

Written Evidence submitted by The Henry Jackson Society (POP0044)

Submission pertaining to points 4 and 5 of the evidence call concerning trust in policing

1. About the Henry Jackson Society

2. Founded in 2005, the Henry Jackson Society is one of the UK's leading foreign policy and national security think tanks. The HJS works across borders and party lines to combat extremism, advance democracy and real human rights, and make a stand in an increasingly uncertain world. The HJS vision is to foster unity between the world's greatest democracies and to safeguard individual and civil liberties in democratic states.

3. About our submission

4. In September of this year civil unrest erupted on the streets of Leicester between the city's Hindu and Muslim communities. The HJS has researched this incident extensively both at the time and in the months after.
5. Using the situation in Leicester as a case study and policy backdrop, we have produced the following points for the committee to consider. This observations and recommendations pertain to points 4 and 5 of the call for evidence.

6. Background

7. Incidents in Leicester and Birmingham involved communities taking security measures into their own hands, subverting the role of the police and resulting in attacks on Hindus, Muslims and Hindu properties and places of worship. Key to the civil unrest was a lack of trust in Leicester policing and a sense of vulnerability emanating from both communities. The Muslim community felt crimes against the Muslim community, noise issues and antisocial behaviour were not being taken seriously enough. The Hindu community felt that their properties and temples were under siege with little protection, whilst nothing was done to assure the Muslim community and wider public that there is no organised Hindutva extremism or Hindu terrorism in Leicester.

8. Observations and Recommendations:

9. Response times and offers of protection

10. Throughout our research into the situation in Leicester some community members have relayed to us that police response times to 'fear of attack' have been slow and left communities feeling vulnerable.
11. Some members of the Diu and Daman Hindu community have expressed that they have been asked to stay out of certain areas in Leicester and not return to their homes. Others have expressed that they have been told they can return but must stay in their houses overnight. They say they are not under investigation for any crimes and have been asked to do this for their own safety. This communicated a lack of control from the police over unrest and an inability to keep people safe. It puts an unwarranted stress on at risk minority groups who need to be able to live freely and without fear in the UK. A stronger police presence and

more patrol vehicles need to be provided in these instances rather than advice given to remain out of one's home.

12. Awareness of police role and avenues of redress for victims

13. Members of the Diu and Daman Hindu community express a lack of understanding over how to access police services and legal services. There is a language barrier and a lack of cultural understanding of the police in the UK. Communities in Leicester (and other urban areas where there is a high density of ethnic minorities and first generation immigrants) should receive community outreach where they are informed of how policing works in the UK and what kind of support they can access from the police as well as how to report a hate crime.

14. Timely home visits to victims and those feeling vulnerable from fear of crime

15. Victims who have felt at fear for their safety have expressed a slow response time for attaining a home visit. There needs to be greater resources afforded to meeting the needs of victims who feel vulnerable and at risk, timely home visits being a priority.

16. Noise control and noise related anti-social behaviour

17. This falls within the remit of the local authority however there should be more the police can do to raise awareness of how to manage noise issues and antisocial behaviour. The complexities of over who manages the enforcement of noise related cases of ASB have led to a considerable amount of frustration and gives the impression that the police don't consider it to be a problem. Communities need to feel that they can hold festivals and celebrate their religion whilst those not involved in the festival need to be assured that these festivals will not continue loudly past a certain hour at night.

18. Police statements and the spread of misinformation

19. Leicester police became more proactive towards the end of September in sharing police statements denoting where misinformation was being spread. This was very useful as misinformation was a large part of the reason for the escalation of violence. However the misinformation campaign that put the communities at the highest risk from violence was the ongoing claims of Hindutva extremist groups or Hindutva terrorist groups. An early clear statement of no history of Hindu terrorism or terrorist groups operating in Leicester could have helped avoid the movement of Muslims from other parts of the country to join the protest. The Hindu community are now left feeling vulnerable and undefended by police, politicians and the media. The misconception that they are involved in extremist activities against the Muslim community and potentially terrorism continues to put them at risk both from attack but also from being radicalised by groups abroad into such activity that they are being accused of.