



Young People's Rights Review

Fatima Bari MSYP - Islamophobia

Hello, I'm Fatima and I'm representing FOSIS which is the Federation Of Societies of Islamic Students. For this speech I consulted with around 50 young people from across Scotland, through online surveys and face to face consultations. Through these consultations, I was disappointed to find the sheer number of young people that had either directly experienced or known others to experience Islamophobia. Police Scotland have the fourth highest number of Islamophobic crimes in the UK. In an article by Anas Sarwar MSP in the NewStateman, I found out that 45% of young Muslims (including me) don't feel safe to go out after a terrorist attack due to uncertainty about what someone may say or do. I urge all decision-makers to do more to tackle this issue as Article 14 of the UNCRC says that all young people have the right to freedom of thought, belief and religion - and Articles 9 and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights protect us all from discrimination on the grounds of religion.

While consulting, a constituent at my school told me of her friend who experienced hate due to the fact she chose to wear the hijab and her beliefs. She had been attacked on a trip out with her friends and ridiculed by her attackers. She had her hijab pulled off and spat at. Even though she wasn't permanently physically hurt, it has left her scared to go outside and socialise for the foreseeable future. These attacks can leave long standing scars and can negatively impact on young people's mental health. Islamophobia therefore breaches young people's rights to play, health and even education. In Scotland's multi-cultural society in 2018, it must come to an end.

Therefore, I welcome the Government's Plan to deliver Scotland's Race Equality Action Plan and to deliver its refreshed National Approach to Anti-Bullying. However, there is no explicit reference to children and young people's freedom of thought, conscience and religion in the draft plan yet, and how to tackle Islamophobia.

I recommend you combat Islamophobia by creating an action in the plan around education about rights and Islam. Mostly the people that commit such crimes is down to the fact that they are ill-informed about Islam. They believe what they read on social media, which usually isn't true. We need to tackle inaccurate associations of muslims with terrorist associations such as ISIS. Through better religious education in all schools in Scotland and training of teachers on this issue, we can eradicate Islamophobia where it begins, rather than leaving it to fester into a hate crime with lasting impact such as that which my constituent experienced.

Thank you for listening.