

OFFICIAL STATEMENT

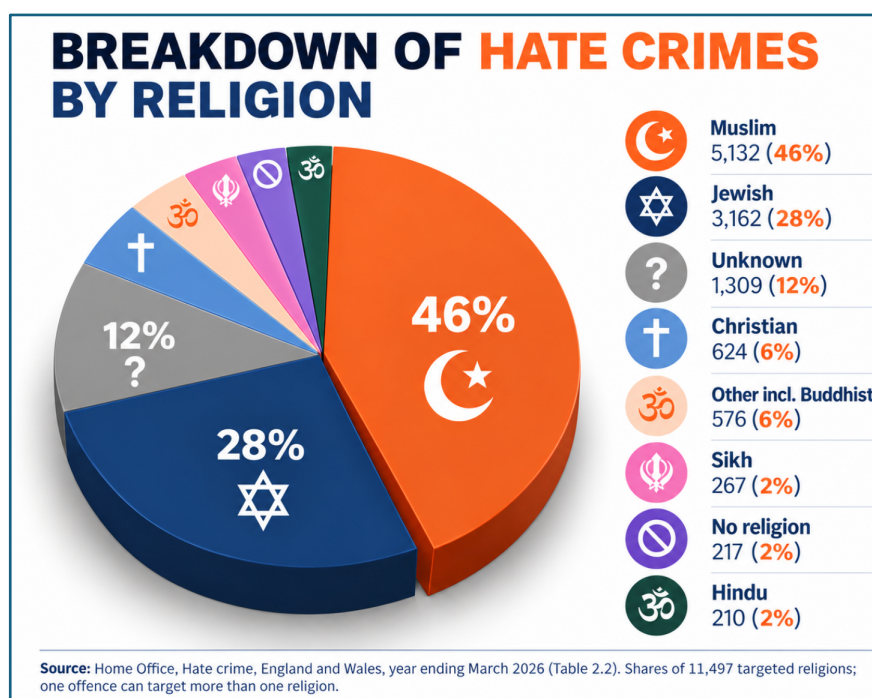
Hate crimes targeting Muslims rise 15% as IRU warns the true scale is far higher

Islamophobia Response Unit (IRU) | 8 October 2026

Today the Home Office published its annual statistics on hate crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales for the year ending March 2026. The figures show a 15% rise in religious hate crimes targeting Muslims, who remain the most targeted faith group. This statement sets out what the official figures show, what they do not show, and what the IRU is seeing through its own casework.

What the official figures show

- Police recorded 146,825 hate crimes in England and Wales, an increase of 7% on the previous year.
- Religious hate crimes rose by 13%, from 10,067 to 11,419 offences.
- Offences targeting Muslims rose by 15%, from 4,479 to 5,132. Muslims were the target of 46% of religious hate crimes where the targeted religion was recorded, more than any other faith group.**
- Excluding the Metropolitan Police, whose figures are not comparable with earlier years, **offences targeting Muslims reached 3,660 - the highest level since this data was first collected in the year ending March 2018.**
- Offences targeting Muslims rose sharply in September 2025, a period of protests and public disorder, and in March 2026, after the start of the US–Iran conflict. These were the second and third highest monthly totals recorded. The highest followed the Southport murders and the disorder that came after them in August 2024.



What the official figures do not show

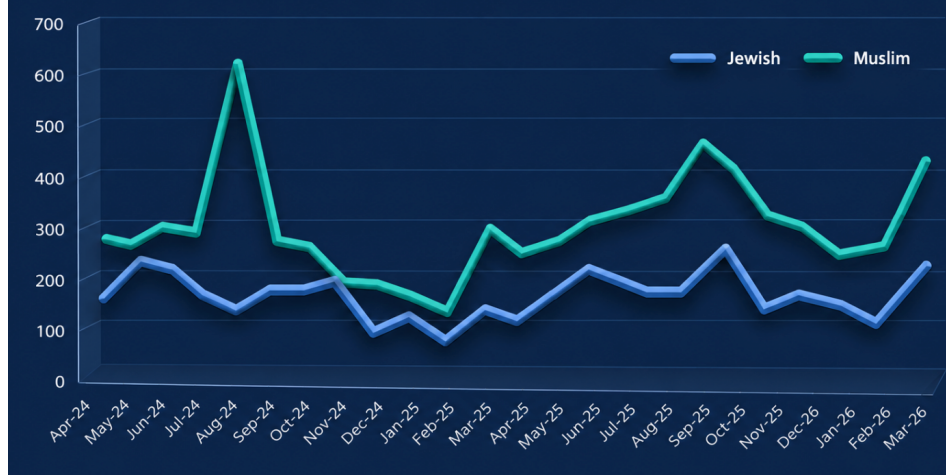
The Home Office itself states that police figures "should also not be seen as a good measure of prevalence since not all hate crime is reported to them." Its figures also depend on the police correctly flagging an offence as a hate crime in the first place. In the latest year, the targeted religion was recorded as "unknown" in 1,309 religious hate crimes, 12% of the total.

The government's own Crime Survey (Eng/Wales) estimates that on average, around 0.8% of Muslims experience a religious hate crime each year. The Home Office acknowledges that differences between the survey and police figures may reflect how likely people are to report a crime to the police.

Even where hate crimes are recorded, few reach court. **Only 10% of hate crime offences recorded last year had resulted in a charge or summons** when the data was extracted, and just over half (51%) of violent hate crimes were closed because of evidential difficulties.

This matches the IRU's experience. Through our work with clients, partners and community stakeholders, we know that many Muslims who experience hate crime never report it. Some do not believe they will be taken seriously. Others fear further harm, or have reported before and seen nothing happen. Where incidents are reported, they are not always recorded as hate crimes or investigated properly. The true scale of Islamophobic hate crime is therefore significantly higher than the official statistics show.

Figure 2.3 Number of religious hate crimes targeted against Jews and Muslims by month, year ending March 2025 and March 2026 (33 forces)

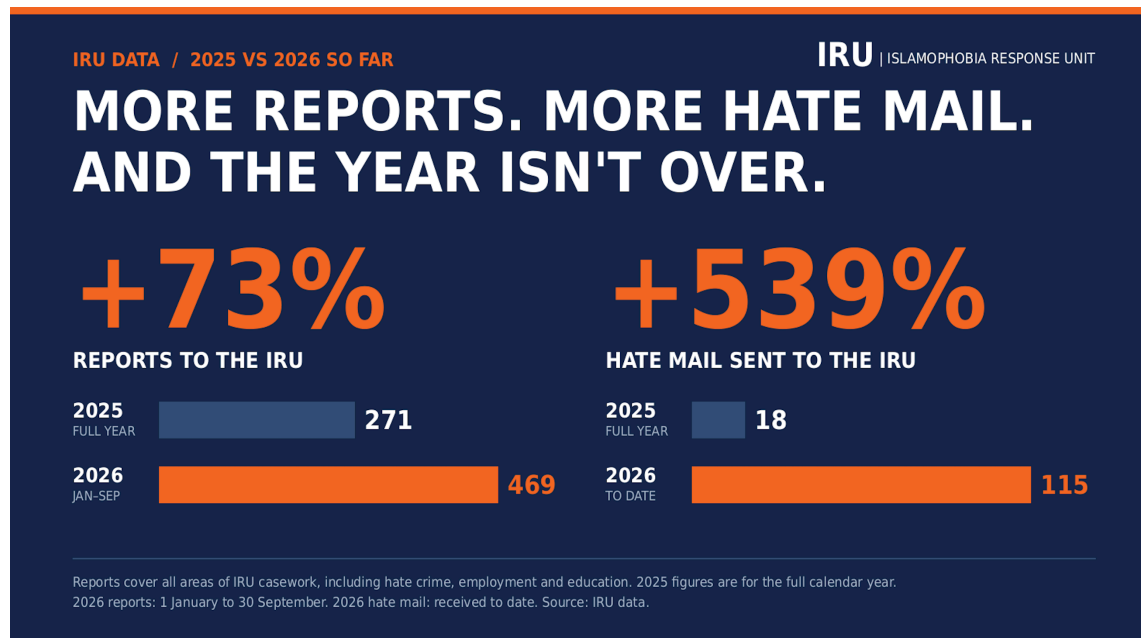


There was a 15% rise in religious hate crimes targeted at Muslims in the last year (from 4,479 to 5,132 offences). Figure 2.3, for 33 forces, shows a rise in these offences in September 2025, which coincided with a number of protests and incidents of public disorder, and March 2026, following the beginning of the USA-Iran conflict on the 28 February. These months represented the 2nd and 3rd highest monthly totals for these offences. The largest spike, recorded in August 2024, coincided with the Southport murders on the 29 July and the subsequent disorder across several English towns and cities. Excluding the MPS, these offences were at their highest annual level (3,660) since this data was first collected in the year ending March 2018 (Credit: Gov .UK)

What the IRU is seeing

Between 1 January and 30 September 2026, the IRU received 469 reports of Islamophobia across hate crime, employment, education and other areas of discrimination, an increase of **73% on the whole of 2025** (271). These reports have come in even as new reporting services have entered the sector, including the government's own funded reporting partner, established in July 2025. We are aware of people who have chosen to report elsewhere, so our figures reflect only part of the need we know exists.

The IRU has also seen a sharp rise in hate mail sent to the organisation itself. We have received 115 **hate mail emails** so far in 2026, compared with 18 in the whole of 2025. **That is an increase of 539%, with almost three months of the year still to go.**



Case study: an example of the IRU's hate crime casework

Idris (not his real name) was running late for evening prayers and hurrying to the mosque when, it is alleged, another resident of his building confronted him in the communal lift. When Idris said he was on his way to the mosque, the man reportedly became increasingly aggressive. As Idris tried to leave the lift, he was knocked to the floor, pinned against a wall and repeatedly struck in the head.

Idris suffered multiple facial fractures requiring extensive surgery, as well as significant psychological trauma. He became afraid to leave his own home.

The incident was reported to the police immediately. Yet no immediate action was taken to apprehend the suspect or to protect Idris. The incident was not recorded as a hate crime, and it was not investigated promptly or effectively. After several weeks without any update, Idris, feeling unsafe and unheard, contacted the IRU.

We acted straight away. We liaised with the police to ensure the incident was recorded as a hate crime and pressed for a proper investigation. We also pushed for practical steps to keep Idris safe, including the installation of a panic alarm and proactive efforts to arrest the suspect. After extensive correspondence and escalation through the police complaints process, a man was arrested and charged with assault.

Alongside this, we helped Idris secure alternative accommodation, connected him with wellbeing support and have guided him through each stage of the criminal justice process. The case is now heading to trial, and we continue to support him.

Statement from the IRU's CEO

"Hate crimes against Muslims have risen by 15% in a single year, and Muslims remain the most targeted faith group. The Home Office itself accepts that these figures are not a good measure of how much hate crime actually happens, because not all of it is reported. That is exactly what we see. Many of the people who come to us have never reported to the police, or have reported and seen their case go unrecorded as a hate crime. Even the hate mail sent to our own organisation has risen more than sixfold this year. Every community targeted by hate deserves protection, and these figures should be treated as a floor, not a ceiling."

Majid Iqbal, CEO, Islamophobia Response Unit

What the IRU is calling for

- Police forces to record Islamophobic hate crimes correctly from the first point of contact.
- Religiously aggravated charges to be pursued wherever the evidence supports them.
- Equal protection and support for all faith communities targeted by hate crime.
- Anyone who has experienced Islamophobia to report it, including to the IRU, which offers free legal support.

The IRU also calls on the government to work with Muslim communities to appoint the Special Representative on Anti-Muslim Hostility. The post was promised in the government's social cohesion strategy, Protecting What Matters, published in March alongside its formal definition of anti-Muslim hostility. Seven months on, the post remains unfilled. A definition without a dedicated champion to put it into practice risks remaining words on paper while Muslim communities continue to face rising hostility.

About the IRU

The Islamophobia Response Unit (IRU) is a registered charity (No. 1196838) providing free legal casework, advice and advocacy to people affected by Islamophobia across England and Wales. It is the only charity run by lawyers dedicated exclusively to this casework in England and Wales, supported by around 70 volunteer caseworkers and 25 volunteer supervisors. To report Islamophobia or make an enquiry, contact info@theiru.org.uk or 0203 904 6555.

Source

Home Office, Hate crime, England and Wales, year ending March 2026, published 8 October 2026: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-year-ending-march-2026/hate-crime-england-and-wales-year-ending-march-2026>

Case study details have been anonymised and are shared with the client's consent. Criminal proceedings in this case are ongoing.