

# BAME Football Forum Media Release



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## **The BAME Football Forum release a 10 point plan to tackle discrimination in football, and say a complete culture change is needed.**

[The BAME Football Forum](#) (BFF), who have consistently raised awareness of racism and discrimination in football, have now released a 10 Point Plan to combat racism and to progress the BAME agenda. The forum say that there needs to be firm plans to address issues at all levels of the game from the echelons of professional football down to grassroots.

The Plan has got the backing of Emile Heskey, ex Liverpool & England International, Kirk Master Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, as well as Labour Member of Parliament Claudia Webbe MP; who are calling for a level playing field and for more players to speak out about discrimination in the game.

Currently the Country is enthralled in the emotional repercussions and ripple effect of the death of George Floyd, and many are questioning their own ability to do more around race and equality.

Across the waters, in America, the first Black Players Coalition of Major League Football has been launched to bridge the racial equality gap in their league. The Coalition is currently an organisation supported by the players.

The Forum is challenging football governing bodies to keep the conversations around race high on the agenda and is calling for:

- The Football Association (FA) and the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) to support the formation of a Black Players Association (in house or independent).
- The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to lead a formal public inquiry in to racism and discrimination in football, with a particular focus on grassroots discrimination and inequalities.
- The FA and CFA's to increase internal targets of BAME employees in leadership roles beyond current targets including the highest boards.
- The FA to have specific grassroots football representation (non-professional and non-elite) at all levels of decision making Boards.

Emile Heskey, ex Liverpool and England International, said,

"I have experienced discrimination first hand within the game and outside of it. There needs to be a body that speaks up for Black players and where they feel comfortable to have open conversations about race and equality. This does not exist in the current set up, and I know players that fear what their clubs will say if they were to speak up about anything. We need to protect players and give them the freedom to share their truths."

Claudia Webbe MP said,

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“I welcome this plan to tackle discrimination in football and I commend the BAME football forum for their tireless work combatting hatred in sport.”

“Over recent years, we have seen unacceptable racism across all levels of football. Whilst there is still much to do, only recently we have seen how the sport can be a force for good. Marcus Rashford led an inspiring campaign to ensure predominantly BAME children do not go hungry. Premier League players have taken the knee and worn shirts in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement. It is up to the FA and PFA to help continue this momentum by adopting these necessary recommendations.”

Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner Kirk Master said,

“This plan is exactly what we need right now and I commend the forum for once again stepping forward with a passion and a drive to make things happen. I am one hundred percent in support of combating any discrimination. So many of our young people are part of the game, and want a future within football. The system needs to do better, we need equality for our young people.”

The forum, with the backing of MP Claudia Webbe, has said that they will be seeking a meeting with the relevant bodies to present their plan and discuss how they can support the implementation of the plan.

Ivan Liburd, Chair of the BAME Football Forum said,

“Let’s start being honest and open about the situation, we need equal opportunities and greater representation for BAME candidates at all levels of the game. Only recently we learnt of the virtual nonexistence of Black members at National Governing Body level. This is no longer about towing the line and keeping the status quo. Everyone has a moral obligation to call out discrimination where they see it, and right now, the inequalities within football are as clear as day. Authorities must address the issue before football implodes.”

The forum have said that inequalities at a grassroots level is far worse as there is less finance and resources, and that the allocation and investment of modern facilities into BAME clubs is lacking.

The forum have requested meetings with the FA, Leicestershire and Rutland County FA as well as the DCMS and Minister of Sport.

-End-

Notes to Editor

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The BAME football Forum (BFF) is a partnership of grassroots clubs and community members that have been formed to develop a network of support. The aim of the forum is to help, promote, support and encourage the development and progression of BAME football, thereby ensuring the broader needs of the football community are met.

To read the [#ItsNotFair, Grassroots Experiences of Racism'](http://www.bamefootballforum.com/?p=160) report and recommendations, please visit <http://www.bamefootballforum.com/?p=160>

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## Related articles

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<https://www.itv.com/news/central/2019-10-22/grassroots-football-racial-abuse-mings-leicester-nirvana-emile-heskey-bulgaria-racism-soccer/>

**BBC News** Child footballers 'frequently racially abused', report states [https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leicestershire-49525172?intlink\\_from\\_url=&](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leicestershire-49525172?intlink_from_url=&)

Below, Ivan Liburd Chair of the BFF, Ahmed Mavaria Vice Chair of the BFF, Emile Heskey Ex England International



Photos by David Garcia



Chair Ivan Liburd



Ahmed Mavaria Vice Chair