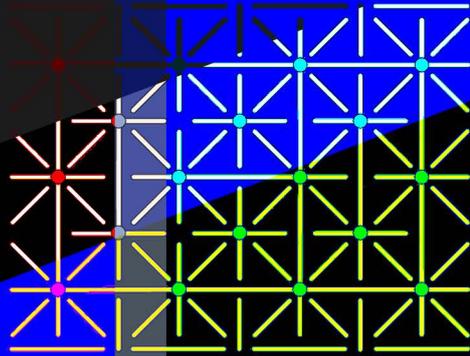


Understanding the
2022 Violence in
Leicester



A report by the Independent Commission
of Inquiry into the 2022 Leicester violence



Brief

Did SOAS Institutionalise Hinduphobia on behalf of George Soros

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Brief

Did SOAS Institutionalise
Hinduphobia on behalf of George Soros?

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I. Executive Summary

Policy realignment beyond the evidential record

The SOAS commission report effects a normative and policy realignment by shifting the centre of gravity from protection against anti-Hindu harm to the management of alleged “Hindutva extremism”, despite its own evidential record not conclusively establishing “Hindutva” as the primary causal driver of the Leicester violence.

Mismatch between descriptive findings and prescriptive recommendations

A central analytical weakness of the report lies in the disconnect between what it descriptively documents and what it prescriptively recommends: it records intimidation, property damage, temple-targeting, and anti-Hindu harm, yet its principal recommendations are directed towards identifying, isolating, and confronting Hindu ideological formations.

Institutionalisation of suspicion through extremism framing

By elevating “Hindutva extremism” into the core policy category, the report risks institutionalising a framework in which Hindus are acknowledged as having suffered harm but are nevertheless rendered the primary object of institutional suspicion, monitoring, and civic management.

Verification deficits in key causal attributions

The report itself acknowledges verification limits in relation to some of its most politically consequential claims, including alleged involvement of Hindutva-associated actors in the 17 September march and unsupported attributions such as references to “Hindutva RSS thugs”. These admissions materially weaken any strong causal inference linking Leicester's violence to organised Hindutva structures.

Methodological legitimacy impaired by representational asymmetry

The inquiry's evidential base was affected by boycott campaigns, opposition from Leicester's Mayor, and non-engagement by the police. Since the report itself accepts that many Hindu organisations did not participate, its claim to produce a fully balanced commission-style account is methodologically constrained at the level of representation and legitimacy.

Privately funded parallel inquiry as an institutional risk factor

The existence of a privately funded, politically salient inquiry running alongside an already extant

UK government-commissioned review generates a foreseeable legitimacy problem. Even absent proof of direct donor interference, such a configuration raises a serious question about agenda-setting, duplication of authority, and public trust in communal-conflict reporting.

Non-interference clauses do not negate structural or ideological bias

The report's formal declaration that Open Society Foundations had no influence over methods or findings cannot resolve the deeper issue of institutional bias. Such disclaimers address formal control, but not the more subtle shaping effects of funding environments, ideological ecosystems, or pre-structured normative assumptions.

Disinformation is acknowledged, but not fully followed through analytically

Although the report correctly identifies disinformation as a central accelerant, it does not fully integrate the implications of prior findings showing that misinformation, influencer amplification, and false attribution disproportionately exposed Hindus to threat, intimidation, and retaliatory violence. This weakens the coherence of its final policy synthesis.

Hindutva and RSS are treated as policy-significant despite no evidential closure

The report attaches significant policy weight to allegations connected with Hindutva and RSS-linked narratives, even where it expressly concedes that some such claims were unverified or unsupported by evidence. This produces a category inflation problem: a politically charged label is elevated into an institutional policy concern without any evidential closure.

The report's ultimate effect is to normalise a one-sided interpretive framework

Read as a whole, the report does not merely analyse Leicester; it helps construct an official-sounding interpretive framework in which anti-Hindu harms are acknowledged but subordinated to a broader narrative of Hindu ideological risk. The result is a form of institutionalised asymmetry with implications for safeguarding, equality recognition, media discourse, and the public understanding of Hinduphobia in Britain.

II. Context

The Leicester unrest of 2022 generated a crowded and contested reporting ecosystem. By the time the SOAS commission published *Better Together: Understanding the 2022 Violence in Leicester* in February 2026, the evidential field already included rapid-response briefs, computational forensic analysis, fact-finding reports, media investigations, and an ongoing UK government-commissioned review. The key analytic question, therefore, is not whether the SOAS report entered a vacuum. It did not. The real question is whether it fairly integrated the prior evidential landscape, or whether it reorganised that landscape through a pre-set ideological frame.

Across the pre-2026 reporting ecosystem, a striking convergence is visible. Reports issued by CIHS, NCRI, CRT/Charlotte Littlewood, and CDPHR differ in method, tone, and institutional location, yet they repeatedly arrive at two common findings. First, disinformation and influencer amplification were not incidental features of the Leicester violence; they were causal drivers in escalating tensions, shaping perceptions, and mobilising individuals towards real-world confrontation. Secondly, Hindus were not merely one community among many caught in a diffuse breakdown of cohesion. They were, in significant respects, targets of online incitement, doxxing, false attribution, intimidation, and attacks on property and religious symbols, much of which these reports attribute to Islamist factions and allied misinformation ecosystems operating in and around Leicester.

This matters because media gatekeeping failed at a critical moment. The prior reports, especially NCRI, CIHS, and CRT, converge on the claim that unverified influencer narratives were elevated into mainstream discourse without sufficient due diligence. In that environment, misinformation ceased to be rhetorical noise and became operationally consequential. False claims about “RSS terrorists”, “Hindutva thugs”, or organised Hindu extremism were not simply descriptive errors; they shaped how violence was interpreted, whom authorities and media treated with suspicion, and which communities were left exposed. The result was not neutral confusion, but a reputational inversion in which Hindu victims could be reframed as presumptive aggressors.

It is against that background that the SOAS commission report must be read. The report adopts the formal language of inquiry, relies on mixed methods, and includes an express statement that Open Society Foundations had no influence over its methods or findings. Yet the report was privately funded, publicly linked to a reported £620,000 OSF grant, and conducted in parallel with an already

existing UK government review. In a politically charged communal context, that institutional configuration was always likely to attract scrutiny. Even if one accepts the non-interference disclaimer at face value, such statements do not settle the deeper question of whether funding relationships, institutional culture, or ideological priors shaped the report's framing, priorities, and recommendations.

The central criticism advanced in this paper is not that the SOAS report contains no useful material. On the contrary, its own descriptive sections document anti-Hindu harm in serious terms, including intimidation, attacks in Hindu neighbourhoods, and the Shivalaya Mandir incident. The problem lies elsewhere: in the report's interpretive and policy architecture. While acknowledging anti-Hindu targeting and admitting verification limits around some claims concerning alleged Hindutva-linked organisational involvement, the report nonetheless elevates “Hindutva extremism” into the principal prescriptive concern. In doing so, it produces a structure in which Hindus are descriptively recognised as having suffered harm, yet prescriptively positioned as the primary object of suspicion and institutional management.

That asymmetry is the report's most serious flaw. A report can document harm accurately and still institutionalise bias through the categories it privileges and the remedies it recommends. In the Leicester case, the cumulative evidential landscape pointed first towards protection: countering disinformation, recognising anti-Hindu prejudice, scrutinising Islamist mobilisation, and repairing failures of media and civic response. The SOAS commission instead shifts the centre of gravity toward the ideological containment of “Hindutva”. That is not a neutral synthesis of the evidence. It is a policy reorientation with downstream consequences for safeguarding, public discourse, community recognition, and the equal treatment of Hindus in Britain.

This report therefore proceeds from a narrow but important contention: the SOAS commission should not be assessed only by what it says, but by what it does institutionally. Read against the wider evidential record, it raises a serious question as to whether a privately funded, politically salient inquiry helped recast a pattern of anti-Hindu victimisation into an official-sounding framework of Hindu suspicion. If so, the issue is larger than one report. It is whether elite institutions, media ecosystems, and donor-linked inquiry structures together contributed to the normalisation of a one-sided narrative of Leicester—one with damaging implications for public trust, social cohesion, and the recognition of Hinduphobia in the United Kingdom.

III. Prior reports and what they establish

The pre-2026 report ecosystem is largely overlapping. It contains briefs, computational forensics, and fact-finding studies. The correct analytic method is to compare what each report credibly establishes, given its methods, and then evaluate whether the SOAS commission report fairly integrates that evidential landscape or reorganises it into a pre-set ideological frame.

The Centre for Integrated and Holistic Studies (CIHS), an independent Delhi-based think tank issued rapid-response briefs in September 2022. Its Leicester briefs highlights that organised Islamist entities and individuals targeted Leicester's Hindu population and that over fifty Hindu properties and vehicles were damaged in targeted attacks; it further records that Leicester police refuted the kidnapping narrative, and it names Majid Freeman as a prominent misinformation disseminator. CIHS reports there after have been tested against the computational and police-referenced work in NCRI and CDPHR. The Network Contagion Research Institute (NCRI) report is the most technologically explicit computational study. It describes multi-platform data collection and applies machine learning, natural language processing, network analysis and OSINT to build a timeline of malicious narratives and mobilisation patterns. Its headline figures include that AI models detected calls for violent action on Twitter during the Leicester events, with 70% of those calls directed against Hindus and 30% against Muslims. Crucially, NCRI also states that disinformation about Hindus as “bloodthirsty and genocidal” motivated attacks by recruiting online reinforcements to real-world engagements, and it explicitly criticises mainstream outlets for

failing due diligence and amplifying Majid Freeman as a “central agitator”. This is not an aesthetic disagreement; it is an operational finding about how violence was incited and against whom, in this case Islamist violence directed towards Hindus. The CRT/Charlotte Littlewood report, published through the Henry Jackson Society ecosystem, offers a narrative corrective and treats “Hindutva extremism” as a largely false narrative overlay for what it characterises as a “micro-community cohesion breakdown” and territorial conflict between youth groups. Its method is mixed qualitative and documentary: interviews with residents, compilation of social media evidence, police reports and statements, and video review. Its key outcomes are: it reports no evidence of Hindutva extremist organisations operating in Leicester; it argues that false allegations of “RSS terrorists” put Hindus at risk; it describes voluntary curfews and temporary relocation among some Hindus; and it identifies an influencer ecosystem whose narratives were taken up by mainstream media and politicians, thereby entrenching an anti-Hindu suspicion framework. The CDPHR fact-finding report is the most explicitly “Hinduphobia” centred. Its method is presented as fact-finding with interviews and document compilation, and it is explicit about two themes: territorial majoritarianism in East Leicester, and the translation of malicious misinformation into on-street violence and temporary displacement. Its most concrete contribution in the reviewed bundle is documentation of doxxing of a young Hindu boy via photos and car plate number, and its account of police debunking of the kidnapping narrative. Like CIHS, CDPHR's rhetoric is advocacy-forward and includes broader geopolitical analogies; the evidence-grade portions are the ones anchored to specific incidents (doxxing, misinformation claims, police debunking) rather than broad generalisations.

Across these four, one evidential convergence is decisive: disinformation and influencer amplification were not peripheral; they were a causal pathway to real-world threat. A second convergence is that Hindus were not participants in community tensions; they were targets of online incitement, doxxing, and false attribution narratives that shaped how violence was interpreted and escalated against them by Islamist fractions in Leicester.



Islamist sympathiser Majid Freeman who was one of the central agitator in Leicester

IV. Role of media and influencer platforming

The media's role in Leicester is best understood as a gatekeeping failure under crisis conditions. Where unverified influencer narratives are elevated to "community voice", journalism can become an accelerant, especially when corrections lag. NCRI reporting is explicit. It states that mainstream media platforms, including the BBC, The Guardian and The New York Times, failed to perform due diligence on Majid Freeman and amplified the voice of a conspiracy theorist and extremist sympathiser who was a central agitator in Leicester; it further states that Freeman disseminated malicious narratives that were disseminated by networks involved in mobilising on the ground. CIHS's weaponisation report advances the same structural claim with stronger language. It states that mainstream UK outlets such as the Guardian and the BBC gave a platform to "fake news disseminators" and supporters of Islamist extremist groups like Freeman, and it also names Sunny Hundal as a roving reporter who stoked anti-Hindu hostility through inciting tweets. This is relevant as

an indicator of how the media ecosystem was acting when Hindu communities were under attack and how selective platforming degraded trust for such mainstream platforms. CRT reporting adds a third layer: it says mainstream press relied on influencers, focused on Hindutva and India politics rather than "nuanced and accurate" local analysis, and that the success of those claims posed a security threat to Hindu communities and contributed to attacks on places of worship. CRT report also describes the false "RSS" allegation leading temporary relocation and fear. The policy implication is straightforward. In communal unrest, mainstream media must treat influencer content as potentially hazardous operational material, not as authentic "testimony" to be amplified without verification, particularly where accusations implicate a minority religion in terrorism or imported extremism. The failure to do so produces predictable outcomes: reputational inversion, pressure on policing narratives, and increased risk of vigilantism and intimidation.



Tweet by Sunny Hundal, who stoked anti-Hindu hostility

V. Deep dive on the SOAS commission report

The commission report's full title is *Better Together: Understanding the 2022 Violence in Leicester*. It lists Professor Juan E Méndez as Chair of Inquiry, identifies an inquiry panel, lists report authors, and states a publication date of 23 February 2026 and publisher as SOAS, London. It also states that inquiry panel members are solely responsible for the content and recommendations. The report discloses that the commission is supported by Open Society Foundation through a grant made to SOAS, and states that Open Society Foundations has “no influence” over the commission's methods of working, conduct, or findings. On its face, this is a formal non-interference statement. Nonetheless, the OSF link matters for two reasons. First, it became a legitimacy focal point in the reports ideological grounding. British community organisations and media reported £620,000 grant linked to George Soros and his Open Society Foundations. Second, even if funder non-interference is true, ideology is not determined by disclaimers. Where a commission-style inquiry is privately funded and runs alongside a government-commissioned review, probability of agenda-setting is a foreseeable institutional effect. Second, Soros has publicly made statements regarding India and Hindus and that his agenda, much like previous global pursuits has been to facilitate “change”.



Violence and intimidation in Hindu neighbourhoods by Islamist mobs

Methodologically, the commission report adopts a mixed-methods approach: interviews, focus groups, community engagement, survey work, documentary and digital material analysis. But its most critical methodological weaknesses are not technical; they are representational and legitimacy-based. The report itself states that Leicester's Mayor opposed the inquiry and refused to meet, objecting to the use of words such as “independent”, “commission” and “inquiry” rather than describing the work as an academic research project; it also states that the Chief Constable of the local police cited the government review as the reason for not engaging. The report further states that the methodological impact of a boycott campaign aimed at Hindus in Leicester, the mayor's opposition, and police non-engagement is discussed in the report. Later, in its limitations section, it explicitly states that a boycott campaign affected participation of some Hindus and many Hindu community and religious organisations, and it notes that while this was mitigated by informal meetings and drop-in events, it nonetheless shaped the inquiry's evidence base.

Key findings in the report's public narrative include that disinformation was a central accelerant, that civic leadership failed to respond adequately, and that violence and intimidation were avoidable. Those findings are not the target of criticism here. The criticism is the report's institutionalised framing and the policy consequences of its recommendations. The report's own descriptive content contains strong evidence of harm to Hindus by Islamist fractions in Leicester. It describes intimidation and property damage in Hindu neighbourhoods, with victims reporting futility in reporting and difficulty obtaining police incident numbers. It treats the Shivalaya Mandir incident as a “signal event” and describes the pulling down and attempted burning of a saffron flag, missiles thrown at the mandir, and smashed windows. These are high-salience markers of Hinduphobia and anti-Hindu attacks. Yet the report's recommendations include explicit calls for political will to confront “Hindutva extremism”, recognising its ideological underpinning reflected in the report as “radical and militant Hindutva (Hindu nationalism, Hindu supremacism)” as a form of extremism comparable to terroristic political Islamism and far-right white nationalism, and urging religious and community figures to identify and isolate Hindutva organisations. That is an ideological prescription with downstream institutional implications.

Where the report becomes vulnerable to the charge of institutionalised bias is its evidential discipline around Hindutva-as-causal-driver in Leicester. The report itself records circumstances where verification was not possible. For example, in examining organisation of the 17 September march, it states that it heard the march was instigated by a small number of individuals previously involved in Hindutva-based politics in India and that some UK Hindutva-associated figures were part of WhatsApp chat groups about the march, but it explicitly states it was not able to verify their involvement. In its account of polarising language, it states “No evidence is given” for why youths involved in a May attack were characterised as “Hindutva RSS thugs”. These internal admissions matter because they directly constrain the strength of any policy recommendations that treat Hindutva organisational influence as a demonstrated local driver rather than as (at least partly) an unverified or contested attribution operating through social media and activist narratives.

The institutional effects flow from this mismatch. A UK policy environment tends to operationalise “extremism” narratives through safeguarding logics, referral ecosystems, school policy, and media shorthand. When a report published under elite institutional branding elevates a minority religion's political-identity disputes into the frame of “extremism” while simultaneously documenting verification limits and anti-Hindu targeting, it creates a structure in which anti-Hindu prejudice can be treated as “reactive tensions” while Hindu political identity becomes the proactive object of institutional management. This is the core mechanism of institutionalising Hinduphobia: not by denying anti-Hindu harm, but by reordering policy attention such that Hindus are descriptively harmed yet prescriptively suspect.



Vandalisation and attempted burning of sacred Hindu saffron flag at Shivalaya Hindu Mandir, Leicester

VI. Critical examination and comparative table

Before the table, the governing question must be put plainly. A report can be empirically rich and still institutionalise bias through the categories it privileges and the recommendations it normalises. Leicester demanded a protection-centred response because disinformation translated to intimidation, doxxing, and attacks on Hindu property and religious symbols. The comparator reports stress precisely these pathways. The commission report acknowledges them, but then shifts the policy centre of gravity toward Hindu ideological containment.

Dimension	SOAS commission report (Better Together, 2026)	CIHS (2022)	NCRI (2022)	CRT / Charlotte Littlewood (2022)	CDPHR fact-finding (2023)
Core explanatory frame	Multi-causal, but with strong prescriptive emphasis on confronting “Hindutva extremism”	Anti-Hindu targeting and organised Islamist intimidation; Hinduphobia	Disinformation and network mobilisation; quantified incitement distribution	“False narrative” critiqued: micro-cohesion breakdown <i>mislabelled</i> as organised Hindutva extremism	Hinduphobia and territorial majoritarianism; disinformation-to-violence pathway
Method	Mixed methods (interviews, survey, community engagement, documentary/digital analysis); acknowledges verification limits	Rapid-response brief	Computational/OSI NT methods; AI models, NLP, network analysis; timeline taxonomy	Interviews, police reports/statements, social media evidence; narrative correction	Fact-finding plus interviews; highlights doxxing and misinformation; advocacy-forward framing
Documentary recognition of anti-Hindu harm	Records intimidation and property damage in Hindu areas; details Shivalaya Mandir incident; notes reporting/insurance barriers	Highlights attacks on Hindu homes/properties; highlights Hindus as primary victims	Reports violence directed largely towards Hindus; reports incitement calls 70/30; details doxxing and malicious narratives	Records attacks on Hindu property/temple threats; records voluntary curfew/temporary relocation	Records doxxing of Hindu boy; records police debunking of kidnapping narrative; frames targeted harm
Treatment of misinformation	Calls disinformation “central”; describes social media as “active agent”; mixed discussion of narratives	Central; attributes spread to named influencers (eg. Majid Freeman); highlights mainstream media failures	Central; identifies bad actors; criticises mainstream media due diligence failure	Central; criticises platforming and narrative mislabelling	Central; describes translation to violence and displacement
Hindutva/RSS causal discipline	Reports unverified linkages in parts of the narrative; - makes strong “Hindutva extremism” prescriptions without methodological connections	Treats “Hindutva” framing as malicious misattribution and smear	Focuses on disinformation about Hindus; treats “Hindutva dominance” narratives as mobilisation tropes	Finds no Hindutva extremist groups operating in Leicester; treats “RSS terrorists” narrative as false and harmful	Treats “Hindutva extremist” branding of Hindus as vilification mechanism
Institutional effects	High policy legitimacy; recommendations likely to shape official framing and training	Politically influential for community stakeholders	Strong evidential lever for platform policy and police anti-disinformation strategy	Strong counter-narrative in policy debates; emphasises safety harms	Policy advocacy for recognising Hinduphobia and protecting micro-minority rights

After reviewing the table, the critical inference is clear. The reports most focused on disinformation mechanics and on-harm documentation (NCRI, CDPHR, CRT, and of CIHS) converge on a centred and consistent analysis: disinformation produced violence risk that fell heavily on Hindus through false attribution, doxxing, and temple/property targeting. The commission report acknowledges those harms in passing and yet still chooses an “extremism” prescription aimed prominently at Hindutva and Hindu civic leadership. That is not a neutral synthesis; it is a policy reorientation. It transforms a crisis where Hindus were targeted, in part through misinformation, into a durable official-sounding suspicion framework about Hindu political identity in Britain.

The consequence is not abstract. Once such framing is institutionalised, it becomes difficult for Hindu communities to secure equal recognition of anti-Hindu prejudice as a safety and equality concern, because calls for recognition can be rhetorically reframed as ideological manoeuvres rather than as protection claims. This is particularly acute when the report itself documents that some allegations linking violence to “Hindutva RSS thugs” were asserted without evidence and that alleged Hindutva-associated organisational involvement could not be verified.

VII. Concluding observations

This report answers the core question in two parts. First, the commission materials reviewed do conclusively do raise a legitimate question as to whether the Open Society Foundations or George Soros funding relationships may have shaped the commission's framing, priorities, or institutional orientation. The commission's express statement of non-interference is relevant, but such clauses are standard practice and cannot, by themselves, dispel concerns about structural, ideological, or institutional bias.

Second, on the report's own terms, the commission can reasonably be read as institutionalising anti-Hindu bias in its effects. It advances a policy prescription centred on 'Hindutva' while, at the same time, documenting anti-Hindu harms and acknowledging evidential or verification limits in relation to some claims alleging with Hindutva-linked organisations RSS. The result is a policy architecture in which Hindus are recognised as having suffered harm, yet are still treated as the primary object of suspicion. That asymmetry is precisely what fuels perceptions of ideological bias, including concerns publicly raised by the Mayor of Leicester.

In that context, the OSF funding connection functions less as proof of direct control than as a serious risk variable for social cohesion and public trust. Where a government-commissioned review already existed, the emergence of a parallel privately supported inquiry, hosted by a politically salient academic institution, was always likely to generate distrust. The reported £620,000 figure further intensified that distrust because it mapped onto an already established transnational narrative within sections of the Hindu community that OSF-linked networks are hostile to Hindu interests and, at times, to the Indian government. In the British context, that perception alone is sufficiently significant to warrant closer scrutiny.

Ultimately, the concern is not only about funding, but about narrative consequence and institutional effect. As the wider record evidences, Hindus were subjected to organised attacks by Islamist factions during the Leicester unrest, then any inquiry that fails to adequately foreground that reality, or that instead reconstitutes 'Hindutva' as the principal axis of policy concern, risks inverting victimhood and suspicion in a manner that deepens rather than resolves communal grievance. Equally, the appearance of this privately supported commission alongside an already existing UK government review remains a striking and curious coincidence. In a matter as sensitive as communal violence, such parallelism was always liable to provoke questions about motive, framing, and influence. Taken together, these features justify serious scrutiny of whether the SOAS commission report clarified the truth, or instead helped institutionalise a one-sided interpretive framework with damaging implications for public trust, community cohesion, and equal civic recognition and most of all institutionalised Hinduphobia on behalf of its donors.

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