

Busted

6 myths about
Muslims



Great Britain is one of the most diverse countries, with people from all over the world bringing innovation, prosperity and vibrancy to our society. However, every year thousands of people suffer prejudice because of misconceptions regarding their identity, beliefs or economic status. Our myth busting guides aim to challenge common misconceptions and negative stereotypes towards minority communities, in order to create awareness and promote better understanding.

Hate crimes and incidents have surged nationally following the result of the EU referendum in 2016. If left unchallenged, these crimes can tear communities apart, leaving scars that may take years to heal. This resource aims to counter the common assumptions made about Muslims living in the UK, whose resilience, hard work and humanity get overlooked in today's turbulent media and politics.

1. All Muslims are immigrants and are from Pakistan

Islam is a religion of **1.8 billion followers worldwide** and encompasses a wide range of ethnicities, cultures and traditions. **In the UK**, there are over **2.5 million Muslims**, **8%** of whom are **White British**.

According to the 2011 census, the ethnic diversity of British Muslims shows that **68%** of British Muslims are of **Asian origin** and **47% of Muslims are UK-born**. Although the UK is home to the largest Pakistani community in Europe (1.17 million), **Britain is home to Muslim populations from all over the world, not only Asia or the Middle East.**

2. Islam and Muslims are not compatible with the West

Islam is one of three Abrahamic faiths, together with Judaism and Christianity. Therefore Muslims believe that the essential message of their faith is no different from the core message of the other two faiths so commonly followed in the West. The Quran, the Muslim holy book, contains accounts similar to the ones found in the Old and New Testaments, such as the story of the Prophet Moses and the parting of the Red Sea.

A lot of the West's values and ethics resonate with the teaching of the Prophet Muhammad, the founder of Islam. For example, the Prophet believed in equality, sincerity, justice and forgiveness, virtues that those who live in the West are encouraged to strive towards.

3. Muslims have come to the UK and have drained our benefits system

Just like any group, British Muslims are both contributors as well as beneficiaries of the UK's welfare system. **British Muslims contribute over £31 billion to the UK economy** and have an estimated **spending power of over £20 billion**. Moreover, in 2016, **during the month of Ramadan British Muslims gave £100 million to charitable causes- that is £38 per second** (Muslim Engagement and Development)

As such, it could be that the same Muslim individual will one day be contributing to the UK's welfare system through their taxes, and the next day fall victim to the same harsh economic climate we are experiencing and thus become reliant on the welfare system in the same way any British citizen would.

In essence, for Muslims, fulfilling their duties in paying taxes and practising their rights in claiming benefits has less to do with their faith and more to do with the fact they're equal citizens.

4. Islam is oppressive to women

There is a common misconception that Islam oppress women and forces them into a submissive role. Actually, **The Quran explicitly states that men and women are equal in the eyes of Allah, that women have the right to refuse a prospective husband and encourages all Muslims to educate their daughters.**

However, gender roles world-wide vary from country to country and **women everywhere are subject to inequalities.** Although this does not exempt Muslim countries, **this is a women's rights issue rather than a religious matter.** That being said, a lot of Muslim countries are setting strong examples for female leadership and empowerment. Countries including **Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have a higher percentage of women in government than the United States and Muslim nations such Turkey, Indonesia, Kosovo and Bangladesh have had women as their head of state.**

5. Islam is intolerant of other religions

In the The Quran Muslims are reminded that they are not the only ones who worship God. **The Holy Book of Islam sees Christians and Jews as members of the family of Abraham (one of the prophets) and Muslims respect these religions because they believe that they all worship the same God.** However, compared to Judaism and Christianity, Muslims do not believe that Jesus was the Son of God, but that he was one of God's prophets, just like Muhammad.

Moreover, **The Quran and the Islamic religion encourages all Muslims to protect from harm not only mosques, but also monasteries, synagogues, and churches** - because *“God is worshiped therein.”*

6. Islam is a violent religion that promotes terrorism

According to Europol, **out of all 142** failed, foiled and completed attacks in Europe in 2016, **only 13** were carried out by Jihadist extremists. **The vast majority of Muslims worldwide condemn terrorist attacks** and terrorist activity, reject violence and truly see these radical beliefs and behaviors as a distortion of the Muslim faith. In fact, **Muslims themselves count for the most victims of 'Jihadi' terrorism** and are seven times more likely to be victims of terror than non-Muslims.

According to a 2008 leaked MI5 report, it was found that ***“far from being religious zealots, a large number of those involved in terrorism do not practice their faith regularly”***. The report also found that the majority of those involved in extremist activity in the UK are British nationals, new to their faith and few have been brought up in strongly religious households.



Communities Inc is a Nottingham based social enterprise working with issues relating to community cohesion. We are passionate about building stronger communities by tackling inequalities faced by the most disadvantaged groups.

Contact us:



0115 964 8227



www.communitiesinc.org.uk



admin@communitiesinc.org.uk



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