

ELON MUSK

IMPACT: Elon Musk is a billionaire entrepreneur and the CEO or top executive of multiple high-profile companies, including X (formerly Twitter), Tesla and SpaceX. He has a documented history of amplifying anti-Muslim tropes, supporting individuals and organizations that promote Islamophobia, and making statements that minimize or dismiss concerns about anti-Muslim racism. His actions and influence have contributed to the normalization of Islamophobic rhetoric in public discourse. In 2024, U.S. President Donald Trump appointed Musk to lead the newly-created Department of Government Efficiency.

- Elon Musk was born on June 28, 1971, in Pretoria, South Africa. He attended Queen's University in Canada before transferring to the University of Pennsylvania, where he earned degrees in physics and economics. **Musk co-founded Zip2, an online city guide, which he sold for nearly \$300 million in 1999. He later founded PayPal and went on to establish Tesla Motors, SpaceX, Neuralink, and The Boring Company, among other ventures.**
- In recent years, **Musk's public commentary expressing far-right views and online activity have drawn criticism for enabling and/or promoting Islamophobia. Musk has promoted discriminatory views about Islam and Muslims and amplified misinformation on his X profile, which has a major impact given its 213 million followers.** In May 2024, he replied "wow" to a tweet by British actor Laurence Fox, who made several false claims about Islam and Muslims in the UK. The tweet exaggerated the scope of Sharia Councils, claimed that all the current mayors (at the time) in multiple cities were Muslim, reinforced conspiracies about Muslim "no-go zones," claimed more than half of Muslims are unemployed, and made more unfounded assertions. That same month, X faced a legal dispute in Queensland, Australia, where the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal concluded that the platform could be liable for hate speech against Muslims.
- In August 2024, Forbes reported on a public dispute between Musk and Scottish politician Humza Yousaf over allegations of racism. **When a video of Yousaf discussing structural racism from 2020 resurfaced online, Musk labelled Yousaf "a blatant racist" in a 2023 reply to the video. In August 2024, Musk tweeted regarding the anti-Muslim riots that had taken place across the UK, claiming that "Civil War is inevitable" (allegedly due to mass migration), and was accused of boosting false headlines about British rioters allegedly being put into detainment camps. When Yousaf was asked about Musk's actions, Yousaf stated that Musk is "one of the most dangerous men on the planet... he uses his billions... to amplify far-right white supremacist ideology."** In response, Musk tweeted, "He [Yousaf] is super, super racist. Scotland gave him everything and yet he loathes white people. This is obvious, because he has never complained about the race of any other country's leadership. There are over 200 countries in the world, most of whom have single-race leadership. Why is he only attacking Scotland?"
- **During President Donald Trump's inauguration in January 2025, Musk gave a speech and appeared to make the Nazi salute twice.** There was immediate criticism both online and from media networks following Musk's gesture. The Guardian reported that "Michel Friedman, a prominent German-French publicist and former deputy chair of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, described Musk's actions as a disgrace and said Musk had shown that a 'dangerous point for the entire free world.'" had been reached. **Lenz Jacobsen, the editor of the German newspaper *Die Zeit*, published a column with the headline: "A Hitler Salute is a Hitler Salute is a Hitler Salute," and wrote that, "Whoever on a political stage, making a political speech in front of a partly far-right audience, elongates his arm diagonally in the air both forcefully and repeatedly, is making a Hitler salute."** In response to the backlash, Musk posted on X: "Frankly, they need better dirty tricks. The 'everyone is Hitler' attack is sooo tired."
- In January 2025, Musk used X to amplify disinformation regarding so-called "Muslim grooming gangs" in the United Kingdom. He falsely perpetuated the narrative that organized Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is primarily conducted by Pakistani Muslim men. On January 6, 2025, Prime Minister Keir Starmer spoke to the media regarding the conversation around CSE, to which Musk tweeted that, "Starmer was deeply complicit in the mass rapes in exchange for votes. That's what the inquiry would show." Further, Musk tweeted "Unconscionable" in response to a list of British MPs who were portrayed as supporting the halting of deportations of alleged foreign rapists. In reality, the

MPs who signed the [letter](#) were supporting a halt because certain legal procedures had not been met. Further, it was revealed that the Home Secretary had [exaggerated](#) the severity of the crimes of a number of individuals marked for deportation (and eventually deported). Musk [tweeted](#) “Stارmer was complicit in the RAPE OF BRITAIN when he was head of Crown Prosecution for 6 years. Starmer must go and he must face charges for his complicity in the worst mass crime in the history of Britain.” On January 3rd, he [labelled](#) MP Jess Philips as “A rape genocide apologist.” In addition, he [tweeted](#) regarding inquiries on child sexual exploitation that, “Now why would Keir Starmer order his own party to block such an inquiry? Because he is hiding terrible things. That is why.” and “Please call your member of parliament and tell them that the hundreds of thousands of little girls in Britain who were, and are still are, being systematically, horrifically gang-raped deserve some justice in this world.” **Musk’s tweets raised concerns about foreign influence on UK politics and the amplification of divisive rhetoric and misinformation. The narrative about so-called Muslim “grooming gangs” has been debunked by the Home Office’s own official reports, which found no evidence to support such claims. Official UK government data [concluded](#) that “group-based offenders are most commonly White”.**

- Far-right groups in the UK have used cases of child sexual exploitation to advance their political goals. Back in 2011, Andrew Norfolk of The Times [claimed](#) he had uncovered a grooming-gang “conspiracy of silence.” The Quilliam Foundation had also made [unfounded claims](#) that allegedly “84% of grooming gang offenders were Asian.” In August 2017, MP Sarah Champion published a piece in The Sun [claiming](#) that, “Britain has a problem with British Pakistani men raping and exploiting white girls.” After making these remarks, she resigned from her position as Shadow Equalities Minister.
- **In January 2025, Musk also called for the release of jailed British anti-Muslim and anti-immigration activist Tommy Robinson.** Musk [tweeted](#), “Free Tommy Robinson!” and in the same thread shared a [documentary](#) from Robinson’s account. In another [tweet](#), Musk asked, “Why is Tommy Robinson in a solitary confinement prison for telling the truth? He should be freed and those who covered up this travesty should take his place in that cell.” This was in response to another [tweet](#) claiming that Robinson “exposed the mass betrayal of English girls by the state.” **In January 2025, Robinson’s representatives [thanked Musk for agreeing to pay his \[Robinson’s\] legal fees.](#)** Reporter Sanya Burgess for iNews [reported](#) that “Musk’s financial support for Robinson – if proven true – will exacerbate concerns about the tech tycoon’s willingness to meddle in British politics.” Robinson is a prominent far-right figure who has promoted the “Muslim grooming gangs” narrative.
- In response to Musk’s tweets, London Mayor Sadiq Khan made a [three-point plan](#) to combat the “far right and billionaire bullies,” claiming that “These are deeply worrying times, especially if you’re a member of a minority community.” Miqdaad Versi, spokesperson for the Muslim Council of Britain, [tweeted](#), “Yet again we see Islamophobic lies spread on this platform and promoted because Elon Musk replied. The @CommunityNotes make clear this [a revenge rape incident that Musk amplified] had nothing to do with “Sharia law” and was actually exposed by an Imam. It’s awful that these lies get such traction and seen by so many.”
- **Following Musk’s plethora of Islamophobic tweets, British Muslims [expressed their fears that Musk’s amplification of misinformation would “fan the flames” of anti-Muslim racism in the country.](#)** Azmat Khan, a British Pakistani Taxi driver, [described](#) Musk as “dangerous” to Al Jazeera and expressed his worry, noting that, “Our community has seen through this kind of scapegoating before. But with Musk’s platform and resources, the threat has reached an entirely new level.” **Dr. Shabna Begum, head of [Runnymede Trust](#), a racial equality think tank, [said that](#), “By propelling misinformation, he’s [Musk] creating mistrust and a volatile environment. It purposefully stokes fear, prejudice, and division with no care for the victims and survivors of this violence, and makes no effort to address the real problems of misogyny and child sexual abuse.”**
- **Musk has also publicly supported politicians who have a history of anti-Muslim rhetoric.** In addition to his close relationship and support for President Donald Trump (Musk [donated](#) more than \$250 million to his presidential campaign), whose history of [Islamophobia](#) has been well-documented by The Bridge Initiative, Musk has also interacted with UK politicians and German political parties. In

January 2025, Musk [tweeted](#) that “Only Reform can save Britain.” The Reform Party is headed by [Nigel Farage](#), who has a history of [spreading](#) anti-Muslim rhetoric in the UK. In 2024, Farage [claimed](#) that British Muslims do not subscribe to British values, adding that “I found some of the recent surveys saying that 46% of British Muslims support Hamas – support a terrorist organisation that is proscribed in this country.” In response, grassroots groups condemned his remarks, [describing](#) them as “outright Islamophobia”. However, the relationship between Musk and Farage is difficult to understand, given that again in January 2025, Musk called for Farage to be replaced as Reform UK leader, saying he “doesn’t have what it takes.” Farage indicated that Musk’s change of heart may have to do with their disagreement about Tommy Robinson, [stating](#) “My view remains that Tommy Robinson is not right for Reform and I never sell out my principles.”

- In response to Musk’s Islamophobic tweets, American scholar and Imam, Dr. Omar Suleiman [directed](#) a post on X to the Tesla CEO, [stating](#) “for the past week, you have blown every conceivable dog whistle of Islamophobia, by highlighting a select group of (horrifying) incidents supposedly in the name of Islam. Your barrage of tweets aimed at Islam have been as dangerous as they are dishonest about a faith practiced by over 2 billion people.” Suleiman added that he’d be happy to engage with Musk if the latter “genuinely” wanted a clarification.
- **In December 2024, Musk [endorsed](#) Germany’s far-right [Alternative für Deutschland \(AfD\)](#) party, known for its anti-immigration and anti-Islam stance. The party has also been “labelled a suspected extremist organization by Germany’s national security services.”** He [tweeted](#), “Only the AfD can save Germany.” This endorsement came leading up to the upcoming German elections and was followed by a [livestream](#) with AfD leader [Alice Weidel](#), raising concerns about potential election interference and the promotion of far-right ideologies. **Just two days before Holocaust Remembrance Day in January 2025, Musk [spoke virtually](#) at an AfD campaign event, [telling](#) the audience that “children should not be guilty of the sins of their parents, let alone their great-grandparents,” in an apparent reference to the Nazi Germany.** He went on to [say](#), “It’s good to be proud of German culture, German values, and not to lose that in some sort of multiculturalism that dilutes everything.”
- **In January 2025, several European politicians, including Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, French President Emmanuel Macron, and a German government spokesperson, [criticized](#) Musk for his commentary on European politics.** While not naming Musk directly in their comments, they accused him of interfering in the continent’s democratic processes. Norwegian PM Støre stated, “I find it worrying that a man with enormous access to social media and huge economic resources involves himself so directly in the internal affairs of other countries. This is not the way things should be between democracies and allies.”
- Beyond his statements, Musk’s business dealings have raised questions about his alignment with individuals who have enforced anti-Muslim policies. Tesla’s recent expansion in India coincided with public praise from Musk for Indian Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#), whose government has been widely criticized for enacting policies that discriminate against and [marginalize](#) Muslims. In June 2024, Musk [tweeted](#), “Congratulations @narendramodi on your victory in the world’s largest democratic elections! Looking forward to my companies doing exciting work in India.” Additionally, **a January 2023 [Intercept](#) article [found](#) that Musk had given in to pressure from the Indian government to remove a BBC documentary from X, which explored “Modi’s role in a genocidal 2002 massacre in the Indian state of Gujarat.”**
- Musk’s actions have drawn criticism from advocacy organizations such as the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). In December 2024, CAIR issued a statement condemning Musk’s amplification of Islamophobic rhetoric on X after the Christmas market attack in Germany by an AfD supporter. The organization [called](#) on Musk “To stop sharing such disinformation and to explain why X (formerly Twitter) deleted social media history on the killer’s X page that showed his extensive, years-long hostility toward Islam and support for Germany’s Neo-Nazi inspired AfD Party, for which Musk has also expressed support.” **Outlets such as Forbes have [written](#) about how Musk’s X platform**

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has been restoring accounts that were previously banned for “hateful conduct” and misinformation. Media analytics professor Marc Owen Jones has [claimed](#) that “Elon Musk turned X into a far-right haven.”

- In November 2024, Musk supported [Douglas Murray’s](#) insistence that violence and terrorism are rooted in Islam and fearmongering about the changing demographics of Europe. Murray is a British writer known for his opposition to Muslim immigration. Musk [tweeted](#) “Douglas Murray is an excellent writer,” when promoting Murray’s new book, *On Democracies and Death Cults*.

Bridge Initiative Factsheet