



Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

Cultural & social affairs Department

OIC Islamophobia Observatory

Monthly Bulletin - July 2014

I. MANIFESTATIONS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA:

I.1. In the United States and Canada:

- 1. US: CAIR-NY asks authorities to probe rash of anti-Muslim graffiti in Brooklyn neighborhood** – The New York chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-NY) on 09 July called on local law enforcement authorities and public officials to investigate a recent rash of anti-Muslim graffiti in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Kensington.



The graffiti, including such slurs as “Islam is evil,” “Allah is e***” and “Islam is barbaric,” had been sprayed on mailboxes and other places around the neighborhood recently. Similar graffiti had been spotted in the ethnically-diverse area since 2012.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/cair-ny-asks-authorities-to-probe-rash-of-anti-muslim-graffiti-in-brooklyn-neighborhood/#more-33985>, retrieved on 10.07.2014

- 2. US: Calls for unity as Islamophobic harassment rocks Ridge**--Passengers in a car bearing Israeli flags, sirens, and flashing lights hurled Islamophobic slurs at Muslims walking to the Thayba Islamic Center on Coney Island Avenue for evening prayers on July 18, say witnesses, and a similar incident occurred in the early morning hours of July 21 outside of the Islamic Society of Bay Ridge, according to police.



The events left Brooklyn's Muslim community shaken, but united Jews and Arabs for a press event at the Islamic Society of Bay Ridge on 22 July. *"To be honest, I am a little scared,"* said Zein Rimawi, who helped found the society more than two decades ago but was not present during Sunday's dustup. *"I'm afraid next time they will come with something else — a machine gun, a grenade."*

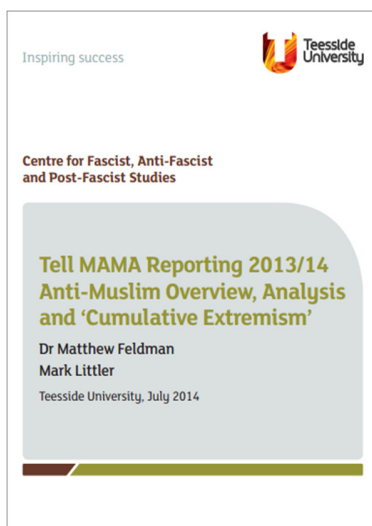
During Friday's incident, the perpetrators also threw eggs at three elderly Muslim men while shouting "This is for your Allah," according to Manaf Abdul, a spokesman for the Thayba Islamic Center. On Sunday, the drive-by aggressors hurled verbal attacks only, and members of the Islamic Society retaliated by throwing bottles, injuring the driver, according to police.

In: http://www.brooklynpaper.com/stories/37/30/br-bay-ridge-islamophobia-2014-07-25-bk_37_30.html, retrieved on 25.07.2014

I.II. In Europe:

1. UK report: Anti-Muslim hate crime rising – According to a new study by Teesside University, the number of reported anti-Muslim hate crime in the UK had risen sharply (over 400%) since the murder by two Muslim converts on a British soldier Lee Rigby in

London in 2013, with women wearing traditional Islamic dress most likely be the victims of abuse and street attacks. But researchers believe that a widespread lack of trust in the police in Muslim communities and endemic under-reporting of hate crime masked the true scale of the problem, with most Islamophobic incidents, ranging from online trolling to verbal abuse and extreme violence, going unlogged and unpunished.



The publication of the report also came amid concerns expressed by some Muslims about their safety on British streets following the murder of a female Saudi Arabian student in Colchester in June 2014. Police said the attack may have

been religiously motivated because the victim was wearing an abaya.

The study was based on analysis of 734 incidents reported to and verified by case workers at Tell MAMA, an organisation that monitor anti-Muslim attacks over 10 months period from May 2013 to the end of February 2014. They included 23 cases of assault, 13 cases involving extreme violence, 56 attacks on mosques and hundreds of instances of online abuse, with an average of more than two confirmed cases a day.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/uk-report-anti-muslim-hate-crime-rising/#more-33870>,
retrieved on 07.07.2014

2. UK: More harassment and threats from Britain First fascists – Under a headline proclaiming “Britain First Kent battalion activists invade Crayford mosque”, the fascist group Britain First was boasting that its paramilitary-clothed activists had engaged in yet another act of religious harassment, in this instance at North West Kent Muslim Association’s mosque in Crayford High Street.



The purpose of the ‘invasion’, according to Britain First, was “to inform the Imams that they have exactly 7 days to remove sexist, segregationist signs from outside their building, or we will”. The reference was to signs indicating the entrance to the women’s section of the mosque. Like most mosques, Orthodox Jewish synagogues and Sikh Gurdwaras, the North West Kent Muslim Association conducted acts of

worship on the basis of gender separation. Needless to say, Britain First did not have a problem with gender separation when Jews or Sikhs engaged in it. But when Muslims followed this religious practice, Britain First leader Paul Golding thought he was entitled to subject them to threats.

This was not the first time that Golding had targeted the Crayford mosque. In March 2013, accusing the North West Kent Muslim Association of “Islamic bigotry against women”, he launched a campaign together with fellow fascist Paul Pitt/Prodromou under the banner of the now moribund far-right unity group, the English National Resistance. Although a proposed demonstration outside the mosque was called off, Golding announced that Britain First would be continuing the campaign by other means.

It is clear that Britain First's activity amounts to racially or religiously aggravated harassment, which is a criminal offence under Sections 31 and 32 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (as amended by the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001). Racially or religiously aggravated harassment is no minor offence – it carries a potential two-year prison sentence. It should be noted that the harassment of Crayford mosque by Britain First involved a threat to remove the women's entrance signs from outside the building. If Golding were to carry out that threat, he would be committing racially or religiously aggravated criminal damage, which is an offence under Section 30 of the Crime and Disorder Act and carries a potential 14-year prison sentence.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/more-harassment-and-threats-from-britain-first-fascists/#more-34321>, retrieved on 15.07.2014

I.III. Rest of the World:

1. China bans Muslims from fasting in Xinjiang – Muslims in China's Xinjiang region working as civil servants, students and teachers had been banned from fasting during the holy month of Ramadan on 2nd July. The move has sparked condemnation from an exile group.

Xinjiang, a mainly Muslim region, home to the Uighur minority, is a place in which for years China's ruling Communist party had restricted fasting in the region. This had led to regular and often deadly clashes between Uighurs and state security forces.

According to Agence France-Presse, the state-run Bozhou Radio and TV university said on its website that it would “*enforce the ban on party members, teachers, and young people from taking part in Ramadan activities...We remind everyone that they are not permitted to observe a Ramadan fast.*” China had in the past said that restrictions on fasting were meant to ensure the health of government employees.

Dilxat Raxit, a spokesman for the exiled World Uyghur Congress, told *AFP* citing local sources that on 30 June, Chinese authorities reportedly encouraged Uighurs to eat free meals, and inspected homes to check if the fast was being observed, adding: “*China taking these kind of coercive measures, restricting the faith of Uighurs, will create more conflict...We call on China to ensure religious freedom for Uighurs and stop political repression of Ramadan.*”

In: <http://thedebateinitiative.com/2014/07/02/china-bans-muslims-from-fasting-in-xinjiang/>,
retrieved on 03.07.2014

2. Tahiti: Anti-mosque demonstration in French Polynesia – About 1,000 people in French Polynesia marched through Papeete in protest at plans to build Tahiti's first mosque. The rally was directed mainly at the 23-year-old imam, Hicham El Barkani, who in 2013 set up a prayer room in town, and was then asking for donations from Muslims in France for a Tahiti mosque. Some demonstrators said his form of Islam was dangerous while some women at the rally had been quoted as saying they feared losing their rights. At time of this news, there were about 500 Muslims in the territory, most of them teachers or members of the French military. The church has denounced the demonstration while the imam made no comment.

In: <http://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/249634/anti-mosque-demonstration-in-french-polynesia>, retrieved on 15.07.2014

I.IV. On Geert Wilders:

1. Wilders Causes Spike In Hague Crime Reports-- A spike in citizen-reported crimes in the Hague so far in 2014 is due to discrimination and hate crime complaints filed against controversial politician Geert Wilders, the city's mayor said. Nearly 340 people filed reports against the PVV leader after he rallied party supporters in favor of removing Moroccans from the Hague.

"Without reports from this particular group, there would be no increase" in criminality, said Mayor Jozias van Aartsen in a letter to the Hague city council referencing the "Wilders effect."

Geert Wilders was largely criticized across the country for emotionally asking people at a Hague rally if they wanted more or fewer Moroccans in the Hague. With a rally cry of "Minder! Minder! Minder!", Dutch for "Fewer! Fewer! Fewer!", Wilders then said his party would make that happen.

Some 5,000 people across the country filed reports against Wilders. The comments sparked an exodus of politicians from Wilders' own party members. Overall, there was a two percent increase in crime during the first five months of the year in the Hague.

In: <http://www.nltimes.nl/2014/07/09/wilders-causes-spike-hague-crime-reports/>, retrieved on 10.07.2014

2: Geert Wilders: How We Can Help Our “Migrant Holy Warriors” and Ourselves as Well-- Geert Wilders and other Dutch politicians are opposed to any efforts to keep “Dutch” mujahideen from traveling to Syria and Iraq to wage jihad. They’d be glad to see them go — provided that the Dutch government never, ever permits them to return to the Netherlands. In: <http://sheikyermami.com/geert-wilders-how-we-can-help-our-holy-warriors-meet-the-virgins/>, retrieved on 23.7.2014

3. Geert Wilders: ‘Holland is no Syria, and we are not a caliphate!’-- Geert Wilders tweeted that Holland is no Syria, and there are no Caliphate. People with those flags should be arrested, detained, stripped of the Dutch nationality and send abroad and never be allowed to return. In: <http://sheikyermami.com/geert-wilders-holland-is-no-syria-and-we-are-not-a-caliphate/>, retrieved on 25.07.2014

II. POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS:

II.I. In the United States and Canada:

1. US: Former Catholic church will serve growing Islamic population in St. Paul – The Church of St. John in Minnesota parish was a home to East Side Catholics since 1886. But a dwindling congregation prompted its closure in 2013. Sold on 20 June, the brick structure would become the Darul-Uloom Islamic Center and serve St. Paul’s growing Muslim community.

Feisal M. Elmi, a spokesman for the Islamic center, said: “*There are a lot of East Africans in the area, and we want to give them a place to worship, a place to be educated, a community space.*” As of 2011, about 21 percent of Minnesota’s foreign-born population was from Africa, compared with 4 percent nationally, according to the Migration Policy Institute. That was about 78,000 foreign-born Africans in Minnesota, and Elmi said that number was prominent on the East Side where the center is located.

The Darul-Uloom Islamic Center opened on 27 June 2014 in the stately brick structure at 977 E. Fifth St. While hoping to create a mosque, Elmi said, the center also hoped to develop after-school and weekend education programs for children, as well as a space for seniors.

The former Church of St. John had been vacant since July 2013. The congregation merged with nearby St. Pascal Baylon Catholic Church at 1757 Conway St., although many parishioners likely ended up at churches closer to their homes, officials said.

In: http://www.twincities.com/localnews/ci_26048972/former-catholic-church-will-serve-growing-islamic-population, retrieved on 01.07.2014

2. US: White House dinner celebrates Ramadan, religious freedom--Muslims share in the blessings of religious liberty. And, in recognizing the Islamic faith as a staple in the fabric of American life, President Barack Obama invites Muslim Americans to the White House to attend the annual iftar dinner celebrating Ramadan. More than 100 guests attended



the 14 July's iftar, including elected officials, ambassadors and officials from the Republic of Iraq, the African Union Mission, Israel, members of the Community of Imam W. Deen Mohammed and others. Connecticut's first Muslim mayor, Saud Anwar of South Windsor, also attended.

The annual dinner has become a White House tradition since the 1990s, under then-President Clinton and continued by President George W. Bush, according to the White House website. The dinner, the sixth for Obama, was held in the State Dining Room.

In his remarks, the president said Ramadan is a time to reflect and to remember discipline and devotion as the essence of a life of faith. *"And for all of us, whatever our faiths, Ramadan is a reminder of just how much we share. The values of peace and charity, the importance of family and community — these are universal values,"* Obama said.

U.S. Rep. Andre Carson, D- Indiana, one of two Muslim congressmen, said the president respects Muslims. *"I applaud the president's recognition of Muslim Americans and join him in calling for understanding and respect among people of all faiths,"* said Carson, 39, who was elected in 2008. *"For me, like most Muslims, Ramadan has always been a special time to reflect upon God's many blessings,"* he said. *"It is a month for renewing our relationship with God and working to improve the lives of those around us."*

In: <http://www.nhregister.com/general-news/20140715/white-house-dinner-celebrates-ramadan-religious-freedom>, retrieved on 16.7.2014

II.II. In Europe:

1. Greece: Council of State green-lights construction of Athens mosque – The Council of State approved the government's decision to construct a mosque in the central Athens neighborhood of Votanikos. The state-run Athens-Macedonian News Agency reported on 1st July that a plenary session of Greece's highest administrative court led to the 1.1-million-euro project, which has been dogged by numerous delays, being given the green light. A consortium comprising the firms J&P Avax, Terna, Aktor and Intrakat was chosen in November 2013 to undertake the mosque's construction on a plot of land that formerly belonged to the Hellenic Navy following four failed attempts to find a taker. The project had been beset by delays since it was announced in 2000 following opposition by residents and the Orthodox Church, which had initially objected to the construction of a mosque with minarets. The mosque slated for Votanikos would not have minarets.

In: http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/_w_articles_wsite1_1_01/07/2014_541007, retrieved on 02.07.2014

Related: Greek court rejects appeal to block Athens mosque construction—The general assembly of the state council in Greece has rejected an appeal to prevent the construction of a mosque in the capital Athens. Construction of Athens's only mosque is due to start soon after plans were approved eight months before. The mosque is expected to be complete six months after construction starts. As plans to begin the construction in 2014 remained on schedule, the plans acted as a focus point for far-right Golden Dawn politicians campaigning against Muslims and immigration.

However, in July 2013, bidding to build the mosque was finally initiated, much to the dislike of far-right groups like Golden Dawn, who have participated in a number of violent protests against the plans. Athens today is the only European capital without an official mosque for its Muslim residents.

In: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/news/139816/greek-court-rejects-appeal-to-block-athens-mosque-construction>, retrieved on 30.07.2014

2. UK: Maidstone: Tory candidate kicked out of party over BNP 'No More Mosques' Facebook post – A former Conservative borough council election candidate lost his membership of the party after a campaign poster from the British National Party appeared

on his Facebook page. But Roger Hogg said: "I'm entirely innocent! I did not post this. My Facebook has been hacked!"



The poster which featured a picture of a mosque with a line through it and the caption "No More Mosques" was displayed on Mr Hogg's page in the first week of July 2014, but the self-employed security officer said: "*I was unaware it was even on my wall till (Tory chief) John Wilson called me about it.*" Mr Hogg stood as the Tory candidate for Fant Ward in the May Maidstone Borough Council elections. His Facebook page read: "How can it be legal to not allow women to enter the front door of the Mosque? Is there any other building in the country that could even think of getting away with such anti-women bigotry and discrimination? These are very real, logical questions, please do contribute."

The post prompted an immediate protest from local Liberal Democrats, who wrote to Cllr John Wilson, the chairman of Maidstone and the Weald Conservatives, to ask if he would remove Roger Hogg from the party's list of approved Conservative candidates, and review Mr Hogg's membership of the party. Cllr Wilson confirmed that he had done just that. He said: "*We are very disappointed...Mr Hogg is no longer a member of the Conservative Party and certainly no longer on our candidate list.*"

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/maidstone-tory-candidate-kicked-out-of-party-over-bnp-no-more-mosques-facebook-post/#more-33740>, retrieved on 03.07.2014

3. UK: Police investigate racist attack at Warrington mosque – Police were hunting for two racist thugs who smashed windows and screamed abuse at people in the mosque in Warrington town centre. Officers from Cheshire Police were called at 11.30pm on 07 July, to reports two men were shouting racist slurs and vandalizing the mosque on Arpley Street. Residents were inside the address at the time of the attack, although there were no injuries, according to police.

Sgt Rob Horton, of Warrington Town Centre NPU, said, "*Cheshire Police treat racially motivated crimes very seriously. Enquiries are still ongoing and we would like to speak to anybody who may have witnessed or can provide any further information with regards to this incident.*"

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/police-investigate-racist-attack-at-warrington-mosque/#more-33970>, retrieved on 09.07.2014

4. Belgium: Vlaams Belang leader questioned about racist internet game – The Antwerp prosecutor had opened an investigation into an internet game published on the website of Vlaams Belang politician Filip Dewinter in the run-up to the May 2014 elections. The game was dubbed Minder, minder, minder (Less, Less, Less), citing Dutch politician Geert Wilders’ supporters when asked whether they wanted “more or less Moroccans”.

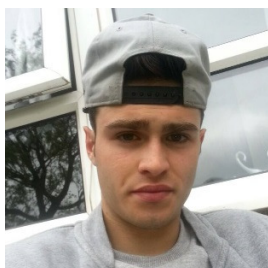


In the game Elio Di Rupo (PS) and Guy Verhofstadt (Open VLD) were represented as flies, which the player could swat. Also among the “enemies” to be swatted were Muslim terrorists and mosques. Police had received several complaints about the racist nature of the game. This had resulted in the investigation in question and Dewinter being questioned.

Dewinter’s party, Vlaams Belang, broke the news itself. Dewinter spoke of an “orchestrated deluge of complaints” and “an attack on the freedom of speech and yet another attempt to muzzle Vlaams Belang”. The Interfederal Equal Opportunities Centre, the official agency against discrimination, did not file a complaint.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/vlaams-belang-leader-questioned-about-racist-internet-game/#more-34090>, retrieved on 12.07.2014

5. UK: Teenager arrested over alleged mosque threat on Facebook – A teenager was arrested after allegedly posting a racist threat against a mosque on Facebook. Leon Richmond, aged 18, from Smithills, was alleged to have made an “offensive” comment about the proposed new mosque in Blackburn Road, Astley Bridge, on a Facebook page. He had been bailed by police, who had warned that more arrests would follow.



The proposed mosque, which was given approval by Bolton Council members earlier in July 2014, would be built on a plot of land off Canning Street. Det Insp Charlotte Cadden, from Bolton North Neighbourhood Policing Team, said: *“An 18-year-old man has been arrested on suspicion of making racial threats to cause criminal damage. This is the first of a number of arrests we will be making. People seem*

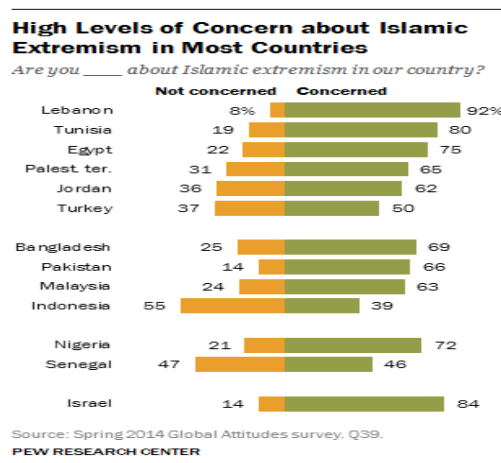
to think they can make racially offensive comments online with impunity but they can't because it's offensive and people are rightly concerned. If you have put something like that online I would advise you to remove it. We have captured some of the comments already and we are prioritising the most serious ones. The arrest made by police is a warning to people. All people have a right to a lawful protest if they are unhappy about something but this has far overstepped the mark and turned into racial verbal abuse and threats to damage that have caused a lot concern and upset in all communities. The comments are offensive to lots of people."

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/teenager-arrested-over-alleged-mosque-threat-on-facebook/#more-34185>, retrieved on 13.07.2014

II.III. Rest of the World:

Study: Muslims hate terrorism, too – In a new study released on 1st of July, the Pew Global Attitudes Project found that “concern about Islamic extremism is high among countries with substantial Muslim populations.” This comes at a particularly fraught moment in the Middle East: the jihadist militant group Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has seized whole swaths of territory in Iraq and Syria and proclaimed a new caliphate. The study involved over 14,000 respondents in 14 countries and was conducted between April and May – before ISIS’s dramatic advance through Iraq this past month. But it underscores the growing fear and anger felt by many in Muslim-majority countries when facing a range of militant threats, from that of Boko Haram in Nigeria to ISIS to the Taliban insurgency in Pakistan.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/study-muslims-hate-terrorism-too/>, retrieved on 02.07.2014








III. SITUATION OF MUSLIMS

III.I. In the United States and Canada:

US: ‘Mohammed Raghead’ – the name the FBI were giving to Muslim-American ‘Joe Bloggs’ – According to newly-published documents provided by NSA whistle-blower Edward Snowden, the US government spied on thousands of law-abiding Muslim-

Americans including top US lawyers and academics. The monitoring was authorized under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), a law intended to target individuals involved in international terrorism, espionage or sabotage. The leaked documents published by *The Intercept* included a list of 7,485 email addresses monitored between 2002 and 2008. Five of the emails identified by journalists had been described as leading “highly public, outwardly exemplary lives”.

Email Account	Collection Status	Expire Date
██████████@juno.com*	Terminated	2/1/08
██████████@cair.com*	Terminated	2/1/08
██████████@gmail.com	Sustained	5/16/08
██████████@a██████████.com*	Terminated	2/8/08
██████████@yahoo.com*	Terminated	2/8/08



Under Surveillance		
██████████@amirahmadi.com	Sustained	5/16/08
██████████@rci.rutgers.edu	Sustained	5/16/08

A document dating from 2006 from the same cache of files instructed intelligence agency staff how to properly record the identity of those under surveillance and used the fake name of “Mohammed Raghead” as an example. Five of those identified as targets of surveillance included Faisal Gill, a lawyer and one-time Republican candidate for the Virginia House of Delegates who served as a Senior Policy Advisor at the Department of Homeland Security under President George W. Bush.

Speaking to *The Intercept*, Gill said he could not work out why his email accounts were monitored: “*I’ve done everything in my life to be patriotic. I served in the Navy, served in the government, was active in my community – I’ve done everything that a good citizen, in my opinion, should do.*”

Other American citizens monitored included Asim Ghafoor, an attorney who had represented clients in terrorism-related cases; Agha Saeed, a civil rights activist and political science professor; Nihad Awad, executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the largest Muslim civil rights organization in the country; and Hooshang Amirahmadi, a professor of international relations.

The monitoring was authorized by the FBI and although no reason for the selection of these individuals was given in the leaked documents. The documents marked the first time that US citizens had been provided with proof of being individually targeted by

intelligence agencies and could allow those involved to sue the US government for unlawful surveillance.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/mohammed-raghead-the-name-the-fbi-were-giving-to-muslim-american-joe-bloggs/#more-33980>, retrieved on 10.07.2014

III.II. In Europe:

1. UK: Muslims gather to inaugurate new body to tackle Islamophobia – Around 1000 religious leaders, politicians, academics, journalists, social and political activists, and Muslims from around the country attended events in London, Birmingham and Greater Manchester to welcome the launch of a new British Muslim organisation, MEND (Muslim Engagement and Development) set up to tackle Islamophobia in all its varied forms.



Building on the significant shifts in policy and practice achieved by its predecessor iENGAGE over the last few years, from police recording of Islamophobia as a category of hate crime to community training workshops, MEND's CEO, Sufyan Ismail, explained the purpose and vision behind the new brand: *"The poor perception of British Muslims in wider society has widened the*

chasm between them and their fellow citizens. There is remarkable ignorance of the immense contributions Muslims make to UK plc, whether it be as the highest charity givers per capita or the huge and lucrative potential of the halal food and shari'ah compliant finance industries. We know media distortion and bias plays a part in this. We know weak legislative protection for groups defined by religion plays a part in this. We know low levels of active Muslim participation in politics and public life plays a part in this. We also know that negative perceptions of Muslims have real consequences, as exemplified by the extraordinary growth in anti-Muslim attacks. Britons deserve to know the real story about their Muslim neighbours and countrymen; hardworking, innovative and patriotic. Through our research, advocacy and community development work we hope to steadily bring this story to light. MEND is committed to bridging a divide that has grown painfully wide in recent times and to reconstructing this broken picture which devalues so much of what British Muslims represent and what they contribute to the UK."

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/muslims-gather-to-inaugurate-new-body-to-tackle-islamophobia/#more-33931>, retrieved on 08.07.2014

2. UK: Justin Welby warns of hysteria over threat of Muslim radicalization – The Archbishop of Canterbury warned against becoming “too hysterical” over Islamic radicalisation in Britain as he spoke of his concerns about developing a “culture of fear” towards Muslims. The Most Rev Justin Welby said there was a problem with radicalisation of Muslims in Britain and an “issue” with young men travelling to Syria and returning to the UK “highly radicalised”.



But, speaking in an interview on *BBC One's The Andrew Marr Show*, the Archbishop said the proportion of Muslims in Britain who were radicalised remained “extraordinarily small”. He said there was a danger of a “national culture of fear” over the issue, adding: “Clearly there is an issue with people going to Syria and coming back highly radicalised. There is a problem with radicalization...But the proportion of Muslims who are radicalised is extraordinarily small and I’m just edgy about developing a national culture of fear because I don’t think that gets us anywhere and I think we’re in danger of slipping into a very fearful culture in which we see everyone against us and us against everyone and we’re constantly trying to defend ourselves...We’ve been becoming too hysterical about this subject for some considerable period and it is a worry because we have huge differences with Islam as Christians, but that is absolutely no reason for hostility. Quite the reverse.”

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/justin-welby-warns-of-hysteria-over-threat-of-muslim-radicalisation/#more-34280>, retrieved on 14.07.2014

III.III. REST OF THE WORLD:

1. Australia: Victoria: tribunal rules in favour of mosque in Coolaroo – A Muslim mosque was given the green light to be built next to an Assyrian Christian church in Coolaroo. Hume Council ticked off the Al Sadiq Foundation’s application to build a mosque at 60–66 Kyabram St in August 2013, despite more than 1000 objections. The decision was then appealed by residents at VCAT, but was upheld on 14 July after almost six months of deliberation.

Among the tribunal's reasons for granting the permit included Hume being a "diverse multicultural, multifaith society", with a relatively even population split between Muslims and Christians in Coolaroo. A VCAT statement said: "All faiths are entitled to facilities and services to meet their needs, including places of worship to practise their faith. For planning purposes, a 'place of worship' does not discriminate between religions, nor is it incompatible (in a town planning sense) for one place of worship to be sited adjacent to another."

While many members of the church were victims of violence by Islamic extremists in their home countries, the tribunal argued there was no evidence that provocation or violence would occur in Coolaroo if the two places of worship were to coexist. "It is acknowledged that some members of the church will take time to adjust, and will find it difficult to adjust," the tribunal said. "However, this is a voluntary and reversible social effect." They said town planning decisions should reflect Australia's "rich and proud history of welcoming all religions" and provide a society where people of different faiths can live, work and worship side-by-side. The case was heard over four days.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/victoria-tribunal-rules-in-favour-of-mosque-in-coolaroo/#more-34305>, retrieved on 14.07.2014

2. Ukraine: Ukrainian Jewish governor vows to return mosque to Muslim community--

The Jewish governor of a major Ukrainian city promised to return a former mosque to the Muslim community. Igor Kolomoisky, who was appointed governor of the Dnepropetrovsk region in March 2014, made the promise in the first week of July during a visit to the city's Olympic Reserve Sports School, which operates from a building that was built in 1926 to serve as a mosque but which the Soviet government later confiscated. According to Newsru.ua, the region's Muslim community is mostly made up of Tatars, whose main place of worship is a private residence in the city's outskirts with a capacity of 250 people. Throughout the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, Jewish, Muslim and Christian faith communities have received hundreds of real-estate properties that had been confiscated during the Soviet era from local and state governments.

Recently, Russia has come under international criticism, including by the Council of Europe, for its treatment of Muslim Tatars in the Crimean Peninsula, an area it annexed from Ukraine in March despite an international outcry.

Kolomoisky, a billionaire banker, is known for his criticism of Russia's actions on Ukraine and is believed to have poured millions of dollars of his private wealth into arming Ukraine's underfunded army to deal with threats from Russia.

In: <http://www.jta.org/2014/07/15/news-opinion/world/ukrainian-jewish-governor-vows-to-return-mosque-to-muslim-community#ixzz39SQDdbQA>, retrieved on 16.17.2014

IV. ON BURQAH AND VEIL RELATED ISSUES:

1. UK: No-go areas in Leicester for Muslim women wearing niqab-- Muslim women who wear a full veil say there are no-go areas in Leicester which they feel frightened to visit, even in a car. They claim they are subjected to abuse every day and that it is getting increasingly difficult to avoid such incidents in the city centre.

More than 100 Leicester-based Muslim women were interviewed over a 12-month period for the book, called Islamophobia, Victimisation and the Veil. One woman who took part in the study said *"People feel free to have a pop at us every day. They swear, stare, spit and tell us to go home. They call us terrorists. There are areas in Leicester we don't go to, even in a car. It is also becoming more difficult to wear the niqab in the city centre. I don't go in any more unless I really have to."*

A police spokeswoman said there had been 11 instances of religiously-based abuse aimed at women in 2014. There had also been one incident of a man removing a woman's veil. She said: *"Police safer neighbourhood teams are continuing to work hard at making all places of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland a safe place to work and live"*.

In: <http://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/areas-Leicester-Muslim-women-wearing-niqab/story-21342283-detail/story.html#ixzz39RophOtg>, retrieved on 09.07.2014

2. France: Muslims Lose Their Fight to Overturn Veil Ban – The European Court of Human Rights dealt a blow to France's Muslim population on 1st July, when it upheld the country's ban on full-face veils. The decision was handed down four years after France outlawed almost all clothing covering the face, such as the burqa and niqab, in any public space. In 2010, then-President Nicolas Sarkozy and leaders in both houses of the French Parliament overwhelmingly favored the ban, reasoning that face veils threatened France's secularism, women's rights, and public safety.

After the law was implemented in 2011, a Muslim woman known only by her initials, SAS, challenged the decision in front of the European Court, the highest court in the European Union with regards to human rights claims. SAS claimed that the law violated Articles 8–10 and Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights, including the “right to respect for private and family life,” “freedom of thought, conscience and religion,” “freedom of expression,” and “prohibition of discrimination.” She also told the Court that she personally chose to wear the burqa and niqab, and was not pressured by her husband or family to do so.

But earlier on 1st July, the Court decided that the ban did not explicitly target Muslims, siding with the French government on a ban of any clothing covering the face, with few exceptions. “[The] European Court of Human Rights held, by a majority, that there had been no violation of Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) of the European Convention on Human Rights, and no violation of Article 9 (right to respect for freedom of thought, conscience and religion); unanimously, that there had been no violation of Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination) of the European Convention combined with Articles 8 or 9,” the Court explained in a release accompanying its decision.

In: <http://thinkprogress.org/world/2014/07/01/3455215/france-veil-ban-hurts-muslims/>, retrieved on 02.07.2014

Related: European Court of Human Rights ‘fails to protect religious freedom’ – according to the Forum for Religious Freedom–Europe (FOREF), an independent non-governmental monitoring group, by upholding a French ban on wearing full-face veils, a common Muslim practice, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has failed to protect the religious freedom of Islamic women who choose the veil as an expression of their faith.

A French law banning wearing a full-face veil has been in force since 11 April 2011. According to a press release issued by the Registrar of the Court, the ECHR “emphasized that respect for the conditions of ‘living together’ was a legitimate aim” for the French law, given that “the State had a ‘wide margin of appreciation’ as regards this general policy question”. According to FOREF President Dr. Aaron Rhodes: *“By giving priority to a vague social goal over the fundamental human right to manifest one’s religious beliefs, the ECHR has undermined the freedom of religion with this ruling,”*

According to the Registry statement, *“the Court accepted that the barrier raised against others by a veil concealing the face in public could undermine the notion of living together”*. In that connection, it indicated that it took into account the State’s submission that the face played a significant role in social interaction...The Court was also able to understand the view that individuals might not wish to see, in places open to all, practices or attitudes which would fundamentally call into question the possibility of open interpersonal relationships, which, by virtue of an established consensus, formed an indispensable element of community life within the society in question. The Court was therefore able to accept that the barrier raised against others by a veil concealing the face was perceived by the respondent State as breaching the right of others to live in a space of socialisation which made living together easier.

“Living together, in a pluralistic society where individual rights are respected, means tolerating differences, not prohibiting them because others ‘might not wish to see them,’” Rhodes added.

France was the first country to ban the full-faced veil, followed by Belgium; several European cities have imposed similar bans. In 2010, the ECHR ruled against Turkey, holding that religious garments were not a threat to public order.

In: <http://www.eureporter.co/magazine/2014/07/05/european-court-of-human-rights-fails-to-protect-religious-freedom/>, retrieved on 06.07.2014

3. Austria: ECHR ruling inspires FPÖ proposal for ‘burqa’ ban – Austria’s Freedom Party (FPÖ) was calling for a ban on burqas, after the Strasbourg-based European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) backed France’s rules on religious headgear on 1st of July, when it ruled the country’s law banning full-face veils in public was legal.

Freedom Party spokeswoman Carmen Gartelgruber said that in the “wide, conservative circles of Islamic immigration society”, the opinion prevailed that women were second-class citizens, adding that one of the many instruments for oppressing women was the burqa. A motion was to be introduced to Austria’s parliament in mid-July 2014 to ban the public wearing of the garment, based on the latest ruling.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/echr-ruling-inspires-fpo-proposal-for-burqa-ban/#more-33882>, retrieved on 03.07.2014

Related: Austrian parliament rejects FPÖ proposal for 'burqa ban' – The Austria Presse Agentur reported that a proposal by the far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ) to introduce a law on the French model banning the “concealment of the face in public space” had failed to find a majority in the Austrian parliament. Only the Team Stronach party supported the FPÖ’s demand for an anti-’burqa’ bill.



While the FPÖ MP Carmen Gartelgruber denounced the veil as “a symbol of the oppression of women”, Nurten Yilmaz of the Social Democratic Party (SPÖ) questioned the feminist credentials of a party who had opposed changing a line in the national anthem that referred to Austria as the “home of great sons” to “home of great daughters and sons”.

Maria Fekter of the Austrian Peoples Party (ÖVP) opposed a ban on the basis that the few women who wore the veil were mostly wealthy foreigners at the Zell am See tourist resort whose presence brought economic benefit to that region. Alev Korun of the Greens rejected the FPÖ proposal on the grounds that it “helps not one single woman”, and Nikolaus Scherak of NEOS said that the veil was not a problem in Austria and a ban would make no sense.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/austrian-parliament-rejects-fpo-proposal-for-burqa-ban/#more-34056>, retrieved on 13.07.2014

4. Denmark may enact French ‘burqa ban’ – A ban on people wearing clothing that covered their face in public, like a burqa or niqab, may find its way to Denmark following a landmark decision at the European Court of Human Rights on 1st July. Several legal experts have told *Berlingske* newspaper that they believed a similar ban could be enacted in Denmark.

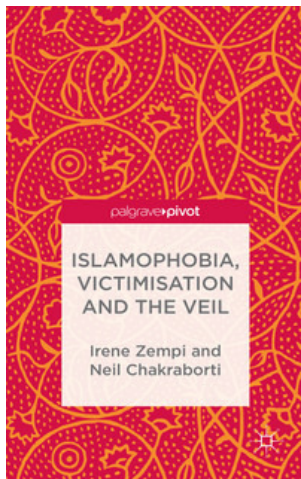
Pia Kjærsgaard, the Dansk Folkeparti (DF) values spokesperson, thought a ban on face-covering dress, whether it was specifically targeting Islamic burqas or not, should be introduced in Denmark because they “...can’t have women being completely covered so you can’t see their facial expressions or who you have right in front of you.” If Kjærsgaard took the question to parliament, it would be the third time DF had proposed a burqa ban, as two similar laws were considered in 2004 and 2009. However, neither of them was passed.

Berlingske has also reported that the Christian Democrats took the same view as the Dansk Folkeparti on this issue. According to a statement by the party's national chairman Stig Grenov: "The Christian Democrats are generally opposed to legislating on civil liberties, but to hide the face is an insult to the Christian view of human nature and oppressive to women." Besides France, only two other European countries – Belgium and the Netherlands – had passed bans targeting Muslim face veils.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/denmark-may-enact-french-burqa-ban/#more-33724>,
retrieved on 03.07.2014

5. Norway braced for new 'burqa ban' debate – Norway's Labour and Progress parties stated that they would consider revisiting the issue of a Muslim veil ban in the wake of a ruling by the European Court of Human Rights that a public ban does not violate the

human rights of Muslim women. Mazyar Keshvari at the Progress Party (FRP) to the *VG* daily: "We must consider whether we should promote the proposal again, after the court in Strasbourg has now confirmed what we have constantly said: that a ban is compatible with human rights."



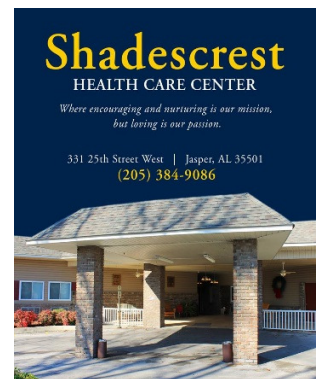
Jan Bøhler of the Labour Party (Ap) also claimed that the ruling of the court put the Norwegian discussion about the controversial ban in a new light as "When parliament rejected such a ban in 2013, the main argument was that Norway risked being censured in the ECHR. Now that argument falls away. I think we need to take a new discussion about a possible ban."

Former Labour Party leader and current Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Thorbjørn Jagland, welcomed the Strasbourg ruling. "*I think it is a positive judgement. It states that any person who participates in a community has an obligation to show their face, otherwise no other community members can relate to you.*" Jagland believed 1st July's verdict opened up the prospect of a ban in Norway, and he "*...would think that the judgement can be applied in exactly the same way in other member states, if they want a similar ban.*"

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/norway-braced-for-new-burqa-ban-debate/#more-33722>,
retrieved on 03.07.2014

6. US: EEOC sues Shadescrest Healthcare for religious discrimination and retaliation – A Jasper, Ala., nursing home violated federal law when it refused to allow a Muslim employee to wear a hijab on the job, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), which enforces federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination, charged in a workplace discrimination lawsuit filed June 30. EEOC v. Shadescrest Health Care Center, ND Ala. Case 6:14-cv-01253-SLB (30 June 2014). The agency also contended that Shadescrest fired the employee in retaliation for filing a complaint with the EEOC.

According to the EEOC's lawsuit, in August 2012, Tracy Martin, a Muslim woman, was hired as a certified nursing assistant by Shadescrest Healthcare Center. On or about 09 August 2012, Martin reported to work wearing a hijab, in accord with her sincerely held religious beliefs. According to the EEOC, Shadescrest refused Martin's request to wear the hijab, despite its religious significance, and instead, told her to remove the head covering or be subject to termination. Subsequently, Martin filed a charge with the EEOC complaining that Shadescrest refused to accommodate her religious beliefs. Weeks after Shadescrest received notice of Martin's charge of discrimination, Martin was summarily fired. According to the EEOC, Martin was fired in retaliation for her complaint to the EEOC and on account of her attempt to exercise her rights under Title VII's religious accommodation provision.



In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/eec-sues-shadescrest-healthcare-for-religious-discrimination-and-retaliation/#more-33990>, retrieved on 10.07.2014

7. Spain: Catalonia to push ahead with 'burqa' ban plans following ECHR ruling – The government of Spain's Catalonia region said on 10 July it would push ahead with a planned burqa ban after a recent European Union ruling that banning full face veils in public did not violate the human rights of Muslim women.

The Catalan Government first announced its controversial plans to control the wearing of burqas and other face-covering attire in public spaces "for reasons of public safety" in 2013. Ramon Espadaler, Interior Minister for Catalonia, announced at the time that the move had nothing to do with religion and would also see the public wearing of garments including helmets and masks banned. On 10 July, Espadaler said the Catalan government would begin the process of getting the bill approved in the regional parliament after the summer 2014 recess.

Spain's Supreme Court in March 2013 annulled previous burqa bans introduced by a number of municipalities, including Lleida in western Catalonia, on the grounds that local authorities did not have the jurisdiction to regulate fundamental rights. In that ruling, the court also said that the council in the mid-sized Catalan town had contravened the European Convention on Human Rights, originally signed back in 1950.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/catalonia-to-push-ahead-with-burqa-ban-plans-following-echr-ruling/#more-34024>, retrieved on 12.07.2014

V. ON DIALOGUE AMONG CIVILIZATIONS:

Vatican message to Muslims calls for 'genuine fraternity'---The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue has released its annual message to Muslims for the end of Ramadan, which took place on July 28. The statement, dated June 24, was released on July 18.

Citing statements by St. John Paul II and Pope Francis, and recalling that Pope Francis personally signed 2013 message, the president and secretary of the pontifical council stated that "Christians and Muslims are brothers and sisters in the one human family, created by the One God...We thank the Almighty for what we have in common, while remaining aware of our differences...We perceive the importance of promoting a fruitful dialogue built upon mutual respect and friendship. Inspired by our shared values and strengthened by our sentiments of genuine fraternity, we are called to work together for justice, peace and respect for the rights and dignity of every person."

The statement added:

As we know, our contemporary world faces grave challenges which call for solidarity on the part of all people of good will. These include threats to the environment, the crisis of the global economy and high levels of unemployment particularly among young people. Let us work together, then, to build bridges of peace and promote reconciliation especially in areas where Muslims and Christians together suffer the horror of war. May our friendship inspire us always to cooperate in facing these many challenges with wisdom and prudence. In this way we will help to diminish tension and conflict, and advance the common good. We will also demonstrate that religions can be a source of harmony for the benefit of society as a whole. Let us pray that reconciliation, justice,

peace and development will remain uppermost among our priorities, for the welfare and good of the whole human family.

In: <http://www.catholicculture.org/news/headlines/index.cfm?storyid=22049>, retrieved on 19.07.2014

VI. GENERAL ISSUES:

Singapore: Centre launched to counter misinterpretations of Islam – The Resource and Counselling Centre launched by President Tony Tan Keng Yam would strengthen the resilience of the community against radical ideology in Singapore and aimed at countering misinterpretations of Islam in Singapore was officially opened on Friday (July 11). The centre is located within Khadijah Mosque, and run by the Religious Rehabilitation Group.

RCC would boost the competencies and knowledge of the Religious Rehabilitation Group's members in the areas of terrorist rehabilitation and counter-ideology, and would also help academics and professionals build a global network of moderate Islamic scholars and practitioners. Speaking at the launch, Dr Tan said the centre would strengthen the resilience of the community against radical ideology. This would nurture an environment where extremist ideas were not allowed to take root in the community, he added.

In: <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/centre-launched-to/1255308.html>, retrieved on 12.07.2014

VII. BOOKS AND REFERENCES ON ISLAMOPHOBIA

Ireland: Revealing report on anti-Muslim racism in Ireland – An informative report by Dr James Carr on racism and bigotry against Muslims in Ireland was published by the University of Limerick. Based on a survey of Irish Muslims on their experiences of anti-Muslim hostility, complemented by one-to-one interviews and focus group discussions, the report found that 36% of respondents felt they had been targeted on the basis of being identified as Muslim.

Dr Carr wrote: "The manner in which this hostility manifested varied. Participants reported experiencing physical assaults (22%) ranging from being struck, having hijabs forcibly removed, to being pushed, spat at; some reported being threatened or harassed (20%). A white Irish male revert to Islam recalls his experiences of physical forms of

abuse: 'I have been pushed and have had people spit in my face, for being Muslim'. Fewer participants (14%) indicated that they had property damaged. Those who detailed how this manifested referred to tyres being slashed, having eggs thrown at their home inter alia."

The survey found that women, who were more easily identified as Muslim because of their dress, experienced higher levels of anti-Muslim hostility (44%) and discrimination (40%) than men (28% and 22% respectively). Women interviewees also reported their frustration at being subjected to anti-Muslim stereotyping and regarded condescendingly as passive victims of male oppression. Dr Carr added: "The discourse of oppressed Muslim women also serves to 'legitimise' the deployment of 'liberation tactics' by those would be 'liberators' of the oppressed. The impact these 'tactics' have on the Muslim female participants in this study includes shock, depression, feelings of fear and vulnerability. Jada explains how she was told to 'take that thing rag off your head you you're too good looking for that' by a patient in the hospital she works in."

More generally, Muslims were treated as a "suspect community" in Ireland, by both the police and the general public. "Anti-Muslim racism", Dr Carr concluded: "...is a lived reality for Muslim men and women in Ireland." He further noted the failure of the authorities to take the issue seriously: "As it currently stands, the Irish State is blind to anti-Muslim racism as it does not systematically collect data on this phenomenon as a distinct manifestation of racist activity.... This paucity of data translates into an inability of the Irish State to construct informed policies that could challenge anti-Muslim racism."

Dr Carr recommended that "by recognising anti-Muslim racism as a distinct phenomenon, the Irish State, through in particular An Garda Síochána, can take a first step in a process towards the formation of evidence based, effective policies that can challenge anti-Muslim racism and concomitantly encourage the reporting of this phenomenon".

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/revealing-report-on-anti-muslim-racism-in-ireland/#more-34368>, retrieved on 16.07.2014

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