

## Britain Is Treating Muslims as Criminals Just for Believing that the Islamic Political System is Better than Their System

### News:

On 9 March 2026, the UK government unveiled its *Protecting What Matters* action plan, embedding the 2024 extremism definition across government and frontline bodies, promising an annual “State of Extremism” report structured around “Islamism, the Extreme Right, and the Extreme Left,” expanding Charity Commission powers to suspend trustees and close charities, and tightening university oversight through a new “Cohesion Charter” and monitoring of even “non-violent extremism” and “divisive or intolerant narratives” thought linkable to terrorism.

### Comment:

Britain says it is defending cohesion. What it is actually normalising is ideological policing. England and Wales abolished the old common-law offences of blasphemy and blasphemous libel in 2008, but now a new form of secular blasphemy is being put in place that targets primarily Muslims. The state once punished offences against sacred doctrine; now it builds administrative machinery to stigmatise, isolate and suppress beliefs judged beyond acceptable public orthodoxy. That is why the comparison with heresy law fits. The object is no longer Christian dogma, but the ideological boundaries of the liberal state that feels threatened by Islamic belief.

The most revealing part of the new plan is that it is not confined to violence. Universities are told specifically to watch for “non-violent extremism,” including “divisive or intolerant narratives” that can “reasonably be linked to terrorism.” Students’ “conduct and engagement” are to be shaped by a Cohesion Charter designed around what supports or “undermines” campus cohesion. The Home Office will add a “horizon-scanning” function covering campuses, student unions, charities, hireable venues and community spaces. This is how thought crime is bureaucratised: not by banning one sentence outright, but by teaching institutions to identify dangerous atmospheres, suspect associations and unacceptable patterns of belief.

The official balancing language does not change who will feel the weight of this system. The strategy names several ideological threats, but it explicitly says “Islamist extremism is a predominant threat” and defines Islamism around imposing “sharia” through state power and aspiring to a global caliphate. In practice, that framing has long turned Muslim political consciousness into a permanent object of suspicion. The issue is not simply violence; it is that lawful Muslim activism, charities, student groups and public dissent are repeatedly treated as being one step away from illegitimacy. That was already visible when on 14 March 2024, Michael Gove’s department announced a new, non-statutory definition of extremism and he specifically warned about the danger of “Islamist orientation and views.” The government said this was a response to the post 7<sup>th</sup> of October climate and wanted

a tougher framework than the old 2011 'Prevent' definition. The 2024 definition said extremism is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on "violence, hatred or intolerance" aimed at destroying others' rights, replacing liberal parliamentary democracy, or creating a "permissive environment" for others to do so. The older 2011 Prevent wording had defined extremism more broadly as "vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values."

There is also a sharp hypocrisy in the timing. In the same package, ministers adopted a non-statutory definition of anti-Muslim hostility after reporting 4,478 anti-Muslim hate crimes in the year to March 2025, almost half of all religious hate crimes in England and Wales. That threat is real. Muslims are abused, harassed and attacked. But the state's answer is split in two: with one hand it acknowledges anti-Muslim hostility; with the other it deepens an extremism architecture that will continue to fall most heavily on Muslim civic life. Muslims are thus recognised as vulnerable citizens and managed as suspect political subjects at the same time.

A decade ago, the police lead for Prevent warned that similar plans risked creating "thought police" who would become judges of "what people can and can not say." This week, even a Conservative frontbencher attacking the new anti-Muslim hostility definition warned of a "back-door blasphemy law." These lone voices have identified the danger: once the state moves from punishing acts to classifying beliefs, so-called free and democratic Britain is turning secularism into a state religion and those who question it are the new blasphemers.

So Britain is reviving its medieval logic. Define orthodoxy. Mark dissenting tendencies as dangerous. Pressure charities, universities and public bodies to report, exclude and deplatform them. Present all of it as moderation. Muslims are the first community placed under this intensified doctrinal gaze because the discussion of "extremism" in Britain has for years been disproportionately focused upon Islam, even while Muslims themselves are constantly vilified in the media and are the target of ever increasing hate crimes.

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