

## UK Extremism Warning Over Segregated Communities

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The outgoing Commissioner for Countering Extremism, Robin Simcox, has warned that segregated communities and a weakening sense of shared national values are creating conditions that could fuel homegrown extremism in Britain.

Speaking to MPs during an inquiry into emerging forms of extremism, Mr Simcox said different faiths and cultures failing to integrate were fostering “permissive environments” for

radicalisation. He criticised political inaction on what he described as the “failure of multiculturalism”, warning of risks from both Islamist and far-Right extremism.

“The existence of segregated communities throughout the country, in which faiths and cultures fail to mix, in combination with an increasingly diluted and confused set of national values, contributes to the creation of permissive environments,” Mr Simcox said.

He noted that leaders worldwide had acknowledged this challenge but that there had been insufficient political action to address it.

Mr Simcox also said extremist ideas tend to flourish when they go unchallenged, and argued there is too much emphasis on the role of the internet in radicalisation.

“Self-radicalisation solely from exposure to extremist material online can be overstated,” he explained. “On-the-ground activism and recruitment can be where the most radical ideas are seeded, which can then be amplified or given greater structure online. The human dimension must never be overlooked.”

According to Mr Simcox, government efforts have increasingly focused on online threats, neglecting local, community-level drivers of extremism.

Shadow Home Office Minister Matt Vickers said the warning must be taken seriously.

“A failure to integrate has permeated countless communities, creating microcosms of parallel cultures with no reflection of a wider British society,” he said. “We need a stronger spine on integration and an unapologetic defence of shared national values. If British values are diluted and cohesion collapses, unity will break down, allowing extremism to quietly fester.”

Sarah Pochin, a Reform Party representative, criticised what she saw as a lack of support for British history and culture, alongside the promotion of values she claimed were “quite different to our own”.

“This is fuelling resentment among people who want the Union Jack on public buildings, English as the only language in our schools, and reassurance that suppression of women will never be acceptable in this country,” she said.

Mr Simcox also expressed fears about the rise of “blasphemy-inspired violence” in Britain, citing incidents in Batley, Wakefield, and cases involving the burning of religious texts.

“At least three of these incidents are linked to a new generation of UK-based anti-blasphemy activists,” he said. “Those accused have received credible death threats requiring police attention.”

In 2021, his office commissioned academic research into the normalisation of anti-blasphemy narratives in some British Muslim communities, examining overlaps with rhetoric used by jihadist figures such as Osama bin Laden. The report also catalogued blasphemy-related violence in Europe.

Mr Simcox warned that without intervention, Britain could experience a serious incident of blasphemy-related violence in the coming years.

His comments come after a man, Hamit Coskun, was fined for burning a copy of the Quran outside the Turkish consulate in London on 13 February. The case sparked concerns among some political figures that the UK was moving towards “de facto blasphemy laws”.

“De facto blasphemy laws will set this country on the road to ruin. Freedom of belief, and freedom not to believe, are inalienable rights in Britain,” she said.

As Mr Simcox prepares to leave his post, his remarks underline growing concern among some political and security figures that Britain’s social cohesion is at risk without a firmer stance on integration, defence of national values, and tackling community-level radicalisation.