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Following the murder of George Floyd in the United States, the world erupted in outrage against the racist murder and harrasment of African Americans, an ongoing reality since the theft and transportation of Africans to American shores. The outrage was felt in the UK and the Muslim community were no exception. Black British Muslims in particular took to social media to express their desire for Black dignity and racial equity and attended rallies and protests in solidarity with African Americans. Inequality and racial disparity is a global social issue that with the rise of the far right and the Trump administration has reached a critical level. The Black rights-based organisation, Black Muslim Forum, found in a survey of 100 Black Muslims that around two thirds felt as though they did not belong to the British Muslim community. This section will explore this sentiment as well as other lived experiences of Black British Muslims who are aiming to bring the issues faced by Black Muslims to the fore as well as highlight the diversity of the British Muslim community and how race informs the Black British Muslim reality.

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# BLACK LIVES MATTER IN THE AFTERMATH OF GEORGE FLOYD

BY SOUKEYNA OSEI-BONSU

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This is a reflection on the period building up to and following the murder of George Floyd in America and the ramifications it had on the British Muslim community. It explores the action that was taken by various organisations in the UK and how a report conducted by Black Muslim Forum on the problem of anti-Black racism in the Muslim community helped in mobilising people and bringing an under researched issue to the fore. It also provides a reflection on the problem of compassion fatigue and the need for momentum in such types of protest movements to conclude that #movementnotamoment needs to become a mantra for non-Black Muslims in order to foster change.

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## GEORGE FLOYD AND RAMIFICATIONS FOR MUSLIMS

The events around George Floyd's death were for many the straw that broke the camel's back. The world saw similar tragedies in the build up to his killing including the execution of Nathaniel Woods, the fatal shooting of Breonna Taylor, and years of viral videos depicting African Americans being racially harassed for merely existing. We saw a culture of general and increased contempt for alterity - a product of the Trump administration. Deeper still was the lack of reparative justice and social provisions for African Americans. This injustice originated in the moment they were stolen and transported en masse to American shores - and institutionally sustained to this day. I watched in frustrated disbelief as these events unravelled and in sadness as once again Black people had no choice but to take to the streets and demand the basic human rights afforded to their white counterparts. Saidiya Hartman (2006) has equated the loss the African diaspora has faced with losing 'your mother' and articulates the degree to which enslavement and the pillaging of Africa has devastated the African diaspora. Indeed, what has happened in the aftermath of George Floyd's death is the awareness of the loss of our 'mother' and the awareness of an injustice that continues prolifically in the United States.

The positives to come out of the Black Lives Matter movement is an increased awareness amongst non-Black people concerning the ways in which Black people uniquely face oppression. Whilst this is long overdue, it is a start and social media has allowed organisations and individuals within the Muslim community to be more sensitive to the Black struggle. Asian Image, Amaliah, The Muslim Vibe and various other media organisations have increasingly been publishing content on the problems faced by Black Muslims as well as the problem of anti-Black racism in the Muslim world. British Muslim organisations such as the Muslim Census have also been active in conducting research on the problem of prejudice in Muslim circles to help spark change within the Muslim community. There is a long way to go but wider awareness-raising is a start.

## ACTION TAKEN BY UK ORGANISATIONS

Black Muslim Forum is an organisation I started in 2018 to help support Black Muslims and combat the problem of racial injustice against them. A survey conducted in 2019 on the problem of anti-Black racism in the Muslim community was compiled into a report and published in 2020<sup>7</sup> highlighting statistics and lived realities that many non-Black Muslims found shocking - from reports of racial segregation within mosques to physical assault within Islamic schools. The aim of the research was to provide evidence on the realities Black Muslims face in the UK and to resolve these issues to unite the Muslim community. Amongst the most surprising statistics for some was the fact that 84% of the surveyed Black Muslims felt as though they did not belong to their Islamic society (ISOC) at university. This helped to mobilise several Islamic societies in the UK amongst them the University of Birmingham's ISOC. The report was covered by several media outlets within the UK and shared widely on social media. The main solutions recommended by Black Muslims surveyed in the report was through education and awareness raising. In order to help sustain change within university societies, Black Muslim Forum also published a policy proposal for UK ISOCs to help support the change they need to make in order to achieve increased racial harmony in these spaces.

Other organisations that took notable action are Amaliah who provided an online space for Black Muslim women to creatively express how they were feeling including The Dabiri Group and Hafsa Dabiri who spoke at several events on the problems facing the Muslim community, and Myriam Francois from ‘We Need to Talk about Whiteness’ amongst others.

**COMPASSION FATIGUE**

The problem we collectively face now is that of compassion fatigue. Just as the refugee crisis of 2015 which initially mobilised the masses to support the plight of displaced persons eventually lost the public interest, so too will Black Lives Matter amongst non-Black people. #movementnotamoment is a hashtag created on social media outlining the degree of work that needs to collectively be done in order to sustain the change our community needs. This hashtag must become a mantra by non-Black Muslims who are uniquely placed to live the legacy of Prophetic advice<sup>8</sup> and make it their work to undo the many trajectories of ignorance in the Muslim community and replace it with knowledge.

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<sup>7</sup> See Black Muslim Forum (2020)  
<sup>8</sup> See Antepi (2014)

**COMPLICIT  
(POST GEORGE FLOYD  
REFLECTION)**

**BY MUNEERA WILLIAMS**