

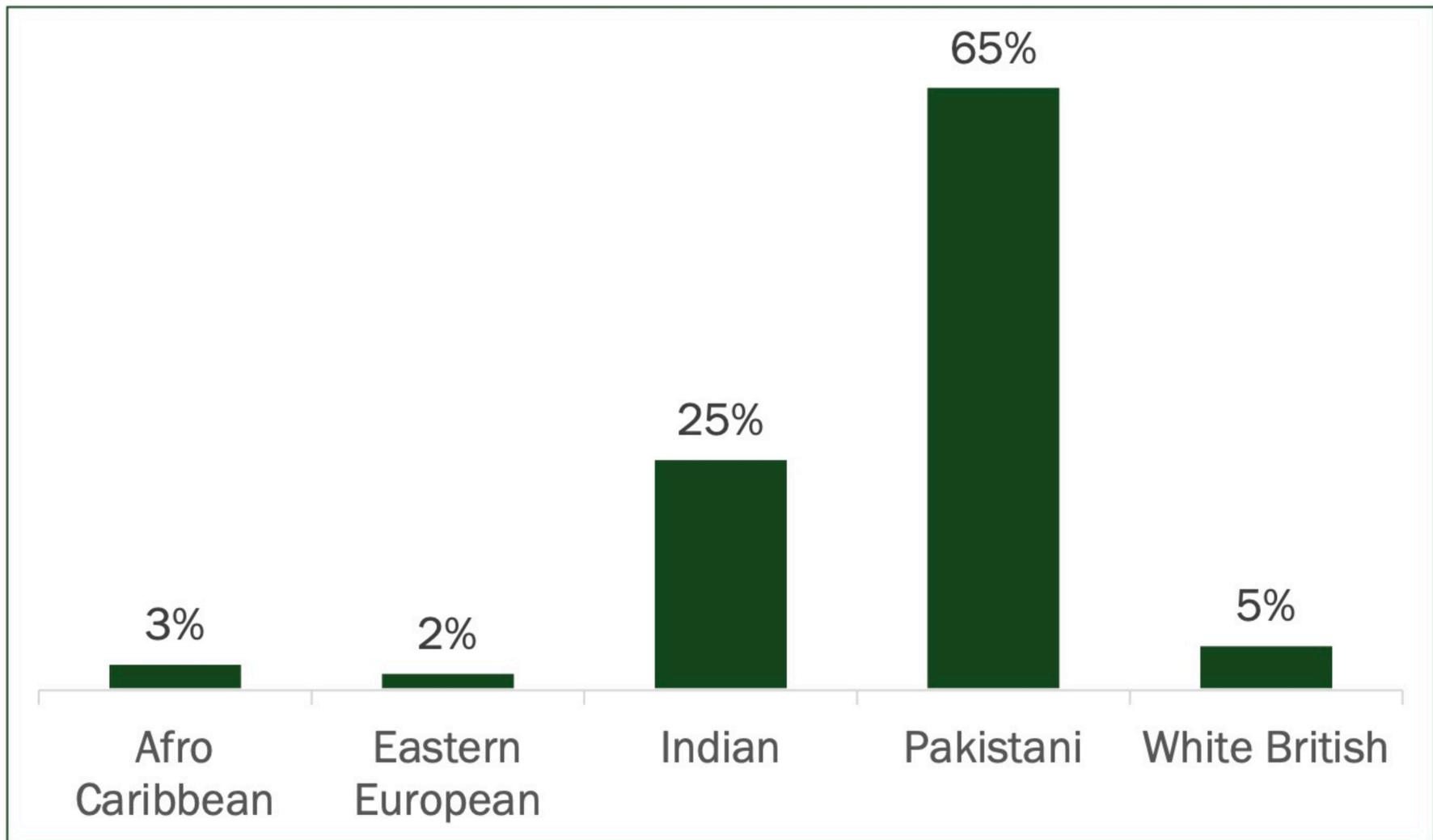


# MY FIRST HAJJ – A JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME (2024)

**JUNE 2025**



## Ethnicity of Participants



## Event Overview

The Tea & Chat session, held at Kunafa & Tea in Bradford, welcomed an audience of sixty-five women for an afternoon of reflection and dialogue. The event featured a keynote presentation by Rani Ahmed, local solicitor and MWC Board member, who shared her personal and spiritual insights following her performance of Hajj in 2024. The programme combined individual reflection with collective discussion, offering participants both inspiration and practical knowledge.

## Speaker Profile – Rani Ahmed

Born and raised in Bradford, Rani Ahmed qualified as a solicitor in 2019 and specialises in catastrophic injury and criminal defence. She has



served on the MWC Board since 2019, motivated by a commitment to supporting and advocating for women in the community.

Alongside her legal career, Rani is undertaking her fourth year of Islamic Studies at Bradford Muslim College. She describes her academic pursuit of Islamic knowledge as a source of peace and spiritual grounding. Outside her professional and academic commitments, she has a passion for travelling and reading.

In her presentation, Rani spoke candidly about her career

motivations, recalling that she was first inspired to study law by the television series *Ally McBeal*. Over time, she found a deeper fulfilment in applying her legal expertise to assist and empower others.

## Key Reflections from Hajj 2024

Rani outlined the journey leading up to and during her pilgrimage, emphasising both spiritual and practical dimensions. She noted that she made the intention to perform Hajj in January 2023, following a family conversation, and completed the booking process through the Saudi portal during Ramadan. Despite widespread reports of difficulties, her own experience of booking was smooth.



She advised attendees to approach Hajj preparation with simplicity, cautioning against over-reliance on numerous courses and resources. “Keep it simple and focus on your intention,” she remarked.

The most impactful moment of her pilgrimage occurred on the Day of Arafah, where she and her group prayed continuously for several hours. She described the experience of giving away their sleeping bags and sitting together on a roundabout to make du'a, emphasising the depth of spiritual connection and the tangible sense of divine mercy felt in that moment.



While she had anticipated significant physical hardship, Rani reported that the pilgrimage was less demanding than expected in this respect. Instead, she identified the emotional and spiritual aspects of the journey as the true challenge.

## **Group Discussion and Shared Learning**

Following the presentation, the session transitioned into an open group discussion. Several participants who had previously undertaken Hajj

contributed their experiences, which enriched the collective learning of the group.



Topics discussed included strategies for maintaining hydration (particularly through the use of electrolytes), adapting to the Saudi climate (where many facilities are now air-conditioned), and approaching the rituals of Hajj with patience and calmness.

The discussion highlighted common themes of intention, resilience, and spiritual focus as central to a successful pilgrimage.

## Conclusion

The Tea & Chat session successfully combined personal reflection, spiritual learning, and community dialogue. Through the contributions of both the keynote speaker and the wider audience, participants left with enhanced understanding, practical guidance, and renewed appreciation for the significance of Hajj. The event further demonstrated the value of creating spaces where women can exchange experiences and strengthen their collective spiritual and community bonds.

The session closed with warm reflections and gratitude. Attendees found Rani's honesty, humour, and spiritual depth both comforting and inspiring.

“You can plan and prepare, but when Allah calls you—He calls you. And you just go.”

**Report created by the Tea & Chat participants  
supported by the MWC Team**

