

# Evidence for the Home Affairs Select Committee on Hate and Discrimination on the UK Sikh Community

Developed by the [Sikh Network](#) Source [UK Sikh Survey 2016](#)

## BACKGROUND

There has been a significant rise in discrimination and serious hate crime towards Sikhs and Sikh institutions linked to wider terror attacks and more recently behavioural and attitude changes post Brexit. Given that very little if any data is collected or monitored on the Sikh community by local authorities including the police, it makes it very difficult to address the specific crimes linked to the very visible Sikh identity.

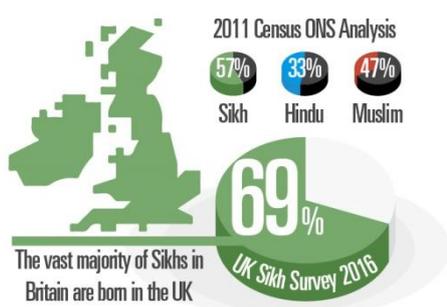
To address this data gap the Sikh Network, who also published the [Sikh Manifesto](#) in 2015, launched the UK Sikh Survey to collate much needed empirical data.

The UK Sikh Survey 2016 findings report was formally released in Parliament on 15 November 2016. It is the largest and most comprehensive ever UK survey of Sikhs with over 4,500 respondents aged 16 and over. Responses have come from Sikhs from all 12 regions of the UK with a good gender and age mix. The Sikh Network who developed and managed the survey has gone to great lengths to get responses from Sikhs across the spectrum in terms of their identity. 58% of respondents are not turban wearing and 48% have described themselves as those who do not have uncut hair. <http://www.thesikhnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/UK-Sikh-Survey-2016-Findings-FINAL.pdf>

Below we have highlighted the key findings of the Survey focused around hate crime and discrimination for submission to the Home Affairs Select Committee for consideration. We have also included links to a range of serious hate crimes against Sikhs in recent times.

## IDENTITY

### The vast majority of Sikhs in Britain are born in the UK



The UK Sikh Survey 2016 shows 62% of Sikhs aged 16 and over are born in the UK. The last ONS Census in 2011 showed 57% of Sikhs were born in the UK, compared to 47% of Muslims and 33% of Hindus. At the last Census Sikhs had one of the youngest age profiles with over 34% of Sikhs under the age of 24. Given most Sikhs under 16 will be born in the UK this suggests an estimated 69% of all Sikhs are born in the UK. By the Census 2021 around 75% of Sikhs are expected to be born in the UK.

The age profile of those born in the UK has wide ranging implications for local and national decision making bodies.

### Over 91% of Sikhs in the UK have British nationality

A staggering 89% of Sikh respondents to the UK Sikh Survey 2016 aged 16 and over described their nationality as British. Adjusting for those under the age of 16 this rises to just over 91%. In comparison an estimated 40% of Hindus have retained Indian nationality instead of choosing to become British nationals. The last available Annual Population Survey (APS) for the year ended 31 December 2014 that builds on the Labour Force Survey (LFS) showed 91.7% of the UK population was British. Ten years earlier only 1 in 20 (5.0%) of the resident population in the UK were non-British



nationals, but this had risen to 1 in 12 (8.4%) by 2014 with an 80% increase in non-British nationals mainly driven by an increase in residents holding EU nationality. For example, less than 4% of the estimated 800,000 from Poland have changed their nationality to become British.

## **DISCRIMINATION & HATE CRIME**

### **1 in 7 Sikhs directly experience discrimination in the workplace**



14% of Sikhs (or 1 in 7) have directly experienced discrimination in the workplace in the last 12 months. 1 in 6 Sikhs that keep uncut hair (men and women) have faced the highest levels of discrimination in the last 12 months closely followed by turban wearing Sikhs (who are generally men, but can also be women).

### **Sikhs encounter unacceptably high levels of discrimination in their daily lives in public spaces**

18% of Sikhs (nearly 1 in 5) have encountered discrimination in a public place (such as a store, airport, sporting venue etc.) in the last 12 months. The most common example given is airports (UK and abroad), others include public transport, sporting events, shopping, at school, in restaurants and coffee shops, in cinemas, at theme parks, at tourist attractions, at the doctors, in hospital or simply walking on the street. The turban and Kirpan appear to be the key triggers. The percentage of Sikh men encountering discrimination is almost 21% compared to 15% of Sikh women. Interestingly those aged 20-40 experience the highest levels of discrimination as they probably have the greatest interaction in all aspects of the British way of life.



Nearly 1 in 5 Sikhs encounter unacceptably high levels of discrimination in their daily lives in public spaces

### **Sikhs suffer unsatisfactory discrimination at the hands of public officials**



8% (or 1 in 12) have experienced discrimination when dealing with public officials (such as local government officials, police officers, health workers, teachers etc.) in the last 12 months. The most common example quoted was police officers, but also included teachers and lecturers, doctors, nurses, local council staff, and not surprisingly security staff at airports and immigration officers. The percentage of Sikh men experiencing discrimination is almost 9.5% compared to 6% of Sikh women. In terms of age the highest percentage were Sikhs in their twenties.

### **Over 100,000 hate crimes against Sikhs in the last 12 months**



21% (more than 1 in 5) have personally experienced race hate crime i.e. verbal or physical abuse in the last 12 months. That equates to over 100,000 hate crimes against Sikhs aged 16 and over in the last 12 months. Our view is the UK Government and public bodies have

systematically failed the minority Sikh community by not adequately responding to the disproportionate impact of racism and hate crime targeting Sikhs since 9/11. The Hate Crime Action Plan published in July 2016 was an excellent example of how Sikhs are 'invisible' to decision makers and senior politicians. The Home Secretary and Secretary of State at the Department for Communities and Local Government have to date been unable to address the concerns we raised after the Hate Crime Action Plan was published.

# **ISSUES RAISED WITH THE HOME SECRETARY AND CABINET OFFICE**

## **Race Hate Action Plan**

In July 2016 the Home Secretary and Communities Secretary jointly launched a Hate Crime Action Plan. This was a specific plan to review and tackle hate crime in relation to faith communities in the UK. Disappointingly Sikhs were more or less completely ignored in the action plan.

We subsequently learnt the case of a Sikh man racially attacked in North Wales (listed below) was a specific case study in the draft Hate Crime Action Plan shared with the Cabinet Office. A Home Office official confirmed the case was removed by No.10. This was very upsetting and shocking given the increasing number and seriousness of race hate crimes against Sikhs, especially given their distinct visible identity.

This later formed part of the question posed by Preet Kaur Gill MP to the Home Secretary Rt. Hon. Amber Rudd MP during the Home Affairs Select Committee hearing in September 2017.

## **Race Disparity Audit**

Following the announcement by the Prime Minister in August 2016 to launch a Race Disparity Audit looking across all government departments, there was much anticipation and expectation for the largely invisible but discriminated Sikh community.

However further disappointment continued as the Cabinet Office confirmed to the Sikh Network and Sikh Federation (UK) in a meeting to discuss the scope of the audit, that Sikhs would not be included within the Race Disparity Audit as there was no data currently collected on the community despite Sikhs being legally recognised as a racial/ethnic group. As the audit was using the ethnicity categories defined by the Office for National Statistics in the Census 2011, which excludes Sikhs, despite them being legally recognised as both an ethnic group and religion following the ruling in the House of Lords *Mandla vs Lee* case from 1983.

Questions have been raised with the Cabinet Office about how it intends to deal with this apparent data gap for future audits and to ensure compliance with the law.

## RECENT SERIOUS CASES OF HATE CRIME AGAINST SIKHS

1. Teen jailed for sickening unprovoked attack on 80-year-old Sikh man

<http://www.itv.com/news/central/story/2014-05-09/teen-jailed-for-sickening-attack-on-80-year-old-man/>

<https://www.coventrytelegraph.net/news/coventry-news/teenager-wyken-jailed-attack-80-year-old-7098845>

2. 'Dangerous racist' inspired by Jihadi John who tried to behead a Sikh dentist in Tesco in revenge for Lee Rigby's murder is jailed for life

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3230910/Dangerous-racist-inspired-Jihadi-John-tried-behead-Sikh-dentist-Tesco-revenge-Lee-Rigby-s-murder-jailed-life.html>

'An act of terror': Sikh family of dentist attacked in Tesco by machete-wielding extremist speak out

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/an-act-terror-sikh-family-9528045>

3. Police apology over caution for woman who burned taxi driver's turban

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-30289596>

4. Sickening footage of Sikh man being beaten up in 'race hate' attack in Birmingham city centre

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3019306/Sickening-footage-Sikh-man-beaten-suspected-race-hate-attack-Birmingham-city-centre.html>

5. Sikh Postmaster stabbed in the neck and head in shocking attack caught on CCTV

<http://metro.co.uk/2017/07/04/postmaster-stabbed-in-the-neck-and-head-in-shocking-attack-caught-on-cctv-6755361/>

6. "Like hanging him in public": Sikh man shunned after drunk yob ripped off his turban for a joke

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/shame-sikh-father-after-drunken-1732795>