



15 December 2025

MEDIA STATEMENT

Anti-Muslim Hostility Definition – Response from Baroness Gohir

Baroness Shaista Gohir, CEO of the Muslim Women’s Network UK, was a member of the government working group to provide independent advice on the definition of Islamophobia / anti-Muslim hatred. Following the publication of the definition by the BBC, Baroness Gohir is sharing the following comments and thoughts:

“I can confirm that the definition published by the BBC is the same as the advice the working group submitted to the government in October. The group is, however, still awaiting a formal response from the government on whether or not the advice will be accepted.

Since the work began in March, there has been widespread misinformation circulating about the wording of the definition including misleading interpretations of its implications. These narratives have been dominated by those who do not want strengthened protections for Muslims. I have chosen to independently comment now because it is time more Muslim voices are given public space to share why it is important for the government to formally support a definition.

I believe the working group has achieved the right balance, safeguarding individuals while avoiding overreach, as free speech (including the right to critique religion) remain protected. The definition also recognises that Muslims are frequently targeted not only for their beliefs but also because of their appearance, race, ethnicity, or other characteristics. Including the element of racialisation validates these lived experiences.

At present, most Muslims do not report incidents of anti-Muslim hostility. They are far more likely to come forward when their experiences are clearly reflected in an agreed definition. The definition will also strengthen accountability and make it harder for legitimate concerns to be ignored or dismissed as has been reported to us via our Muslim Safety Net helpline. Careful consideration of terminology was also essential in accurately describing the issue in a range of settings, which is why the term ‘anti-Muslim hostility’ was recommended.

Muslims are not seeking special treatment, which has been wrongly suggested by some. The definition does not create new rights or protections; rather, it helps institutions, employers, service providers, the police and regulators etc., to understand and recognise what anti-Muslim hostility looks like in practice. This enables existing laws and policies to be applied more consistently across different situations and sectors while reducing confusion caused by multiple definitions.

I urge the government to adopt the working group's advice without delay and to move swiftly to support its practical application—beginning with government departments while also encouraging the development of sector-specific guidance and examples to ensure the definition is understood and implemented effectively. I look forward to continuing to support the government on this important work.”

Tackling anti-Muslim hatred is a core part of MWNUK's charitable objectives, particularly because Muslim women are disproportionately affected. We are therefore sharing Baroness Gohir's reflections to support informed discussion and encourage wider engagement with this important issue.

Anti-Muslim Hostility can be reported to Muslim Safety Net via 0303 330 0288 or its online form: <https://www.muslimsafetynet.org.uk/report>

Additional Information

1. For comments get in touch via – contact@mw nuk.co.uk / 0121 236 9000
2. Muslim Women's Network UK (MWNUK) is a registered charity (no.1155092) and further information can be found on <https://www.mw nuk.co.uk>