crimes through friends or the media.

Cllr Dar outlined the different types of hate crimes that people experience directly, indirectly and through the media and she explained how the impact of these experiences. People can be victims of hate-motivated verbal abuse (e.g., shouted at), online abuse (e.g., trolling), vandalism (e.g., graffiti), physical assault (e.g., punched), and physical assault with a weapon (e.g., stabbed). In Manchester, Muslims are increasingly being made the victims of hate crimes and which remain a common experience for people who identify as Muslim. Many experience cyber bullying and some have been physically attacked. Muslims are also more likely to have been abused online, more likely to have been the victim of vandalism.

Being a victim of a hate crime or incident affected how people felt, thought and acted. In the surveys and longitudinal study we repeatedly found that being a victim of a hate crime has considerable impacts on individuals. It can:

- Alter their sense of safety making them feel more vulnerable and anxious
- Increase feelings of anger and injustice
- Lead to increased suspicion and social withdrawal
- Motivate increased community engagement through specialist groups and charities

Hate crime victimization is significant and varied. For some, it can lead to feeling anxious and avoidant, while for others it can lead to feeling angry and engaged. Furthermore, these feelings and behavioral changes may be felt by the same victim at different times. Moreover, Muslims are more likely to have known someone whose property had been vandalised and to have known someone who had been physically assaulted with a weapon.



## CLr Rabnawaz Akbar: Manchester City Council

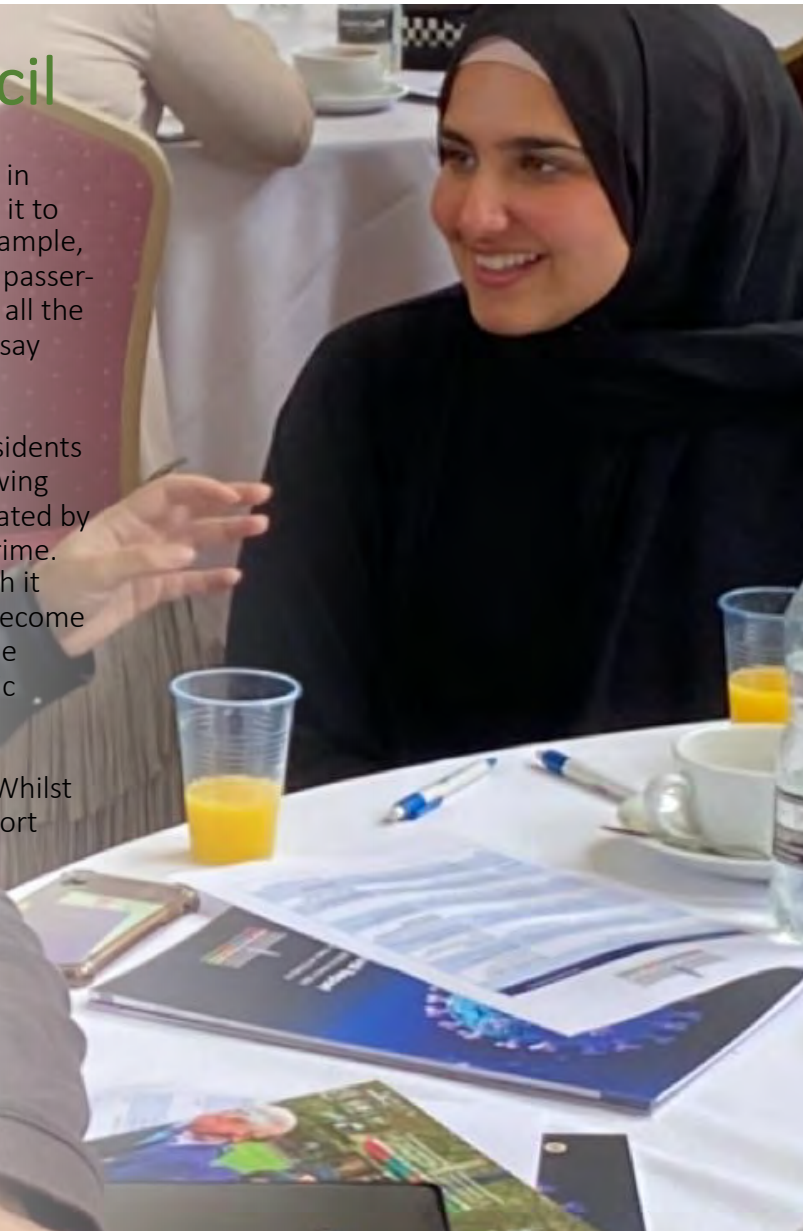
CLr Akbar provided racist or religious hate incidents into a personal context whilst he was growing up in West Yorkshire. He emphasised that if anyone experiences a hate incident or crime; they must report it to the police. Victims can also report a hate incident or crime even if it was not directed at them. For example, the hate could have been directed at a friend, neighbour, family member, support worker or simply a passer-by. Where people get harassed repeatedly by the same person or group of people, it is best to report all the incidents to help the police get the full picture. When reporting the incident or crime, people should say that they think it was motivated by hostility or prejudice based on race or religion.

CLr Akbar mentioned that many hate incidents happen near the victim's home. For example, local residents may get repeatedly harassed or intimidated by neighbours or local youths. Perpetrators may be throwing things like rubbish in their garden or damaging their property. Bullying in schools is sometimes motivated by hostility or prejudice based on race or religion. Bullying, if it is serious enough, could also be a hate crime. Bullying also includes cyber bullying. If someone child experience bullying, the school should deal with it under their behaviour policy. They should also co-operate with the police and social services if they become involved. If the school fails to deal with the bullying, people may have a discrimination claim under the Equality Act 2010. People should also be able to challenge the school's failure to act under their public sector equality duty.

CLr Akbar made reference to older people who were more likely to report hate crimes to the police. Whilst many young people, even if they have previously been a victim of a hate crime, were less likely to report hate crimes to the police. The explanations for not reporting hate crimes/incidents included: -

- That nothing much could be done about it
- That the incident was not serious enough to report
- That it would be a waste of police time and their time
- A lack of trust in the police
- Fear that the police might misuse personal details
- The responding police officer might be prejudiced

Young people tend to feel that they would only report incidents of serious violence but are therefore unlikely to report incidents of verbal abuse.





## The Hon. Afzal Khan CBE, MP

Mr Khan, who was a Criminal Defense Lawyer prior to becoming an MP, was critical of the progress made in the 22 years since [the Macpherson report](#) into why the killers of Stephen Lawrence were allowed to go free. He felt that the Government has done too little to stamp out racial injustice thus creating a systemic that leads to unjustified inequalities.

As a society, we are for failing to take racial justice seriously enough. There are deep-rooted and persistent racial disparities.

Mr Khan discusses his concerns with his Parliamentarians over the way the Criminal Justice System (CJS) deals with hate crimes. Feels that the way we deal with hate Crime must be debated in the Commons.

Mr Khan stated warned of the dangers of the far right and fascist political parties, such as the British National Party (BNP). The BNP is implacably opposed to Islam and Muslims and that they use immigration policy as a means to attack Islam, which they believe to be incompatible with their fascist ideology.



## Tackling Islamophobia as a Hate Crime. Round Table Recommendations

The recommendations of the Round Table discussions were wide-ranging and demand multi-agency responses. They discussions fall into four categories: Understanding, Reporting, Responding and Preventing which could be covered through the following recommendations:

- 1: **GM Police and partners develop a strategy** based around the four categories, beginning with understanding what hate crime, and in particular Islamophobia, means to victims, through to the most appropriate responses and working reporting mechanisms.
- 2: **supporting and preventing hate crime:** ensuring that the public and potential victims are informed and empowered to report Islamophobia and that the appropriate services and channels are in place to enable them to do so. This includes being proactive in the identification of people and communities at risk of hate crime s including islamophobia.
3. **Training of police officers and partners including communities** to ensure that they respond, reassure, prevent and support victims of Islamophobia.



# Understanding

- GMP to review and confirm their own definition of Islamophobia as a hate crime and make this publicly available in appropriate formats for all groups (for example. easy read, BSL, speech etc.).
- Ensure that the revised definition provides an educational function: involve diverse groups to explain to staff, officers and other stakeholders what Islamophobia really looks like.
- To deter offending, use best practice from here and elsewhere to work with partners to develop education streams to inform young people about Islamophobia and the protected characteristics.
- GMP should consider how this links with their Young Person's strategy and other programmes within Manchester and linking up with Manchester City Council (MCC).
- Analyse police and partner data, including dip sampling hate crime incidents reported to GMP to inform practice and develop targeted interventions in districts and within communities where hate crime is more frequent.
- Identify which communities are most at risk in each geographical area and work with local organisations including the third sector (e.g. Mosques) to reassure, develop relationships and increase reporting.
- Develop the role of Independent local Advisory Groups (IAGs) to be more than a 'critical friend' to the police and offer specific, structured insights about diverse communities. IAGs could be utilised in a different way as an information source to provide guidance to the police about specific nuances of diverse communities



## Reporting

- Carry out a review of reporting mechanisms, including third party reporting centres and develop a new programme based around user need. Ensure that reporting mechanisms are effectively marketed so that services are fully accessible, and people understand how they can report incidents.
- A community training programme on tackling hate crimes should be developed targeting community influencers and faith groups and institutions.
- Train the community influencers including young people and women to cascade the training to other groups and organisations.
- Internally, review existing methods for contacting GMP and the accessibility of these options, both emergency and non-emergency.
- Ensure that current methods of communication with disability groups, particularly deaf/hard of hearing and those with speech impediments are prompted to diverse communities. Work with BSL users to give practical advice to officers and public facing staff to maximise communication where an interpreter is not readily available.



# Responding

- There is an apparent lack of confidence in GMP to respond to perceived 'low level' crime. The high level of unreported incidents indicates that hate crime / Islamophobia is a problem that is not being understood effectively. In addition, feedback from victims suggests low level hate crime can be seen and treated as anti-social behaviour (ASB).
- Even when hate crime is 'no further action-ed,' officers must be confident in recommending and advising on support networks, specifically Supporting Victims. Setting up third Party reporting within community organisations was suggested.
- Consider how victims could be utilised to contribute to improved response and understanding of hate crime by officers. Build on the work done in the past using victim videos.
- Measure how effective current Equality & Diversity training is against demographics of GMP – is it tailored to the makeup of the region? Are there gaps, for example, African Muslims have their own culture and is GMP able to respond effectively to their needs?
- Ensure sufficient awareness is given of different disabilities and suitable and available methods of response. For example, the deployment of non-uniformed officers to vulnerable people who may be frightened of the police.
- Review BAME training for officers and staff to ensure that awareness of local diverse groups is current. Encourage officers to ask questions sensitively and check how individuals wish to be addressed.



## Preventing

- GMP to review existing crime prevention advice and, working with local faith groups, produce appropriate format information on safety and where to seek help and advice, improving engagement with those communities. Link with the Crime Prevention Strategy.
- Consider how partners and volunteers could speak to diverse groups as part of crime prevention and community safety role. Understand what cultural opportunities exist to build relationships and who is best placed to develop them.
- Consider hate crime on public transport as a serious risk, particularly to those with visible differences (for example, woman wearing headscarf).
- Work with local authorities, BTP and other partners to address issues surrounding transport, identify which routes are most problematic and why.
- Establish a review board to implement changes with key partners and organisations.
- Involve taxi drivers, restaurant owners, door staff and others working in the night-time economy to raise awareness of racism and how to report it.
- Include hate crime as part of vulnerability training for GMP Officers.



## Concluding Remarks

Elinor Chohan, chair for the seminar concluded by stating that the British Muslim Heritage Centre was founded on certain fundamental values and the principle of the rule of law. These essential values have been brought to the fore today in this seminar so that human rights' obligations are fully respected. Despite all this, we still witness intolerance in our societies and hates crimes against other persons based on the mere fact that someone is 'different'.

I welcome the fact that Greater Manchester Police and other strategic partners have placed particular focus on tackling hate crime and have drawn up plans to prepare a comprehensive strategy to combat hate crime. The discussions and insights arising from this seminar will greatly contribute to tackling hate crime of all types, such as racism, through criminal law. This seminar has mainly focused on the victims, those who have suffered crimes. Today we discussed not only about the current situation in combating hate crimes, but also, which is no less important, about ways of reacting to such crimes (namely, legal measures, but also education) and what improvements are needed.

Moreover, we considered new challenges arising from modern society, such as manifestations of hate on the internet and other related issues. At the same time, we kept an eye on the wider context, in so far as hate crimes threaten society or certain parts of it. Clearly, we must learn lessons from the past, when human dignity was denied through intolerance, discrimination and hatred targeted at those who were deemed 'different'; we must learn also from our history where ideologies preaching hate ended in human tragedies committed against a particular nation or groups of persons characterised as being 'different'.

We should remember that combating hate crimes is not just a question for our public authorities. The support and input of all members of society, and of academia, is extremely important. As a result, events and discussions such as those held today are absolutely essential. The discussions during this seminar have shown that we in Greater Manchester are ready to face up to our shortcomings, we don't conceal them; we view the challenges, we try to tackle them and move forward. For all these reasons, let me thank you once again for attending and participating in this ground-breaking seminar. She thanked all the excellent speakers and participants for their fabulous contribution.





Thank you everyone