

Muslim charity accuses prison officers of 'Islamophobia' after jihadist attack

From [The Telegraph](#)

A Muslim charity has accused prison officers of Islamophobia amid calls for a crackdown on Muslim gangs after [the knife attack on staff by a jihadist](#).

Data obtained by Maslaha, a Muslim charity, show that [prison officers](#) were more likely to use force against [Muslim inmates](#) than other prisoners.

The official figures, obtained through freedom of information requests, showed that Muslim prisoners in eight of the nine jails with high Muslim populations were more likely to be confronted with batons, made to wear rigid bar handcuffs or deliberately held in a painful position.



Hashem Abedi, right, seen during a previous spell in HMP Belmarsh, where he has now been moved to continue to serve his life sentence. Credit: Metropolitan Police/PA

The research comes amid demands by the Prison Officers' Association (POA) for dangerous Islamist terrorists to be subjected

to a tougher "supermax-style" regime in the wake the violent attack on staff by the brother of the Manchester Arena bomber

in the high-security HMP Frankland, Co Durham.

The figures, which include Belmarsh, do not show whether the disproportionate use of force against Muslim prisoners by staff was because of discrimination or because Muslim prisoners were worse behaved than others.

Maslaha said that it reflected a “culture of Islamophobia and racism that runs through the prison system”, but the POA maintained officers only used force as a “last resort” and in a “proportionate and reasonable” way.

Mark Fairhurst, the national chairman of the POA, disagreed with that interpretation of the data. “Staff only use force at the last resort when necessary and when it is used, it is always proportionate and reasonable,” he said.

Ministry of Justice data show there were 15,594 Muslim prisoners in England and Wales in September last year, accounting for 18 per cent of all inmates, despite Muslims comprising only 6.5 per cent of the general population.