

Combating Anti Muslim Hatred: UK statement to the OSCE

19.3.2026 - James Ford | Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

Deputy Ambassador James Ford reaffirms the UK's commitment to tackling anti Muslim hatred and promoting tolerance and non-discrimination and the enjoyment of human rights for all.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The United Kingdom reiterates its firm commitment to tolerance, non-discrimination, and the full enjoyment of human rights for all. These principles are at the heart of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. When they are undermined, our societies become less cohesive, less resilient, and less safe.

We thank Türkiye for raising this important issue today. Anti-Muslim hatred is a serious and persistent problem across the OSCE area. No one should face intimidation, discrimination or violence because they are Muslim or perceived to be Muslim.

According to the UK's most recent official statistics, 45% of police-recorded religious hate crimes targeted Muslims - a level that has been high for many years. This month, the UK Government adopted a new non-statutory definition of Anti-Muslim Hostility. This definition was informed by the work of an independent expert working group and a broad evidence-gathering process.

The definition has a clear purpose within the UK: to improve understanding of unacceptable hostility targeting Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim, and to provide a practical framework for action. The definition helps public authorities, employers and services recognise when behaviour crosses the line into targeted hostility, unlawful discrimination or prejudicial stereotyping intended to encourage hatred.

Domestically, this sits alongside wider work to tackle all forms of religiously motivated hate crime and to strengthen social cohesion. The UK continues to support security measures for places of worship, to fund monitoring and victim-support services, and to promote dialogue between communities. We recognise that antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred and other forms of hatred often rise together and must be addressed together.

Internationally, the UK remains committed to championing freedom of religion or belief for all, and to implementing our OSCE human dimension commitments. We will continue to support ODIHR and the OSCE's Personal Representatives on tolerance and non-discrimination, and to share good practice, including on the implementation of non-statutory definitions at a national level such as the IHRA working definition of antisemitism and, now, our definition of Anti-Muslim Hostility.

Across the OSCE region, we must resist efforts to instrumentalise religion for political ends, and we must confront disinformation and narratives that inflame tensions between communities. The United Kingdom will continue to work with participating States, OSCE institutions and civil society to ensure that every individual can live free from fear, and that diversity is recognised as a source of strength, not division.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/combating-anti-muslim-hatred-uk-statement-to-the-osce>