

## **PE1737/H**

Petitioner submission of 25 February 2020

The Hindu Forum of Britain (HFB) is the largest umbrella body for Hindus in UK with more than 300 member organisations including Hindu temples, charities, Cultural Organisations. HFB facilitates consultation and communication to support and influence public policy by providing broad and collective views of the Hindu community on a wide range of issues.

### Summary :-

The petition PE1737 is “Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to address increasing levels of hate crime in Scotland by providing security funding similar to that in place in England and Wales.” Was lodged by our executive member, Puneet Dwivedi who is the Vice president for Scotland. On 19th Sept 2019 – Puneet Dwivedi gave [evidence](#) of his petition in front of Public Petitions Committee.

HFB conducted Security Conference in association with Police Scotland at various Hindu temples in Scotland. During this conference many people given their accounts of hate crime incidents, which goes unreported. People also reported how their place of worship was attacked in past. People also narrated how their places of worship have been attacked in the past. There were many incidents of hate crime in Glasgow temple as well as at Edinburgh Hindu temple, which include graffiti paints, congregation car vandalised, Break-ins to cause damage and desecrate the sacred spaces and scriptures.in, verbal abuse etc. – many of these incidents are still being under investigation by police.

These are just statistics and examples relating to attacks on Hindu Community in Scotland, it's not just Hindus faith groups have been the target of similar attacks in various parts of Scotland.

The Home Office introduced The Places of Worship (POW) for tackling hate crime in England and wales however this scheme was not introduced in Scotland, hence this petition was raised to have similar funding for Scotland as well. The Chancellor doubled the funding from £1.6 to £3.2 million in 2019/20 in the recent changed they also removed the need for applicants to demonstrate they had been a victim of hate crime, instead focusing on vulnerability. The scheme benefitted 63 churches, 49 mosques, 5 Hindu temples, and 17 Sikh Gurdwaras.

As Police Scotland in their [submission](#) have mentioned that they support this initiative additional fund enhance the safety for places of worship.

### Conclusion: -

Almost all of the Hindu temple in Scotland are funded by donations from congregations and struggle financially as the number of Hindus is very low in Scotland. Any additional funding to improve security means diverting funds from bare minimum requirement for temples. Many Hindus hesitate to report any hate crime to police. Its vital everyone feels safe and protected in the places of worship they attend worship without the threat of intimidation, abuse or violence or any hate crime. Hindu Community welcome any move from Scottish Govt for additional funding for protective and security measures at places of worship would support this endeavour.