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NATIONAL NEWS

'Crisis' of forced marriages

8:10am Thursday 12th June 2008

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Britain's Muslim community is facing a "crisis" because hundreds of forced marriages go unreported and unnoticed, a legal group has said.

According to the Muslim Arbitration Tribunal (MAT), more than 70% of marriages in the Muslim community which involve a foreign spouse have some element of coercion or force.

In its Liberation from Forced Marriage report the organisation also claims young Muslims in Britain are "under siege" from older generations and alienated from mosques.

The MAT claims that while there are currently 300 reported cases of forced marriages brought to the attention of the police and government authorities, the true figure is in the thousands.

The report says: "These figures reflect the crisis that has loomed within the Muslim community without being noticed or dealt with for the past two decades. The figures that are reported to the authorities are only the tip of the iceberg."

According to the report, forced marriages are a reality for many young Muslims in the UK.

It adds: "Young Muslims in Britain are under siege from their elders and parents because of the generational and cultural gap. They are alienated from the mosques because these mosques are mainly controlled by the elder generation."

The report recommends that Muslim community leaders work alongside the Home Office and Foreign Office to resolve the issue. It also calls for a summit on forced marriages to be held at Downing Street with the Prime Minister.

Shaykh Faiz Siddiqi, chairman of the MAT's governing council, said it was crucial that the Muslim community worked alongside the Government.

He said: "We will work closely with the Government. It has to be joined forces but up to now the leadership of the Muslim community have not been forthcoming. We are trying to achieve an awareness that the community is now taking very bold steps to self-regulate."

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Summer dance in memory of Yeovil Town legend

A SUMMER dance and disco will be held next month in memory of the late Yeovil Town legend Paul Smith.



Landlord to work with police following drugs raid

THE landlord of the Yellow Wag-tail, in Yeovil, has said he will co-operate with the police to clamp down on under-age drinking and drug-users after officers raided his pub on Friday evening.

Plans to give Westfield a "makeover"

A PUBLIC meeting will take place on Thursday evening for residents to discuss how they can give their Yeovil estate a floral makeover.



Owusu staying at Yeovil Town

THERE are reports this morning suggesting that striker Lloyd Owusu has put pen to paper and signed a new contract with Yeovil Town.



Tough start for Yeovil Town, warns Slade

YEOVIL Town boss Russell Slade has labelled the Glovers' opening day of the new season against Walsall as a "tough" one.



Britain's Muslim community is facing a 'crisis' over forced marriages

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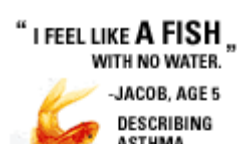
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