



Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

CULTURAL & SOCIAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

OIC ISLAMOPHOBIA OBSERVATORY

MONTHLY BULLETIN – NOVEMBER 2014

I. MANIFESTATIONS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA:

I.1. In the United States and Canada:

1. **US: Brigitte Gabriel: 'No Chance' Of Muslim Americans 'Blending In' To U.S.**—Anti-Muslim activist Brigitte Gabriel told *Newsmax* host Dennis Michael on 14 November that there was “no chance” of American Muslims ever “blending in” with U.S. society.



In the interview, Lynch told Gabriel that he had recently traveled to Dearborn, Michigan, and did not see all but one or two homes with an American flag waving outside, and at one point stopped to ask for directions and was ignored.

“Why is it that the Muslim community is not blending in with the rest of American society.....Because this is what they are being told in mosques across the United States,” Gabriel said, claiming that American mosques were instructing their people not to shake hands on Christmas or Easter or wish

the Americans a happy holiday.

In: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2014/11/20/brigitte-gabriel-no-chance-of-muslim-americans-blending-in-to-u-s/#>, retrieved on 03.12.2014

2. **US: Shots fired at mosque in Southern California**—On 4 November morning shots were fired at a mosque in Southern California, while there were people in the building when the Islamic Society of Coachella Valley mosque was hit. The police said the incident was being treated as a potential hate crime.

Riverside County Sheriff's Captain Andrew Shouse said at least five shots were fired, including one that struck a Toyota parked in front of the mosque. A man who was in the mosque at the time told the *Desert Sun* there were four worshipers praying.

In: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2014/11/12/shots-fired-at-mosque-in-southern-california/>, retrieved on 03.12.2014

3. **US: John Cleese & Bill Maher debate political correctness, muse 'You can't make jokes about Muslims, they'll kill you'** – Monty Python scion John Cleese had described political correctness as “condescending” and a barrier to comedy. The comedian mused on the subject on HBO's *Real Time With Bill Maher* on 21 November.

Cleese, who was on the show to promote his memoir, was led into the matter by Maher who gleefully asked



him: *"Let's bitch about political correctness."* Cleese said *"I make jokes about Swedes, Germans, French, English, Canadians, Americans... why can't we make jokes about Mexicans? Is it because they're so feeble that they can't look after themselves? It's very, very condescending. Who are the people you can't make jokes about?"*

Quick as a shot, Maher replied with a laugh: *"Muslims. Try that, see what your Twitter feed says."* Cleese said: *"That's not saying that you can't, that just means they'll kill*

you."

"Oh yes, I've said that. I've made jokes like 'It's a religion of peace... there's a piece of you over there, there's a piece of you over there'", Maher responded.

In: http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/11/27/john-cleese--bill-maher-debate-political-correctness-muse-jokes-muslims- n_6232548.html, retrieved on 04.12.2014

4. US: Woman suspected in vandalism of Santa Cruz mosque—Black graffiti of the Star of David was found on the front door of a mosque in Live Oak on mid-November, and Santa Cruz County sheriff's deputies were investigating it as a hate crime.

Spray paint of the star, which was a Jewish symbol, and above it the number "26" were written on a white front door of the Islamic Center of Santa Cruz at 900 17th Ave. Santa Cruz County sheriff's Sgt. Mitch Medina said night vision surveillance images showed what appears to be a woman in a hooded sweatshirt spraying paint. The letters 'SC' appeared on the left torso of her sweatshirt. Deputies said they were unsure of her height, weight and other features.

In: http://www.mercurynews.com/crime-courts/ci_26986480/woman-suspected-vandalism-santa-cruz-mosque, retrieved on 01.12.2014

I.II. In Europe:

1. French: Far-right leaders vow to 'save Europe' at French gathering—Representatives of Eurosceptic and far-right groups from Italy to Bulgaria gathered at the National Front party conference in Lyon at the end of November to, what they called, warn France and Europe of a "neo-Ottoman" onslaught of Islam-preaching, benefit-stealing migrants.



Heinz-Christian Strache, the head of Austria's far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ), warned that *"Arab armies plundered Lyon in 725 and were now busy doing the same in Iraq and Syria"*. Strache went on to blast Europe's mainstream parties for, among other things, stoking "mass immigration, ideological terror, gay marriage and gender theory".

The Austrian far-right leader was one of seven foreign politicians invited by the National Front (FN) leader, Marine Le Pen, to showcase her so-called "Europe of nations" – which she hoped to build on the ruins of an increasingly unpopular EU.

Like the French far right, Le Pen's foreign guests had thrived on the gloom and anxiety sweeping across Europe in the wake of the financial crisis. Addressing the FN conference, they treated the audience to a mix of fear-mongering and unbridled optimism, claiming their impending victory would save Europe from the present apocalypse.

First to speak was Geert Wilders, the platinum blond leader of Dutch Islamophobic party PVV, who hailed Marine Le Pen as “France’s next president”. *“Just like you, we don’t want foreigners to tell us they are masters in our country. We say: kick the criminals, the jihadists, the illegal migrants out,”* he told the entirely Caucasian audience to rapturous applause.

In: <http://www.france24.com/en/20141130-france-national-front-europe-far-right-leaders-marine-le-pen-wilders-russia/>, retrieved on 02.12.2014

2. Netherlands: Dutch Far-Right Party demands closure of mosques – Netherlands’ extreme right wing party, Party for Freedom (PVV), headed by Geert Wilders and known for its extremist anti-Islam and anti-Immigration views, had demanded for the closure of all mosques.

During a meeting with the Representative Congress, PVV Representative Machiel de Graaf, said that a Holland free of mosques would be better overall, and that *“We want to cleanse Holland from all traces of Islam”*. Saying that Muslims refused to change, assimilate or integrate, De Graaf responded to a question that they don’t want Islam in Holland. In comparison to Holland natives, Muslims gave birth to more children, and that Holland was in danger of losing its identity and culture because of the high birth rate of Muslims. *“Dutch unity, identity and culture are being wrecked by immigration and via wombs.”*

In: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/news/149344/dutch-far-right-party-demands-closure-of-mosques>, retrieved on 01.12.2014

3. UK: ‘Racist legislation’: British Muslims hit out at new anti-terror laws – British Muslims had lashed out at the government’s new anti-terrorism policies, as the chief reviewer of the proposals suggested there was no way of implementing them in practice.

Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation David Anderson QC criticized the government’s plan to prevent jihadists returning to the UK, saying that it was “nothing like as dramatic” as it set out to be.

The legislation set out by the government included more regulations on public speakers at universities, more training to teachers to prevent extremist activities in schools, as well as TPIM prevention measures, which would force some returning jihadists to live 200 miles away from any associates.

Some UK Islamic organizations have argued the legislation would unfairly target Muslims, and would do little to tackle the root causes of terrorism. Cerie Bullivant, communications officer at the advocacy organization, CAGE said: *“The current batch of legislation was only used on Muslims, only targets Muslim, and feels from a Muslim perspective like racist legislation. That further leads to young people not being included in society, not feeling they have the same rights as the rest of society. That only leads to more radicalization, not less.”*

The Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) also said the legislation was yet another attempt to erode civil liberties and otherize the Muslim community. *“To go down the same route of policies which have failed to address terrorism is just going to alienate Muslims further and increase ‘otherization’ of communities, encouraging the kind of victimization that has resulted in ever-increasing attacks on places of worship and individuals,”* said Massoud Shadjareh of IHRC.

In: <http://rt.com/uk/209443-british-government-terror-criticism/>, retrieved on 01.12.2014

4. UK: British Muslims Face Worst Job Discrimination of Any Minority Group – Local researchers, Dr Nabil Khattab and Professor Ron Johnston, using data from the Office for National Statistics’ Labour Force Survey of more than half a million people found that Muslims were facing the worst job discrimination of any minority group in Britain, and that they had the lowest chance of being in work or in a managerial role. Muslim men were up to 76 per cent less likely to have a job of any kind compared to white, male British Christians of the same age and with the same qualifications. And Muslim women were up to 65 per cent less likely to be employed than white Christian counterparts.

Muslims were the most disadvantaged in terms of employment prospects out of 14 ethno-religious groupings in the UK,. Skin colour made little difference to the figures.

For women, Muslim Pakistanis and a “Muslim other” group were 65 per cent less likely to have a job, with Muslim Indians 55 per cent, Muslim Bangladeshis 51 per cent and white Muslims 43 per cent less likely. For men, the “Muslim other” group was 76 per cent less likely to be in work, followed by Muslim Bangladeshis (66 per cent), white Muslims (64 per cent), Muslim Pakistanis (59 per cent) and Muslim Indians (37 per cent), the Social Science Journal study found.

White British men and women of no religion were, 20 and 25 per cent less likely to have a job than Christians. Black Christians with Caribbean origins were 54 per cent and 48 per cent less likely. The only ethno-religious group with better work prospects than white British Christians were British Jews, with women and men 29 and 15 per cent more likely to be employed.

Of those in work, the researchers found only 23 per cent and 27 per cent of Muslim Bangladeshis and Muslim Pakistanis, respectively, had a salaried job. White British Jews had the highest rates, with 64 per cent in salaried jobs, followed by Hindu Indians and white Christian Irish on 53 and 51 per cent respectively. White British Christians, white British of no religion and black Christian Africans were all above 40 per cent.

In: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2014/12/01/british-muslims-face-worst-job-discrimination-of-any-minority-group/>, retrieved on 03.12.2014

5. UK: Criminologist receives online threats after publishing research into Islamophobia—a leading Birmingham criminologist was bombarded with vicious hate mail and violent threats after publishing his research into online Islamophobia. One internet troll even accused Imran Awan, of Birmingham City University, of being worse than members of the barbaric jihadist group Islamic State.

Mr Awan said he was shocked by the sheer number of vitriolic hate-filled messages he received after an online discussion about his detailed research on anti-Muslim abuse on the internet. He revealed how he received anonymous threats and how one far-right website had put him “under official investigation” – labelling him a “troublemaker”.



The study had shown that the majority of incidents of Muslim hate crime reported to the organisation Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks) were online. Before the Woolwich incident in 2013 there were an average of 28 anti-Muslim hate crimes per month but in May 2014, following Rigby’s murder, that number soared to 109. Between May 2013 and February 2014, there were 734 reported cases of anti-Islamic abuse – and of these 599 were incidents of online abuse and threats; the others involved violence, threats and assaults.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/criminologist-receives-online-threats-after-publishing-research-into-islamophobia/#more-39123>, retrieved on 04.12.2014

I.IV. On Geert Wilders:

Geert Wilders: Islam’s War against the Free West—Geertz Wilders kept spreading hate and xenophobic messages. Below is the transcript to Geert Wilders’ hate speech against Islam at the David Horowitz Freedom Center’s 20th Anniversary Restoration Weekend. The event took place on 13-16 November at the Breakers Resort in Palm Beach, Florida:

It is always a pleasure to be in the United States. And it is an honor to be at Restoration Weekend again. Especially at this moment when a new Congress and a new majority in the Senate are preparing to lead this great country and change it for the better.

I am a politician from Europe. I am a member of the House of Representatives in the Netherlands and the leader of the Party for Freedom, the leading party in the Dutch opinion polls today.

Before I continue, let me tell you something about my life as a European politician.

I am not a President, nor a Governor, nor even a member of Cabinet, just a member of Congress. For over ten years now, I have been living under 24/7 police protection. I lived with my wife in army barracks, prison cells and safe houses until this very day, just to be safe.

Wherever I go, armed policemen accompany me to protect me against Islamic jihadis. Al Qaida, the Taliban, ISIS and many others threatened to kill me because I tell the truth about Islam and speak out against the Islamization of our free Western societies.

In Europe we have made a terrible mistake. During the past decades, our politicians foolishly allowed millions of Islamic immigrants to settle within our borders. Everywhere the Islamic culture was welcomed as an enrichment. Nowhere was the demand made that the immigrants assimilate.

Not a single European leader had the guts to state the obvious and tell the truth: Our Western culture based on Christianity, Judaism and Humanism, is far superior to the Islamic culture and immigrants have to adopt our values.

And now, we in Europe are paying the price for this folly. Islam is eating away our Judeo-Christian and humanist civilization and replacing it with intolerance, hatred and violence. And our so-called leaders allow it.

25 years ago, the Berlin Wall fell and the Iron Curtain was dismantled. Thanks to President Ronald Reagan, America's greatest and best President ever, the totalitarian ideology of Communism was defeated in Europe and my continent was liberated. But now another totalitarianism has nestled itself in the heart of Europe.

Last Summer, my home town, The Hague, witnessed scenes which brought back memories of the darkest period in our history, the Nazi era. Sympathizers of the Islamic State paraded in our streets. They carried swastikas, they carried the black flags of the Islamic State. They shouted "Death to the Jews" and "Oh Jews, the army of Mohammed is coming for you". In the streets of The Hague in broad daylight. And instead of rounding up these hatemongers, the Dutch authorities did nothing.

When we in Europa warn against Islam, the authorities call it hate speech and bring us to court. But when the grim forces of hatred march down our streets, the police look on and do not interfere. It is a disgrace. It is a scandal. It is intolerable.

Islam is waging war against the free West. Only fools can deny it. The Islamic State has declared war on us. We have already had our share of beheadings in Europe. And it has started here, too.

America and its allies are currently bombing the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq. Excellent. My party supports this offensive. I am glad that Dutch and American F16s participate in it and that our two nations stand shoulder to shoulder in this endeavor. We should liquidate Abu Bakr Al-Bagdadi and the other criminals who are leading the Islamic State.

But we have to do more than that. Far more important than fighting Islamic State abroad, is the fight to preserve our own security in our own countries. In the Netherlands, in America, in Canada, in Australia, in all the other European and Western countries. It is our homes that we must protect first and foremost. And we are not doing that.

Recently, the Dutch authorities prevented over 50 jihadis to leave our country, when they attempted to go to Syria to fight for the Islamic State. Their passports were seized. But they were sent home instead of jailed. Can you believe it? These criminals now freely walk our streets and make them unsafe.

The jihadis who last month murdered soldiers in Canada were also people whom the authorities had previously prevented to leave for Syria. What I suggest is that we either detain every jihadi or let them leave and never return. Once you're out, you're out!

My friends, let us be brave. That is what we must do. That is our duty.

Let me ask you: Do our leaders tell us the truth? Unfortunately not. They even lie to us.

Everyday, we hear them repeat the sickening mantra that Islam is a religion of peace. Whenever an atrocity is committed in the name of Islam, whenever someone is beheaded in Syria or Iraq, Barack Obama, David Cameron, my own Dutch Prime Minister and many of their colleagues rush to the television cameras to tell the world that it has nothing whatsoever to do with Islam. How stupid do they think we are?!

The Koran is full of verses such as sura 47 verse 4: "When ye meet the unbelievers, smite at their necks and cause a bloodbath among them." How much more Islamic do you want it, Mr. Obama?

With every new terrorist crime, with every new attack, with every new beheading, it becomes clear to ever more people what the true nature of Islam is. With every Islamic assault on our values, more and more people realize that Islam wants to conquer the world, that it is prepared to terrorize, kill or enslave anyone who refuses to submit. And that it is ready to commit the biggest atrocities to achieve this goal.

Of course – I repeat it wherever I go – of course, there are many moderate Muslims. I believe in moderate people, but I do not believe in a moderate Islam. There is only one Islam – the Islam of the Koran, the Hadith and the life of Muhammad, who was a terrorist and a warlord. But even though there are many moderate Muslims, it is wrong to think that the moderates are a majority. They are not.

This week, a terrifying poll was published in my country. We already knew that three quarters of all the Muslims in The Netherlands say that Dutch Muslims who go and fight in Syria are heroes. Can you believe it? Heroes!

But now it appears that 80% of our Turkish youths do not consider it wrong to use violence against non-believers. And they also support the armed combat of Hamas against our ally Israel – the only democracy in the Middle East. My friends, we cannot tolerate within our borders extremists who not only want to destroy our nations but also the Jewish homeland.

We stand with Israel. We defend Israel. Israel is one of us. We are Israel. If Israel falls, the West falls.

A few years ago, I called on Muslims to liberate themselves from the yoke of Islam, to choose for freedom. I wholeheartedly support Muslims who love freedom. So, I told them "Free yourselves. Leave Islam." And I still stand by this appeal. But this does not blind me to the terrible reality that we are facing today.

The day before yesterday, there was a quarrel in our parliament in The Netherlands. That is nothing remarkable of course. As you know, Congressmen quarrel all the time. They do it here, they do it even in my country. They do it everywhere. But this time something extraordinary happened.

We had one Dutch Congressman, a Turk, threatening another – a Moroccan – shouting "May Allah punish you!" And that is not all. They also demanded special washing rooms for Muslims in Parliament and they do not accept being contradicted by female members of Congress.

That is the parliament of the Kingdom of the Netherlands today. Politicians invoking Allah, threatening each other with Islamic curses, demanding special washing rooms, and treating women as inferior beings. Meanwhile the Dutch public prosecutor is going after me again.

You may have heard that three years ago, I was taken to court on hate crime charges. A court case that lasted almost 2 years. Fortunately, I was acquitted on all charges. But now, they want to bring me to court again. They do not see Islam or jihadis as a problem; they see me as the problem.

They try to silence the messenger. But they will never succeed. Because I will always speak out and tell the truth about Islam. We will never be silent or silenced.

Because we love our country. Because we love our freedom. Because we believe that without liberty, life is not worth living.

We celebrate life; jihadis celebrate death.

My friends, when politicians become appeasers of evil, the people must speak. This is why I have established the International Freedom Alliance IFA. It is an international organization to fight for freedom and oppose

Islam. Here in America, in Europe, in Israel, in Canada, in Australia, everywhere in the free world. IFA aims to be a network of resistance in all the countries threatened by Islam.

Our mission is to stop all immigration from Islamic countries, to stimulate voluntary remigration of Islamic people, and to expel criminals and jihadis. Our mission is to preserve and save our Judeo-Christian civilization and values.

Because there is nothing more precious than liberty and freedom. There is a path we will never choose, and that is the path of submission. We are neither prepared to collaborate with evil, nor to appease it. We must shout this so loud that even President Obama and political leaders all over the West will hear it.

Let us cry a river for every innocent victim of the Islamic State, for every poor girl abducted by Boko Haram in Nigeria, for every Jew, Christian, Yezidi persecuted in the Islamic world. But let us make sure that no-one will ever have to cry for our children. No-one. Never!

My friends, we have a duty. We are the torchbearers for freedom. We are the torchbearers for a civilization that is far superior to any other civilization on earth. We are the torchbearers for a better future – a future without Islamic intolerance and violence. As you sing so proudly in your beautiful national anthem, your country, the great America, it is “the land of the free, the home of the brave.” So, be brave, America, and keep your land free!

Avoid all the mistakes Europe made. Protect America against Islam. Stop the immigration from Islamic countries. Go forth with courage. Keep the light of liberty shining. Save freedom! Save America.

Thank you.

In: <http://www.frontpagemag.com/2014/frontpagemag-com/geert-wilders-islams-war-against-the-free-west/>, retrieved on 01.12.2014

II. POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS:

II.1. In the United States and Canada:

1. **US: County GOP official resigns after anti-Muslim remarks** – The Republican party county chair who came under fire for comments about Muslims on his Facebook page has resigned on 28 November. He was also fired from his hardware store job in Ortonville.

Big Stone County GOP Chair Jack Whitley called Muslims “parasites” and wrote “FRAG ’EM!” when they travel to Mecca, slang for a fragmentation hand grenade. Those comments were condemned by Muslim community leaders and GOP party Chairman Keith Downey.



In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/minnesota-county-gop-official-resigns-after-anti-muslim-remarks/>, retrieved on 04.12.2014

2. **Canada: Calgary Muslims gather to honour fallen Canadian soldiers**—Hundreds of Calgary Muslims gathered on 7 November to remember the sacrifices made by Canadian soldiers ahead of Remembrance Day a week after.

The fourth annual Muslims for Remembrance Day campaign was held in nine cities across Canada. In Calgary, one celebration took place at a mosque in northeast Calgary. The mosque's imam said the Qur'an makes it clear Muslims must love their countries — including the soldiers defending them.

In: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/calgary-muslims-gather-to-honour-fallen-canadian-soldiers-1.2828840>, retrieved on 01.12.2014

3. **Canada: V18 director apologises for rant on Islam** – V18 director Mario Philip Azzopardi apologised for statements he made on Facebook insulting people's sentiments quoted: “he would treat any Muslim who believes in Sharia law with the same contempt he would reserve for Nazis, Klu Klux Klan members and slave traders, reiterating that anyone who does not practice Sharia law is not a Muslim”.

On 28 November, Mr Azzopardi said that his erratic comment was his personal opinion and he was sorry if he was not clear or if what he said could be taken to mean he was against cultural diversity. Mr. Azzopardi underlined that he regularly worked in societies where diversity was celebrated in productions and projects inspired by his writings, so he was sorry that he could have insulted the people's sentiments with his writings.

Reviewing the Facebook entry of Mr Azzopardi, he wrote: *"Maltese society had outgrown Christian theocracies, adding that our theologies have changed. The idiots, (Muslims), on the other hand, were tied to a set of rules written 1,500 years ago....If one says he believes in Sharia law then there is where our conversation ends, with me making sure that the idiot does not attain any political power whatsoever, at the risk of using violence against him"*.



Contacted to expand on his comments, Mr Azzopardi initially said he believed all the comments had been erased but when it was pointed out that this was not the case, he stood by his remarks. He said Sharia law was something he found to be "extremely negative".

In another comment Mr Azzopardi wrote: *"Sharia law was the biggest collection of anti-human rights laws under one religious cap"*. Asked if he was putting all Muslims in the same basket, Mr Azzopardi said his views were in line with the EU in this regard. *"If one is Islamic and does not believe in Sharia law, then he is not Muslim. If he believes in Sharia law then even the EU human rights convention has declared this as being in breach of human rights"*. In: <http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20141128/local/updated-v18-director-apologises-for-rant-on-islam.545985>, retrieved on 01.12.2014

I.II. In Europe:

UK: Former Britain First Member, Matthew Lester, Denounces Group and Visits Mosque to Apologise—A former member of Britain First had denounced the organisation and visited a mosque to apologise to the Muslim community he said they demonise.



Matthew Lester, 25, joined the group six months before to protest radical preachers such as Anjem Choudry but soon became disillusioned with the group. He told *The Huffington Post* *"I thought it was for the people but found out it was more about publicity. Basically it was publicity stunts more than getting anything done and tackling issues.....They're not just going after extremists, they're going after Muslims."* To make amends Lester visited Crayford Mosque to apologise. In: <http://www.5pillarz.com/video/matthew-lester-why-i-joined-and-then-left-britain-first/>, retrieved on 01.12.2014

II.III. Rest of the World:

Australia: Arrest warrant issued over mosque attack –An arrest warrant had been issued for Corey Ellis, a man sought over an attack of a worshipper at a Newcastle mosque.



retrieved on 04.12.2014

A 47-year-old worshipper was leaving the mosque at Wallsend after evening prayers on November 12 when he was confronted by a man.

Police say words were exchanged and the offender tried to punch the victim, and then grabbed his hair, before pushing him. The man then got into a car with several other people and drove off. The 47-year-old was not injured.

On 26 November, two teenagers were also charged with aggravated littering after admitting to police they threw a severed pig's head into the grounds of the same Newcastle mosque.

In: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-11-27/arrest-warrant-issued-over-mosque-attack/5922510>,

III. SITUATION OF MUSLIMS

III.I. In the United States and Canada:

US: New Jersey Muslims outraged by NYC mayor's support of surveillance– New Jersey Muslims who were suing New York City over the Police Department's alleged spying on them strongly criticized arguments in favor of continuing the program while appearing in court on 7 November, labeling them "truly troubling."

Filed in 2012, the lawsuit brought by members of New Jersey's Muslim community claimed surveillance by the New York Police Department violated the constitutional rights of hundreds of American Muslims. A federal judge dismissed their case in February, but now the plaintiffs were pursuing the case in appeals court. They were dismayed by the city's response under the administration of Mayor Bill de Blasio.



In its brief to the appeals court deciding whether to overturn that ruling in *Hassan et. Al v. City of New York*, the city argued that the court should uphold US District Judge William Martini's decision and defended the practice of spying on American Muslim communities even without suspicion of wrongdoing. When Judge Martini dismissed the New Jersey lawsuit in February, he claimed the only harm from the surveillance came when the Associated Press disclosed it over a series of articles. The court also endorsed the city's argument that its targeting of Muslims on the basis of their faith alone was justified in response to the attacks of September 11, 2001.

In: <http://rt.com/usa/204595-new-jersey-muslims-nypd-surveillance/>, retrieved on 01.12.2014

III.II. In Europe:

UK: Finsbury Park Mosque wins major community award—Faith and community leaders had praised Finsbury Park Mosque (FPM) in London, after it was awarded the 'Visible Quality Mark' by Community Matters. It was the first mosque and the third faith organization in the country to receive the award.

FPM served the local community in Islington and surrounding boroughs of north London, and worked to promote dialogue and understanding in the city's multi-cultural society. The Centre's activities included community gathering, youth and welfare services, IT and ESOL courses, regular surgeries for the local MP and councilors and educational projects for children and adults.

Fr David Ardagh-Walters, Parish Priest at St Mellitus, Tollington Park, said: *"They well deserve this award especially for their youth and community work around here. They are admirably open, friendly and straightforward. In many unexpected ways they seem to practice what Pope Francis teaches."*

In: <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=25929>, retrieved on 02.12.2014



III.III. REST OF THE WORLD:

1. **Myanmar: New concerns rise over Burmese treatment of Rohingya Muslims**— On November 2014, Around 135,000 Muslim Rohingya in the western state of Rakhine were still being held as virtual prisoners in camps with scarce food, water and health care. Dozens have died, many from preventable conditions such as malnutrition. *"U.S. officials had been troubled by the citizenship verification project...Burmese authorities were pressuring the Rohingya to say that they were Bengali, a term the government preferred because it considered them to be illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, even though many have lived in the country for generations"*, said Tom Malinowski, the assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor.

"It's good that they say they want to legalize as much of the Rohingya population as possible, but the way they have gone about it so far creates a potentially bigger problem, since they've required Rohingya to self-identify as Bengali, which most find offensive and many will not do," Malinowski added.

Khin Soe, director of the state's immigration department, dismissed criticism that the government was violating the Rohingya's rights or trying to force them out of Burma. *"It is not true. This is just their concerns and worries,"* Khin Soe said. *"We were just verifying the citizenship. Our job is to classify the citizens and non-citizens and to make them have some kind of legal identity."*

Human Rights Watch and the Rohingya themselves had accused the Burmese government of a campaign of ethnic cleansing, a charge the government denied. In: http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/new-concerns-rise-over-burmese-treatment-of-rohingya-muslims/2014/11/11/4c0f42fe-5947-11e4-9d6c-756a229d8b18_story.html, retrieved on 01.12.2014

2. **Singapore: Upgraded Al-Istiqamah Mosque re-opens**—The Serangoon North mosque was upgraded at a cost of S\$1.2 million and is the fourth mosque to be completed under phase 2 of the mosque upgrading programme. The mosque was open to the public after the completion of year-long upgrading works.

Worshippers could now enjoy more elderly-friendly features. These included the installation of a lift to service the three-storey main building and upgraded ablution areas and toilets, including the addition of anti-slip tiles. The mosque can accommodate up to 3,000 worshippers.

Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs Yaacob Ibrahim visited the mosque on 21 November, said that these improvements would help meet the changing needs of the Malay-Muslim community.

In: <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/upgraded-al-istiqamah/1486564.html#>, retrieved on 01.12.2014

IV. ON BURQAH AND VEIL RELATED ISSUES:

1. **Spain: Woman Told to Get Off Bus for Wearing Burqa** – A woman wearing a burqa had been forbidden from travelling on a bus in Spain. According to witnesses, the bus driver forbade the woman from entering the vehicle as she was wearing the Islamic veil, which covers the entire body, with a semi-transparent cloth covering the eye. The incident occurred on early November in Vitoria, a city in northern Spain, where the driver was urging his colleagues to sign a petition to support his stance. The local transport company, Tuvisa, has opened an investigation into the incident.

Muslim women were not barred from wearing the burqa in public in Spain, however the government announced in September it was considering a ban on the Islamic garment on grounds of security. “The ban could be included in the country’s new Citizen Security Law” said Interior Minister Jorge Fernández Díaz. Vitoria already bans women from bathing in public swimming pools while wearing Islamic swimsuits. In: <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/spain-woman-told-get-off-bus-wearing-burqa-1473992>, retrieved on 01.12.2014.

2. **UK: Let Muslim primary school teachers wear full-face veil in class**—Former Archbishop of Canterbury said panic about the niqab was ‘largely misplaced’ even if young children could not see their teacher’s face. There was no need to “panic” about Muslim primary school teachers wearing the full-face veil in class, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Williams, had insisted.

He said concerns that young children would struggle to learn from a woman whose face was covered were “largely misplaced” and that there were other ways to “read” what people were saying. The former Archbishop’s remarked, in an interview for the Christian think-tank *Theos*, reopened the debate about the place of the niqab in British public life.

It followed a political storm the year before after the then Home Office Minister Jeremy Browne called for a national discussion about restrictions in some settings such as schools to prevent young women from having the veil imposed on them. David Cameron rejected the idea of a ban but said he would “back up” schools and courts that ask women to remove veils. In: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/11221033/Let-Muslim-primary-school-teachers-wear-full-face-veil-in-class-Rowan-Williams.html>, retrieved on 01.12.2014

3. **France: 5 Veiled Frenchwomen Tell 5 Stories of Harassment**—Since the ban of religious signs in public schools in 2004, French Muslim women wearing the veil said they have experienced a degree of discrimination that intensified. Five Muslim women shared the difficulties of wearing the head-covering veil or hijab as part of their religious practice. They spoke with *Women’s eNews* in interviews on November conducted in French and translated into English.

Testimony 1: Retooling Her Work as a Lawyer

Imen Bichaoui, 24, lived at Meaux, just outside Paris. She was working as an intern for the French union, Confederation of Christian Workers (CFTC), and planned to graduate from the Paris Bar School in September 2015. Bichaoui said the veil that covers her hair had hindered her from being hired by law firms. When she sought help from advocacies promoting diversity she was told that “certain diversities are not too good to display.” After numerous rejections, Bichaoui changed her career plans. She initially wanted to be an in-house corporate counselor but has decided it will be too hard to find an employer. So instead she planned to open her own law firm once she graduates. She was worried about pleading a case at a court because of her veil, so she was shying away from litigation.

"Legally, there is no rule that would forbid me from pleading at a court with my hijab on . . . Now because I am afraid that I could harm the interests of my clients, I am not sure that I will dare plead at the court. I would let someone else do it. I think I will wind up doing more counseling than litigation."

Testimony 2: Separated from Other Students

Sirine Ben Yahiaten, 17, had been wearing the veil since she was 14. From December 2011 through May 2012, she said she was harassed by the head of her school as well as other staff members who wanted her to stop wearing wide hair bands and long skirts. Eventually Ben Yahiaten left to complete her education at another school.

"It was the month of December and it was cold. I had a long skirt and sweatpants underneath. I was wearing a wide hair band on my head. One of the teachers called me upon my hair band and asked me to remove it. I didn't understand why. He told me that it was an ostentatious sign. There was nothing of ostentatious in my opinion. He asked me three times to remove it. I kept refusing. He then took to me the office of the principal. While waiting for the principal, her secretary told me that I should not be wearing a pair of sweatpants under my skirt because there was a law that bans such dress code. The truth is that there is no law. I tried to explain that the weather warrants my choice of dressing... The principal didn't show up so I was sent back. But on my way back to class, I was asked to return to the principal's office. She told me that my skirt was too long and students walking behind me could fall because of its length, so she said that I was posing a threat to the security of the students. As for the headband, she said it prevents me from hearing well during the class. After that episode, I was sent to study period class everyday until I would agree to take off my hair band and long skirt. Every time I entered the school, someone was waiting for me to accompany me to the study period class since I was no longer allowed to have any contact with other students. I was not allowed to go out during class breaks. I was given exercises to do but I was never given makeup material for the courses that I had been missing."

Testimony 3: Barred from School Outings

Rabha Chatar, 40, was a practicing Muslim and working mother of three who lives in Meru, a small town located in L'Oise. Chatar was no longer allowed to accompany her children on school outings due to her hijab. Chatar, along with 12 other mothers, had gone to court to fight this school-outing ban, which was imposed first in 2012 by a memo from then-Education Minister Chatel which was followed a year later by a formal document, The Charter of Secularism. Their attempts had been so far unsuccessful.

"I am a mother who has always been very much involved in my children's development. I have always taken part in school activities for their wellbeing. For my son's first year in kindergarten, I asked to have my name on the list of parents available to accompany for school outings. It was a Monday. The teacher called me and asked me if I could be available to accompany for an outing on Tuesday. I informed her that I would take my morning off from work to be with them. On Monday evening, I reconfirmed with the teacher once my employer approved my time off. On Tuesday morning, the teacher told me that the regional head of education had issued a note during the night forbidding mothers who wear the veil to be part of school activities. I broke out in tears. I didn't understand what had happened overnight. I had the support and the solidarity from several parents along with the head of the school and the teachers. With other Muslim mothers who are veiled, we started to organize to legally combat this injustice... It took a toll on me, physically and mentally. I was not feeling good at all. I was crying a lot. I was sleeping barely three hours a night and I even lost 10 kilograms due to the anguish... Today, my other daughter, who is 11, attends a private school. I would like to have my two other children in a private school too but they are full. There are private Catholic schools where there is no discrimination because of my religion. At least I know I can be part of school activities with my children..."

Testimony 4: Disrupting Her Education

Hanane Karimi, 36, who taught sociology at the University of Strasbourg, was well known among French Muslim feminists for organizing female students hurt by the 2004 ban on religious signs. She was sensitive to the issue because even before the ban was passed, when she was in high school, she had been pressured by teachers to remove her veil in school, which discouraged her so much she stopped her education. From 1999 through 2004, she dedicated her time to her family life. She got married and had two children. In 2004, she decided to resume her education but at first she did that online, from home.

"I left the university due to the intolerance toward the veil. In 2004, I decided to resume my education online so I wouldn't have to deal with other issues due to my veil. I already had a family to take care of. At the same time, I was watching closely the effects the ban started to have on veiled female students. We started to organize and meet to take actions with people defending the same cause. For one year before the law was passed, a lot of female students who were veiled didn't have access to their classes. They were sent to stay in the library. They were treated like a plague, and were not allowed to have contact with their classmates because they were viewed as dangerous. So we organized to provide them with the lessons they had missed in class... I eventually decided to go to the university to pursue a master's degree. I came across people who gave me my confidence back. Since then, things are not going so badly. People started to know me, especially in the sociology circle and the feminist milieu... However, I don't want to be seen as a veiled woman by students, I want to be viewed as a PhD graduate in sociology giving a class. For that reason, I sometimes remove my veil when I teach. I don't think that I am being less modest by doing so. As I grew older, my relationship to the veil changed. I had worn it in a very traditional way (covering neck and chest) but for the past two years I have worn it as a turban. I feel more comfortable than with a traditional veil, which is often rejected. Yet, even with the turban I stay who I am and I am identified as a Muslim. Now I also think the law of 2004 made me the feminist that I am today. It helped me to see the sexism of certain men in the Muslim community and on the other hand the rejection of Muslim women by the State. Then you have no other choice than to stand up and defend the rights of women to be free and empowered."

Testimony 5: Leaving Her Family and Country

Leila Glovert, 33, lived in London. French-born, she converted to Islam 13 years before and started to wear the hijab few years later. Four years before, she decided to look for a job in London after the company where she was doing a training decided not to hire her due to her veil. Despite, the reluctance of her family to let her go, she headed to the British capital where she had been working as a health advisor in clinic.

"I became jobless. I applied to jobs and got called for interviews. Once I showed up at the interviews, I was being told "we will call you back" or simply "we don't want the Islamic veil." I sent hundreds of resumes and each interview ended up that way. I started to retreat into myself. I was staying home, keeping myself busy, working out, taking photos, doing my make up. But I didn't want to stay at home. My children were used to see me working. So I decided to go to London. I had lived over there for two years and I knew that it would not be an issue to work with my hijab. My daughters' father didn't want them to come with me. Nobody wanted me to leave. My parents who are very involved in my daughters' growth didn't me to go too. Yet, I decided to go and look for a job and come home often. It has been four years now that we have been living apart. It is hard. Very hard. It is very difficult for all of us but my daughters' father is great. He is supporting me and understands my decision. My daughters now understand. They also witnessed in the past attacks that targeted me. For a child, it is horrible to see their mother being insulted. I remember one woman in particular who started to tell my daughter not to become a witch like her mother. I am impulsive and I insulted that woman back. My daughter got so scared that she almost peed herself... Today I am blooming again as a veiled woman living in London. I am not scared to go outside... I will never return to France. The only thing that could make me return would be if my children get tired of the distance."

Transcribed from the report of Hajer Naili of Women's eNews. In: <http://womensenews.org/story/the-world/141108/5-veiled-frenchwomen-tell-5-stories-harassment#.VldBkzGUejA>, retrieved on 01.12.2014

4. Burqa Bans in All Public Places Have No Place in A Liberal Democracy – Wrote in the Leicester Mercury, Professor Jill Marshall of the School of Law at the University of Leicester, author of Human Rights Law and Personal Identity, took issue with the French ban on the face veil:

In 2011 it became a criminal offence to wear face coverings, including the burqa and niqab, in any public place in France. This summer the European Court of Human Rights decided this law did not violate human rights. It interferes with rights to religious freedom of expression and our private life, “personality” or “identity” rights. However, these interferences are justified by the “rights and freedoms of others”: “living together” argued by the French government.

As the two dissenting judges say this notion is “far-fetched and vague”. It makes a mockery of rights to freedom of expression, religious or otherwise, identity or personality. This judgement turns the focus in human rights protection on to how the majority perceive a person’s identity, allowing governments to criminally ban clothing even though it is part of a person’s identity. This is a worrying development in protecting human rights.

The court had previously said that “private life” embraced gender identification, name, sex, personal development, the right to establish and develop relationships with others, and appearance and clothing.

This personality right enables us to make our own choices in life, to have some power and control over our future. So human rights should protect choices and identities even if the majority of the population disagree or are shocked, offended or disturbed.

The French government represented the veil as a “symbolic and dehumanising violence”, an “effacement” and “self-confinement” of women who wear it. The dissenting judges do not agree and fieldwork in Belgium and France indicates that veil-wearing women had been happy to socialise in public: others harassed them.

Dr Irene Zempi also found this in her interviews with women in Leicester (where, of course, there are no such criminal bans). Regardless of what the face veil represents, the dissenters convincingly point out that there is no legal right not to be shocked or provoked by different types of personality or identity.

There is no right to enter into contact with other people in public places against their will. Communication is essential for life in society but we also have a right not to communicate, not to enter into contact with others in public places: “the right to be an outsider”.

The full face does not need to be shown for us to communicate as is clear when skiing, motorcycling, wearing carnival costumes (these are exempt under the French law). Ear or headphones, talking on the telephone, Skype without a video, email, letters, social media and other virtual communications could also be added to the list. Full-face veil bans in all public places have no place in European liberal democracies. It is a shame the European Court of Human Rights missed the opportunity to say so.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/burqa-bans-in-all-public-places-have-no-place-in-a-liberal-democracy/>, retrieved on 04.12.2014

V. ON DIALOGUE AMONG CIVILIZATIONS:

1. US: Muslim Friday prayers was offered at Washington National Cathedral—Washington National Cathedral and five Muslim groups had announced that the first celebration of Muslim Friday prayers at the cathedral were observed on Friday, 14 November 2014.

“Offering Muslim prayers at the Christian cathedral shows more than hospitality...It demonstrated an appreciation of one another’s prayer traditions and was a powerful symbolic gesture toward a deeper relationship between the two Abrahamic traditions”, said the Cathedral media advisory.

The prayers was attended by Canon Gina Campbell, director of liturgy for Washington National Cathedral, South African Ambassador Ebrahim Rasool, Masjid Muhammad of The Nation’s Mosque, and representatives



from the Dulles Area Muslim Society, Council on American-Islamic Relations, Islamic Society of North America, and Muslim Public Affairs Council.

In: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2014/11/11/muslim-friday-prayers-to-be-offered-at-washington-national-cathedral/>, retrieved on 03.12.2014

2. Turkey: Pope Francis prays alongside Grand Mufti in Istanbul's Blue Mosque — In a gesture designed to highlight his commitment to inter-faith dialogue, Pope Francis conducted a silent prayer alongside a senior Islamic cleric in Istanbul's Blue Mosque on 29 November. Facing Mecca, Francis bowed his head in prayer for several minutes while standing next to Istanbul's Grand Mufti Rahmi Yaran. The Vatican described the gesture as a "moment of silent adoration" of God.



Francis's predecessor, Pope Benedict, caused dismay among many conservative Catholics and some Muslims when he appeared to pray in the same mosque on his visit to Turkey eight years before. The Vatican felt compelled to publish a statement saying that Benedict had merely been in meditation, though he later acknowledged that he "certainly turned his thoughts to God".

Francis then paid a visit to the Hagia Sophia, the most important cathedral of Orthodoxy for almost 1,000 years. The basilica was turned into an imperial

mosque under the Ottomans when they conquered the city in 1453, and converted into a museum after the foundation of the Turkish republic in 1923.

Speaking at the presidential palace, Francis underlined the importance of religious freedom for everyone. *"It is essential that all citizens – Muslim, Jewish and Christian – both in the provision and practice of the law, enjoy the same rights and respect the same duties,"* he said in a joint press conference Turkish President.

In: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/29/pope-francis-turkey-pray-blue-mosque-islam-cooperation>, retrieved on 01.12.2014

VI. GENERAL ISSUES:

1. Muslims worldwide denounce ISIS, but Islamophobes aren't listening [An Excerpt from Henry Millstein, a practicing Roman Catholic, labor activist, journalist, and member of the National Writers Union]— Authoritative Muslim voices from all quarters were denouncing ISIS, as they have denounced al-Qaeda and terrorism in general for years-but the silence from the mainstream media and from professional Islamophobes was deafening.

Recently, over 100 leading Muslim scholars from every continent issued an open letter to Al-Baghdadi, the leader of ISIS and now self-proclaimed 'Caliph', showing how ISIS' ideology and actions stand in flagrant contradiction to traditional Islamic teachings and morality. Such a statement has special weight in the Muslim world, since scholars such as those who signed the letter are the highest authority in Islam.

Nonetheless, the mainstream media have taken little or no notice of this significant event. Nor have they taken much notice of the many other Muslim denunciations of the terrorist group, including a statement by the Saudi Arabia Muslim clerical council, an invitation by German Muslims to pray with them at their Friday prayers that no youth go to join ISIS (an action in which 2,000 mosques all across Germany joined), a call by British imams to join in prayer for humanitarian workers threatened by ISIS, and many other statements and actions by local, regional, and national Muslim leaders.

This Muslim outcry is simply a continuation of a long-standing series of denunciations of all forms of terrorism by Muslim leaders and authorities since before 9/11. To find hundreds of such statements, one need only Google "fatwas against terrorism" or go here.

Professional Islamophobes-those organized forces that stir up fear and hatred against Muslims and Islam-have nonetheless had a field day with ISIS' brutality, aided and abetted by the silence of the mainstream capitalist media. Last month, notorious Islamophobe Pamela Geller, founder and head of the absurdly named organization Stop Islamization of America, had ads posted on San Francisco buses claiming that all faithful Muslims were obligated to be violent. The ads were greeted with a vigorous outcry not only from Muslims but also from Jewish, Christian, and interfaith organizations and leaders, including the San Francisco Interfaith Council and the Jewish Community Relations Council which, despite sharp disagreement over Middle East issues, has cultivated relationships with local Muslims.

Such attacks are part of an concerted assault by right-wing forces against the Muslim community in the U.S., organized by a well-funded posse of Islamophobic groups and individuals. Their aim, as usual with such extreme rightist forces, is to sow intergroup division and hostility and to deflect the fears and anxiety whose ultimate source is the capitalist system itself onto a convenient scapegoat. A 2011 report by the Center for American Progress, Fear, Inc.: The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America details the interconnections of these groups and their ties to other right-wing forces.

Among the funders of this Islamophobic network are seven foundations well known for their funding of right-wing causes: the Donors Capital Fund, the Richard Mellon Scaife Foundation, the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, the Newton D. Becker and Rochelle F. Becker foundations and charitable trust, the Russell Berrie Foundation, the Anchorage Charitable Fund and William Rosenwald Family Fund, and the Fairbrook Foundation. Other beneficiaries of these foundations include the American Enterprise Institute, a cheerleader for the leading sectors of corporate capital; the Americans for Prosperity Foundation, whose notion of "prosperity" is built on dismantling government regulation of business; the Sam Adams Alliance, which seeks "to raise awareness of free market principles and policy"; and the Heritage Foundation, a leading right-wing think tank.

These foundations support a group of self-proclaimed "experts" on the alleged threat of Islam who are also, not surprisingly, aligned with extreme right-wing Zionist forces. They include the aforementioned Geller, Frank Gaffney at the Center for Security Policy, David Yerushalmi of the Society of Americans for National Existence, Daniel Pipes of the Middle East Forum, Robert Spencer of Jihad Watch, and Steven Emerson of the Investigative Project on Terrorism. These individuals and their organizations pour out a stream of misinformation claiming that terrorism is inherent in mainstream Islam and that the American Muslim community is a threat to American values, culture and security. In reality, American Muslims are above the national average in education and income, and not even the Congressional Islamophobe Peter King, R-N.Y., was able to find in his provocative "investigations" of the American Muslim community any significant extremist or terrorist presence in U.S. mosques or other Muslim institutions.

The linkage between the right wing and the current campaign of divisive anti-Muslim propaganda confirms what progressives have long contended: that the right will use any tool to divide and confuse people and divert them from struggle against corporate power. Therefore, as the powerful reaction to Pamela Geller's bus ads in San Francisco shows, stamping out Islamophobia has to be high on the agenda of the people's movement.

In: <http://peoplesworld.org/muslims-worldwide-denounce-isis-but-islamophobes-aren-t-listening/>, retrieved on 01.12.2014

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