Time to Make a Difference
Getting a Fair Deal for British Muslims
Next year, the Government is going to pass legislation, in line with European law, to protect people from religious discrimination in employment. This is good news because it protects Muslims and others against unfair dismissal or discriminatory practices in the workplace. However, it leaves Muslims open to religious discrimination in other areas of life.

Under British law, Muslims will not get protection from religious discrimination in the areas of:

- social security and health care
- education
- public provisions e.g., housing
- social advantages e.g., housing benefit, student maintenance grants and loans, etc.

The new laws will simply reinforce present inequalities in British law and society. Currently, Muslims do not benefit from the Race Relations Act 1976 or the more recent Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, which requires certain public bodies, like the police, to:

- prohibit direct and indirect discrimination in the performance of their public duties
- take positive steps to eliminate discrimination and promote equality

Whilst some faith communities in Britain, like Sikhs and Jews, rightfully enjoy the above protection and provisions of law, Muslims are unjustly denied access to them. This is because case law under the above Acts currently defines ‘racial group’ in a way that includes single ethnic religious groups like Jews or Sikhs but
excludes Muslims. In a democracy such as ours, it is simply unacceptable that Muslims should enjoy any less protection from discrimination and inequalities than other racial or religious groups.

Additionally, to the extent that the new legislation will provide protection for faith communities, the Government is yet to propose suitable institutional arrangements to facilitate access to this protection by all. Unless these arrangements are of the standard currently enjoyed by other strands of discrimination, e.g., race, sex and disability, some faith communities, particularly Muslims, will face further inequalities - that is, inequalities in delivery as well as provisions.

What can you do?

Now is not the time to sit back and do nothing. Look at the facts. Many in the Muslim community suffer high levels of crime, low incomes, high unemployment, poor housing, low skills, low educational achievement and poor health. All of these have the potential of being addressed by the new legislation. But the Government is not even going to allow this issue to be properly debated because the new legislation will be brought in through ‘secondary legislation’ - i.e., not primary legislation, which would allow a proper debate in Parliament where you could make sure that your elected Member of Parliament would represent your interests as a Muslim.

Now is the time for you to make a difference. PLEASE

1. Write to your local MP and to the Prime Minister using the model letters in this pack. Aim to have these letters sent as soon as possible

2. Support our campaign with your time, your money, your commitment and enthusiasm

3. Make our voice heard around the country so that everyone becomes aware of this unfair discrimination against Muslims

It is time to make a difference
Dear Prime Minister,

**Re: Religious Discrimination Legislation in the UK**

I write to you with regard to the above matter. There is at present insufficient protection against religious discrimination for British Muslims in their daily lives.

Muslims do not enjoy the same protection under the law which has long been rightfully enjoyed by some religious communities, for example, Sikhs and Jews. Muslims are not covered by the Race Relations Act 1976, which protects some religious groups from direct and indirect discrimination in a wide range of areas. Muslims are also not covered under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, which requires public authorities to take into account the needs of some religious minorities in taking positive steps to eliminate discrimination and promote equality.

I welcome the fact that the European Employment Directive, to be implemented by December 2003, will protect British Muslims from religious discrimination in employment. However, under current proposals for the implementation of the Directive, religious discrimination against Muslims will continue to be legal in the following areas: social security and health care; education; public provisions – e.g., housing; and social advantages – e.g., student maintenance grants and loans. The proposed legislation will also fail to extend the positive duty enshrined in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to Muslims.

I can see no moral or legal justification for the failure to take this opportunity to legislate on religious discrimination to provide comprehensive legal protection for all faith communities and to eliminate the existing anomalies and inequalities between them. I am also concerned that, to the extent that the proposed new legislation will provide protection for faith communities, the Government is yet to propose suitable institutional arrangements to facilitate access to this protection by all. It is my firm belief that unless these arrangements are of the standard currently enjoyed by other strands of discrimination, e.g., race, sex and disability, some faith communities, particularly Muslims, will face further inequalities – that is, inequalities in delivery as well as provisions.

The Government has through its own commissioned research shown that Islamophobia is a proven and widespread phenomenon in our society. This is truly an ideal opportunity to address this cancer in our midst. I ask this Government to demonstrate its central commitment towards equity and justice for all Britons, regardless of their gender, colour or creed.

I also strongly object to the introduction of the European Employment Directive by regulation and secondary legislation. It is wrong that a matter of such importance is not part of the national political debate, as any Act of Parliament and piece of primary legislation would be. Secondary legislation will also deny Muslims the opportunity to participate in a full debate in Parliament via their elected representatives on an issue which is of critical concern to them.

Yours sincerely,

Signature

Name
Re: Religious Discrimination Legislation in the UK

I write to you with regard to the above matter. There is at present insufficient protection against religious discrimination for British Muslims in their daily lives.

Muslims do not enjoy the same protection under the law which has long been rightfully enjoyed by some religious communities, for example, Sikhs and Jews. Muslims are not covered by the Race Relations Act 1976, which protects some religious groups from direct and indirect discrimination in a wide range of areas. Muslims are also not covered under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, which requires public authorities to take into account the needs of some religious minorities in taking positive steps to eliminate discrimination and promote equality.

I welcome the fact that the European Employment Directive, to be implemented by December 2003, will protect British Muslims from religious discrimination in employment. However, under current proposals for the implementation of the Directive, religious discrimination against Muslims will continue to be legal in the following areas: social security and health care; education; public provisions – e.g., housing; and social advantages – e.g., student maintenance grants and loans. The proposed legislation will also fail to extend the positive duty enshrined in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to Muslims.

I can see no moral or legal justification for the failure to take this opportunity to legislate on religious discrimination to provide comprehensive legal protection for all faith communities and to eliminate the existing anomalies and inequalities between them. I am also concerned that, to the extent that the proposed new legislation will provide protection for faith communities, the Government is yet to propose suitable institutional arrangements to facilitate access to this protection by all. It is my firm belief that unless these arrangements are of the standard currently enjoyed by other strands of discrimination, e.g., race, sex and disability, some faith communities, particularly Muslims, will face further inequalities – that is, inequalities in delivery as well as provisions.

The Government has through its own commissioned research (HO Research Study 220) shown that Islamophobia is a proven and widespread phenomenon in our society. This is truly an ideal opportunity to address this cancer in our midst. I ask this Government to demonstrate its central commitment towards equity and justice for all Britons, regardless of their gender, colour or creed.

The Government intends to introduce the European Employment Directive by regulation (secondary legislation) rather than via an Act of Parliament (primary legislation). This will, of course, deny Muslims the opportunity to participate in a full debate in Parliament via their elected representatives on an issue which is of critical concern to them. Therefore, as my elected representative in Parliament, I would urge you to raise my concerns above through every other possible means available to you, and I look forward to your kind co-operation and assistance.

Finally, I would like an opportunity to discuss this with you further in one of your surgeries.

Yours sincerely,
FAIR is an independent voluntary sector organisation established for the purpose of raising general awareness of and combating Islamophobia and related prejudices and practices. To achieve its objectives FAIR has several dedicated projects:

**ISLAM AWARENESS (EDUCATION) PROJECT**
The project seeks to raise general awareness of and to combat Islamophobia through Islamic literature/art, conferences/seminars and festive events that portray a more balanced image of Islam and Muslims.

**MEDIA AND POPULAR CULTURE WATCH**
The Watch seeks to monitor and address specific incidences of Islamophobia in the media and in popular culture that impact the Muslim community directly and indirectly over a period of time.

**MUSLIM EQUALITY CASEWORK PROJECT**
The project provides direct advice and assistance to victims of Islamophobia, with a particular emphasis placed on legal advice and representation.

**INSTITUTIONAL DISCRIMINATION PROJECT**
This project seeks to challenge institutional religious discrimination and promote best practice by assisting organisations to develop fair policies, procedures and practices.

**POLICY RESEARCH AND LOBBYING**
The purpose of this project is to advise central and local government agencies on issues of concern to Muslims and to lobby for change in order to meet the needs of the Muslim community.

Further details on each of these projects are available on our website: www.fairuk.org, or if you would like to receive a FAIR brochure please contact us at the address overleaf.

FORUM AGAINST ISLAMOPHOBIA & RACISM (FAIR)
16 Peninsular Court, 121 East Ferry Road, Docklands, London E14 3LH
Tel 020 7531 1516
Fax 020 7538 4689
Email fair@fairuk.org

Support Services
- Building/maintaining databases
- Fundraising
- Organising meetings/seminars/conferences

Awareness/Education/Training (AET)
- Preparing AET packs
- Organising AET events & campaigns

Victim Support (VS)
- Counselling
- Legal advice/litigation
- VS training

FAIR DATABASE & VOLUNTEERS APPEAL

I would like to become a Friend of FAIR

Name __________________________________________________________
Address __________________________________________________________
________________________________________ Postcode ____________
Tel ______________________________ Email __________________________

I enclose a cheque/postal order made payable to FAIR in the amount of:
☐ £5,000 ☐ £2,000 ☐ £1,000 ☐ £500 ☐ £100 ☐ other £ ____________

I would like to provide ongoing support to the work of FAIR by pledging a monthly payment

Name __________________________________________________________
Address __________________________________________________________
________________________________________ Postcode ____________
Tel ______________________________ Email __________________________

Bank ___________________________ Branch ________________________

Account No. ______________________ Bank Sort Code ___________

Please pay the sum of £__________ on receipt of this Banker’s Order, and then the same on the __________ day of each month until further notice. This form takes the place of any previous Banker’s Order in respect of FAIR.

PAY TO: FAIR, Account No. 40125199, Sort Code 20-26-46, Barclays Bank Plc, Docklands Branch, Hertsmere House, Hertsmere Road, London E14 4AA

Signature ______________________ Date ________________

FAIR PLEDGE FORM

To report an incident of Islamophobic discrimination, harassment or violence please contact us on our Emergency Helpline:
08707 651 516

FAIR SUPPORT FORM

I would like to become a Volunteer of FAIR

Name __________________________________________________________
Address __________________________________________________________
________________________________________ Postcode ____________
Tel ______________________________ Email __________________________

My specific skills include:

Name __________________________________________________________
Address __________________________________________________________
________________________________________ Postcode ____________
Tel ______________________________ Email __________________________

FAIR PLEDGE FORM

I would like to provide ongoing support to the work of FAIR by pledging a monthly payment

Name __________________________________________________________
Address __________________________________________________________
________________________________________ Postcode ____________
Tel ______________________________ Email __________________________

Bank ___________________________ Branch ________________________

Account No. ______________________ Bank Sort Code ___________

Please pay the sum of £__________ on receipt of this Banker’s Order, and then the same on the __________ day of each month until further notice. This form takes the place of any previous Banker’s Order in respect of FAIR.

PAY TO: FAIR, Account No. 40125199, Sort Code 20-26-46, Barclays Bank Plc, Docklands Branch, Hertsmere House, Hertsmere Road, London E14 4AA

Signature ______________________ Date ________________