

How do we build community cohesion when hate crime is on the rise?

“There are always a few who stand up in times of communal madness and have the courage to say that what unites us is greater than what divides us” – Geraldine Brooks

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Introduction

In this submission, René Cassin seeks to assist the APPG into an inquiry on the impact of hate speech and hate crime on communities, by providing a brief impression of the impact of these on the Jewish and Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT) communities. In section 1 we examine the different forms which hate crime and speech take, the extent to which they are experienced by these communities and their impact. In section 2 we provide recommendations on how community cohesion can be strengthened in the face of rising hate crime and hate speech, drawing on our organisational experience of facilitating cross-communal campaigning and resource sharing between the Jewish and GRT communities.

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

Status Quo – What is the situation today?

Anti-Semitism

1. The UK Jewish community is currently experiencing the greatest extent of hate crime which it has suffered in recent years, with figures indicating a trend of upward growth in hate crime incidents. The Community Security Trust (CST), a charity which works to protect British Jews from anti-Semitism, recorded 1,382 anti-Semitic incidents in 2017.¹ This was the highest annual total CST has ever recorded and a 3% increase from 2016, which had itself seen a record annual total of anti-Semitic incidents.² In 2017, 356 individuals in public, 283 visibly Jewish individuals, 141 Jewish community

¹'Annual Review', CST, 2017, p.8.

<https://cst.org.uk/data/file/8/8/Annual%20Review%202017%20web.1521476984.pdf>.

²ibid.

organisations/communal events or commercial premises, 89 homes and 76 synagogues were targeted.³

2. Anti-Semitic hate crime takes the forms of abusive behaviour, anti-Semitic literature, assault, threats and damage of Jewish property. In 2017, the most common form of anti-Semitic hate crime was abusive behaviour, with 1,038 incidents reported.⁴ 145 anti-Semitic assaults were reported to CST in 2017, which is an increase of 34% from 2016 and the highest number CST has ever recorded in the category of Assault.⁵

3. A large proportion of anti-Semitic hate speech has been found to take the form of hate via social media, with CST recording 247 anti-Semitic incidents from social media in 2017; this represents 18% of their overall annual total of recorded anti-Semitic incidents.⁶ It is important to note that these numbers only record the online incidents which people have reported to the CST, which means that actual figures of anti-Semitic tweets and other social media content are very likely much higher.

4. Anti-Semitic hate crime impacts Jewish children and young people in schools and educational institutions. In 2017, 88 anti-Semitic incidents targeted Jewish schools and Jewish schoolchildren or staff, while the victims of 22 anti-Semitic incidents were Jewish students, academics or other student bodies.⁷ In February 2017, Holocaust denial leaflets were distributed on campus at Cambridge, Edinburgh and Glasgow universities, as well as the London School of Economics and University College London.⁸ As a result of high levels of anti-Semitic hate crime against Jewish young people and Jewish educational institutions, the CST now manages a Home Office grant of £13 million to subsidise professional guards at Jewish schools and youth camps.⁹

³ 'Antisemitic Incidents Report 2017', CST, p.27.

<https://cst.org.uk/data/file/a/b/IR17.1517308734.pdf>.

⁴ *ibid*, p.18.

⁵ 'Annual Review', CST, p.9.

⁶ *ibid*.

⁷ 'Antisemitic Incidents Report 2017', CST, p.8.

⁸ *ibid*, p.24.

⁹ 'A Parent's Guide to CST', 2018, p.4.

<https://cst.org.uk/data/file/c/b/Parents%20Guide%20June%202018%20-%20web.1529591561.pdf>.

GRT hate crime and hate speech

1. The GRT community experiences a shocking extent of hate crime and hate speech. Research from the Traveller Movement shows that in 2016, 98% of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers had experienced discrimination.¹⁰ Discrimination in the form of hate speech/ crime was the most common form of discrimination out of five identified areas, with 81% of respondents saying that they had experienced this either 'sometimes' or 'often'.¹¹ The extent of hate crime and hate speech against the GRT community does seem to be decreasing slightly, as in a 2017 report, the Traveller Movement found that 77% of respondents (153/ 199) were victims of hate speech/ hate crime – so a decrease of 4% from 2016.¹²
2. In the Traveller Movement's 2016 survey, when respondents were asked to specify the forms of hate crime that they had experienced, the most common answers were: verbal abuse, physical abuse; damage to cars and trailers; threats to burn their caravan; being refused entry to a pub or being thrown out; being refused service by charities and restaurant signs stating "no Gypsies/ Travellers".¹³ Abuse and hate speech on social media was also reported by the GRT community, with hate speech on social media often taking place as part of protests in local areas against Traveller sites.¹⁴
3. The hate crime experienced by GRT young people in education impacts their attainment and school attendance. In the Traveller Movement's 2017 report, 70% (138/199) of respondents reported having experienced discrimination in education.¹⁵ GRT children and young people reported teachers bullying them, holding negative GRT stereotypes, calling them names and threatening them with social services; additional impacts include GRT children being excluded from school, bullied by other pupils and being placed in special needs classes or segregated schools.¹⁶ 15 respondents of the Traveller Movement's 2017 survey said that teachers'

¹⁰'Interim Discrimination Survey Report', The Traveller Movement, 2016, p.1.
<http://travellermovement.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Discrimination-survey-report.pdf>.

¹¹Ibid, p.4.

¹²'The Last Acceptable Form of Racism?', The Traveller Movement, September 2017, p.18.

<http://travellermovement.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/TMreportFinalWeb1.pdf>

¹³'Interim Discrimination Survey Report', p.5.

¹⁴'The Last Acceptable Form of Racism?', p.18.

¹⁵Ibid, p.11.

¹⁶'Interim Discrimination Survey Report', p.5.

expectations of their illiteracy and inadequacy either made them feel unwelcome, or became a barrier to continuing education.¹⁷

4. Hate crime against GRT young people also results in feelings of wider social isolation and exclusion from everyday activities within school life. Respondents of the Traveller Movement's 2017 survey said that this made school attendance and educational attainment more difficult.¹⁸ Reports of social exclusion correlate with the findings of a 2017 YouGov survey, where only four in ten (41%) UK parents said they would be happy with their child having a playdate at the home of a Gypsy/Traveller.¹⁹ The social impacts of hate crime and hate speech are reported to continue to affect GRT young people in college and university; respondents of the 2017 Traveller Movement survey described the prejudice they faced as leading to social isolation, and said that it caused them to hide their GRT identity.²⁰ These findings correlate with a 2016 survey, in which 77% of GRT respondents reported having hidden their ethnicity.²¹

Section 2

Recommendations – What can we do to build community cohesion?

1. Many extremely valuable schemes, initiatives and projects already exist to build community cohesion in the face of rising hate crime and hate speech.
2. The below examples of existing projects and initiatives demonstrate the important role that community organisations can play in increasing community cohesion. Organisations can share their resources, experience and expertise with the representative organisations of other targeted groups. This helps to tackle hate crime and hate speech, by building the capacity of organisations to fight against hate crime effectively. The sharing of resources and expertise also builds community cohesion by uniting diverse groups through the shared goal of ending hate crime. Projects and initiatives which show marginalised groups standing in solidarity with one another can also work to combat a sense of wider isolation, which members

¹⁷'The Last Acceptable Form of Racism?', p.11.

¹⁸Ibid, p.12.

¹⁹'Summary of YouGov Survey Results', p.2.

²⁰'The Last Acceptable Form of Racism', p.12.

²¹'Interim Discrimination Survey Report', p.1.

of communities who are victims of hate crime and hate speech, such as the GRT community, have reported experiencing.

3. René Cassin has trained faith leaders across the country on how to recognize and react to discrimination against the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community. This project, which included a joint statement 'An Interfaith Challenge to Racism'²² won an Interfaith award and was commended by the Prime Minister.²³
4. In order to promote solidarity between different communities, and therefore address isolation, education and awareness raising is vital. The René Cassin Fellowship Programme explores Jewish visions for a just society and provides individuals with the knowledge, skills and contacts needed to enhance their activism in the areas of social justice and human rights. As part of the programme, fellows learn about the issue of hate crime as a whole and how it specifically effects both the Jewish and GRT community.²⁴ The programme teaches fellows the importance of standing in solidarity with the GRT community, to reduce a sense in both the Jewish and GRT communities of isolation from wider society.
5. René Cassin facilitated an introduction between CST and Gate Hertfordshire (Gate Herts), a community led organisation who seek to educate both the GRT community and the general UK population²⁵. Gate Herts' work includes supporting victims of hate crime within the GRT communities and encouraging the reporting of hate crime incidents. René Cassin's introduction of the two groups enabled CST to share their valuable experience and expertise in reporting hate crime with Gate Herts, an organisation with a more general focus and therefore with less experience in the area of hate crime reporting.
6. René Cassin brings together Jewish community representatives to annually commemorate the 2nd August Roma Genocide Remembrance Day, to stand in solidarity with the GRT community.²⁶ This day is particularly

²² <http://www.renecassin.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/An-Interfaith-Challenge-to-Racism.pdf>

²³ <http://www.renecassin.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Rene-Cassin-wins-an-award.pdf>

²⁴ <http://www.renecassin.org/discrimination-hate-crime-issues-uniting-jews-and-gypsies-roma-and-travellers/>

²⁵ <http://reportracismgrt.com/>
<http://www.renecassin.org/category/grt/> .

²⁶ <http://www.renecassin.org/category/grt/>.

significant for the Jewish community, as the importance of commemorating any genocide is coupled with the Jewish and GRT communities' shared experiences of persecution at the hands of the Nazis.

7. In September 2017, CST, the Jewish anti-Semitism charity, undertook a cross communal initiative to combat rising hate crime and hate speech, by publishing *Hate Crime: A Guide for Those Affected*. The publication provides guidance for victims and witnesses of hate crime on navigating the criminal justice system. The guide was co-authored with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the anti-Muslim hate crime group TellMAMA, and supported by the Department of Communities and Local Government.²⁷
8. CST is part of the CATCH (Community Alliance to Combat Hate) partnership, which works with other community organisations across all the hate crime strands to provide advocacy help to London based victims.²⁸ Other community organisations involved in CATCH are TellMAMA, Galop (LGBT hate crime), The Monitoring Group (race hate crime), and Choice in Hackney and Wandsworth & Westminster Mind, which both work in disability and mental health hate crime.
9. In 2016, CST established a Stand Up! Education Against Discrimination project. The project is a joint initiative with CST and Maccabi GB, an Anglo-Jewish sports, health and wellbeing charity, where Jewish and Muslim educators deliver anti-racism lessons to non-Jewish schoolchildren; 6,500 students were taught by Stand Up! During 2017. The project encourages students to stand against prejudice, anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim hatred.²⁹
10. In 2018, the Jewish Leadership Council (JLC) produced an 'Enough is enough Video' in advance of the Parliamentary Labour Party's meeting to discuss anti-Semitism on 26th March 2018.³⁰ The video features British Jews and non-Jews condemning anti-Semitism as unacceptable.
11. Why Me?, a charity which campaigns and advocates for greater access to Restorative Justice (RJ) for victims of crimes, are working to improve access

²⁷'Annual Review', CST, 2017, p.25.

²⁸<https://www.catch-hatecrime.org.uk/>.

²⁹'Annual Review', CST, 2017, p.20.

³⁰https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpfylbsvMw_.

to RJ for hate crime victims.³¹ Community organisations can play an important role in working with Why Me? and other Restorative Justice organisations to identify the specific needs of hate crime victims from within their own communities, and raise awareness about the existence of RJ programmes. RJ can be a useful tool in building community cohesion by helping to break down prejudice, as it lets perpetrators see the humanity of their victims, and some victims of anti-Semitic hate crime have engaged positively with the RJ process.

³¹https://why-me.org/campaigns/hate-crime-restorative-justice/?gclid=EAlalQobChMIoNSA7NW13AIVq7_tCh3I3QCKEAAYASAAEgKJB_D_BwE