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## Introduction

Comedian Jimmy Carr made national newspaper and social media headlines at the weekend after a segment from Netflix show *Jimmy Carr: His Dark Material* surfaced online. In the segment, Carr describes the genocide of 'thousands of Gypsies' during the Holocaust as a 'positive.'

His comments were met with an eruption of laughter and whistling from the audience, serving as a horrifying reminder that racism towards Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) people is 'the last acceptable form of racism.'

What followed was a whirlwind of uncomfortable debate and commentary which laid bare the lack of understanding and knowledge about GRT communities in the UK. Our communities suffer from invisibility, other than during acts of hatred such as this. We don't want this event to be a flash in the pan, and meaningful change must follow to counter the deep-seated prejudice that allowed this event to take place.

In this edition of our newsletter, we would like to take you through our responses and those of others to the actions of Jimmy Carr and Netflix. We also give directions on how you can support and follow our campaigns.

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# ROMA SUPPORT GROUP

*'The last time I saw my younger brother and sisters, my youngest sister said when we parted:  
"You're going away and we're going to be burned."  
Those were her last words. I will never forget it!' Amalie Reinhardt, Roma Holocaust Survivor.*

It is difficult to comprehend how joking about Amalie's memories can be acceptable. As descendants of Roma victims and survivors of the Holocaust, we are appalled with Jimmy Carr's abhorrent comment dehumanising the death and suffering of our parents and grandparents murdered during the Second World War.

We feel hurt and deeply insulted.

His 'joke' (and the eruption of laughter that followed) has not only reduced the death of 500,000 Roma and Sinti to a 'laughing' matter but also revealed the depth of anti-Roma hatred, prejudice and discrimination – the last 'acceptable' form of racism that still exists in our society today.

The UK's authorities and leaders should take immediate action to challenge racism, hatred and discrimination against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

Netflix prides itself as an organisation which values 'integrity, respect and inclusion.' If it continues to provide a platform to Jimmy Carr, how sure can anyone be that these are not empty statements?

We are calling on Netflix to withdraw the programme, reconsider their work with Jimmy Carr and support work that challenges racism and hate against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

## Roma Support Group statements

On Monday, Roma Support Group issued two statements in response to the actions of Jimmy Carr and Netflix: The first (above) on [Twitter](#), and the second, an extended statement published on our [website](#). We have called on Netflix to withdraw Jimmy Carr's programme, reconsider their work with him and commit to producing programmes aimed at raising awareness on Roma and tackling the issues GRT communities are facing.

Please follow our [Twitter account](#) for updates on these issues.

## Reaction from the GRT sector, politicians and other organisations

126 Parliamentarians, The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma and the APPG for the Prevention of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity have written to the Chief Executives of Netflix. The [letter](#) states that '*Netflix's approval and funding of this material perpetuates discrimination and racism*' and calls on the company to remove the programme from their platform immediately.

Co-Chair of the APPG for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma, Martin Docherty-Hughes, raised a point of order in the House of Commons on Monday addressing Jimmy Carr's comments:



Chief Executive of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, Olivia Marks-Woldman, issued a [statement](#) on Friday. She stated that *'the widespread ignorance of this recent history needs to be addressed and we urge everyone to learn more about the past and the experiences of Roma people today.'*

[Hope Not Hate](#) have written a [letter](#) to Netflix UK inviting the company to meet with them, [The Traveller Movement](#) and Roma Support Group *'to discuss how comments like Jimmy Carr's affect Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and how we can work to frame them in a more positive light.'*

[Luton Roma Trust](#) held a [protest](#) outside a Jimmy Carr gig in Dunstable on Tuesday evening. Crina Morteau from the Trust stated that if no apology is received from Carr and Netflix, they are *'convinced that we need to take legal action.'*

Our colleague, Mihai Bica, and Romany journalist, Jake Bowers, recently appeared on a BBC [podcast](#) to discuss the ways Roma and Gypsies often have to hide their identities in the UK due to fear of discrimination. The podcast host caught up with Bowers on Tuesday for his [comments](#) on the events of the last week. Bowers stated:

*'When I first heard that supposed joke, my blood ran cold... I think it says we are still classed as sub-human and it shows there is a special category, an acceptable racism towards Romani people.'*

While there has been widespread condemnation of Carr's comments in the media and on

the political level, it is important to remember that GRT people in the UK have continuously been victim to these arenas. Owen Jones has written an insightful [column](#) for *The Guardian* detailing the ugly political backdrop in which GRT communities have been stigmatised.

You can show your solidarity with GRT communities and challenge Netflix by signing this [petition](#) launched by The Traveller Movement.

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## National Curriculum Appeal

Jimmy Carr referred to the Roma and Sinti victims as 'Gypsies', a term that has deeply negative connotations for Roma and Sinti across Europe and the population of 200,000 Roma in the UK. Many commentaries too, even well meaning ones, repeated this erroneous usage amongst others. It revealed a lack of understanding about the differences between Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and their histories.

GRT people are regularly excluded from mainstream British history. [Research](#) from YouGov in 2019 found that 55% of British adults surveyed did not know that over 500,000 Roma and Sinti people were killed by the Nazis during the Holocaust.

Led by [Friends, Families and Travellers](#) and Roma Support group, the GRT sector has launched an appeal to Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi. In a [letter](#) signed by over 40 charities, we have called for the mandatory teaching of the Roma and Sinti genocide to be included in the National Curriculum. You can read coverage of the letter in [The Guardian](#), and see FFT's [website](#) to read quotes from supporting organisations on this issue.

It has been nearly two years since the Council of Europe [recommended](#) that its 47 member states include the history of Roma and/or Travellers in school curricula and teaching materials, but we have seen no progress on this in the UK as of yet.

The letter also calls for the curriculum to include *'positive narratives about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, reflecting both their national presence and historical context, and their common history as a people present in Europe for centuries. An important step would be for the Department for Education to support schools to celebrate [Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month](#).'*

Visit our [Roma Oral History Project](#) website to find a range of resources on the Roma Holocaust, anti-Roma persecution and ethnocide following the Second World War, migration and changing Roma identity, and the exploration of a sense of belonging and a process of integration in the UK.

The [Forgotten Genocide](#) website provides a detailed collection of Roma experiences during the Nazi regime.





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For more information about Roma Support Group, go to our website and look at the ["projects" pages](#).

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Views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily suggest that they are in accordance with the trustees of Roma Support Group.

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