# Scottish podcaster charged over racist abuse aimed at Councillor Soryia Siddique



A Scottish podcaster has been charged following an incident involving Councillor Dr Soryia Siddique, who faced a wave of racist abuse online. Siddique, representing Glasgow Southside Central, had her character attacked after sharing her experiences and motivations for entering politics in a video for the campaign group ElectHer. In the video, she described her surprise at the predominantly "pale, male and stale" environment of politics, a sentiment that resonated with many but also drew the ire of online trolls.

The abuse took a particularly offensive turn, characterised by Islamophobia and racism, and was exacerbated by the climate of political tension following remarks made by Nigel Farage regarding Anas Sarwar, the leader of the Scottish Labour Party. In the same week, Farage was accused of perpetuating racial stereotypes, drawing public backlash and further highlighting the need for a more inclusive political discourse.

Councillor Siddique has long been vocal about the challenges faced by women of colour in politics, recounting moments where she was told she wouldn't be elected due to wearing a headscarf. Such experiences only strengthened her resolve, as she aims to inspire other women from diverse backgrounds to participate in political life. The broader context reveals a concerning trend: women in politics, particularly those from minority backgrounds, are increasingly becoming targets for hateful abuse. Labour MP Satvir Kaur has noted that she encounters extreme verbal abuse almost daily, underscoring the systemic issues of racism and misogyny embedded within political spheres.

The arrest of the podcaster, Craig Houston, marked a significant step towards accountability. According to Police Scotland, he has been charged in relation to an online communication offence and is set to appear in Glasgow Sheriff Court. Such actions reflect a growing acknowledgement of the need to tackle hate speech online, but they also highlight the difficulties faced by public figures advocating for change, as evidenced by the experiences of journalists like Sima Kotecha, who recently encountered racial abuse while reporting in Leicester.

The incidents surrounding Councillor Siddique and others like her spark a crucial conversation about the state of political dialogue in the UK today. As racist and misogynistic abuse continue to permeate both online and offline spaces, the call for greater representation and respect within political environments has never been more poignant. The experiences of these figures illustrate the multifaceted struggle for equality and the essential need for a societal shift in how political engagement is approached.

Overall, the legal actions taken against perpetrators of hate speech signal a policy progression that aims to protect public figures and encourage a more respectful political discourse. Still, the road ahead remains challenging for many, who continue to face significant adversities due to prejudice and discrimination.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/podcaster-charged-after-scots-councillor-35317212), [[2]](https://www.holyrood.com/inside-politics/view%2Ccouncillor-soryia-siddique-i-was-told-i-wouldnt-get-elected-wearing-a-headscarf)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/podcaster-charged-after-scots-councillor-35317212), [[3]](https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/labour-britain-sikh-southampton-parliament-b2640497.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-leicestershire-52616923), [[5]](https://www.indy100.com/news/man-charged-for-hate-crime-over-racist-rant-8366696)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://www.vice.com/en/article/prominent-global-news-supriya-dwivedi-host-quits-alleging-on-air-climate-increased-racist-threats/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/podcaster-charged-after-scots-councillor-35317212), [[2]](https://www.holyrood.com/inside-politics/view%2Ccouncillor-soryia-siddique-i-was-told-i-wouldnt-get-elected-wearing-a-headscarf), [[3]](https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/labour-britain-sikh-southampton-parliament-b2640497.html)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/podcaster-charged-after-scots-councillor-35317212> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.holyrood.com/inside-politics/view%2Ccouncillor-soryia-siddique-i-was-told-i-wouldnt-get-elected-wearing-a-headscarf> - Councillor Soryia Siddique, representing Glasgow's Southside Central ward, shared her experiences of entering politics while wearing a headscarf. She recounted being told that she wouldn't get elected due to her attire, which only strengthened her resolve to prove that women from diverse backgrounds could succeed in politics. Siddique emphasised the importance of representation and the need for more women, especially from minority communities, to participate in political processes.
3. <https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/labour-britain-sikh-southampton-parliament-b2640497.html> - Labour MP Satvir Kaur, representing Southampton Test, revealed that she faces 'extreme' abuse, including racism, almost daily. Since her election, the abuse has intensified, particularly online. Kaur highlighted the challenges women in politics face, noting that they often become targets for misogynists and racists. Despite the vitriol, she remains determined to continue her work, aiming to inspire others from deprived areas and minority backgrounds to pursue political careers.
4. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-leicestershire-52616923> - BBC reporter Sima Kotecha was racially abused in Leicester city centre while preparing for a live broadcast. A group of individuals subjected Kotecha, her crew, and guests to racist and abusive behaviour, leading to the cancellation of the broadcast. The BBC reported the incident to the police, who are investigating. This event underscores the challenges journalists, especially those from minority backgrounds, face in the field.
5. <https://www.indy100.com/news/man-charged-for-hate-crime-over-racist-rant-8366696> - A man was charged with a hate crime after launching a racist tirade at Soraya Orelian, an African-American woman, for allegedly speaking too loudly on a train in Manhattan. The man, identified as Ruggerio, used derogatory language and racial slurs during the incident. He was arraigned in Queen's Criminal Court and released without bail. This case highlights the prevalence of racial abuse in public spaces and the legal consequences perpetrators may face.
6. <https://www.vice.com/en/article/prominent-global-news-supriya-dwivedi-host-quits-alleging-on-air-climate-increased-racist-threats/> - Supriya Dwivedi, a prominent global news host, resigned citing an increase in racist threats and a toxic on-air environment. Dwivedi alleged that the station's shift towards 'smart radio' led to a rise in misinformation and hateful content. She recounted specific incidents, including receiving violent threats after correcting a host's claims and complaints about the station's handling of controversial guests. Dwivedi's departure sheds light on the challenges media professionals face regarding workplace culture and online harassment.
7. <https://www.texasstandard.org/stories/aafia-siddiqui-pakistani-prisoner-fort-worth-texas-abuse-allegations-lawsuit/> - Aafia Siddiqui, a Pakistani national incarcerated at the Federal Medical Center in Carswell, Texas, filed a lawsuit alleging multiple instances of sexual assault and abuse by correctional officers. Siddiqui described the facility as a 'rape camp' and detailed several assaults over the years. Despite reporting the incidents, she claimed that the Bureau of Prisons failed to investigate adequately or implement protective measures. The case highlights concerns about the treatment of incarcerated individuals and the handling of abuse allegations within the prison system.