

Media Myth Busting: Islam in the Tabloids



Image Credit Ridwana Adahmi

Do you believe everything you read? We put three common media myths about Islam under the microscope...

“The media is the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent”. These were words spoken by the famous Muslim human rights activist, Malcolm X. Today, in an age where ‘post-truth’ narratives and fake news stories surround us, his words have perhaps a greater resonance than ever before.

The portrayal of Islam in British tabloids has been of particular concern in recent times, with frequent use of half-truths, hyperbole and dubious statistics and the prioritising of populism, sensationalism and ‘click-bait’ over fact. Shockingly, it was recently reported by [The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance](#) that mainstream UK media outlets (namely The Sun and The Daily Mail) were *“fuelling prejudice against Muslims”*.

As well as generalising and over-simplifying information about the faith, tabloids frequently ‘home in’ on a minute segment of the Muslim community known as ‘extremists’. In doing so, all other (non-violent) Muslims are placed in the spotlight and made guilty by association. This creates a toxic and dangerous atmosphere for Muslims in everyday life, which has led to a [40% increase in Islamophobic hate crimes](#) since last year.

Liverpool World Centre has been working to clear up misconceptions about diversity and Islam... Here I bust a couple of the most common myths...

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Young Muslims who quit the faith 'live in fear of violent revenge': Support group says some have been warned they will be killed if they abandon their religion

any kind, as may be seen in this Qu'ran excerpt: "Whoever kills an innocent person it is as if he has killed all of humanity" – Qur'an 5:32

EXCLUSIVE: SHOCK POLL



Myth 2: Muslims condone ISIS' actions.

In the press, often the word 'Jihad' is associated with terrorism and violence. Jihad is simply in Arabic literally means 'striving' or 'struggling' often with a praiseworthy aim. By suggesting that Muslims see terrorist actions as praiseworthy, the anger levelled at terrorists is also aimed at innocent Muslims.

The facts: The word 'Jihad' has been wrongfully adopted by violent groups. Leading Muslims frequently condemn the actions of terrorist organisations unequivocally. The 'Open Letter to Al-Baghdadi' written in 2014 used passages of the Q'uran to dismantle ISIS's ideology as connected to Islam and was signed by numerous Muslim theologians, lawmakers and community leaders.

Myth 3: Islamic culture is 'taking over' Britain

Tabloids like The Sun and The Daily Mail go to great lengths to place distance between the cultures and practices of Muslims and British values. Burkas, Niqabs and Hijabs, are represented as a restriction of women's freedom. Traditions such as halal meat and the introduction of Sharia councils are implied to be part of a plot to Islamise Britain.



The facts: Many Muslim women dress traditionally by choice, and the UK's population is only 5.02% Muslim.

The media may be powerful, but equipped with fact-checking skills we can bust media myths and make more informed decisions about the news we read. For more information on fake news and how to spot it, check out this BBC article <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-41902914>