



## **The Rise of Post-Brexit Hate Crime**

**Submission by** René Cassin, UK

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## **Introduction**

In this submission, René Cassin seeks to assist the Home Affairs Select Committee into an inquiry on the rise of hate crime since the EU referendum.

In section 1 we examine the effectiveness of current legislation and law enforcement policies for preventing and prosecuting hate crime.

In section 2 we examine the barriers that prevent individuals reporting hate crime, and measures to improve reporting rates. We focus on reporting rates within Gypsy, Traveller and Roma (GTR) communities.

In section 3 we examine the role of the voluntary sector, community representatives and other frontline organisations in challenging attitudes that underpin hate crime.

## **About René Cassin**

René Cassin is a human rights organisation that promotes and protects universal human rights drawing upon Jewish experience and values. We campaign and educate on issues such as discrimination, asylum, modern day slavery and human trafficking and general human rights protections.

The organisation is named in honour of Monsieur René Cassin, a French Jew and Nobel Laureate who was one of the principal co-drafters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

## **Section 1: the effectiveness of current legislation and law enforcement policies for preventing and prosecuting hate crime**

1. The UK has some of the strongest legislation in the world designed to protect communities from hostility and violence. This includes specific offences for racially and religiously aggravated activity.
2. We welcome the UK Government's Hate Crime Action Plan, covering all forms of hate crime, including xenophobic attacks.
3. A 2014 assessment found that the reporting and understanding of hate crime and the impact of hate crime had improved.

4. Barriers still exist with regards to reporting. However, we welcome the introduction of True Vision, the police online hate crime reporting site, which makes reporting hate crime easier.<sup>1</sup>
5. We are concerned that reports of hate crime have risen almost by three-fifths since the aftermath of the EU referendum vote as recorded by True Vision.<sup>2</sup> Complaints filed increased fivefold after the EU referendum, with 331 hate crime incidents reported to the site, compared with a weekly average of 63.<sup>3</sup>
6. It is nevertheless promising that 85% of hate crime prosecutions now result in a conviction. In 2015/16, the Crown Prosecution Service prosecuted 15,442 hate crimes- a 4.8% increase on 2014/5.<sup>4</sup> The problem persists in communicating that strong conviction rate to the public at large, and reassuring particular ethnic groups and minorities who still see there being an institutional bias against those who report.<sup>5</sup>
7. As an organisation which focuses on promoting human rights emerging from Jewish experience and values, **we are particularly concerned about a jump in anti-Semitic abuse**, which saw an 11% increase for the first six months of 2016.<sup>6</sup>
8. Whilst anti-Semitic abuse has risen, all ethnic minorities suffer when hate crime spikes and we support efforts to tackle hate crime whomever it is directed against.

## **Section 2: the barriers that prevent individuals from reporting hate crime and measures to improve reporting**

1. According to the Independent Crime Survey for England and Wales, there were an estimated 222,000 hate crimes on average each year from 2012/13 to 2014/15. This represents a promising 56,000 decrease since the previous period covered by the survey. However, hate crimes

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Hamilton, 27 June 2016, 'Hate crime is unacceptable in any circumstances say police', <http://news.npcc.police.uk/releases/hate-crime-is-unacceptable-in-any-circumstances-say-police>, date of access: 9/8/16

<sup>2</sup> Peter Yeung, 27 June 2016, 'EU Referendum: Reports of hate crime increase', <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/brexit-hate-crime-racism-reports-eu-referendum-latest-a7106116.html>, date of access: 9/8/16

<sup>3</sup> Nazia Parveen and Harriet Sherwood, 30 June 2016, 'Police log fivefold rise in race-hate complaints since Brexit result', <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/30/police-report-fivefold-increase-race-hate-crimes-since-brexit-result>, date of access: 9/8/16

<sup>4</sup> 'More hate crimes prosecuted by the CPS than ever before', 13 June 2016, [http://www.cps.gov.uk/news/latest\\_news/more\\_hate\\_crimes\\_prosecuted\\_by\\_the\\_crown\\_prosecution\\_service\\_than\\_ever\\_before/](http://www.cps.gov.uk/news/latest_news/more_hate_crimes_prosecuted_by_the_crown_prosecution_service_than_ever_before/), date of access: 9/8/16

<sup>5</sup> HATE CRIMES: Barriers to Reporting and Best Practices, <https://www.york.ac.uk/media/cahr/documents/Hate%20crime%20barriers%20report%20PRINT.pdf>, date of access: 9/8/16

<sup>6</sup> Bily Hollowell, 8 August 2016, 'Inside the increase in anti-Semitic incidents in the UK', <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865659586/Inside-the-increase-in-anti-Semitic-incidents-in-the-UK.html?pg=all>, date of access: 9/8/16

recorded by the police rose from 44,471 in 2013/4 to 52,528 in 2014/15. This demonstrates that hate crimes continue to be significantly underreported.

2. It is further estimated by the Crime Survey for England and Wales that in 2014, 43% of personal hate crimes were not reported to the police. Reporting is especially low for more isolated groups, in particular, Gypsy Traveller and Roma (GTR) communities.<sup>7</sup> It was found that 98% of the Gypsy Roma and Traveller Community experienced hate crimes but only 27% sought legal advice or advocacy.<sup>8</sup>
3. Dissatisfaction rates with the manner of investigations of hate crime by police are higher than dissatisfaction rates for crime overall – 35% are very dissatisfied as compared with 14% dissatisfied overall.<sup>9</sup>
4. Although the UK has a strong legislative framework to tackle hate crime, legislation can only ever be part of the answer. People must have the confidence to come forward and police must have the ability to respond appropriately. This is especially difficult when communities are distrustful of the police. Within GTR communities the police can be perceived as a negative organisation, enforcing warrants and evictions. Therefore a community-based policing model is recommended.<sup>10</sup> Education must also play a crucial role in teaching others the harmful effects of hate crime in the UK and the necessity in preventing and reporting it. Though advances have been made the number of racist incidents as recorded by police has seen no decrease since levels in 2009/10.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, particular work is needed within the GTR communities on how to report hate crime.<sup>12</sup>
5. A major source of concern is the increase in hate crime online that often goes unreported. We urge the UK Government to consider this

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<sup>7</sup> HATE CRIMES: Barriers to Reporting and Best Practices, <https://www.york.ac.uk/media/cahr/documents/Hate%20crime%20barriers%20report%20PRINT.pdf>, date of access: 9/8/16

<sup>8</sup> Traveller Movement, Discrimination Survey, 2016, page 2, point 6

<sup>9</sup> Home Office file, 'Action against hate – The UK Government's plan for tackling hate crime', July 2016 Para 17,

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/543679/Action\\_Against\\_Hate\\_-\\_UK\\_Government\\_s\\_Plan\\_to\\_Tackle\\_Hate\\_Crime\\_2016.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/543679/Action_Against_Hate_-_UK_Government_s_Plan_to_Tackle_Hate_Crime_2016.pdf), date of access: 16/8/16

<sup>10</sup> The Traveller Movement, "The Traveller Movement's response to the Home Affairs Select Committee inquiry into hate crime and its violent consequences", 2016

<sup>11</sup> Hannah Corcoran, Deborah Lader and Kevin Smith, 13 October 2015 'Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2014/5',

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/467366/hosb0515.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/467366/hosb0515.pdf), date of access: 9/8/16

<sup>12</sup> The Traveller Movement, "The Traveller Movement's response to the Home Affairs Select Committee inquiry into hate crime and its violent consequences", 2016

new, pervasive method of hate crime when designing new legislation or initiatives.

6. The Home Office requires police forces to record and report the ethnicity of users and employees; however, the classification system currently in use by 81% of UK police forces does not include GTR categories.<sup>13</sup> Adequate gathering of information relating to GTR ethnic status by the criminal justice sector agencies would enable the police to develop an appropriate response and gain greater clarity of the extent to which these communities experience hate crime.<sup>14</sup>
7. Another limitation is that national surveys like the British Crime Survey does not visit caravan sights. Therefore, GTR people who do not own a permanent residence cannot be included in this national survey, thus making it even harder for them to report crimes.
8. To reduce the barriers for people to come forward and report hate crime, **the UK Government must focus on improving education to clarify what hate crime is**, the necessity of it being reported, and easing the access of people to come forward.
9. **We also call on the Government to address further engagement with more isolated groups.** Many communities experiencing hate crime suffer from fear due to historical marginalisation. Members of these communities will consequently feel more distrustful of reporting hate crimes to authority figures. Yet public services should be for the entire UK public and it is important that these inadequacies be addressed.
10. One way in which reporting hate crime can be made more accessible for many is if the Police develop a mobile application service that helps users to establish whether a hate crime has been committed and report it accordingly. This should be coupled with working alongside social media networks when compiling statistics on current levels of hate crime, as well as targeting persistent abusers.

### **Section 3: The role of the voluntary sector, community representatives and other frontline organisations in challenging attitudes that underpin hate crime.**

1. One key aspect of improving legislation's enforcement is working with the police to ensure that hate crime is effectively recorded and

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<sup>13</sup> Page 7, The Traveller Movement (2016): *Inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers in ethnic monitoring systems of Police forces in the UK.*

<sup>14</sup> TVP GRT Policy and Procedure Review May 2015, Greenfields, Watson and Davies, May 2015

identified. This can be done by working with third party reporting centres for individual communities. We welcome the UK Government's plans to work with young people from all backgrounds to challenge prejudice and hatred, including initiatives working with charities such as the Anne Frank Trust, Streetwise and Tell MAMA.

2. **The UK Government should encourage charities to assist with collection of data so the full scale of hate crime can be properly examined.**

Concurrently, it is vital that communities at risk of hate crime receive the necessary security assistance.

3. As a charity involved with the Jewish community, we have seen first-hand the effectiveness of the security provided by the Community Security Trust (CST), the strength of relationship it has with the UK Government, and the ease of access the charity's website provides in reporting hate crime. Should hate crime continue unabated within the UK it would be wise **to replicate the success of the CST within other threatened communities too.**