

ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION

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**SEVENTH
OIC OBSERVATORY**

REPORT ON ISLAMOPHOBIA

October 2013 – April 2014

PRESENTED TO THE
41st Council of foreign ministers

Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
18–19 June 2014



Original: English

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FOREWORD by the OIC Secretary General



In pursuance of the given mandate, the OIC Islamophobia Observatory is presenting its 7th Annual Report to the Council of Foreign Ministers. The report covers the period from October 2013 to April 2014 and yet again proves its utility by collating and presenting the unhindered streak of Islamophobic incidents in various parts of the world. This report further validates OIC's well-founded and justifiable concerns on the threat of Islamophobia as

one of the key challenges faced by the international community in promoting peaceful and multicultural societies that are at peace within and without.

Islamophobia – a contemporary manifestation of racism – continues to form a vital concern not only for the Islamic world but its significance and repercussions have been equally acknowledged by the wider international community. Comprehensive and well-rounded reports on various aspects of Islamophobia as well as objective and authenticated sources of information such as reports from OIC Islamophobia Observatory have greatly contributed to this global understanding and awareness.

The phenomenon of Islamophobia is not new. History is filled with various forms and manifestations of hatred against Islam and Muslims. However, the impact of contemporary manifestations of Islamophobia, in the backdrop of today's increasingly interconnected world, where fast flow of information and human migration has transformed socio-cultural boundaries, is a recipe for disaster for the current international order. Combating religious discrimination and intolerance, therefore, remains a formidable challenge of our times.

I reiterate OIC's oft-repeated warning that if not addressed squarely, such incidents are bound to increase with serious repercussions for the unity, stability and coherence of affected societies. The long-term impact of such incidents on the multi-cultural fabric of current international order as well as peace and security are even more problematic. We must not be held hostage to such acts of Islamophobia and incitement to hatred on religious grounds that are either based on misperceptions, ill perceived threats or sheer political interests. Based on specific socio-cultural and political environment and circumstances, Islamophobia is manifested through racist, xenophobic, anti-immigrant sentiments and various forms of discrimination by excluding Muslims from socio-political and economic life. This report illustrates through concrete examples that Islamophobia continues to exist through various old

and contemporary forms of prejudice and discrimination against Islam as a religion and against Muslims both as individuals and as community. Many academics have, therefore, rightly called it as “anti-Muslim or Islamic racism.”

The rise of Islamophobia in today’s world stands in stark contradiction to universal human rights values as well as international community’s commitment to developing a culture of peace and harmony among different cultures, civilizations and faiths. International human rights law provides important and unambiguous safeguards for prohibiting any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, to ensure the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by all. The OIC has repeatedly expressed its commitment to the freedom of opinion and expression, exercise of which, we believe is fundamental to the realization of the right to freedom of religion. However, as also established by the existing jurisprudence, it must be exercised with responsibility and discretion. Freedom of expression, therefore, cannot be used as a pretext for inciting hatred, or insulting the deeply held beliefs of any community. It should respect the beliefs and tenets of all religions.

The Observatory has noted and the OIC strongly warns that spawning of hatred on religious lines in various national and regional conflicts would lead to undesirable and uncontrollable consequences. Recent manifestations of this menace of Islamophobia have resulted in scores of killings and worst human sufferings in Central African Republic and Myanmar. Governments, religious and community leaders, media as well as civil society actors have important though varying roles to play in ensuring protection of religious minorities, addressing misperceptions and building trust between affected communities.

The OIC is of the view that pluralism and diversity constitute an opportunity for cultures and civilizations to open up, respectfully interact and better understand and enrich each other. Maintaining an open, respectful and constructive debate of ideas is key to our understanding of various forms and manifestations of intolerance as well as finding appropriate solutions to better address their negative impact. International community must cooperate at all levels to address this rising trend of discrimination based on religion or belief, which is also a threat to the values of pluralism, global peace and harmony.

For this international cooperation to bear fruit, it must be done through an organized and well-structured format. To start with, there must be a global political commitment to de-politicize the issue at all levels. As a next step a detailed analysis be carried out of the available information on existing/new trends and manifestations of Islamophobia or discrimination based on religion or belief. Last but not the least, international community must strengthen and rationalize its numerous expert mechanisms working on the issue of racism and discrimination to better interpret and address these concerns through existing international human rights obligations and where needed through crafting new legally binding instruments to fill the gaps in existing instruments. In order to address the concern of some States about avoiding new standards, we may follow the soft law approach that could take the shape of agreed principles, guidelines or declaration that could reflect the common understanding of international community on this important issue.

I would also urge Member States to continue to use their influence with their interlocutors to convey the grave concerns of OIC over rising trends of Islamophobia in various societies and the need to address this phenomenon through a holistic approach that addresses its structural, normative and political aspects in a consensual manner. While this report makes specific recommendations to be followed by different actors at all levels, I would like to stress the importance of pursuing the well acknowledged path crafted to address this issue through HRC Resolution 16/18. This OIC sponsored consensus resolution sets specific action to be taken by different actors through an 8-point action plan at all levels.

That is where the strategic importance of Istanbul process comes in, which provides a platform for sincere exchange of views, perspectives and best practices among various stakeholders on all aspects of the Resolution 16/18. The process carries great potential in terms of evolving an international consensus to deal with the matter while addressing genuine concerns of all parties. In line with this approach, the OIC has also made suggestions to create a mechanism within the OHCHR that will help effective implementation of this consensus resolution. The OIC has offered to host the next meeting of Istanbul Process that would discuss the issue threadbare with the view to finding appropriate solutions and best practices to address this universal concern.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Seventh Annual report of the OIC Islamophobia Observatory on the incidents and manifestations of anti-Muslim sentiments and intolerance against Islam, which covers the period from October 2013 to April 2014, illustrates that Islamophobia, as a contemporary form of racism, continues to manifest itself through different forms of prejudice and discrimination against Muslims both as individuals and as a community. Taking root in various economic, social, political and cultural considerations, Islamophobia not only contributes to the propagation of negative stereotypes against Islam and its followers, but also leads to more serious human rights violations such as discrimination against Muslims and attacks on their physical integrity, particularly Muslim women who are often more easily identified due to their distinctive attire.

The Report is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 describes the general trend of intolerance and discrimination against Muslims. It confirms the OIC's concerns and apprehensions that in some Western societies Islam was being increasingly misperceived as a religion of intolerance and Muslims as a burden on society both from a cultural and economic perspective, thus leading to further stigmatization and marginalization of Muslim minorities. This trend is manifested nowadays also through social networks, including the existence of serious hate speech problem on Facebook.

Chapter 2 of the report deals with various manifestations of Islamophobia in Western countries. In the context of the US, the OIC Observatory noted several incidents, starting with Islamophobic Behavior by US Military & Police, where facts are described on how some law enforcement agencies in US are helping shaping the Islamophobia agenda. Another issue of concern in the US, during the reporting period, was the emergence of Anti-Sharia Laws, with several federal states adopting such kind of legislation. In Canada, there was an attempt to adopt a Quebec Charter of Values (or in French: *Charte de la laïcité* or *Charte des valeurs québécoises*), which was outlawing Muslims, and, of course, helped the increase in the Islamophobic incidents in this Canadian.

With regard to Islamophobia in Europe, the overall impression propagated by the Media and national discourse was that of an omnipresent and growing Islamic threat. Moreover, several European study centers indicated that a majority of cases of discrimination and hate crimes based on religion or belief were actually directed against Muslims. Many of these continued to occur at the level of education and

employment, with Muslims being either barred from wearing religious symbols and ornaments, particularly the Islamic headscarf (hijab), or simply dismissed on the basis of their religion. Other international human rights agencies and organizations as Council of Europe noted with concern that more was needed to be done to confront the growing climate of discrimination and prejudice against Muslims in Europe. The Observatory has sensed that the anti-Islam agenda and anti-Muslim message has been spreading to other untouched details linked to Muslim identity, including halal meat and food. Some European countries have banned halal slaughter, including Poland and Denmark, where the country's ministry of agriculture declared that religion had no precedence over animal welfare.

For this year's Annual Report on Islamophobia, the Observatory decided to expand its scope of analysis and coverage taking into account the alarming incidents of manifestations of Islamophobia in many parts of the world, including the Rohingya issue, the situation of Muslims in Sri Lanka, the alleged ban of Islam in Angola, the fears of Tatar Muslims in Crimea, and the persecution of Muslims in the ongoing war in the Central African Republic.

The OIC Observatory noted, during the reporting period, that Western media, including the social media, continued to play a key role in promoting and disseminating an anti-Muslim culture. The lack of objectivity and biased reporting combined with continuous focus on the issue of "Islamic extremism" steadily consolidated negative stereotyping of Muslims. Under the covering period, the Observatory came across alarming reports on how Muslims are being discriminated against while seeking jobs or in their place of work, as they are bullied by fellow colleagues or the supervisors are less accommodating to their religious needs. The Observatory also looked into the issue of anti-Muslim sentiments in schools.

Chapter 3 of the Report outlines some constructive developments with regard to combating Islamophobia. Among those court decisions against Islamophobes, politicians' positive views on Islam, and on hijab. It was with satisfaction that the Observatory noted the University of Brandeis, in the United States, making a step back in giving an award to a known Islamophobe, Ayan Hirsi Ali.

Chapter 4 is under the title *"OIC Initiatives and Activities to Counter Islamophobia"*, where some of the steps and initiatives taken by the OIC to counter Islamophobia are

mentioned, including the visit by the former OIC Secretary General to the Vatican and the continuation of the meeting series on Istanbul Process.

Finally, in the conclusions and recommendations section, the Observatory decided to give a special attention to the Muslim community victim of the ongoing Islamophobia discourse and harassment. The Observatory is fully aware of the important role NGOs and civil society institutions play in present day international relations and issues of global concern. Therefore, Muslim communities should join hands with relevant NGOs and civil society organizations. Religious leaders, journalists, academics and diplomats are also important actors in combating the existing manipulation of faith and religious doctrine by extremist groups to justify violence and other obnoxious practices.

INTRODUCTION

Islamophobia is a contemporary form of racism that continues to grow in many parts of the world and particularly in the West. The 6th Annual Report, submitted to the 40th Council of Foreign Ministers in Conakry, Republic of Guinea, last December, revealed that the rise of Islamophobia continues unabated in some Western countries thereby exacerbating tensions at all levels and constituting additional obstacles to the diversity and multicultural fabrics of the societies. This current, 7th Report, on the incidents and manifestations of anti-Muslim sentiments and intolerance against Islam, which covers the period from October 2013 to April 2014, illustrates that Islamophobia continues to manifest itself through different forms of prejudice and discrimination against Muslims both as individuals and as a community. Taking root in various economic, social, political and cultural considerations, Islamophobia not only contributes to the propagation of negative stereotypes against Islam and its followers, but also leads to more serious human rights violations such as discrimination against Muslims and attacks on their physical integrity, particularly Muslim women who are often more easily identified due to their distinctive attire.

As recorded in previous reports by the Observatory, the trends observed during the period under review range from the usual vandalism of Islamic places of worship, including mosques, Islamic centers and cemeteries, to trivialization of any Islamic-related issue, be it halal food, Muslim attire (headscarf) or the perceived physical appearance of Muslims, everything serves to denigrate Muslim identity. This is the reason why the Observatory decided to dedicate special attention in this 7th Report to local Muslim communities living in the West, as these are the main victims and therefore need to play an active role in combatting all forms of incitement to hatred, intolerance and discrimination to which they are subjected.

The Observatory reiterates that unless stopped, the phenomenon of Islamophobia will continue to spread and cause an ever greater threat to the cohesion and well-being of Western societies as well as to the maintenance of international peace and security. It is indeed source of great concern for the Observatory to note that many national and regional conflicts are being increasingly exacerbated along religious lines as Muslims find themselves subject of targeted hatred and violence. For this reason, the Observatory decided to expand the scope of the 7th Annual Report with a view to covering alarming manifestations of Islamophobia in other parts of the world, such as the Rohingya issue, the situation of Muslims in Sri Lanka, the alleged ban of Islam in

Angola, the fears of Tatar Muslims in Crimea and the persecution of Muslims in the ongoing conflict in the Central African Republic.

The Observatory is of the firm belief that maintaining an open and constructive international dialogue is crucial to furthering the international community's understanding of new forms and manifestations of intolerance in order to better address their wider adverse effects in a globalized world. It is therefore important to act through concerted international action, based on internationally recognized human rights principles and standards while engaging with all relevant actors. It is worth mentioning here that the visit of former OIC Secretary General, Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, to the Vatican to meet Pope Francis I last December is a sign of the OIC's recognition as to the important role played by the Vatican in addressing incitement to hatred and violence on the basis of religion or belief. It also shows that Muslim and Christian leaders have an important role to assume in upholding values of tolerance between people of different faiths and in finding common platforms for addressing modern day challenges.

At the international level, the OIC remained engaged in the Istanbul Process for combatting intolerance and discrimination on the basis of religion and belief. The Istanbul Process, which is a joint US-OIC initiative, consists of a series of international expert meetings on implementation of UN Human Rights Council (HRC) Resolution 16/18 and therefor offers a positive platform for debate, exchange of best practices and maintaining of a common and unified stance. The 4th Istanbul Process expert meeting was organized by the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue under the title "Doha Meeting for Advancing Religious Freedom through Interfaith Collaboration", on 24-25 March 2014, in Doha, State of Qatar. On this occasion, the OIC Secretary General, Mr. Iyad Ameen Madani, emphasized the need for the international community to unite and work together to curb the malaise of discrimination and intolerance based on religion or belief. The platform set up by the continued consensual adoption of HRC Resolution 16/18, both in Geneva and New York, provides with an optimism that all actors are on the right track in this important task.

In terms of recommendations, the Islamophobia Obsevatoty outlines a number of axes on which government action and invovlement by civil society is urgently needed in combatting intolerance and discrimination against Muslims. These include measures to be taken at the institutional and policy levels aimed, *inter alia*, at ensuring that

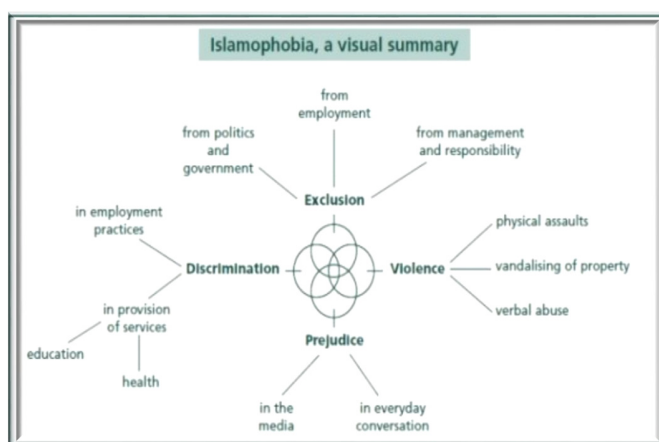
Muslims are properly integrated in society and are not subjected to racial profiling and other institutionalized forms of discrimination. The implementation of comprehensive educational strategies and the need to raise awareness and exchange best practices are also identified as priority areas. It is further recommended that relevant stakeholders should continue to collect and maintain reliable data and information about hate crimes inspired by anti Muslim sentiments. The Media has also its responsibility to refrain from acting as a platform for the dissemination of hate speech and ought to present the true positive nature of Islam.

Furthermore, special recommendations are advanced for Muslim communities living in the West, as well as for OIC Member States to support these communities in the fight against religious discrimination. The Observatory is fully aware of the important role NGOs and civil society institutions play in present day international relations and issues of global concern. Therefore, Muslim communities should join hands with relevant NGOs and civil society organizations. Religious leaders, journalists, academics and diplomats are also important actors in combating the existing manipulation of faith and religious doctrine by extremist groups to justify violence and other obnoxious practices.

1. ISLAMOPHOBIA, INTOLERANCE AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MUSLIMS

The OIC Islamophobia Observatory has been consistent since 2008 in highlighting instances of anti-Muslim sentiments and intolerance against Islam as harmful to global efforts for peaceful coexistence, harmonious and multicultural societies.

The Observatory has proposed the following definition as part of its earlier reports, “Islamophobia is a contemporary form of racism and xenophobia motivated by unfounded fear, mistrust and hatred of Muslims and Islam. Islamophobia is also manifested through intolerance, discrimination, unequal treatment, prejudice,



stereotyping, hostility and adverse public discourse. Differentiating from classical racism and xenophobia, Islamophobia is mainly based on stigmatization of a religion and its followers. As such, Islamophobia is an affront to the human rights and dignity of Muslims.”

The trends have been evolving from individual dispersed attacks against

Muslims to the creation of overt social and political movements against Islam and Muslims, including Stop Islamization of Nations, Stop Islamization of Europe, English Defense League, Bloc Identitaire, Freedom Party (PV in the Netherlands), etc. The evolving process also started including the use of anti-Muslim sentiments for political gains and even to institutionalize Islamophobia at the state level, as was the case of the ban of minaret construction in Switzerland or banning of religious attires in France, Belgium or in some cities of Italy.

Basically, for many parts of the world, the west inparticular, being Muslim should be

Figure 1 summarizes today's Islamophobia trends¹

confined to the private space, as the perceived fashions or societal behavior linked to Islam are seen as a threat to

the established way of being in those societies.

¹ In: <http://vridar.org/2013/05/02/islamophobia-origin-and-meaning-of-the-word/>

In this context, Prof. Jocelyne Cesare published an article titled *Why the West Fears Islam*² where she provided a starting point for issues related to the legitimacy of Islamic signs in public space (headscarves, mosques, and minarets) being increasingly seen as a rejection of western democratic values, or even worse, as a direct threat to the West:

...the spotlight has moved to the legitimacy of Islamic signs in public space, such as dress code, minarets, and halal foods. As a consequence, controversies surrounding the visibility of these signs have steadily grown. Controversy is not merely a disagreement about divergent points of view; but it is about fundamental differences (or at least perceived as such) about the principles and norms that regulate the common life of individuals sharing the same time period. Such fundamental divergences that lead to exclusive or binary positions cannot coexist in the same public space.

Islamic signs are not only ostracized in public discourse, but are also controlled and restricted through multiple legal and administrative procedures in an attempt to “civilize” or adjust the signs to fit western political cultures...The most recent addition to the long list of outcast Islamic signs is circumcision.

...an essentialized West and an essentialized Islam are fighting each other and in so doing reinforce one another.

(...)

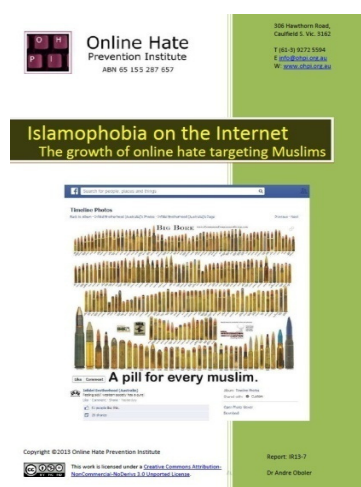
One major consequence of such a polarized mindset is to mask the sociological reality of Muslims. In fact, a striking gap exists between the image of Islam as it is constructed in binary public discourse and the multifaceted reality of Muslims across countries and localities. For example, the dominant assumption is that visible Islamic identities in the West are inversely correlated to their civic and political loyalties, while there is empirical evidence that contradicts such an assumption.

The major conclusion is that although Muslims are challenged by their secular environment, they do not experience the incompatibility so intensely debated by western politicians and Salafi preachers alike. Then why is Islam depicted as an obstacle in political discourse and the media? Taking up this intriguing gap, I have attempted to make sense of this disjuncture between what Muslims do and the political construct of the “Muslim problem”.

² Cf. J. Cesare, “Why the West Fears Islam”, in: <http://en.qantara.de/content/muslims-in-liberal-democracies-why-the-west-fears-islam>, retrieved on 04.12.2013, emphasis in the original.

In sum, the symbolic integration of Muslims within national communities would require a dramatic change in the current liberal and secularist narratives. It is a daunting task, but it can be done.

All the aforementioned trends and discourses against Islam and Muslim find even a greater audience with the evolution of social networking. The disturbing trend was highlighted in a report by the Online Hate Prevention Institute (OHPI)³, an Australian charity dedicated to the growing problem of online hate. The report, *Islamophobia on the Internet: The growth of online hate targeting Muslims*:



examined anti-Muslim hate on *Facebook*. This major work examined 50 anti-Muslim *Facebook* pages, which ranged from “The Islamic threat” which on the day of publication of the news (03 December 2013) had passed the 113,000 supporter mark and continued to rapidly grow, to “Mohammad the P**”, which vanished after reaching 2000 supporters. From these 50 pages the report documented 349 images of anti-Muslim hate. These images represented 191 unique images and many repetitions as messages of hate moved between the different pages. The messages of hate in this report were divided into seven themes which the report discussed:

- a) Muslims as a Security Threat or Threat to Public Safety
- b) Muslims as a Cultural Threat
- c) Muslims as an Economic Threat
- d) Content Dehumanising or Demonizing Muslims
- e) Threats of Violence, Genocide and Direct Hate Targeting Muslims
- f) Hate Targeting Refugees / Asylum Seekers
- g) Other Forms of Hate Speech

American, British and Australian nationals provided the highest level of support to these pages of hate. Of the pages examined 13 of them were specifically Australian in nature, including pages like “Look after Australians first deport all illegal boatpeople”, and “Australian Defence League Official AdIEst 2009”.

³ See OHPI’s entry “Islamophobia on the Internet: Major new report exposes online hate targeting Muslims”, In: <http://ohpi.org.au/islamophobia-on-the-internet-the-growth-of-online-hate-targeting-muslims/>, retrieved on 04.12.2013, emphasis added.

This report aimed at highlighting the existence of what was a serious hate speech problem on Facebook. To the extent that this content gave a window into the hate speech against Muslims that was circulating in society, it was hoped that the report would assist community leaders, policy makers, law makers and researchers in better understanding and responding to this threat to an inclusive society. In democracies inclusiveness is regarded as a public good, as such, this hate speech is not only an attack on the Muslim community but an attack on society as a whole.

In sum, the Islamophobic trends nowadays tend to include anything that relates to Islam as a threat of the socio-cultural accepted norms of western societies. This is reason-why the Observatory wishes to urge local Muslim communities in the West to tackle these trends from local perspective with a view to fruitfully addressing the malaises of Islamophobia.

2: MANIFESTATIONS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

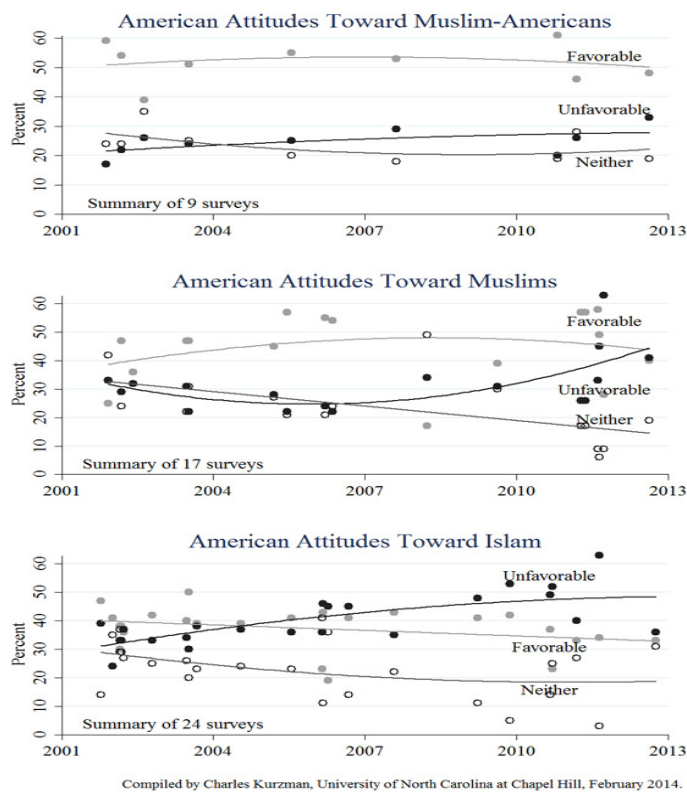
2.1. Islamophobia in USA

A report⁴ issued in February 2014 by the Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security showed that the number of Muslim-American terrorism suspects and perpetrators remained low in 2013. An analysis⁵ to this report led to belief that

⁴ See: Charles Kurzman, *Muslim-American Terrorism in 2013*, Department of Sociology University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 5 February 2014, available online at http://sites.duke.edu/tcths/files/2013/06/Kurzman_Muslim-American_Terrorism_in_2013.pdf

⁵ See: Juan Cole, *Descent into Bigotry: 21st Century Americans increasingly negative toward Muslims, Minorities*, available at <http://www.juancole.com/2014/02/americans-increasingly-minorities.html>, viewed on 11.04.2014

Yet American attitudes toward Muslim-Americans have grown more negative in recent years. Eight surveys since 9/11, most of them conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, have asked random samples of adult Americans whether they have a “favorable” or “unfavorable” view of Muslim-Americans. As shown in the top graph, the proportion answering “unfavorable” has increased over time: before 2006, all five surveys found “unfavorable” rates of 26 percent or lower; in the four surveys between 2006 and 2012, only one found “unfavorable” rates that low.



These numbers are still considerably less than positive responses, but they suggest that a growing segment of the American population is willing to express negative views about Muslim-Americans in recent years.

This negative trend is even more pronounced in surveys that ask about Americans’ attitude toward Muslims in general, not specifically about Muslim-Americans (see the middle graph). In 17 surveys since 9/11 conducted by Pew, the Arab-American Institute, and other organizations, “unfavorable” responses declined from 2001 through 2006, then veered upward. From 21–24 percent “unfavorable” responses in 2006, negative responses spiked as high as 63 percent in recent years.

When Americans are asked about their attitude toward Islam, rather than Muslims, the rates are even more negative. In 24 surveys over the past dozen years, “unfavorable” responses toward Islam averaged 40 percent, as compared with 32 percent toward Muslims and 25 percent toward Muslim-Americans. “Favorable” responses about Islam outnumbered “unfavorable” responses in almost every survey prior to 2006, but the reverse is true in nearly every survey since then.

(...)

What accounts for this trend toward more negative views of Islam and Muslims? Surely this trend is due in part to the drumbeat of alarming news linking Muslims with violent events ...

Anti-Muslim attitudes seem to have increased in tandem with an organized campaign to vilify the Muslim-American community as a threat to the United States. These anti-Muslim activists raise and spend tens of millions of dollars each year to spread their message... Anti-Islamic legislation developed and promoted by this movement has been proposed in 29 state legislatures and enacted in seven states...

Conservatives have been particularly likely to shift toward anti-Islamic views... Even controlling statistically for conservatism, respondents who regularly watched Fox News or listened to conservative talk radio were 50 percent more likely than other respondents to express negative "thermometer" ratings toward Muslims.

(...)

Still, it's clear that the rise in negative attitudes toward Muslim-Americans poses a challenge to America's self-image as a nation committed to religious freedom. Americans who promote the rights of religious minorities in other countries should be worried about developments in the United States as well.

It is within the context of this last point that even America championing itself as a nation committed to religious freedom, it chose an Islamophobe to be a member of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF). In fact, on 11 February 2014, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) repeated its request⁶ to investigate one of its own members, **USCIRF Vice Chair Zuhdi Jasser**, this time for being funded by Abstraction Fund, the same group that backed a number of notorious Islamophobes. Earlier in 2014, CAIR asked for an investigation of the same individual for apparently seeking to deny religious rights to Muslim military personnel.

The letter of Corey Saylor, director of CAIR's Department to Monitor and Combat Islamophobia, sent on 11 February 2014 to USCIRF Chairman Dr. Robert P. George, inter alia, cited funding of anti-Islam groups and islamophobes by the Abstraction Fund including:

⁶ See *Digital Journal's* entry "CAIR: 'Religious Freedom' Rep Funded by Same Group that Backs Islamophobes", in: <http://www.digitaljournal.com/pr/1732043>, retrieved on 13.02.2014

- a) **TheCenter for Security Policy**, the head of which was a keywitness for the plaintiffs in a controversial lawsuit against a mosque being built in Tennessee, where he promoted the notion that mosques wanted to “destroy western civilization from within.”
- b) **Steven Emerson’s Investigative Project on Terrorism**, which recently published an Islamophobic article stating: “Europe is still...captivated by the specious charms of the Arabs and Islam” and “...pitiful Arab, whose inherent culture left him no shred of sincerity, creativity or courage.”
- c) **Jihad Watch**, an anti-Muslim blog published by **Robert Spencer**. *The Boston Globe* had described Spencer as a man who “depicts Islam as an inherently violent religion. Spencer co-founded the **Stop Islamization of America** (SIOA), which had been designated as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). Spencer’s *Jihad Watch* blog was also designated as a hate group by the SPLC, which named Spencer as part of the nation’s “Anti-Muslim Inner Circle.”
- d) The **Middle East Forum** (MEF), headed by Islamophobe **Daniel Pipes**, who was infamous for quotes such as: “... All immigrants bring exotic customs and attitudes, but Muslim customs are more troublesome than most.” [NOTE: Jasser accepted donations from Middle East Forum.]

In concluding his letter to USCIRF, Saylor wrote: “*CAIR values, advocates for and has pursued legal action to protect free speech and freedom of expression. Dr. Jasser has every right to advocate for the causes and organizations with which he chooses to align AIFD. At issue here is the reasonable concern that arises regarding Dr. Jasser accepting financial support from anti-Muslim groups while he is serving on a commission advocating for religious freedom. Given the expanding evidence of AIFD’s financial dependency on groups funding anti-Muslim prejudice in the United States, we do not believe Dr. Jasser can act as an honest voice regarding religious freedom domestically or internationally.*”

Some other relevant Islamophobic related incidents in the United States are as follows:

a) Islamophobic Behavior by US Military & Police

The Observatory noted with concern the story⁷ of Muhammad Tanvir. He was part of those Muslims the FBI attempted to coerce into spying on their own community in exchange for getting off the no-fly list. Then Tanvir sued and testified in court against the FBI for its no-fly practices. Tanvir's lawsuit, which the Center for Constitutional Rights had taken on, had put the FBI on the hotseat. The CCR suit read, according to the *Courthouse News Service*: "Mr. Tanvir has been prevented from flying despite the fact that he does not present any threat to aviation security. Instead, defendants sought to exploit the draconian burden posed by the No Fly List – including the inability to travel for work, or to visit family overseas – in order to coerce him into serving the FBI as a spy with American Muslim communities and places of worship." In fact, "the practice of pressuring Muslims to become informants in their own communities in exchange for law enforcement help had been one clear example of an apparatus running roughshod over the rights of Muslims in the U.S. It had also been a practice familiar to Muslims in New York City, who had to deal with a police department that had implemented a surveillance dragnet with the help of Central Intelligence Agency officials."⁸

In another development, *Islamophobia Today blog*, in an article by Jacob Hausner, uncovered⁹ facts indicating that the pervasive "Crusader" sub-culture within the ranks of Islamophobes was not limited to internet forums and blogs but also existed within the US Military.

Anti-Muslim/Islam and pro-Crusader themes tied to military-use paraphernalia, including: T-Shirts, insignias, bullet coating, rifle scope cases as well as tattoos inscribed "Kafir," and "Infidel" had become common within a sub-set of the US military. Many soldiers had expressed deep concern about this Crusader sub-culture. A growing network of e-stores, as well as large chains such as SEARS (online) to the day of publication of the news (12 November 2014) were selling the aforementioned anti-Muslim/Islam commodities. Most troubling, **Crye Precision, which was under Department of Defense contract for the production of Multicam camouflage for the US Military was also involved**

⁷ See: *Pakistan Kakhudahafiz* blog's entry "FBI Pressures Muslims on No-Fly List to Become Informants in Exchange for Travel Rights", in: <http://www.pakistankakhudahafiz.com/world-view/fbi-pressures-muslims-on-no-fly-list-to-become-informants-in-exchange-for-travel-rights/>, retrieved on 07.10.2013

⁸ See: *Pakistan Kakhudahafiz*, op. cit.

⁹ See: *Islamophobia Today blog's* entry "Exclusive: The Crusader Sub-Culture in the US Military", in: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2013/11/12/exclusive-the-crusader-sub-culture-in-the-us-military/>, retrieved on 14.11.2013, emphasis in the original.

in the anti-Muslim/Islam trade with a brand of “Infidel” themed clothing wear and accessories.



Following are some examples:

USMC Marine with “Kafir”/Infidel Tattoo and Possible Navy SEAL(AOR pattern 1 camouflage– exclusive to Navy SEALs) with a menagerie of patches including “Infidel strong”, “Hadji Don’t Surf”



U.S. ARMY 10th Mountain Division soldier in Wardak Providence, Afghanistan, 2009. “Kafir” tattoo and

Unknown SPEC OPS soldiers (Crye Precision Multicam uniform, OPS-CORE “FAST” ballistic helmet; both products designated to SPEC OPS community) conducting training in northern California with “Hadji Don’t Surf” patch.



German soldier, Afghanistan. Part of the NATO ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) forces. Note that the patch was in Arabic as well as English so that the meaning was not obscured.

The anti-Islam sub-culture that degraded and dehumanized the Muslim ‘other’ had given rise to

online e-stores that sought to fill the special niche of serving officers with the most dehumanizing representations of Muslims and Islam, as well as selling pro-Crusader images and insignia. Those involved were not only small online retailers, but such large and well know retailers as CryePercision (**manufactures all camouflage for US military**) and SEARS.

There were a number of internet businesses that propagated this culture. Two of the more well-known sites to purchase “infidel” clothing and accessories are <http://www.opsgear.com> and <http://www.milspecmonkey.com>. *Milspecmonkey.com* had been the manufacturer/e-retailer of the: “Infidel,” “Infidel Strong,” “Pork Eating Crusader,” and “Hadji Don’t Surf” patches shown in the body of this report. *Opsgear.com* especially had been catering to military, law enforcement, and aficionados with their infidel t-shirt line:

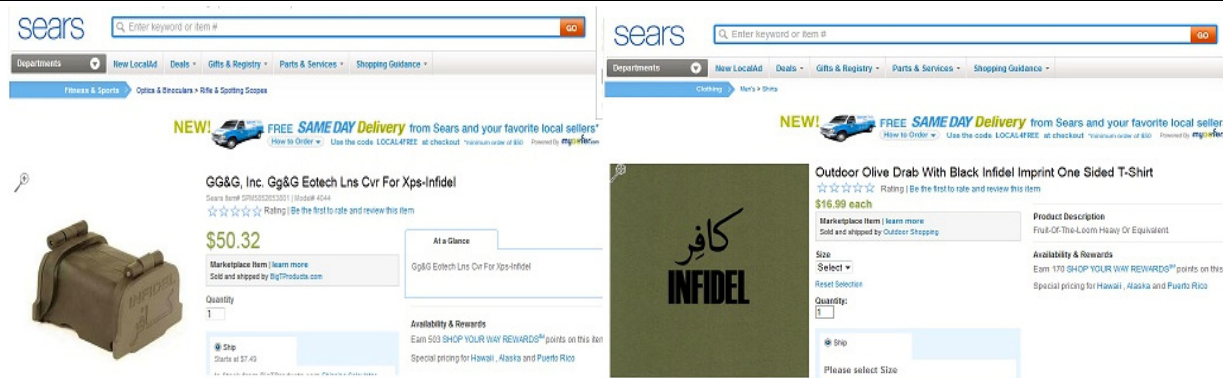


“Infidel” t-shirt and cap and “American Infidel”-Arabic & English

Crye’s side project apart from the Department of Defense contracts was a line of product called the “Major League Infidel” line. The most alarming part of this was that Crye manufactures camouflage and uniforms for the US Military and manufactures this brand of infidel products (which were also aimed towards service personnel). Here are some examples of what one can find at <http://cryeprecision.com> :



One of the most alarming aspects of this cottage industry may be that the “infidel” label was creeping into the mainstream. The author of the article came across Kafir/Infidel items for sale at a major retailer, SEARS. From rifle scope covers to t-shirts and more, SEARS was selling all the aforementioned on their website:



Sold at SEARS: Eotec rifle scope case with Kafir/Infidel embedded in it & Sold at SEARS: Kafir/Infidel t-shirt

“Alarming” may be an understatement: American military personnel were purchasing these goods and were displaying them in theater. One wonders what the indigenous Afghani and Iraqi citizens, police, contractors, and military personnel feel/felt when they see/saw US soldiers wearing these items?

Finally, on the issue related to **New York Police Department (NYPD) monitoring of Muslims**, the Observatory came across two conflicting federal pronouncements.

The first one against it was made by a federal judge on 02 October 2013¹⁰, who revisited a decades-old court settlement restricting how the NYPD conducted surveillance after civil rights lawyers accused the department of breaking those rules by monitoring Muslims. The dispute centered on the restrictions set by the Handschu decree, which was put in place in response to surveillance used against war protesters in the 1960s and ‘70s. The decree was relaxed following the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks to allow police to more freely monitor political activity in public places. In February 2013, civil rights lawyers filed papers seeking a court order barring further surveillance of Muslims without evidence of crimes and a court-appointed auditor to oversee police activities that were “flagrant and persistent”, after it was discovered that NYPD was monitoring places where Muslims ate, studied and worshiped as part of its counterterrorism efforts. Plaintiff attorney Paul Chevigny said: “The police measures directed at Muslims violated the Handschu decree “because they’re not rooted in the fact that there’s a criminal predicate...They’re rooted in the fact that the

¹⁰ See: *Chron*’s entry “NY judge asked to bar NYPD monitoring of Muslims”, in: <http://www.chron.com/news/crime/article/NY-judge-asked-to-bar-NYPD-monitoring-of-Muslims-4859980.php>, retrieved on 03.10.2013

subjects are Muslims.” The city had countered by claiming that it closely observed the Handschu guidelines when making decisions about how to fight terror.

However, on 20 February 2014¹¹, in a written decision filed in federal court in Newark, U.S. District Judge William Martini dismissed a civil rights lawsuit brought in 2012 by eight Muslims who alleged the NYPD’s surveillance programs were unconstitutional because they focused on religion, national origin and race. The suit had accused the department of spying on ordinary people at several mosques, restaurants and grade schools in New Jersey since 2002. The judge added: “The police could not have monitored New Jersey for Muslim terrorist activities without monitoring the Muslim community itself. ... The motive for the program was not solely to discriminate against Muslims, but to find Muslim terrorists hiding among the ordinary law-abiding Muslims.”

Reacting to Judge Martini’s statement, the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York and the California-based civil rights organization Muslim Advocates, which represented the plaintiffs, called the decision troubling. CCR Legal Director BaherAzmy said: “In addition to willfully ignoring the harm that our innocent clients suffered from the NYPD’s illegal spying program, by upholding the NYPD’s blunderbuss Muslim surveillance practices, the court’s decision gives legal sanction to the targeted discrimination of Muslims anywhere and everywhere in this country, without limitation, for no other reason than their religion.”

Basically, the Observatory’s concerns on how the American law enforcement institutions, including the army, FBI, and the police, dealt with Muslim-related issues remain high. The aforementioned examples and facts should urge the concerned American authorities to revise their standards while dealing with Muslim-related issues so as to creating an environment conducive for Muslim Americans to build trust with law enforcement agencies. On the contrary, Muslims living in the United States will always be suspicious of the police, FBI, etc, and will always feel persecuted, spied on and sensing that their basic rights, in terms of security and free movement, are being curtailed.

¹¹ See: *Star Tribune*’s entry “NJ judge throws out lawsuit challenging NYPD surveillance of Muslims”, in: <http://www.startribune.com/lifestyle/246405501.html>, retrieved on 21.02.2014

It may be mentioned here that the Observatory noted, with satisfaction, that the New York Police Department had disbanded¹² the aforementioned secret programme designed to eavesdrop on Muslims to identify potential terrorism threats.

b) Anti-Sharia Laws

On this subject, the blog *Islamophobia Today* mentioned¹³ that

The 2014 legislative year has already seen legislation proposed that would ban the application of Sharia law in state courts. By the time of this news, there were nine states that had introduced some variation of a bill aiming to block Islamic law. Most of the bills had carried over from 2013 with the exception of Vermont, which had introduced its first bill of this stature. The bills were intended to combat the perceived threat that Muslims were undermining the United States Constitution and imposing Sharia law. Although almost none of the bills mentioned Sharia or other religious law specifically, instead opting for more neutral language, such as “foreign” and “international” law, their intent to vilify Muslims remained very much the same.

The bills were modeled after legislation entitled American Laws for American Courts (ALAC), which was authored by anti-Muslim lawyer and activist David Yerushalmi. The decision to explicitly leave out words like Sharia and Islam reflected a recent court case in Oklahoma where a federal judge ruled that legislation directly targeting Sharia law was in violation of Muslims’ Constitutional rights. However, the bill was amended and secured Oklahoma as the sixth state to enact such a law

Listed below are all of the [proposed 2014 anti-Sharia bills](#):

- i. Florida has introduced [Senate Bill 386](#). The bill’s sponsor is Sen. Alan Hays (R), who last year [proposed SB 58](#), which died on the Senate floor. Hays has [previously compared](#) Sharia law to a “dreadful disease,” and its only vaccination is anti-Sharia legislation.
- ii. Georgia has introduced [HB 895](#) and [SR 808](#) prohibiting courts from recognizing foreign and international law.
- iii. Iowa’s [House Bill 76](#) was carried over from 2013 and has been referred to a Judiciary House Committee.

¹² See BBC’s entry “New York police disband Muslim ‘eavesdropping’ unit”, in: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-27043912>, retrieved on 17.04.2014

¹³ See: *Islamophobia Today Blog*’s entry “New Anti-Sharia Legislation Introduced in Several States”, in: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2014/03/01/new-anti-sharia-legislation-introduced-in-several-states/>, retrieved on 02.03.2014

- iv. Kentucky has introduced [HB 43](#), which has been referred to a House Judiciary Committee.
- v. Missouri has re-introduced [SB 619](#). The bill's sponsor is Republican State Senator Brian Knieves, an anti-immigrant legislator and member of the [State Legislators for Legal Immigration](#). SB 619 was [vetoed](#) last summer by Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon.
- vi. South Carolina has introduced three bills: [HB 4494](#), which specifically bans Sharia, and [SB 60](#) and [81](#), both of which were carried over from 2013. Sen. Bright is responsible for SB 81.
- vii. Mississippi has introduced [HB 44](#), which has been referred to a House Judiciary Committee.
- viii. Vermont has introduced [SB 265](#) and is the state's first anti-Sharia bill.
- ix. West Virginia has introduced [SB 2116](#), which is currently in a Judiciary House Committee.
- x. Washington has introduced [SB 6118](#) and [HB 1392](#), which carried over from 2013.

For a broader understanding on how these bills threaten religious freedom of Muslim in the US, it is important to read the article "The Dangers of Anti-Sharia Laws"¹⁴ by Joe Carter, the editor for *The Gospel Coalition*. He quoted the Catholic legal scholar Robert K. Vischer's explanation:

Though popular with secularists and religious conservatives, anti-Sharia legislation does not defend against theocracy but calls into question our society's fundamental commitments to meaningful religious liberty and meaningful access to the courts. These commitments have been relied on by generations of Protestants, Catholics, Mormons, and Jews, and to try to remove them for Muslims both is unjust to Muslims and sets a dangerous precedent for other religious groups.

[. . .]

Before Christian and Jewish believers support such measures, they should consider the way these laws not only misunderstand the faith of their Muslim fellow citizens but threaten their own religious liberty. Muslim Americans who seek to use Sharia are not asking the American legal system to adopt Islamic rules of conduct, penal or otherwise. Muslims have introduced Sharia in court not in an attempt to establish a freestanding source of law binding on litigants but rather in recognition of the norms to which the litigants have already agreed to be bound.

American courts do this every day—it's called contract law. Even the literature being pumped out by anti-Sharia organizations shows that their target is not the threat posed

¹⁴ Available here: <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/tgc/2013/08/19/the-dangers-of-anti-sharia-laws/>, viewed on 11.04.2014

by the imposition of Sharia on American society but rather the threat posed by the introduction of Sharia according to the same criteria of admissibility applied by courts to other religious codes.

Vischer gives an example of a Baptist church, whose rules may state that a pastor can be removed only by a vote of the entire membership. If the court determines that a small group of members ousted the pastor without the required vote, the court will uphold the pastor's challenge despite the fact that the rules are based on a religious commitment (i.e., the Baptist commitment to the priesthood of all believers).

Another example is when courts enforce arbitration agreements based on biblical principles pursuant to widely invoked rules of "Christian conciliation." To exclude similar agreements between Muslims that are based on Islamic principles would be to violate their freedom of religion -- and set a precedent that could jeopardize the religious liberty of Christians.

As Vischer adds, "the presumption that the deepest core values and convictions of religious Americans threaten the legal order by virtue of their source, without reference to their substance." If we don't want biblical principles to be terms excluded from American court system, then we can't let Sharia be excluded either.

In this regard, the Observatory shares the conclusion found in *Islamophobia Today's* coverage of anti-Sharia laws, as "legislation outlawing Sharia law in state courts remained unnecessary and a distraction from more pressing matters. The background of the laws and its fringe sponsors showed their true intent and had no place in [the American] legislative process."¹⁵

c) Quebec's "Charter of Values"

The entry on *Wikipedia* regarding this subject states¹⁶, in part:

The Quebec Charter of Values (or in French: *Charte de la laïcité* or *Charte des valeurs québécoises*) is a proposed bill in the Canadian province of Quebec, introduced by the governing Parti Québécois in 2013, trying to address the Quebec controversy on reasonable accommodation. The PQ cabinet member responsible for the bill is Bernard

¹⁵ See *Islamophobia Today Blog's* entry "New Anti-Sharia Legislation Introduced in Several States", *op. cit.*

¹⁶ See *Wikipedia's* entry "Quebec Charter of Values", in: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quebec_Charter_of_Values, viewed on 11.04.2014

Drainville, Minister responsible for Democratic Institutions and Active Citizenship. There has been much controversy in Quebec and elsewhere about the charter, especially concerning its prohibition of public sector employees from wearing or displaying “conspicuous” religious symbols.

The proposal would include the following provisions:

- Amend the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms.
- Establish a duty of neutrality and reserve for all state personnel (including state-funded education and health care workers).
- Limit the wearing of “conspicuous” religious symbols for said personnel.
- Make it mandatory to have one’s face uncovered when providing or receiving a state service.
- Establish an implementation policy for state organizations.

The bill had not passed as of the 2014 election, which was won by the Quebec Liberal Party. The Liberals were opposed to the legislation, although Couillard pledged during the campaign to put forward a different set of measures on the reasonable accommodation issue.

Although the bill was rejected through the victory of liberals, there were news items¹⁷ that Canadian women’s groups were reporting a spike in verbal and physical assaults against veiled Muslim women in Quebec since the introduction of the discussion on province’s Charter of Values, evidence that the Parti Québécois’s bid to curb religious symbols in some workplaces was inflaming social tensions. The *Regroupement des centres de femmes du Québec*, an umbrella group of 17 women’s centres across the province said members were voicing worries and appealing for calm after witnessing disturbing acts of anti-Muslim intolerance, from spitting to racist insults. The debate had also led to isolated reports of hostility against Muslims, including a prolonged shouting match on a Montreal bus, captured on video, showing a man yelling at a veiled woman: “We should have never opened the door to you!”

¹⁷ See *The Globe and Mail*’s entry “Quebec Muslims facing more abuse since charter proposal, women’s groups say”, in: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/quebec-muslims-facing-more-abuse-since-charter-proposal-womens-groups-say/article14672348/>, retrieved on 05.10.2013

With the growing support in many Quebecois quarters, including the famous singer, Céline Dion¹⁸, who had said that “foreigners” (all Muslims are by default “foreigners”) needed to adapt to Canada that had been so “hospitable” to them, implying, perhaps, that if you were a Muslim born in Canada you still were not Canadian, it was not surprising to see Islamophobia to rise in incidents.

In fact, a survey¹⁹ showed that Islamophobic abuse had soared. On 05 November 2013, The *Collectif Québécois contre l'islamophobie*, a local anti-Islamophobia group, said that 117 complaints of verbal or physical abuse against Muslims were made between 15 September and 15 October 2013. This could be compared to a total of 25 complaints made in the first seven months of 2013 or 3.5 complaints per month on average. The group's spokesman, Adil Charkaoui, said Muslim women were overrepresented in the study as they accounted for 114 of the 117 complaints. According to Salam Elmenyawy, president of the Muslim Council of Montreal, the spike in attacks was a consequence of the debate over the Parti Québécois government's proposed Charter of Values. The Quebec Human Rights Commission had censured the planned charter, saying the ruling party's proposal was a clear violation of personal freedoms guaranteed under the province's own charter of rights, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, as well as the international law.

However, the debate on the “Charter” may have been a backlash to the proponents of the same, as they lost elections and allowed other religious groups to sympathize with Muslims and their ordeal. On 09 March 2014²⁰, an important rally was held at the synagogue in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce with a crowd of nearly 500 people. Catholic Bishop Thomas Dowd said that the rally was “a chance to show to the world that religion did not need to be seen as a source of division,” but can also be a source of unity. Organized by Norman Simon, a retired teacher who founded a Facebook group called “Canadians for Coexistence”, the event also included members of the Sikh, Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist communities. Liberal MNAs Lawrence Bergman and

¹⁸ See *Islamophobia Today Blog's* entry “Céline Dion, Not Only Can't She Sing but She Also Is a Bigot In: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2013/11/04/celine-dion-not-only-cant-she-sing-but-she-also-is-a-bigot/>, retrieved on 06.11.2013

¹⁹ See *Press TV's* entry “Survey Shows Islamophobia on the rise in Quebec”, in: <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2013/11/06/333330/islamophobia-on-the-rise-in-quebec/>, retrieved on 07.11.2013

²⁰ See *Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry “Montreal rally unites faiths against ‘secularism’ charter”, in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/montreal-rally-unites-faiths-against-secularism-charter/#more-29702>, retrieved on 11.03.2014

Kathleen Weil, N.D.G. Mayor Russell Copeman and Pierrefonds–Roxboro Mayor Jim Beis attended, along with representatives of the English Montreal School Board.

2.2. Islamophobia in Europe

In many European countries surveys have shown that the anti-Muslim sentiments are not receding, rather they are on the increase. This, of course, is not conducive for Europeans involving the issue that is shaping all kinds of debates in society: what to do with the growing movements and far-right political parties whose agenda is to fight the Muslim presence.

The debates are influencing voters and ordinary European public opinion. For instance, after numerous heated debates over whether Muslims were imposing their culture upon **Denmark**, a poll showed²¹ most thought too many concessions were made for the minority. According to a recent survey by market researcher TNS Gallup, carried out for *Berlingske* newspaper, every third non-Muslim Dane was under the impression that Denmark was too tolerant of its Muslim minority population. Jens Peter Frølund Thomsen, a political science professor at Aarhus University, said that the most surprising thing about the survey was how little the Danish mentality had shifted, even though the Muslim immigrants arrived years ago, adding: “The demands of assimilation weigh heavily on the Danish public...We have a very ethnocentric culture and when people speak of integration in Denmark, they’re really talking about assimilation.” A report based on the examinations of Nils Muiznieks, commissioner for human rights of the CoE, during his visit to Denmark in November 2013, and released²² on 24 March 2014 by the Council of Europe (CoE) stated that there was an increase in incidents of Islamophobia and hate speech against Muslims living in that country. Muiznieks concluded that the high prevalence of racist and stigmatizing

In recent years, far-right politics in Europe have mainly focused on attacks against Muslims living in European countries. These attacks, in the name of an anti-Islam, have reached the dimensions of what can be

²¹See: *Copenhagen Post*’s entry “Danes say ‘We are too tolerant of Muslims’”, in: <http://www.cphpost.dk/immigration-amp-denmark/danes-we-are-too-tolerant-muslims>, retrieved on 16.10.2013

²² See *Today Zaman*’s entry “CoE report confirms concerns about Islamophobia”, in: <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-344428-coe-report-confirms-concerns-about-islamophobia-in-denmark.html>, retrieved on 13.04.2014

speech being used against Muslims in political life and in the media was a very problematic issue in Denmark. The Report stated: "The commissioner encourages the Danish authorities to step up their efforts to combat hate speech, and in particular Islamophobia, which continues to be widespread in public and political debate. He particularly urges the authorities to condemn firmly and unequivocally all instances of racist and xenophobic political discourse."

In the **United Kingdom**, local newspaper, *The Independent*, carried out a report²³ in December 2013 stating that hundreds of offences were perpetrated against the country's Muslim population in 2013, with the Metropolitan police alone – Britain's largest force – recording 500 Islamophobic crimes, compared with 336 incidents in 2012 and 318 in 2011. Tell Mama, a group monitoring anti-Muslim incidents, said it had dealt with some 840 cases since just April 2013 – with the number expected to rise to more than 1,000 by the end of March 2014. This compared with 582 anti-Islam cases it dealt with from March 2012 to March 2013. Fiyaz Mujhal, director of Faith Matters, running the Tell Mama project, said: "The far right groups, particularly the EDL (English Defence League) perniciously use the Internet and social media to promote vast amounts of online hate." Of those Muslims living in the UK that suffered Islamophobic attacks, women were the ones likely to suffer more compared to men. A report²⁴ on the impact of Islamophobic attacks titled *Maybe We Are Hated*, written by Dr Chris Allen, a social policy lecturer at the University of Birmingham, launched in the House of Commons on 20 November 2013, found that Muslim women were more likely to be subjected to Islamophobic attacks than men, especially if they are wearing the niqab or other clothing associated with their religion. The Study was intended to look beyond the statistics and, for the first time, give a voice to the female victims of Islamophobia.

²³ See: *The Independent's* entry "UK Islamophobia: Surge revealed in anti-Muslim hate crimes", in: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/islamophobia-surge-revealed-in-antimuslim-hate-crimes-9026873.html>, retrieved on 28.12.2013

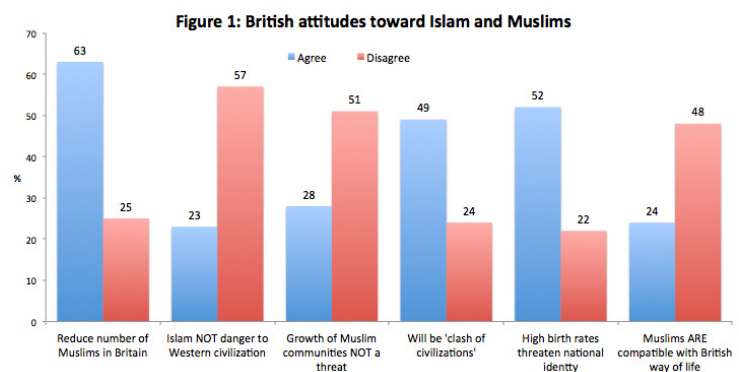
²⁴ See: *The Guardian's* Entry "Muslim Women more likely to suffer Islamophobic attacks than men – study", in: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/20/muslim-women-islamaphonic-attacks>, retrieved on 21.11.2013

On the other hand, according²⁵ to the British government-funded monitoring group, Tell Mama, the police were failing to investigate hundreds of cases of anti-Muslim hate messages on the internet. The group, which recorded anti-Muslim attacks, said it recorded 1,432 cases of abuse in the last 22 months (as of November 2013). But Tell Mama had told the *BBC* it had only had a response from the police regarding 70 cases. The Association of Chief Police Officers said it was working to address the concerns expressed by Tell Mama.

Obviously, these alarming figures on incidents against Muslims just confirm the Islamophobic attitude some quarters of the British society have toward Muslims, as shown on the table on the right²⁶.

Meanwhile, research by *The Independent*²⁷ showed Islamophobic attacks spreading across Britain, with mosques being set alight and Muslims targeted at home in January 2014. Despite the warning signs, a senior Government adviser told *The Independent* that there remained a “lack of political will” to take on the rise of Islamophobic attacks in Britain. The adviser, who did not want to be named, said that attempts to “tackle this issue – even before Woolwich – struggled to attract buy-in,” with the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Eric Pickles, identified as the primary source of frustration.

It is also relevant to note that in the UK there was an increase of Islamophobic incidents and statements during the campaign for European elections, expected to be held in May 2014. For instance, the British



²⁵ See: *Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry “Police ‘failing to investigate anti-Muslim abuse’”, in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/police-failing-to-investigate-anti-muslim-abuse/#more-26176>, retrieved on 25.11.2013

²⁶ Cf. Mathew Goodwin, “Britain, Islam and the Generational Struggle”, in: http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/matthew-goodwin/islam-britain-generational-struggle_b_2848943.html, viewed on 12.04.2014

²⁷ See: *Daily News's* entry “Half of Britain’s mosques have been attacked since 9/11”, in: <http://www.dailynews.lk/features/half-britain-s-mosques-have-been-attacked-9-11>, retrieved on 22.02.2014

National Party (BNP) released²⁸ an election broadcast featuring vile anti-Muslim animation. At the United Kingdom Independent Party (UKIP), some of its candidates made islamophobic related campaigns, including Magnus Nielsen, who wrote²⁹ on Facebook that most mosques in the UK had been “taken over” by “fundamentalists” and that “Islam is organised crime under religious camouflage. Any Muslim who is not involved in organised crime is not a ‘true believer’, practising Islam as Mohammed commanded”; William Henwood tweeted³⁰: “Islam reminds me of the 3rd Reich Strength through violence against the citizens.” Finally, Liberty GB candidate Paul Weston was arrested on suspicion of “religious or racial harassment” in a Hampshire city for reading a Winston Churchill quote describing Islam as “militant” and “retrograde” through a megaphone outside Winchester’s Guildhall on the afternoon of 26 April 2014.

In France, anti-Muslim assaults were said³¹ to be on the rise as 226 attacks on Muslims were reported in 2013, including women wearing headscarves, meaning an increase by 11.3 percent in 2013, compared to the previous year, according to the National Observatory of Islamophobia. Local communities believed that such hike on anti-Muslim incidents were consequence of Islamophobic laws, which were giving a back to Islamophobes to act with no serious consequences against them. In this regard, on 15 March 2014, a protest³² was organized by the Campaign of Elimination of Islamophobic Laws aimed at overturning Islamophobic status in France by highlighting Muslim rights to freedom of expression and religious practices. Citing

²⁸ See: *Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry “BNP’s proposed election broadcast features vile anti-Muslim animation”, In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/bnps-proposed-election-broadcast-features-vile-anti-muslim-animation/#more-30768>, retrieved on 27.04.2014

²⁹ See: *Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry “EDL-supporting UKIP candidate claims ‘Islam is organised crime under religious camouflage’”, In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/edl-supporting-ukip-candidate-claims-islam-is-organised-crime-under-religious-camouflage/#more-30804>, retrieved on 28.04.2014

³⁰ See: *Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry “UKIP candidate compares Islam to Nazism”, in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/ukip-candidate-compares-islam-to-nazism/#more-30803>, retrieved on 28.04.2014

³¹ See: *World Bulletin's* entry “France sees rise in Islamophobia”, In: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/muslim-world/127890/france-sees-rise-in-islamophobia>, retrieved on 30.01.2014

³² See: *Islamic Invitation Turkey Blog's* entry “French Muslims Protest Islamophobic Laws”, in: <http://www.islamicinvitationturkey.com/2014/03/17/french-muslims-protest-islamophobic-laws/>, retrieved on 19.03.2014. Pictures found here: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/lyon-demonstration-against-islamophobia/#more-29895>

anti-Islam campaigns led by difference factions of French politicians, Muslim activists expressed concerns that with a broad political backing of anti-Islam laws, it was not easy to counter what they dubbed as 'discriminatory laws'.



With the rise of Front National in the local elections of 30 March 2014, political figures connected to Marine Le Pen's Front National were fast in setting the Islamophobic agenda of their mandates.

Backed by the conservative National Front Party, the newly-elected mayor of Beziers, Robert Menard, announced³³ municipal cafeterias or canteens will not serve halal meals. Menard's comments followed National Front leader Marine Le Pen who recently said towns that elected National Front candidates should stop serving non-pork substitute meals in school canteens. Another politician, a right-wing mayor, Claude Goasguen, said³⁴ that it was impossible "to teach the Holocaust in secondary schools as we are afraid of the reactions of those drug-addicted Muslims in mosques."

EmreDemir's article in *Today's Zaman* sums up³⁵, in the concluding part, the real issue in France, as "Many French people are afraid of Muslims because they simply do not know them. And many French politicians like Marine Le Pen shamefully choose to feed this fear because they simply have nothing else to offer. But it firstly belongs to French Muslims to build bridges in order to transform conflict into healthy diversity and to invest in education by developing a more pro-active and constructive discourse for this long fight."

³³See *Aljazeera's* entry "French mayor calls for halal ban in town canteens", in: <http://stream.aljazeera.com/story/201404080050-0023628>, retrieved on 12.04.2014

³⁴EmreDemir, "How to fight Islamophobia in France?", *Today's Zaman*, 21.02.2014, available at: http://www.todayszaman.com/blog/emre-demir_340110_how-to-fight-islamophobia-in-france.html

³⁵EmreDemir, *Today's Zaman*, op. cit.

In **Germany**, *Der Spiegel*, a prominent weekly German news magazine has covered³⁶ the boom in Islamophobia in Germany:

The article written by Hubert Gude, Maximillian Popp, Jörg Schindler and Fidelus Schmid noted jarring trends in German society and the extent of Islamophobia's reach in the political, cultural and social sphere.

The article highlighted the success of the Islamophobic German website, "Politically Incorrect," which by the time of the article was getting up to 120,000 visitors daily, the foundation of another anti-Muslim political party, Pro-Deutschland (Pro-Germany), a study by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation showing that, *"56 percent of Germans consider Islam to be an "archaic religion, incapable of fitting into modern life" and many believe religious freedom for Muslims should be "substantially restricted."* The article also pointed out particular anecdotes involving attacks on mosques which had increased in the past several years and the increase in neo-nazis stirring up hatred of Muslims and Islam.

(...)

the rise in Islamophobia has to do with propaganda and far-right movements fearing the "new visibility" of Muslim institutions and symbols in society.

Meanwhile, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* reported³⁷ on how two far-right political parties,



Die Freiheit (Freedom) and Bürgerinitiative Ausländerstopp (Citizens' Initiative to Stop Immigrants – BIA), led respectively by Michael Stürzenberger (who is seen in the picture addressing an anti-mosque rally) and Karl Richter, were competing for the anti-Muslim vote in the local elections in Munich of early March 2014. While both parties incited hatred of Muslims, the BIA

was a more traditionally fascist organisation, being an offshoot of the neo-Nazi NPD, of which Richter had been vice-chairman, and as its name indicates it promoted a hardline anti-immigration line. Die Freiheit represented the newer manifestation of the far right, concentrating on denouncing Muslims specifically rather than migrants

³⁶ See: *Loonwatch's* entry "Der Spiegel Covers Germany's "Islamophobia Boom"", in: <http://www.loonwatch.com/2014/03/der-spiegel-covers-germanys-islamophobia-boom/>, retrieved on 07.03.2014

³⁷ See: *Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "Far-right Islamophobes compete for votes in Munich", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/far-right-islamophobes-compete-for-votes-in-munich/>, retrieved on 12.03.2014

generally, while also adopting a pro-Israel stance that was rejected by neo-Nazis. Stürzenberger had been a regular contributor to the “counterjihadist” website *Politically Incorrect*. He had come to prominence through waging a fierce campaign against plans to build an Islamic centre in Munich. Likely, when the results announced, Die Freiheit failed to gain any representation on Munich city council, though the BIA won a seat.

In the **Netherlands**, according to a report by SPIOR (platform for Islamic Organisations in the Rotterdam-Rijnmond)³⁸, Islam and the presence of this religion and Muslims constitute the major item in the Dutch political arena, in the media and in the public debate. In fact,

This mostly negative debate fuels polarization of ideas and people in society. Many think of Islam and Muslims as alien and a threat to Dutch society and culture. In this situation, an increasing number of Muslim citizens feel uncomfortable, discriminated or violated against in the public sphere. Incidental reports by anti-discrimination organizations or police data show a substantial number of hate crimes against citizens (perceived to be) of a Muslim background. Because Islamophobic incidents are not recorded as such separately, but are mostly recorded as 'discrimination on grounds of religion or ethnicity', these specific data are difficult to track down. Furthermore, it is known that many victims do not report incident, which frustrates the actual overview of incidents and limits the possibilities for structural action. At the same time, structural reports on opinions of the Dutch population show an increasing perceived social distance between Dutch Muslims and other citizens. Disagreement and confusion on facts and figures and misleading statements on existing opinions are giving room for manipulation of the public opinion, increasing feelings of discomfort and prejudice.

The Observatory sees Geert Wilders as the main drive behind Islamophobia in the Netherlands. His euro-skeptic, anti-Islam Freedom Party continue to grow and in municipal elections on 19 March 2014, it made huge gains “...and polls suggest it will become the largest Dutch party in the Brussels assembly in European elections in May [2014]”³⁹. Geert Wilders led supporters in chants against Moroccans at an election

³⁸SPIOR, *Islamophobia: Monitoring Islamophobia in the Netherlands*, 12 March 2014, p.32, available online in: http://www.spor.nl/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/MonitoronIslamophobia_finalversionmaart2014.pdf

³⁹ See *Reuters'* entry “Calls for prosecution of Dutch right-winger after anti-Moroccan chant, in: <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/03/20/uk-netherlands-wilders-morocco-idUKBREA2JOK920140320>, viewed on 21.03.2014

victory party in the night of Election Day, which prompted calls for prosecution for discrimination. This anti-Islam Dutch politician, being famous, his acts are widely registered in the media, but other Islamophobic incidents take place in the Netherlands without registration, which may lead to the belief that anti-Muslim discrimination is low. In fact, "...although Islamophobic incidents are not registered separately, reports from human rights organizations, research institutes, anti-discrimination bureaus and government bodies like the police and the public prosecution clearly indicate that Islamophobia is present in Dutch society in discourse (e.g. in politics and public debate), sometimes even in policies and in discrimination towards Muslims. The data that are available would suggest that Islamophobia is a growing problem. A point of attention to this is that several studies also show that many incidents are not reported, so the real number in all likelihood is larger."⁴⁰

Other important islamophobic manifestations in Europe, as noted by the Observatory, **are related to halal food**. Some European countries have banned halal slaughter, including Denmark and Poland⁴¹. In fact, "the halal discussion exploded into public consciousness after Denmark announced a ban on non-stun slaughter in February 2014, with the Scandinavian country's ministry of agriculture declaring that "animal welfare takes precedence over religion""⁴².

In the period under review, the following incidents took place:

I. Poland: Arson attack on Gdansk Mosque follows halal slaughter Row

A Polish imam had claimed an alleged arson attack on a mosque was "revenge" for the Chief Mufti of Poland's pledge to continue the banned practice of halal slaughter. A fire began at the mosque in Gdansk, northern Poland, at about 4.40 am local time on 16 October 2013, damaging doors and parts of the elevation. The incident coincided with the holiday of Eid-al-Adha. The fire followed angry exchanges between Polish Tatars and animal



⁴⁰SPIOR, *op. cit.* p.22

⁴¹ For a comprehensive review on Legal aspects of ritual slaughter, visit *Wikipedia* entry under the same subject in: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legal_aspects_of_ritual_slaughter

⁴² See: *Meatinfo's* entry "Halal safe with me, says PM", In: http://www.meatinfo.co.uk/news/fullstory.php/aid/16816/Halal_safe_with_me_says_PM.html, retrieved on 04.04.2014

rights activists one day earlier in the village of Bohoniki in the Podlasie region of north eastern Poland. Chief Mufti of Poland Tomasz Miskiewicz had pledged that ritual slaughter would continue there that year, in spite of a state-imposed ban. Meanwhile, the *AFP* reported that Grazyna Wawryniuk, spokeswoman for the regional prosecutor in Gdansk, had confirmed: "It was definitely arson."⁴³

II. Denmark: Muslims and Jews slam halal slaughter ban – Denmark passed a new law forbidding animal slaughter of live or non-anesthetized animals, frustrating Muslims and Jews in Denmark because of their contrary religious practices. Muslims and Jews saw the new law as into the freedom of religion. 'Danish Halal', a body representing 53 Muslim organizations including the Islamic Community in Denmark, started a petition against the law, and expected to garner some 20,000 signatures against the introduction of the law. The Jewish Society in Denmark also reacted to the new regulation, which they said was politically motivated and a decision based on anti-minority sentiments.⁴⁴

III. France: Front National bans halal school meals – Far-right National Front leader Marine Le Pen said on 04 April 2014 it would prevent schools from offering special lunches to Muslim pupils in the 11 towns it won in local elections, saying such arrangements were contrary to France's secular values. Le Pen told *RTL radio*: "We will not accept any religious demands in school menus...There is no reason for religion to enter the public sphere, that's the law." The party won control of 11 town halls and a large district in the port city of Marseille in municipal elections on 30 March 2014, more than double its record from the 1990s.⁴⁵

2.3. Islamophobia in the Rest of the World

⁴³See *Islamophobia Today blog's* entry "Arson attack on Gdansk Mosque follows halal slaughter Row", in: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2013/10/16/arson-attack-on-gdansk-mosque-follows-halal-slaughter-row/>, retrieved on 23.10.2013

⁴⁴ See: *World Bulletin's* entry "Denmark: Muslims and Jews slam halal slaughter ban", in: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/muslim-world/129090/the-muslims-who-fought-and-died-for-america>, retrieved on 18.02.2014

⁴⁵ See: *Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "Front National bans halal school meals", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/front-national-bans-halal-school-meals/>, retrieved on 06.04.2014

For this year's Annual Report on Islamophobia, the Observatory decided to expand its scope of analysis and coverage taking into account the alarming incidents of manifestations of Islamophobia in many parts of the world, including the Rohingya issue, the situation of Muslims in Sri Lanka, the alleged ban of Islam in Angola, the fears of Tatar Muslims in Crimea, and the persecution of Muslims in the ongoing war in the Central African Republic.

a) Rohingya Issue

The *Wikipedia* article on the subject⁴⁶ describes the Rohingya people as an ethnic group who practice Islam and speak Rohingya, an Indo-European language of the Eastern Indic branch, closely related to Chittagonian and more distantly to Bengali. The origin of this group of people is disputed with some saying they are indigenous to the state of Rakhine (also known as Arakan, or *Rohang* in the Rohingya language) in Burma and others contending that they are Muslim migrants who originated in Bengal, latterly Bangladesh, and migrated to Burma during the period of British rule.

According to same *Wikipedia* article, citing several other sources, the Rohingya people have been described as "among the world's least wanted". They have been denied Burmese citizenship since a 1982 citizenship law was enacted. They are not allowed to travel without official permission, are banned from owning land and are required to sign a commitment not to have more than two children. According to Amnesty International, the Muslim Rohingya people have continued to suffer from human rights violations under the Burmese junta since 1978:

The Rohingyas' freedom of movement is severely restricted and the vast majority of them have effectively been denied Burmese citizenship. They are also subjected to various forms of extortion and arbitrary taxation; land confiscation; forced eviction and house destruction; and financial restrictions on marriage. Rohingyas continue to be used as forced labourers on roads and at military camps, although the amount of forced labour in northern Rakhine State has decreased over the last decade. [...]

⁴⁶ Found here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rohingya_people, viewed on 13.04.2014

Additionally, there have been reports citing discrimination policies against Rohingya people. For instance, a report titled “Policies of Persecution”⁴⁷ released on 25 February 2014 by Fortify Rights, a Southeast Asia-based human rights organization, which was based primarily on 12 leaked official documents and a review of public records alleged that the Myanmar government had in place official policies that denied Rohingya Muslims the same rights as others in the country, including population control measures and restrictions on their movements. The report also highlights other discriminatory policies applied to the Rohingya, including restrictions on marriage, childbirth and construction of places of worship.

On the other hand, Tomás Ojea Quintana, a UN human rights envoy, said⁴⁸ in April 2014 that severe shortages of food, water and medical care for Rohingya Muslims in western Myanmar were part of a long history of persecution against the religious minority that could amount to “crimes against humanity”.

This statement followed the evacuation of hundreds of international humanitarian workers from Rakhine state, home to almost all the country’s 1.3m Rohingya Muslims, tens of thousands of whom were living in crowded displacement camps.

In following up the issue of the Rohingya Muslims, an OIC fact-finding mission paid a visit to Myanmar in September 2012 and submitted its report to the 39th Council of Foreign Ministers, held in Djibouti in December 2013, whereby it confirmed that the conditions of Muslims there were getting worse day after day. Indeed the radical Buddhists have mobilized all their forces to root out the Rohingya Muslims from their homes and homeland, and were engaged in an ethnic cleansing process against them. With this persistent situation, in August 2012 an extraordinary meeting of the OIC Executive Committee was held in Jeddah, which adopted a number of measures and important recommendations which were submitted to the Fourth Extraordinary Islamic Summit, held in Makkah in August 2012, which came out with the decision to set up a ministerial level contact group on the Rohingya in Myanmar.

⁴⁷ See *Wall Street Journal*’s entry “Rohingya Discrimination Is Myanmar Policy, Report Says”, in: <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304610404579404092576360508>, retrieved on 25.02.2014

⁴⁸ See *Aljazeera*’s entry “UN raises alarm over Rohingya Muslim abuse”, in: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2014/04/un-raises-alarm-over-rohingya-muslim-abuse-20144863638917587.html>, retrieved on 10.04.2014

The OIC Contact Group entrusted to follow the situation of the Muslim Rohingya community in Myanmar, convened on 14 April 2013 at a ministerial level at the OIC headquarters to discuss the critical position endured by Muslims in Myanmar. It stressed the need to respect human rights and internationally acknowledged standards and condemned the spread of violence in these regions in Myanmar. It also condemned the continued disregard of international law, commended the Secretary General's efforts for the settlement of the issue and concluded its deliberations with recommendations on important issues including the need for the Myanmar Government to uphold its duty in protecting all the citizens, to assume its responsibility in this area, and to prosecute all those involved in acts of violence. It further underlined the need for continued dialogue with the Myanmar Government.

Under the patronage of the OIC Secretary General, the Arakan Rohingya Union (ARU) held a meeting at the OIC headquarters on 7–8 July 2013, at which the Union's Charter was adopted and a Director General, a Consultative Council and a regional 2-year Coordination Commission were elected.

b) The Situation of Muslims in Sri Lanka

The situation of Muslims in Sri Lanka⁴⁹ is of concern to the OIC, as the persecution and discrimination against Muslims became part of the local behavior. An article by Lewis Garland, a British freelance journalist and social justice activist, titled "The rise of red-robed Islamophobia in Sri Lanka"⁵⁰, sums-up the issue:

Anti-Muslim fervour is now rife among the majority Sinhalese population, stirred and fed by the firebrand propaganda of extremist Buddhist-Sinhalese nationalist groups such as the Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) – The Buddhist Strength Force.

(...)Sri Lanka's Muslim community have been subjected to repeated attacks, including rotten meat being thrown into mosques during prayers, mosques being tagged with obscene graffiti, death threats, arson and Muslim-owned businesses being vandalized by marauding mobs.

⁴⁹ For a comprehensive study on the Muslims in Sri Lanka, visit:

<http://www.missionislam.com/knowledge/srilanka.htm>

⁵⁰ Found here: <http://newint.org/blog/2013/04/15/islamaphobia-in-sri-lanka/>, viewed on 13.04.2014

These attacks have been driven by a series of high-profile hate campaigns targeting Sri Lanka's Muslim community and their practices. As Javid Yusef, founding Secretary General of the Peace Secretariat for Muslims in Sri Lanka explained to me, the BBS have manufactured 'distrust of the Muslims among Sinhala Buddhists by spreading untruths, half-truths and lies among the populace'. These have included advocating a ban on both Hijab and Halal meat certification and campaigns encouraging the Sinhalese community to boycott Muslim-owned shops and businesses (based on claims ranging from the false: that shop-owners have been concertededly converting their female Buddhist employees to Islam, to the nonsensical: that shop-owners were giving free miscarriage-inducing sweets to their Sinhalese customers).

The BBS has frequently advocated vigilantism and in one rally which boasted a crowd of over 10,000, the organization's secretary, Gnanasara Thero, called on followers to become 'an unofficial civilian police force against Muslim extremism'.

In the midst of this ever escalating Islamophobic sentiment, the Sri Lankan government, whilst not *officially* patronising the BBS and its associated Sinhala-Nationalist mobs, has shown few signs of disowning the group or taking any serious action against it. The police have been shown, time and time again, standing by as stone-throwing mobs attack Muslims and Muslim property. On the few occasions in which arrests have been publically called for, the accusations have been dropped prior to any arrests taking place. Moreover, the government has bowed to pressure over the Halal issue resulting in an effective ban on Halal certification.

In fact, in the period under review, there have been reports of several other incidents targeting Muslims⁵¹ as shown in the blog *Islamophobia Today*.

- I. **BBS – Back on the Road with Anti-Halal Campaign Again** – The BoduBalaSena was back on the road again pledging to recommence its anti-Halal agitation that resulted in widespread Islamophobia and violence against the Muslim minority community the first time it unfolded in January 2013.⁵²
- II. **Muslim women's attire under attack in Sri Lanka** – Hate groups in Sri Lanka have made the attire of Muslim women a key target in their onslaught against Muslims. They have used security and the need for uniformity as reasons to attack Muslim

⁵¹See also *Associated Press*' Report on "Hardline monks rally Sri Lanka as Buddhist front", available here: <http://apenews.com/hardline-monks-rally-sri-lanka-buddhist-front/>

⁵²<http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2013/10/22/bbs-back-on-the-road-with-anti-halal-campaign-again/>, retrieved on 24.10.2013

female attire such as the hijab, the punjabi attire and the niqab. Although the Ministry of Education by a directive issued in 1980 permitted Muslim girls to go to school attired in a punjabi attire, since 2009, school authorities have prohibited this in many schools in the country. Various excuses have been made out such as the need for uniformity or the simple and oft used one 'this is a Buddhist school/country'. On a separate incident, University of Moratuwa stopped three Muslim girls from attending the university because of the niqab. Two students filed cases in the Supreme Court in SC (FR) 424/2013 and SC (FR) 427/2013. Both these matters were fixed for support on 29 April 2014. One student made an application to the National Human Rights Commission, which took the matter for inquiry on 19 February 2014.⁵³

- III. **BBS to Rescue Anti-Muslim Unqualified Janadipathi Balika Vidyalaya Principal** – Bodu Bala Sena General Secretary GalagodaAtte Gnananasara on 18 March 2014 defended the actions of Nayana Thakshila Perera who earlier forced two Muslim students to remove their attire which was in accordance with Education Ministry Circulars and Supreme Court orders, and ordered them to worship her. The BBS secretary ignoring the fact that Perera had forced the students to worship her, and was also an unqualified politically appointed Principal, addressed a Press Conference on the same day and said the Muslim ministers were harassing the Principal.⁵⁴

c) The Alleged Ban of Islam in Angola

On 22 November 2013, the weekly Beninese newspaper *La Nouvelle Tribune* published an article quoting "several" Angolan officials, including Minister of Culture Rosa Cruz, who reportedly offered the following remarks, which were translated from French: "The process of legalization of Islam has not been approved by the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights. Their mosques would be closed until further notice." And the website *OnIslam.net* cited African news agency *Agence Ecofin* reporting: "According to several Angolan newspapers, Angola has become the first country in the world to

⁵³ See: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2014/02/21/muslim-womens-attire-under-attack-in-sri-lanka/>, retrieved on 22.02.2014

⁵⁴ See: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2014/03/19/bbs-to-rescue-anti-muslim-unqualified-janadipathi-balika-vidyalaya-principal/>, retrieved on 20.03.2014

ban Islam and Muslims, taking first measures by destroying mosques in the country.”⁵⁵

The reports raised concerns in the Muslim world, and the OIC, as its political voice, issued a statement⁵⁶ on 26 November 2013, expressing shock and dismay over the aforementioned media reports, and that the reported Angolan Government’s decision was outrageous and called for condemnation in the strongest terms. The OIC also called on the United Nations, the African Union, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), and on the international community to take a firm position against the reported decision of the Angolan Government which stood in blatant contravention of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms codified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

On 30 November 2013, the OIC Secretary General sent a letter to the Foreign Minister of Angola Mr. Georges Rebelo Chicoti, reiterating the OIC’s position and proposing to send a high-level delegation to his country to discuss ways of enhancing the relationship between Angola and Muslim countries. In response, the Foreign Minister categorically denied the reported ban on Islam, and calling media reports as “allegations”, asserting that this was the official Angolan Government’s position.

Furthermore, the 40th Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, held on 09–11 December 2013 in Conakry, Republic of Guinea, issued a statement⁵⁷ on the various media reports on the denial of the basic rights of Muslims in Angola. They took note of the aforementioned message conveyed by Secretary General to the Foreign Minister of Angola. While expressing their concern over these reports, which if true, would have unfavorable consequences on Angola’s relations with the Muslim world, the Ministers requested the Office of the Secretary General to further investigate the veracity of the information through direct consultation with the Government of Angola and representatives of Muslims in that country, including dispatching a high-level delegation for this purpose.

⁵⁵ See a detailed report by the *International Business Times* on this subject available here: <http://www.ibtimes.com/angolan-official-denies-islam-ban-muslims-say-mosque-closings-persist-1487416>

⁵⁶ Available here: http://www.oic-oci.org/oicv2/topic/?t_id=8669&ref=3486&lan=en&x_key=angola

⁵⁷ See: http://www.oic-oci.org/oicv2/topic/?t_id=8714&ref=3500&lan=en&x_key=angola

d) The Persecution of Muslims in the Central African Republic

The persecution of Muslims in the Central African Republic (CAR) has become one of the main concerns of the OIC because, as Reuters' journalist, Stephanie Nebehay, puts⁵⁸ it, "Violence between Christians and Muslims in Central African Republic has threatened to spiral into genocide."

The OIC Secretary General, Mr. Iyad Ameen Madani, has been vocal in strongly condemning the escalation of violence in CAR, and in expressing concerns on the resulting massive displacement of persons – internally and across borders, which has been deepening the already grave humanitarian crisis in the region. In one of his statements, "He urged all parties to the conflict to put an end to the violence, cooperate fully with the Head of the Transitional Government, facilitate delivery of humanitarian assistance, and live up to their African heritage and deep tradition of tolerance and to the true spirit of forgiveness in both Christianity and Islam."⁵⁹

Within this spirit, an Emergency Open-ended Meeting at Ministerial level of the Executive Committee on the situation in the CAR was convened on 20 February 2014 at the General Secretariat in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to discuss the continuing escalating violence, the ethnic cleansing of Muslims, the destruction of mosques and the mass exodus of Muslims out of the country, which is an Observer State in the OIC. The meeting recalled the OIC Charter and the Ten Year Program of Action relating to conflict resolution, peace and security, moderation and tolerance, human rights, the various statements of the Secretary General as well as relevant international instruments, and, inter alia, decided⁶⁰ to dispatch a high-level mission to Bangui, the CAR's capital. The mission was to be led by the Chair of the Council of Foreign Ministers, Lounceny Fall, also Guinea's foreign minister, to explore as well as express solidarity with the Muslims and communicate with the authorities to resolve the crisis.

⁵⁸ Stephanie Nebehay, "Militias in Central African Republic block Muslims exit to Cameroon: U.N.", *Reuters*, in: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/04/11/us-centralafrica-un-refugees-idUSBREA3A1EX20140411>, viewed on 13.04.2014

⁵⁹ Here: http://www.oic-oci.org/oicv2/topic/?t_id=8817&ref=3537&lan=en&x_key=Central%20African%20Republic

⁶⁰ Final Communiqué of the Meeting available here: http://www.oic-oci.org/oicv2/topic/?t_id=8877&ref=3562&lan=en&x_key=Central%20African%20Republic

The meeting also decided that a special representative would be appointed to lead the efforts towards resolving the crisis and building peace in the country, the statement said. In this context, the Secretary General appointed the former Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Senegal, Dr. Cheikh Tidiane Gadio, as Special Envoy for the CAR.

e) The Fear of Tatar Muslims in Crimea

The *Wikipedia* entry on “Crimean Tatars”⁶¹, defines them as a Turkic ethnic group, and formerly during the Crimean Khanate a Turko–Mongol ethnic group, native to the Crimea (a peninsula on the northern part of the Black Sea) in modern-day Ukraine. In the latest Ukrainian census (2001), 248,200 Ukrainian citizens identified themselves as Crimean Tatars with 98% (or about 243,400) of them living in Crimea. A second group composed of 1,800 citizens (or about 0.7% of those that identified themselves as Crimean Tatars) live in the city of Sevastopol next to Crimea’s border. The difference between these groups being that the city lies on the Crimean peninsula but is administratively separated from Crimea.

As of 2012, there were an estimated 500,000 Muslims in Ukraine and about 300,000 (or about 60%) of them identify themselves as Crimean Tatars. About 150,000 remain in exile in Central Asia, mainly in Uzbekistan. The official number of Crimean Tatars in Turkey is 150,000. In the Dobruja region straddling Romania and Bulgaria, there are more than 27,000 Crimean Tatars: 24,000 on the Romanian side, and 3,000 on the Bulgarian side. There are other communities in Russia, Western Europe, the Middle East and North America, as well as small communities in Finland, Lithuania, Russia, Belarus and Poland.

Within the context of the current crisis, there have been some incidents against Muslims or their properties or house of worship. Representatives of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatars and the Crimean Muftiate (the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of

⁶¹ Available here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crimean_Tatars

Crimea) were shocked⁶² by attacks on mosques in Crimea and were demanding that the law enforcement agencies take decisive measures to uncover these crimes. A fire broke out at a central mosque in the Crimean town of Saki on 13 October 2013. Crimean police were conducting an investigation into the incident, and criminal proceedings were launched under Part 2, Article 194 of the Criminal Code (intentional destruction or damage to property). Two days later, a fire broke out at another mosque in Crimea with no reaction from the authorities.

In fact, “The Tatars’ anxiety about Russia’s annexation of Crimea, which they consider their homeland, is warranted. The human rights organization the Council of Europe in a 2012 report outlined high levels of xenophobia and racism in Crimea. Racist intolerance toward Tatars, who account for 15 percent of Crimea’s population, is widespread. Their support for the Euromaidan and their boycott of the Crimean referendum has further alienated them from the Russian community. Their desire for autonomy, if not respected by the dominant Russian and larger Crimean communities, may lead to further chaos and bloodshed.”⁶³

In the framework of the recent developments in Ukraine, and particularly in Crimea, the OIC expressed its concerns about the security and well-being of the Muslim Crimean Tatar Community. The OIC expects that the past suffering of the Crimean Tatars who were expelled from their homeland in Crimea in the 20th Century does not occur and hopes authorities exert efforts not to allow it. It is of the utmost importance for the OIC that the right of citizenship, lives, religious and cultural heritage and property should be safeguarded. It is the firm belief of the OIC that in the 21st century, constructive dialogue, peaceful and good neighborly relations should be the norm for the members of the international community.

⁶² See: *Islamophobia Today Blog*’s entry “Attacks on Crimean Tatars Are Frequent”, in: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2013/10/17/attacks-on-crimean-tatars-are-frequent/>, retrieved on 23.10.2013

⁶³ Cf. TarasCuzio, “Tatars Fear Future Under Russia”, *Aljazeera*, in: <http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2014/4/ukraine-crimean-tatarsinputinsrussia.html>, retrieved on 02.04.2014

2.4. Other Islamophobic Trends

a) Media Islamophobic Discourse and Campaigns

Some quarters of the western media continue to fuel Islamophobia with distortions or exaggeration of news related to Muslims. This understanding is supported by independent reports, including a research study by the Media Tenor International, the global media research company, which was made public on 22 November 2013, which stated, inter alia, that with "...a decreased focus on the lives of Muslims in the Western world in U.S. and European TV, stereotypes and negativity had increased in the news."⁶⁴ The findings were presented by Media Tenor CEO and founder Roland Schatz at the Alwaleed bin-Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding (ACMCU) at Washington's Georgetown University, who said: "Despite the increasing need for better understanding between people of all religious faiths, overall *the news media is not helping to build compassion and tolerance, but, in many cases, is actively working against it.*"⁶⁵

The following examples vindicate the Observatory's view that there is a need for media related professionals to start having some degree of responsibility while reporting Muslim or Islam related matters:

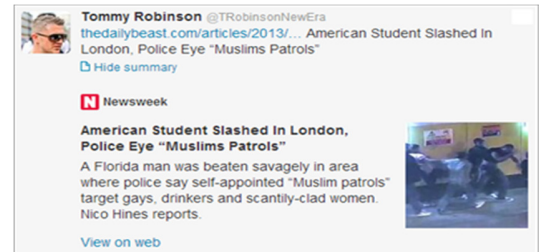
- I. **UK: *Daily Beast* provides anti-Muslim ammunition for former EDL leader⁶⁶** – It was already noted the *Times* misleading report of the assault on US student Francesco Hounye, which tried to link the attack to earlier incidents involving the so-called Muslim patrol, in the absence of any evidence whatsoever to indicate such a connection. Taking its cue from the *Times*, and ratcheting up the Islamophobic content a few more notches, the *Daily Beast* also covered the story, under the headline "American student slashed in London, police eye 'Muslims patrols'".

⁶⁴ See: *Ecumenical News'* entry "Anti-Muslim stereotypes increase on TV, hinder understanding: Research", in: <http://www.ecumenicalnews.com/article/anti-muslim-stereotypes-increase-on-tv-hinder-understanding-research-22580>, retrieved on 25.11.2013

⁶⁵ See: *Ecumenical News'* entry "Anti-Muslim stereotypes increase on TV, hinder understanding: Research", op. cit., emphasis added.

⁶⁶ See: *Islamophobia Today Blog's* entry "*Daily Beast* provides anti-Muslim ammunition for former EDL leader", in: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2013/10/25/daily-beast-provides-anti-muslim-ammunition-for-former-edl-leader/>, retrieved on 30.10.2013

The author of this piece, the *Daily Beast's* London editor Nico Hines, produced no statement by the police that they suspected the attackers may be connected to the "Muslims patrols", because of course the police had made no such statement. Hines reported that Detective Constable Ben Mott "called upon the Muslim community to identify the men who left a tourist scarred for life". But DC Mott made no reference to Muslims. What he said was: "The CCTV footage is exceptionally clear and I believe the suspects to be local. I would ask people to please look closely at the faces of the attackers and help us identify them. I am positive someone would know who they are from looking at the footage." Police described the suspects as Asian and "possibly Bengali". Then, Stephen Lennon, former leader of the English Defence League, and new Atheist Sam Harris seized on Hines' inaccurate and inflammatory report to spread another poisonous story about Muslims.



II. US: Islamophobes Publish Fake Image of "Muslims Throwing Christian Girl from Window"⁶⁷ –

The image below was posted on the right-wing website,

FreePatriot.org, in an article titled "Muslim Mob Justice-15 year old girl thrown from Third Floor

window." By the time of the publication (December 2013), *Free Patriot* had a half million Facebook fans and after the article was shared on its page it went viral on the Islamophobia industry's interwebs. Rick Wells who authored the post claimed that the picture was of a girl thrown from a third floor window by Muslims: *In a truly outrageous demonstration of the lawlessness that exists in Egypt today, the Muslim residents of a small village in southern Minya province went on a rampage. They attacked Christian homes, burning 10 of them. 15 Christians were wounded, including a 15 year-old girl who was thrown from the third floor of a building. The report is from Ezzat Ibrahim, a minority rights activist.*

⁶⁷ See: *Islamophobia Today Blog's* entry "Islamophobes Publish Fake Image of "Muslims Throwing Christian Girl from Window"", in: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2013/12/04/islamophobes-publish-fake-image-of-muslims-throwing-christian-girl-from-window/>, retrieved on 10.12.2013

Wells distorted the news about the image as in reality, the image is from June, 2011 and was taken in Shanghai, China not Minya, Egypt and the woman was not thrown out of the window but rather fell from the fifth floor, as the following sources documented it:



- a) *Daily Telegraph*⁶⁸: A WOMAN has survived a fall from the fifth floor after a number of windows she hit on her way down broke her fall.
- b) *The Sun*⁶⁹ reported horrified onlookers saw her jump out after someone is believed to have threatened her.
- c) *Asia One*⁷⁰ said the incident happened at a residential building in Shanghai's Luwan district, where the woman was spotted crouching from the window on the fifth floor yelling, "Somebody is going to kill me!" The woman, 29 lost her grip on the window and fell into several open windows, which sent her spinning during her fall. The unnamed woman was rushed to hospital after the plunge and is recovering from the incident. It happened just days after the woman was diagnosed with schizophrenia.

III. US: Meet Fox's New Anti-Muslim "National Security Analyst"⁷¹

Fox News is known for repeatedly hosting Islamophobes, including members of the fringe group Clarion Project, an anti-Muslim organization known for spreading Islamophobic fears, to discuss serious national security matters. On 20 February 2014, *Fox News* hosted Ryan Mauro, a so called national security analyst from the Clarion Project, also known as the Clarion Fund, to discuss possible security threats on airlines. Mauro had before appeared on *Fox* several times where he had argued that 'Muslim patrols' were a growing security concern for the United States,



⁶⁸ Available here: <http://m.dailytelegraph.com.au/woman-survives-fall-from-fifth-floor-window-in-shanghai/story-e6freuy9-1226101273312>

⁶⁹ Available here: <http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/3709648/Plunge-woman-in-Shanghai-China-lives-after-windows-break-fall.html>

⁷⁰ Available here: <http://news.asiaone.com/News/Latest%2BNews/Asia/Story/A1Story20110724-290708.html>

⁷¹ See: *Media Matters'* entry "Meet Fox's New Anti-Muslim "National Security Analyst"", in: <http://mediamatters.org/blog/2014/02/20/meet-foxs-new-anti-muslim-national-security-ana/198148>, retrieved on 21.02.2014

discussed the possibility of an anti-American alliance in the Middle East with Syrian Jihadists, and hyped fears that Somali refugees in the United States were becoming 'homegrown' terrorists.

But Mauro and other Clarion Project members should not be seen credible sources to discuss issues such as these given their virulent history of Islamophobia. Clarion Project had been widely criticized for producing and spreading Islamophobic material including the movie, *Obsession: Radical Islam's War Against the West*, a film that depicted Muslims as terrorists seeking world conquest. Other board members from the Clarion Project who had also made their way onto *Fox* included Frank Gaffney, one of America's most notorious Islamophobes and *Fox's* go-to anti-Muslim activist, Zuhdi Jasser. Gaffney had used funding for his Center for Security Policy to produce reports promoting the baseless myth that Muslims were conspiring to implement Sharia law in the United States.

IV. UK: Another scaremongering headline from the *Daily Star*⁷²

- The source of the headline was in fact a recent report by CAGE, *The Prevent Strategy: A Cradle to Grave Police-State*, which condemned the targeting of Muslim children as potential extremists under the Channel programme. The CAGE report, inter alia, stated: "A nine-year-old schoolboy in east London, who was referred to the authorities after allegedly showing signs of extremism - the youngest case known in Britain. He was 'deprogrammed' according to a source with knowledge of the case." The *Daily Star Sunday* front page spanned that to suggest to its readers that Muslim children posed a genuine extremist threat. The accompanying text stated: "A nine-year-old boy has been reported to the authorities as Britain's youngest Islamist extremist. The youngster was one of more than 2,600 so extreme they were sent on a Government de-radicalisation scheme."



⁷² See: *Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "Another scaremongering headline from the *Daily Star*", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/another-scaremongering-headline-from-the-daily-star/#more-29382>, retrieved on 03.03.2014



V. UK: Islamophobic hoax exposed⁷³ – Tahir Alam was the target of an Islamophobic campaign, originating in the *Sunday Times* and subsequently taken up by a number of other media outlets including *BBC News*, which claimed that there was a “Islamic plot” to take over Birmingham schools and even

that this was a case of “terrorism in the UK” due to a “leaked” letter outlining the supposed plot. Indeed, as even the most cursory read through the document⁷⁴ would confirm, it was quite obviously faked. *The fact that it was taken seriously in the news media is a worrying reflection of the extent to which anti-Muslim prejudice in the UK had destroyed journalists’ capacity for critical thinking when it came to evaluating spurious Islamophobic propaganda.*

On the other hand, there is a need to expose the double standards related to some western media outlets while reporting on issues where Muslims are victims of terrorism or when such terrorism is caused by a non-Muslim. The case of Glendon Scott Crawford is paradigmatic. He was charged by the FBI “...for conspiring to build a portable, remote-controlled device designed to deliver fatal doses of radiation to Muslims – or “medical waste,” as the plotters called their intended targets.”⁷⁵ The coverage of the news was minimal, but if we changed the names of the alleged plotters to Muslim related, then the media would have been viral in its reporting.

Another example of decreased interest by the media on an issue linked to terrorism committed by a non-Muslim was of a flight from Ukraine that was forced to make an emergency landing in Turkey on the evening of 07 February 2014 after a hijacking

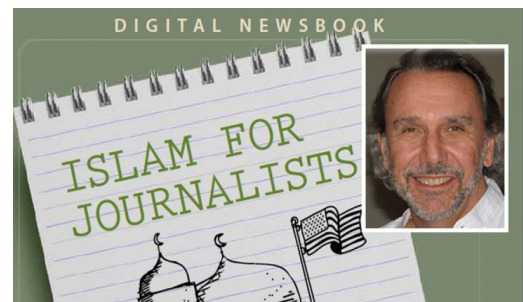
⁷³ See: *Islamophobia Today Blog*’s entry “Islamophobic hoax exposed”, in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/islamophobic-hoax-exposed/>, retrieved on 11.03.2014, emphasis added.

⁷⁴ Available here: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Trojan-Horse-document.pdf>

⁷⁵ See: *Islamophobia Watch Blog*’s entry “Feds indict Klansman who designed radiation gun to kill Muslims”, in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/feds-indict-klansman-who-designed-radiation-gun-to-kill-muslims/#more-28214>, retrieved on 23.01.2014

attempt. "The Boeing 737-800 carrying 110 passengers had departed from Kharkiv airport when a passenger reportedly yelled "Bomb!"...The man, a 45-year-old Ukrainian national, is then believed to have attempted to hijack the aircraft and divert it to Sochi, where the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics was underway at the time."⁷⁶

Within the context of addressing the role of media in reporting about Muslim related issues, the Observatory noted with appreciation that the founding dean of the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication at Washington State University Lawrence Pintak (inset in the picture) recently co-edited an e-book⁷⁷ meant to be a field guide for journalists when reporting on Islamic issues. "Islam for Journalists", an online guide from Washington State University, said coverage of the Muslim world could be fair, yet inoffensive without compromising journalistic principles.



However, and as expected, the guide had been under fire⁷⁸ from critics who said it sacrificed the First Amendment to political correctness.

In this regard, the Observatory would recommend local Muslim communities in the west to disseminate this e-book so as to sensitize journalists and media outlets in fair reporting about Muslim related issues. If required, conferences and workshops may be organized with a view to inviting journalists and media outlets to reflect on the document as well as to draw a clear road-map for its implementation.

b) Discrimination against Muslims in Employment

Under the covering period, the Observatory came across alarming reports on how Muslims are being discriminated against while seeking jobs or in their place of work,

⁷⁶ See: *Mirror's* entry "Ukrainian plane makes emergency landing in Turkey after 'hijacker attempts to divert to Sochi'", in: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/sochi-2014-attempted-hijack-forces-3122725#ixzz2yqd7CvNr>, retrieved on 08.02.2014

⁷⁷ Available here for download: <http://www.foxnews.com/us/interactive/2014/04/10/islam-for-journalists/>

⁷⁸ See: *Fox News'* entry "Journalists' guide to Islam called cave-in to political correctness", in: <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2014/04/12/journalists-guide-to-islam-called-cave-in-to-political-correctness/>, retrieved on 13.04.2014

as they are bullied by fellow colleagues or the supervisors are less accommodating to their religious needs, as was the case of two dozen Muslims fired⁷⁹ from DHL Global Mail in Hebron (Cincinnati) in October 2013 for stopping to say five-minute evening prayers required by their religious beliefs.

In this context, as part of the *BBC Inside Out West*⁸⁰ investigation, two undercover white reporters, one a Muslim in traditional dress, travelled across the city of Bristol in the UK to inquire about 40 jobs being advertised in shop windows. Ian, the non-Muslim, was more than four times more successful in getting job interviews than Muslim-convert Zoltan, who, to make his faith clear, used the name Mohammed and wore traditional shalwar kameez dress. Both



journalists were from Manchester, they were of a similar age and ethnicity and were given equivalent CVs. Ian's inquiries resulted in 13 interviews and one job offer without an interview. Zoltan was invited to three interviews. At one café, Zoltan was told CVs were being collected and to assume he had not been shortlisted if he heard nothing further. But when Ian inquired about the same job 10 minutes later, he was offered a trial shift. The cafe owner spotted Zoltan in the distance and said to Ian: "See that guy in the hat? Do not tell him I've given you a trial shift on Saturday. If you bump into him in the street and he wants to talk to you, do not tell him because he's just given me his CV and I told him that I won't be making a decision until next week. So don't tell him." After contact from the *BBC*, the cafe manager denied discriminating against Zoltan and said he had more things in common with Ian and had struck up a better rapport with him.

⁷⁹ See: *USA Today's* entry "Muslim workers say they were fired for praying", in: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/11/06/muslim-workers-say-they-were-fired-for-praying/3462061/>, retrieved on 07.11.2013

⁸⁰ See: *Islamophobia Today Blog's* entry "Bristol Muslims 'facing job discrimination'", in: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2013/10/28/bristol-muslims-facing-job-discrimination/>, retrieved on 30.10.2013

In the United States, a new study⁸¹ by Carnegie Mellon University found that in most Republican states in the US, employers may be less likely to interview job candidates whose social networking profiles indicated that the applicants were Muslims.

As part of a social experiment, the researchers created four fictitious job candidates – each with a unique name that most likely pointed to someone who was male, U.S. born and Caucasian. The candidates had identical resumes. The researchers also created social network profiles for each of the candidates that revealed either his sexual orientation or whether he was a Muslim or Christian. **All other information, including the profile photograph used for each candidate, was the same.** The resumes, which did not mention the candidates' online profile, were then sent out to more than 4,000 employers nationwide with job openings.

(...)

In both Republican and Democratic states, there was no difference between the call backs received by the gay candidate as compared with the straight candidate. **But in the Republican states, the Christian candidate received more interview calls than the Muslim candidate.** In the 10 states with the highest proportion of Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney voters in the 2012 election, **17% of Christian applicants received interview calls, compared with 2% of the Muslim job candidates.** There were no differences in call backs received by the Christian and Muslim candidates in the 10 states with the lowest proportion of Romney voters.

In this regard, local Muslim communities should rely on local existing anti-discriminatory laws on employment so as to expose those discriminating against Muslims from getting jobs or being mistreated in their work places. In fact, the integration process of Muslims in western societies should also mean equal opportunities when it comes to employment market and dignity and equal rights in the work place.

c) Schools Bullying with Muslims as Victims

The process of building a sane society presupposes a healthy educational environment where children, from their earliest age, are taught values of tolerance and understanding. Cultural and religious differences should be a source of diversity and richness rather than a source of hatred and discrimination.

⁸¹ See: *Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "Muslim job candidates may face discrimination in Republican states", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/study-muslim-job-candidates-may-face-discrimination-in-republican-states/#more-26313>, retrieved on 28.11.2013, emphasis added.

However, in Florida (US) there was controversy⁸² over the portrayal of Islam in Volusia County school textbooks. The information appeared on *Facebook* urging an organized protest rally before the School Board's meeting on 5 November 2013. The meeting was canceled before it began over security concerns and the controversy has continued to simmer, with Volusia County Republican Executive Committee Chairman Tony Ledbetter taking leadership of the textbook protest. Luckily, the good judgment of the School Board remained and decided on 18 November 2013 that world history textbook would remain in Volusia County high schools. Due to this public pressure, the Florida House passed⁸³ a bill on 28 April 2014 that would give local school boards, parents and protesters more power over classroom materials.

This example shows the widespread anti-Muslim sentiments or intolerance to Islam in many quarters of the western society. For instance,

...a growing number of British Muslim children reported facing racist and xenophobic bullying in their schools, a UK charity group revealed, warning that far-right agenda on immigration was being taken into classrooms.

The figures, release by ChildLine, revealed that more than 1 400 children and young people contacted the helpline in 2013 to report racist bullying. Marking 69% increase, the charity asserted that Islamophobia was a particular issue in schools, with young Muslims reporting that they were being called "terrorists" and "bombers" by classmates. James Kingett, of the charity Show Racism The Red Card (SRTRC) which seeks to combat racism, said: "We work with around 50,000 young people every year and issues around Islamophobia have been very prevalent over the past 12 to 18 months. That idea that all Muslims are terrorists or bombers is a particular problem. We're getting that from kids with no Muslim classmates through to those in diverse schools with many Muslims. We are doing work on the impact of far-right groups such as the English Defence League on children's attitudes. Often children are picking up language at home and from parents and taking that to be fact. The rhetoric at the moment around immigration is incredibly pervasive. The prominence of the immigration debate may have had a knock-on effect, filtering down in classrooms."

⁸² See: *Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "Florida school board rejects Islamophobic hysteria over history textbook", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/florida-school-board-rejects-islamophobic-hysteria-over-history-textbook/#more-25997>, retrieved on 21.11.2013

⁸³ See: *Islamophobia Today Blog's* entry "House gives nod to Volusia-inspired textbook review bill", in: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2014/04/29/house-gives-nod-to-volusia-inspired-textbook-review-bill/>, retrieved on 30.04.2014

Making things worse, many children said that reporting bullying problems to their teachers were unhelpful and ineffective. Others who were encouraged to speak out in assembly said that the problem was advertised, leading to more abusive behavior.⁸⁴

A good example to corroborate the aforementioned findings was the Redbridge Muslim school in the UK, which was targeted⁸⁵ by far right, following a council planning meeting which refused to allow discussion of a retrospective application for an additional 64 places at the school. The group targeting the school, Britain First, reported that the planning application provoked comments from its supporters such as: “If you want a Muslim school, go to a country that has already been ruined by Muslims, don’t bring their prehistoric ways to Britain”, “Get retro permission to kick all out and they can be taught the hatred in a diff country”, “Pack the whole lot off back to Pakistan. YOU KNOW THEY MEAN TO TAKE OVER DON’T YOU”, and so on.

However, a new project in Czech Republic was created with a good spirit so as to allow Czech kids to learn more about Islam. In fact, on 07 April 2014, local daily *Lidovénoviny* (LN)⁸⁶ “...wrote that a new project launched by the Muslims In Czech Schoolchildren’s Eyes group and approved by the Education Ministry, would offer free seminars and lectures that would acquaint pupils with Islam and the life and habits of Muslims...The project reacted to a survey its authors had made in 2013 and in which pupils showed interest in learning more about Islam.”

Therefore, the Observatory believes that local Muslim communities should push more for projects similar to the one being implemented in the Czech Republic. This would perhaps decrease the number of students subjected to discriminatory comments by their peers because of their religion. It would also facilitate frank class discussions concerning Islam and Muslim majority countries, opening the way for female Muslim

⁸⁴ See: *On Islam*’s entry “Islamophobia Increases in UK Schools”, in: <http://www.onislam.net/english/news/europe/467871-islamophobia-increases-in-uk-schools.html>, retrieved on 09.01.2014

⁸⁵ See: *Islamophobia Watch Blog*’s entry “Redbridge Muslim school targeted by far right”, In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/redbridge-muslim-school-targeted-by-far-right/>, retrieved on 12.01.2014

⁸⁶ Quoted by *Prague Post*’s in its entry “Czech kids to learn more about Islam”, in: <http://www.praguepost.com/education/38202-czech-kids-to-learn-more-about-islam>, retrieved on 09.04.2014

students to wear their hijab confidently as their colleagues would understand the meaning of the same.

On the other hand, Muslim parents should feel encouraged to speak out to the school board or to the concerned local law enforcement authorities in case their children are discriminated against at school or due to teacher misrepresentation of Islam.

3. SOME POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

The Observatory is encouraged in pursuing its efforts towards countering Islamophobia as some quarters of the western society started to positively respond against perceived anti-Muslim and Islamophobic activists, which may be helpful in decreasing their provocative activities and approach towards Muslims. The following examples are worth mentioning:

I. *Court Decisions against Islamophobes:*

- a) **Germany: Islam critic fined 1200 euros for comparing Islam to a cancerous ulcer** – In March 2013, the German Islam critic Michael Stürzenberger published an article in which he made the following statement: *Islam is like a cancerous ulcer that has a corrosive effect on the (still) free peoples of this planet and gradually infects them with the poison of this inflammatory, intolerant, woman-hating, violent and power-hungry ideology.* Someone with a Muslim-sounding name then filed a criminal complaint about him. The result: a 1200 euro fine for “insulting faiths”.⁸⁷
- b) **French journalist prosecuted for insulting Islam** – Ivan Rioufol, a French journalist, faced a criminal trial for remarks he made in a radio interview against the influence of Islam in the country following a complaint from a group called the Collective Against Islamophobia in France (CCIF). Mr. Rioufol’s comments from a 15 November 2012, RTL radio program particularly objected to a CCIF poster,

⁸⁷ See: *Islam versus Europe Blog*’s entry “Germany: Islam critic fined 1200 euros for comparing Islam to a cancerous ulcer”, in: <http://islamversuseurope.blogspot.gr/2013/10/germany-islam-critic-fined-1200-euros.html>, retrieved on 12.10.2013

which showed pictures of Muslims under the slogan “We are the Nation”. He said the idea of the poster went against France’s inclusive, secular republic.⁸⁸

c) **US: Judge rules against Geller, says ad campaign demeans Muslims**

– A federal judge rejected a pro-Israel group’s assertion that its free speech rights were violated when the MBTA turned down a subway advertisement on the grounds that the ad was “demeaning or disparaging. The ad was paid for by the American Freedom Defense Initiative, a New York organization that sought to combat the spread of Islam in the United States. With bold, all-capital-letter text placed against a stark black background, the ad reads: “In any war between the civilized man and the savage, support the civilized man. Support Israel; defeat Jihad.” Officials with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority rejected the ad in November 2013 on the basis that it violated the agency’s advertising guidelines, which included rejecting advertisements that demeaned and disparaged individuals and groups, promoted alcohol or tobacco, and depicted graphic violence.⁸⁹



d) **UK: EDL member gets community order and curfew for anti-Muslim hate crime**

– A member of a far-right group nailed a copy of the Koran to a proposed Muslim education centre. Graham French, 28, also sprayed EDL, which stands for English Defence League, on the former Melrose Arms in Shotton Colliery, in December 2013. Shotton Colliery, admitted racial or religious aggravated criminal damage to the wall of a multi-faith centre. He was given a community order with six months supervision at Peterlee Magistrates’ Court plus a one-month tagged curfew between 10.30pm and 7am.⁹⁰

e) **UK: Neath mosque attack: Steven Davies jailed for 22 months**

– A man was jailed for 22 months for vandalizing a south Wales mosque and attacking a couple who

⁸⁸ See: *Washington Times*’ entry “French journalist prosecuted for insulting Islam”, in: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/oct/10/french-journalist-prosecuted-insulting-islam/>, retrieved on 11.10.2013

⁸⁹ See: *Islamophobia Watch Blog*’s entry “Judge rules against Geller, says ad campaign demeans Muslims”, in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/judge-rules-against-geller-says-ad-campaign-demeans-muslims/#more-27542>, retrieved on 25.12.2013

⁹⁰ See: *Islamophobia Watch Blog*’s entry “EDL member gets community order and curfew for anti-Muslim hate crime”, in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/edl-member-gets-community-order-and-curfew-for-anti-muslim-hate-crime/>, retrieved on 13.02.2014

challenged him. Steven Davies, 22 and from Neath, smashed four windows at the St Anne's Islamic centre, Tonna, and then head butted, kicked and stamped on the woman and punched her husband. Davies admitted religiously aggravated criminal damage and assault.⁹¹

- f) **UK: Fan fined for ripping up Koran pages at football match** – A football fan who ripped up pages of the Koran during a match on 7 December 2013 had been fined for “religiously aggravated” disorder. Middlesbrough supporter Mark Stephenson, 25, admitted a charge of threatening behaviour. He was fined £235 but spared a football banning order. Magistrates also ordered Stephenson to pay £105 costs and a £23 victim surcharge.⁹²
- g) **US court orders Google to take down anti-Islam film** – On 26 February 2014, a federal appeals court in the United States ordered Google to remove from the Internet all copies of a US-made film that disrespected Islam and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit said a trial judge made a mistake when he refused to order the removal of the “Innocence of Muslims” from *YouTube*, owned by Google. The court order came in the case of Cindy Lee Garcia, whose voice was dubbed over to make anti-Islam remarks in the film.⁹³

II. *Politicians Positive Views on Islam:*

- a) **Netherlands: Former enemy of Islam to establish 1st Islamic political party in Europe** – A Dutchman who was involved in a derogatory film about Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said he would establish the first Islamic political party in Europe. The party would focus on serving Islam and Muslims not only in the Netherlands but Europe as whole, said Arnoud van Doorn, who was involved in the production of the controversial “Fitna”. Van Doorn had reverted to Islam

⁹¹ See: BBC's entry “Neath mosque attack: Steven Davies jailed for 22 months”, in: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-south-west-wales-26358464>, retrieved on 28.02.2014

⁹² See: BBC's entry “Fan fined for ripping up Koran pages at football match”, In: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-26389242>, retrieved on 01.03.2014

⁹³ See *Press TV*'s entry “US court orders Google to take down anti-Islam film”, in: <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2014/02/27/352434/us-court-to-google-remove-antiislam-film/>, retrieved on 28.02.2014

about in 2012 and performed Haj in 2013. He also performed Umrah in February 2013.⁹⁴

- b) Germany: President Praise Islamic Theology** – On 28 November 2013, German President Joachim Gauck was quoted by *Anadolu Agency* praising the Muslim community as a part of the German society, asserting Germany as a common land for all its citizens, adding: “Over two thousand sanctuaries and mosques have been built in different cities of the country.” The president was speaking during that day’s visit to Munster University’s Islamic Theology Center. He also asserted the fact that Islamic Theology departments in German universities were an important element of the country’s recent history as “The establishment of faculties providing education in Islamic Theology is a pragmatic agreement for the future...Everyday more Muslims become part of the German society and take part in the development of it...We want to educate people who in the future will give religion lessons in schools, mosques and universities.”⁹⁵
- c) Swiss Minaret Ban Politician Embraces Islam** – Daniel Streich set out to read the Qur’an so he could argue against Muslims on the tenets of their faith. Convinced by the message, he became a Muslim. Daniel Streich was a member of Swiss People’s Party (SVP) in Switzerland. A well-known politician, Streich led the calls for a ban on minarets across Switzerland. He was active in building anti-Muslim sentiments throughout Switzerland. This sustained campaign led to him being given a high ranking position in the Swiss Army. Streich left the SVP in November 2009 calling his party’s campaign against Islam as a ‘witch hunt.’⁹⁶
- d) US: New York Mayor announces academic holidays on Muslim festivals** – The New York’s Mayor, Bill de Blasio, announced plans to implement a policy allowing

⁹⁴ See: *Saudi Gazette*’s entry “Former enemy of Islam to establish 1st Islamic political party in Europe”, In: <http://www.saudigazette.com.sa/index.cfm?method=home.regcon&contentid=20131022184271>, retrieved on 23.10.2013

⁹⁵ See: *Onislam*’s entry “Germany: President Praise Islamic Theology”, in: <http://www.onislam.net/english/news/europe/466451-german-president-praise-islamic-theology.html>, retrieved on 30.11.2013

⁹⁶ See: *Islamophobia Today Blog*’s entry “Swiss Minaret Ban Politician Embraces Islam”, in: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2013/11/30/swiss-minaret-ban-politician-embraces-islam/>, retrieved on 04.12.2013.

public schools to be closed for holidays on biggest Muslim festivals including Eid-ul-Adha and Eid-ul-Fitr.⁹⁷

- e) **US: CIA Director defends Koran, defines Islamic teaching** – As reported by the right-of-center *Cybercast News Service* on 11 March 2014, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) director, John Brennan, publicly declared that the al-Qaeda terrorist network was improperly and purposefully misinterpreting the sacred writ of the followers of Mohammed. While responding during the question and answer segment of his visit to the Council on Foreign Relations, Director Brennan was asked of “the ‘war of ideas’ surrounding Islam, which the questioner said many Americans tend to equate with violence.” The intel honcho delved into the actual definition of what was the correct and incorrect tenets of Islam vice an analytical study of combating a known rather viscous terrorist group known to target not only American men, women and children, but those of their allies as well. In his response, Brennan referred to al-Qaeda and presumably their numerous affiliates as: “A perverse and very corrupt interpretation of the Qur’an. One of the things that I’m struck with when I travel throughout the Middle East and I meet with leaders, military and civilian – these are individuals who are Qur’anic scholars themselves and they are the ones who are most annoyed at how al-Qaeda has hijacked their religion and how they have really distorted the teachings of Mohammed, you know, for violent purposes.”⁹⁸

III. *On Hijab:*

⁹⁷See: *Islamophobia Today Blog*’s entry “New York Mayor announces academic holidays on Muslim festivals”, In: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2014/02/09/new-york-mayor-announces-academic-holidays-on-muslim-festivals/>, retrieved on 12.02.2014

⁹⁸ See: *The Examiner*’s entry “CIA Director defends Koran, defines Islamic teaching”, in: <http://www.examiner.com/article/cia-director-defends-koran-defines-islamic-teaching>, retrieved on 13.03.2014

- a) **Canada: Edmonton police approve hijab headscarf design for female officers** – According to a press release issued 06 December 2013, Edmonton police approved a design for a hijab headscarf for female officers of Muslim faith. The hijab design covered the head and neck, but not the face.



At the time of the approval, EPS did not have any applicants requesting to wear a hijab but police wanted to be proactive and “reflect the changing diversity in the community, and to facilitate the growing interest in policing careers from Edmonton’s Muslim community,” as stated in the release.⁹⁹

- b) **FIFA lifts ban on head cover** – Football’s world governing body FIFA authorized the wearing of head covers for religious purposes during matches. That would allow female Muslim players who wore a hijab in everyday life to cover their heads during matches as well. FIFA added that male players would also be authorized to do so following a request from the Sikh community in Canada. The wearing of head covers had been banned until 2012, with FIFA saying that they posed too great a risk of injury to the head or neck. However, the IFAB then allowed them to be tested out over a two-year period following a request from the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), a trial which proved to be successful.¹⁰⁰

- c) **US: Colorado girls’ soccer team takes stand against hijab ban** – On 13 March 2014, in response, the Overland High School girls soccer team took an inspiring stand in support of their teammate and her freedom of religious expression by donning headscarves representative of Aidah’s hijab. With more than 40,000



⁹⁹ See: *Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry “Edmonton police approve hijab headscarf design for female officers”, in: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2013/12/07/edmonton-police-approve-hijab-headscarf-design-for-female-officers/>, retrieved on 08.10.2013

¹⁰⁰ See: *Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry “FIFA lifts ban on head cover”, in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/fifa-lifts-ban-on-head-covers/#more-29351>, retrieved on 02.03.2014

retweets and favorites by the time of this news item, teammate Divine Davis' photo of the team in headscarves was making a loud statement about equality.¹⁰¹

IV. General Issues:

- a) **US: Brandeis Cancels Plan to Give Honorary Degree to Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a Critic of Islam** – Facing growing criticism, Brandeis University said on 08 April 2014 that it had reversed course and would not award an honorary degree to Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a fierce critic of Islam, who had called the religion “a destructive, nihilistic cult of death.” The university said in a statement released eight days after it had announced that Ms. Hirsi Ali and four other people would be honored at its commencement on 18 May: “We cannot overlook that certain of her past statements are inconsistent with Brandeis University’s core values. In its statement, Brandeis said, “For all concerned, we regret that we were not aware of” Ms. Hirsi Ali’s record of anti-Islam statements, though those comments have been fairly widely publicized.¹⁰²

4. OIC INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES TO COUNTER ISLAMPHOBIA

4.1. Meeting with Pope Francis I¹⁰³

In the context of the need for greater efforts to foster respect for religious pluralism and cultural diversity, and to counter the spread of bigotry and prejudices, including Islamophobia, the former OIC Secretary General, Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, met with the pope at the Vatican on 14 December 2013, and commended the efforts exerted by Pope Francis to revitalize interfaith dialogue between Christians and Muslims.

The secretary-general pointed out that today the presence of Muslims in historically Christian countries had expanded, while some OIC countries either had native

¹⁰¹ See: *Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry “Colorado girls’ soccer team takes stand against hijab ban”, in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/colorado-girls-soccer-team-takes-stand-against-hijab-ban/>, retrieved on 18.03.2014

¹⁰² See *New York Times'* entry “Brandeis Cancels Plan to Give Honorary Degree to Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a Critic of Islam”, In: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/09/us/brandeis-cancels-plan-to-give-honorary-degree-to-ayaan-hirsi-ali-a-critic-of-islam.html?_r=0, retrieved on 10.04.2014

¹⁰³ Based on *Arab News'* report under the entry “OIC chief praises pope’s efforts to revitalize interfaith dialogue”, in: <http://www.arabnews.com/news/492916>, retrieved on 15.12.2013

Christian communities or had witnessed in recent years the arrival of Christians as guest workers.

The two expressed the need for greater efforts to foster respect for religious pluralism and cultural diversity and to counter the spread of bigotry and prejudices. They stressed that inter-religious dialogue was a necessary condition for peace in the world and was a duty for adherents of all faiths and traditions.

Ihsanoglu shared with the pope his vision regarding the need for a “historic reconciliation” between Islam and Christianity based on the common Abrahamic roots, in order to establish multiculturalism and harmonious societies. The pope commended the proposal and stressed the need to follow it up.

The two leaders expressed concern over the increase in inter-communal tension between Muslim and Christian communities and over the transformation of communal conflicts in some parts of the world into religiously motivated conflicts, even though the root causes were not religious in nature. Concern was also expressed about the exploitation of religion in conflict situations as a means to mobilize supporters. They highlighted establishing a secondary, cultural tract to support interfaith dialogue initiatives.

During the meeting, views were exchanged on regional and international developments, especially the situation in Palestine. Both leaders expressed hope that the holy city of Jerusalem would be a haven in which Muslims, Jews and Christians may live and worship in peace and harmony.

Concern and dismay were also expressed about the continuation of violence in Syria, which they agreed requires a solution based on dialogue and negotiation. The secretary-general concurred with the vision of Pope Francis on the need for a just world where poverty and hunger were eradicated and commended him for being recognized as “Person of the Year” by Time magazine. Before the audience with Pope Francis, the OIC delegation met with Antoine Camilleri, undersecretary for relations with states, to discuss means of forging cooperation between the Holy See and OIC to contribute to global peace and security.

4.2. Istanbul Process Follow-up

The Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue hosted the “Doha Meeting for Advancing Religious Freedom through Interfaith Collaboration”, held 24–25 March 2014, in Doha, State of Qatar. The meeting focused on the need for all people to have the freedom to practice their religion and build places of worship in all communities. The meeting was part of the “Istanbul Process”, spearheaded by the OIC to advance the implementation of UN Human Rights Council Resolution 16/18.

Experts, scholars and leading religious figures from 50 countries were unanimous in calling for the rejection of intolerance and incitement to violence on the basis of religion or belief. Meeting participants said a clear line needed to be drawn between freedom of expression and hate-inciting speeches, and that defamatory, disparaging and provocative phrases that fueled religious intolerance and lead to violence must be avoided in order to protect religions. Participants condemned religion-based genocide in all instances, noting that the principle of tolerance is advocated by all monotheistic religions.

OIC Secretary General, Mr. Iyad Madani, while agreeing with the need to maintain an open, constructive and respectful debate of ideas, emphasized the importance of distinguishing between respectful and critical discussion which is part of freedom of expression from hateful, insulting and defamatory discourse which goes in line with hate speech that leads to incitement to hatred, discrimination and violence. Hence, the need to clearly draw a line between free speech and hate speech by determining the threshold between incitement to hatred and freedom of expression in accordance with Articles 19 & 20 of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

In his statement¹⁰⁴, Mr. Madani, briefly commented on the history of Istanbul process and stressed its importance as a mechanism in developing a better understanding of different perspectives, interests and concerns related to combating incitement to hatred, discrimination and/or violence on religious grounds. He also urged international community to make best use of this platform for devising specific course of action and steps for the full and effective implementation of the Action Plan contained in Resolution 16/18. In conclusion, the OIC Secretary General reiterated the importance of utilizing Istanbul process as a vehicle to meticulously discuss and address the triple gap of interpretation, implementation and information through a

¹⁰⁴ Full copy available as Annex B on this Report.

soft law approach by consensus. Such an approach could take the shape of agreed principles, guidelines or declaration that could reflect the common understanding of international community on this important issue.

Participants discussed¹⁰⁵ the rights of minorities, rejection of intolerance, promotion of tolerance, and the role of the OIC in the fight against religious discrimination and hatred, and adopted an action plan which called for incidents of intolerance and persecution of minorities to be reported to the UN Human Rights Council. This would facilitate the implementation of UN Resolution 16/18, which “recognises that open and constructive discussion and interfaith co-operation at the national level will play a role in the fight against incitement and intolerance based on religion”, said US special envoy to the OIC Rashad Hussain.

¹⁰⁵ See more on *Al-Shorfa's* report under the entry “Doha interfaith meeting calls for an end to hate speech” in: http://al-shorfa.com/en_GB/articles/meii/features/2014/03/27/feature-01, retrieved on 28.03.2014

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The common person in the west today seem to have developed a mindset in which every Muslim is perceived as a potential terrorist or a person who wants to replace the western values of living in society with that of Islam and therefore considered a threat to their society. This situation has inspired some motivated groups and individuals in the US and Europe who hold Islam in disregard and contempt, to mount a campaign to defame Islam through distortions and misrepresentation of Islamic values and teachings and to marginalize the Muslims living in western societies. As a consequence our present day world is gradually being driven towards the dangerous precipices of growing intolerance of religious and cultural diversity. This campaign to demonize Islam and denigrate Muslims, or Islamophobia, poses a clear and present danger to the very fabric of civilizations.

Islamophobia, discrimination and intolerance against Muslims are not only a matter of hatred against a specific religious group, but also deeply affect international relations as well as the internal stability of Western societies. As such, it is a multifaceted question and must be addressed through a holistic approach. What the West needs to know is that Islam is not a contender of Judaism or Christianity but that it is another Abrahamic faith that flowed from the preceding faiths of Judaism and Christianity.

The support of a section of political leaders and inaction on the part of some governments to take legal action against the perpetrators of Islamophobia in the west makes it to raise and gain in strength. Such inaction helps propagate negative stereotypes regarding Islam, including the notion that Islam is linked to terror; that it is intolerant of other religious beliefs, that its values and practices are incompatible with modern democratic systems; that it favours repression of freedom of expression and that it undermines human rights.

The OIC has relentlessly advocated concerted action and effective cooperation with its Western counterparts to address this issue of common concern. The role of local Muslim communities is crucial in countering Islamophobia. In this regard, the Observatory recommends local Muslim communities to

- a) Continue holding “Open Mosque Day” so as to improve interfaith and intercultural dialogue aimed at creating more understanding and dispel misconceptions about what it means to be Muslim in the west.
- b) Cooperate with local civil society institutions of Muslim background, which have to put more efforts in initiatives, projects to bring the positive aspects of local Muslims in the West.
- c) Take advantage of social networks facilities to dispel myths against Islam and combat Islamophobia.
- d) Push for local law enforcement agencies and police forces to introduce a system to monitor and record Islamophobic crimes.
- e) Through respecting, studying and disseminating local laws, ensure that local existing anti-discrimination laws are implemented in cases of religious hate crime.
- f) Report to police hate crimes and incidents of incitement to hatred on religious grounds so as to prevent any kind of discrimination against Muslim, especially against women on the grounds of dress.
- g) Avoid political instrumentalization of Islamophobia by any government through clear standings on what are the most important needs and actions in combating incitement to hatred based on religious beliefs.
- h) Get involved with local anti-racism and minority groups with a view to “glocalizing”¹⁰⁶ a common stance against discrimination, intolerance, and incitement to hatred based on religious beliefs, and racism.

¹⁰⁶ “Glocalization (a portmanteau of globalization and localization) is a term denoting the adaptation of a product or service specifically to each locality or culture in which it is sold. It is similar to internationalization. The term “glocalization” is a neologism of globalization and localization, referring to a concept to describe individual, group, organization, product or service that reflects not only global standard but also local one.”, *Wikipedia*, in: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glocalization>, viewed on 14.04.2014

- i) Have active political and social participation so as to ensure that basic rights are safeguarded and the voice of Muslims is taken into account in the decision-making process and mechanism.

In this context, OIC Member States, in their bilateral meetings with western countries, may consider

- a) Calling for effective measures in the West to protect Muslims as a vulnerable minority group from religiously or racially motivated discrimination, hostility and violence and ensure that such abuses are effectively investigated, prosecuted and punished.
- b) Urging strengthening legislation that prohibits discrimination and hate crime motivated by religious or racial bias.
- c) Encouraging efforts to prosecute and punish discriminatory and violent acts through improving the monitoring of discrimination against Muslims in employment, housing, access to service and other areas of society in order to increase knowledge of such trends and to facilitate the development of effective strategies to prevent and combat discrimination based on religious beliefs.
- d) Suggest taking effective measures to promote tolerance among their citizens. To this end, they should encourage debate within the media about their responsibility to avoid perpetuating prejudice when reporting on Islam and Muslim communities, develop campaigns to foster respect for cultural and religious pluralism, and raise awareness of positive contributions of Muslims.
- e) Recommend ensuring that any measures adopted to regulate immigration or to counter religious extremism or terrorism comply with international human rights standards. In particular, it should be ensured that any such measures fully respect the principle of equality before the law and do not amount to discrimination on grounds such as religion, nationality or ethnicity.
- f) Proposing that measures are taken to ensure respect for the right of Muslims to freely practice their religion, including the right to celebrate religious holidays, the right to construct houses of worship without undue obstacles, the right to observe funeral rites, the right to wear distinctive clothing, the right to observe

dietary regulations, the right to organize instruction in their religion and the right to train religious leaders. Any restrictions placed on the right of Muslims should be avoided.

Finally, OIC Member States, in their relationship with Muslims in the West, are encouraged to:

- a) Be actively engaged in dialogue with Muslim communities for the purpose of developing strategies to promote the integration of Muslims in different fields of society and to address problems related to the practice of Islam. To identify best practice and criteria to ensure balanced rhetoric in the western media.
- b) Continue supporting, materially or financially, Muslim communities in the west in hosting workshops, seminars and conferences to discuss the issue of Islamophobia and how to address it.

In order to combat Islamophobia and foster tolerance and mutual understanding based on international human rights standards, States, international organizations and non-state actors should:

- a) Take all necessary measures within their power and legal/jurisdictional systems to ensure a safe environment free from Islamophobic harassment, violence and discrimination in all walks of life;
- b) Develop and implement comprehensive educational strategies and programmes for combating Islamophobia;
- c) Create, whenever necessary, specialized bodies and initiatives in order to combat Islamophobia;
- d) Include in their integration policies programmes and activities addressing Islamophobia and its roots causes;
- e) Collect and maintain reliable information and statistics about Islamophobic hate crimes committed within their territory/area of responsibility and make such reports publically available;

- f) Combat Islamophobic hate crimes, which can be fuelled by Islamophobic hate speech in the media and on the Internet;
- g) Take all necessary measures in order to prevent racial/religious profiling and other forms of institutionalized Islamophobia;
- h) Conduct public awareness campaigns and specific programmes for governmental officials and also for citizens in order to combat Islamophobia;
- i) Encourage and support intergovernmental human rights agencies and non-governmental organizations dealing with Islamophobia;
- j) Strive to develop necessary mechanisms and standards to increase international co-operation in combating Islamophobia.

ANNEXES

A. SOME ISLAMOPHOBIC INCIDENTS

I. Incidents Related to Mosques:

1. **UK: 'Boy told teacher he wanted to blow up a mosque'** – The science teacher of a 16-year-old neo-Nazi accused of plotting a school massacre told the *Old Bailey* how the teenager asked for help making explosives to blow up a mosque. The 16-year-old, from Loughborough, who could not be named for legal reasons, quizzed his teacher during weekly science lessons while revealing a hatred of Muslims. His teacher told the court he said he hated Muslims and expressed a desire to blow up a mosque. He was also accused of having a terrorist manual and possessing parts for an improvised explosive, but he denied the charges.

In: <http://www.thisisleicestershire.co.uk/Boy-told-teacher-wanted-blow-mosque/story-19886872-detail/story.html#axzz2gv8wAEC2>, retrieved on 06.10.2013

2. **US: Anti-mosque group linked to Virginia Beach councilman** –A few weeks before September 2013's vote on the city's first mosque, Councilman Bill DeSteph received a 25-page PowerPoint presentation. It came from the leader of the local chapter of *ACT for America*, a well-known anti-Muslim group, an anti-mosque group in the United States, and alleged the proposed mosque had ties to Muslim extremists. DeSteph, the only council member to vote against the mosque on 24 September 2013, later said he had information that the facility was a threat to national security, but he declined to give details. He said he passed the information to the federal government. That PowerPoint, other correspondence obtained by *The Virginian-Pilot* through the Freedom of Information Act and interviews showed that DeSteph used information from the local *ACT* leader to help make his decision on the mosque, and that *ACT* hoped he would be a political voice in Richmond for its agenda.

In: <http://hamptonroads.com/2013/10/antimosque-group-linked-va-beach-councilman>, retrieved on 18.10.2013



3. UK: Anti-mosque leaflet greeted with shock – Tahirul Hasan, a man hoping to create a mosque in Chipping Norton, said he was shocked and upset after receiving a “nasty” leaflet through his door. He was set to convert a shop in Hitchman’s Mews into a mosque after securing planning permission in February 2013. But after the plans were approved, the shop’s landlord George Wissinter received a sinister phone call threatening to burn it down if the plans went ahead and Mr Hasan’s plans were left in tatters. He had almost given up hope of finding somewhere but after

speaking to David Cameron in his Witney constituency surgery, the Prime Minister said he would do all he could to support the venture. Coun Hasan then received a leaflet urging people not to re-elect Mr Cameron and warning residents about the ‘dangers’ of allowing a mosque to be built. Entitled “Mosque alert” it said: “A mosque or Islamic centre is being built in your area” which is supported by “your local Member of Parliament.” It added that Mr Cameron had “set up a special task force to ensure your children kneel before Allah”.

In: http://www.cotswoldjournal.co.uk/news/10744778.Anti_mosque_leaflet_greeted_with_shock/, retrieved on 18.10.2013

4. US: Police, FBI investigate vandalism at Delaware mosque in Newark – Investigators believed it happened early morning of 25 October 2013 at the Islamic Society of Delaware’s community center in Newark. Vandals tore down a fence and used rocks to damage a digital sign. Pieces of the fence were used to make a cross on the property. Delaware State Police and the FBI were investigating the case.

In: http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/police-fbi-investigate-vandalism-at-delaware-mosque-in-newark/2013/10/27/cfb894a4-3f5b-11e3-b028-de922d7a3f47_story.html, retrieved on 29.10.2013

5. France: Far-right graffiti on two mosques in Besançon – In November 2013, *La Dépêche* reported that two mosques at Besançon in eastern France had been desecrated with racist and fascist graffiti. Three swastikas, accompanied by the slogans “France for the French”, “Vive la France”, “Arabs out” and “death to Muslims” were sprayed on the Al-Fath mosque. A swastika and the words “Long live the FN” (Front National) were also found on the wall of the Souana mosque.



This was not the first time the mosques had been attacked. In August 2013, an SS sign, a Celtic cross an Odal rune and the words “Vive la France” were [sprayed](#) on the Souna mosque. In February 2013, Star of David graffiti was daubed on both the Souna and Al-Fath mosques.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/far-right-graffiti-on-two-mosques-in-besancon/#more-25203>, retrieved on 06.11.2013

6. Australia: Racist vandalized graffiti Queensland mosque – On 04 November 2013,



a mosque in Cairns in far north Queensland was targeted by vandals, who sprayed with large red letters calling for the worshippers to “integrate” or return to their “homelands”.

The attack was condemned by local political leaders. The Federal Member for Leichhardt, Warren Entsch, said it was laughable, given the Imam’s family had as history in the far north dating back more than a century, adding: “He’s got an accent that’s broader than mine and I think as a community we need to be able to get behind Abdul and his community...They are part of our rich culture, and any suggestion they are anything other than that is an absolute nonsense. It shows you the small-minded minority that we have in this town.”

In: <http://www.loonwatch.com/2013/11/racist-vandals-graffiti-queensland-mosque/>, retrieved on 07.11.2013

7. France: Pig’s head left at site of Turkish cultural centre – *Fait Religieux* reported that on 8 November 2013, workers at the new Turkish cultural center under construction in Amboise, in the Indre-et-Loir department in west-central France, found a pig’s head on the site. This was the third such incident there. Kazim Oflu and Ismail Ozdemir, secretary and president of the Association culturelle turqued’Amboise

(Acta), said: "Another pig's head was left here recently. And on 29 September 2012 we found a boar's head, under the same circumstances: on our way to noon prayer, on a Friday."

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/pigs-head-left-at-site-of-turkish-cultural-centre/#more-25785>, retrieved on 14.11.2013

8. France: Pig's head left at mosque site in northern part of the country – On 10 November 2013, in Hazebrouck in northern France, a pig's head was found at the site where a mosque was to be built. The leaders of the association responsible for the mosque project refused to comment, in order to avoid controversy over the issue. However, this was not an isolated case – it was the seventh act of desecration of Muslim places of worship in France over the past three months between September and November 2013.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/pigs-head-left-at-mosque-site-in-northern-france/#more-25782>, retrieved on 16.11.2013

9. Greece: Golden Dawn threatens protests against Athens mosque – Golden Dawn had pledged to organize mass protests against the construction of a mosque in central Athens after the tender for the project was awarded earlier in the week of 11 November 2013. The neofascist party said the awarding of the contract was an "unprecedented provocation" and that it would use its position "within Parliament and mainly through mass, powerful demonstrations" to prevent the mosque being built.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/golden-dawn-threatens-protests-against-athens-mosque/#more-25867>, retrieved on 17.11.2013

Related: Greece: Neo-Nazi party protests Athens mosque construction – The state-run *Athens News Agency* reported that some 700 members and supporters of Greek neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn protested on 14 December 2013 against the construction of Athens' first official mosque. Shouting "Greece belongs to the Greeks" and "No mosque in Athens", protesters gathered in the Eleonasneighbourhood in central Athens where the mosque would be constructed. Lawmaker EleniZaroulia the wife of Golden Dawn leader Nikos Michaloliakos and three more of the party's elected deputies reportedly participated in the protest.

In: <http://www.brecorder.com/top-news/109-world-top-news/148720-neo-nazi-party-protests-athens-mosque-construction.html>, retrieved on 16.12.2013

10. Sweden: Stockholm mosque hit in pig's trotters attack – Police suspected vandalism after pig's trotters were thrown into a mosque near Stockholm after the windows of the building's main door were smashed in the morning of 18 November

2013. The mosque was the focus of attention in the spring 2013 as it hosted the first public call to prayer from a mosque in Sweden. The prayer call, in the last Friday in April 2013, came following a decision earlier in the month by local police who ruled that it would not violate local noise ordinances.

In: <http://www.thelocal.se/20131118/stockholm-mosque-targeted-in-pigs-trotters-attack>, retrieved on 20.11.2013

11. UK: Hate DVD is sent to the Acton mosque – The mosque visited by a terror suspect who evaded police by wearing a burka received a second hate DVD. It arrived through the post the morning after the mosque held an open evening for the public to learn more about Islam to help dispel fears that the faith nurtured extremists and terrorists.

Abdul Maalik Tailor, an interfaith outreach worker at the An-Noor mosque, said that in the morning of 18 November 2013, the mosque in Church Road, Acton, received a second copy of a DVD it was sent in August 2013, containing footage of a fake skull with the words ‘Prophet Mohamed’ scrawled across. Offensive words were held underneath it before it is cut with scenes from a pornographic film and a *BBCNewsnight* report about a banned extremist group.

In: <http://www.getwestlondon.co.uk/news/west-london-news/hate-dvd-sent-acton-mosque-6316432>, retrieved on 20.11.2013



12. France: Racist slurs on Paris Mosque – Racist slurs against Allah were inscribed on the exterior face of the mosque of Paris at the level of the place of the *place du puits de l'ermite* in the fifth arrondissement (district) city hall. The mayor of Paris, Bertrand De laDelanoe, stated: “These insults are at the same time irresponsible and

intolerable. By targeting the Muslims in Paris, those that have professed these insults to Muslims in France and betray the republican pact that links us all. In the name of Parisians as well as in my personal name I want to assure the director of the mosque of Paris as well as the Muslim community of my support and of my friendship”

In: <http://vladtepesblog.com/2013/11/19/racist-slurs-on-paris-mosque/>, retrieved on 21.11.2013



13. **Belgium:
Mosques
defilement angers
Locals** – Belgium
Muslims denounced
the heinous attacks
on mosques in the
Belgian town of

Genk after they were desecrated with swastikas and abusive slogans. The attack occurred reportedly in the night of 22 November 2013, when three mosques were desecrated with swastikas and abusive slogans. A pig head was also left outside one mosque. The attacks were widely condemned by Belgian officials, while police increased its patrols surrounding the mosques. Mayor of Genk Wim Dries condemned the attacks as “unacceptable”. He was quoted as saying by *NVONews*: “We won’t tolerate this. Nobody wants this kind of signs on a religious building”. Launching an investigation to try and find the culprits, two people in their twenties had been identified by the police through the testimony of neighbors and images of surveillance cameras placed near the vandalized mosque. The suspects were arrested and placed in custody.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/mosques-defilement-angers-belgians/#more-26302>, retrieved on 27.11.2013

14. **Iceland: Protest against Mosque may be defined as Hate Crime** – Three pig heads and bloodied pages of the Koran were scattered across the plot of land allocated to the Association of Muslims in Iceland for the building of a mosque on 27 November 2013. Reykjavík City Council formally approved the building site for Iceland’s first mosque in September 2013. The Association of Muslims in Iceland was allocated the plot of land in January of the same year.

In: http://www.icelandreview.com/icelandreview/daily_news/Protest_against_Mosque_may_be_Defined_as_Hate_Crime_0_404452.news.aspx, retrieved on 30.11.2013

15. **Islamophobia in Russia** – The election in August 2013 of Sergei Sobyenin, an ultranationalist, as mayor of Moscow had given racism in Russia a prominent official face. In the last week of November 2013, the mayor stunned the world by announcing that Moscow was banning the construction of new mosques. The ban was one of the latest and clearest signs of the growing anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim sentiments in Russia.

According to the *Christian Science Monitor*, the four existing mosques in Moscow are overcrowded, but Mayor Sobyanin declared that no new mosques would be built because “they are used by migrant workers”. A new mosque was then under construction, but there would not be any more, the mayor said. He told the Russian daily newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda*: **“No new building permits will be issued. I think that’s enough mosques for Moscow.”** By December 2013, it was estimated that there were 2 million Muslim residents in the city, but none of Moscow’s four existing mosques could hold more than 10,000 people. Worshippers frequently had to use the streets or wait for hours to enter the existing mosques, especially on Fridays and religious occasions. Russian Muslim activists said that Russian authorities had long tried to prevent construction of new mosques, but this was the first clear ban in recent memory.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/islamophobia-in-russia/#more-26536>, retrieved on 02.12.2013, emphasis added

16. Russia: Construction of Kaliningrad mosque stopped – The Central District Court halted construction of the mosque on two land lots in the Southern Park of Kaliningrad, as the Museum of Fridlanskiye Vorota filed a lawsuit against the construction. The organization believed that the Kaliningrad head granted free land illegally for the mosque and the road to it on 3 August 2009. **Locals residents had been protesting against the mosque construction. A 20-year-old welder attempted to blow up the mosque in November 2011.**

In: <http://vestnikkavkaza.net/news/society/48216.html>, retrieved on 04.12.2013, emphasis added.

17. UK: Vandals scrawl more offensive graffiti on planned Worcester Park mosque – Vandals scrawled offensive graffiti on the door of a building a Muslim community wanted to use as a mosque. The graffiti, saying “f*** off c****”, was spotted over the weekend of 7–8 December 2013 on the front door of the Bank Chambers building in Green Lane, owned by a Muslim group that had had **two applications to turn the building into a mosque** turned down. It was not the first time the building had been targeted by vandals, earlier in 2013 someone daubed a **swastika on the same door.**

In: http://www.yourlocalguardian.co.uk/news/topstories/10865317.Vandals_scrawl_more_offensive_graffiti_on_planned_Worcester_Park_mosque/?ref=nt, retrieved on 10.12.2013, emphasis in the original

18. US: Vandals defile Islamic Society of the Appalachian Region center – The Mercer County Sheriff’s department was investigating an act of vandalism that occurred at the I.S.A.R. (Islamic Society of the Appalachian Region) Worship Center near Princeton. Mercer County Sheriff’s Deputy E.P. Parks is conducting an investigation into the

vandalism that occurred either late 08 December 2013 or early morning of the following day.

A person or persons unknown spray painted defamatory words with negative references to Allah, the numbers “666” making reference to the Antichrist, the word “pedophile” and other anti-Islamic words.

In: <http://www.bdtonline.com/local/x468538347/Vandals-defile-Islamic-Society-of-the-Appalachian-Region-center>, retrieved on 20.12.2013

19. France: Pig’s head and ears left at Besançon mosque – *AFP* reported that in the morning of 22 December 2013 a pig’s head and several pig’s ears were found outside the Souna Mosque in Besançon, which had previously been the target of Islamophobic acts. Only in November 2013 a swastika and the slogan “Long live the FN” (Front National) were painted on the wall. The mosque had suffered an earlier graffiti attack in August 2013 when an SS sign, a Celtic cross, an Odal rune and the words “Vive la France” were sprayed on the building. In February 2013, Star of David graffiti was daubed on the mosque. Police patrols had been stepped up around the premises. In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/pigs-head-and-ears-left-at-besancon-mosque/>, retrieved on 24.12.2013



20. Sweden: Swastikas scrawled on Stockholm mosque – The doors to the central Stockholm mosque were covered in Nazi graffiti in the night of 1st January 2014, the first time vandalism had taken the shape of swastikas, representatives said.

The swastikas, which covered the men’s entrance to the mosque on Södermalmisland in Stockholm, were discovered in the following morning. The mosque was vandalized in December 2013, but the damage was not overtly political. Mosque administrators reported the vandalism to the police, which were documenting the damage. An anti-fascist tag with an accompanying anarchist symbol were also scrawled on the mosque’s façade.

In: <http://www.thelocal.se/20140102/swastikas-scrawled-on-central-stockholm-mosque>, retrieved on 03.01.2014

21. **Australia: Group rallies against mosque proposal** – As of 14 January 2014, *The Stop the Mosque in Bendigo* page on Facebook had attracted more than 1700 likes since being created three days earlier. The administrators of the group did not respond to a request for comment and made a post saying they did not want to deal with the inevitable backlash.



The page said the media was “aligned with the left and will not give a true and correct report”, and the “about” section said it was not a forum for debate as “It is for those who don’t not want a mosque in Bendigo for their own reasons...We live in a democracy and we are exercising our right to say 'no' to what happens in our country. Please like, share and ask the City of Greater Bendigo to show some leadership on behalf of our great country.”

In another post, it said: “We are entitled to our views and request that the City of Greater Bendigo **stops the mosque based on historical evidence that not one community in the world has benefited in a positive way from a mosque and Muslims setting up camp in a community.**”

But Bendigo mayor Barry Lyons said councillors would consider the application on planning grounds, and Councillors had unanimously said they are not opposed to the mosque on religious or cultural grounds.

In: <http://www.bendigoadvertiser.com.au/story/2023064/group-rallies-against-mosque-proposal/?cs=12#slide=1>, retrieved on 15.01.2014, emphasis added.

22. UK: Six teens charged with race attacks at Sandwell mosque – On 28 January 2014, West Midlands Police revealed that six teenagers as young as 14 had been charged after mosque worshippers including pensioners and a schoolboy were slapped and kicked. Members of the Cradley Heath Mosque & Islamic Centre were targeted, sparking an investigation from officers.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/six-teens-charged-with-race-attacks-at-sandwell-mosque/#more-28356>, retrieved on 29.01.2014

23. UK: Man Held of Alleged Bomb Threat – Nigel Flanagan, a 52-year-old man, had been remanded in custody after he allegedly threatened to bomb a mosque. He had been accused of telling the police that there was an explosive device in a Harlow place of worship on 8 January 2013. Mr Flanagan was also accused of causing religious aggravated fear or provocation of violence through words or behaviour, motivated towards Muslims.

In: http://www.guardian-series.co.uk/news/10974599.Man_held_over_alleged_mosque_bomb_threats/, retrieved on 31.01.2014

24. UK: Fury at protest group's legal bid to stop planned £17.5m mosque in Cambridge in which they claimed it could be "front for terrorism" – A protest group was criticized for a legal application to stop a £17.5 million mosque being built in Cambridge, in which they claimed it could be "a front for terrorism". Stephen Gash, of Stop Islamisation of Europe (SOIE), and Sareeta Webra, founder of Sikhs Against Sharia (SAS), made an application for a Cambridge County Court injunction to prevent the mosque in Mill Road to be built. The application called for a "court injunction to be served against the Muslim Academic Trust for construction of a mega-mosque". The campaigners claimed the planning consultation was not conducted "lawfully", adding: "It is well documented that many so-called Muslim charities are fronts for Islamic terrorism and that several of those cited are based in the United Kingdom."

In: <http://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/Cambridge/Fury-at-protest-groups-legal-bid-to-stop-planned-175m-mosque-in-Cambridge-claiming-it-could-be-front-for-terrorism-20140129060229.htm#ixzz2rp0Q1HiW>, retrieved on 31.01.2014

25. France: Mosques in Vandoeuvre and Pontarlier are attacked, while Islamophobic incidents continue to rise – *The Collectif contre l'Islamophobie en France* reported that two mosques were attacked in the last week of January 2014. On the night of 28–29 January the Al Ihsan mosque and cultural centre in Vandoeuvre-lès-Nancy suffered extensive damage – its doors were smashed and the administrative office completely ransacked. (The same mosque was targeted in September 2012, when the building

was defaced with Kahanist graffiti.) The following night a mosque in Pontarlier was the victim of a far-right graffiti attack, with a swastika and an “SS” symbol sprayed in white paint on the doors.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/france-mosques-in-vandoeuvre-and-pontarlier-are-attacked-while-islamophobic-incidents-continue-to-rise/#more-28504>, retrieved on 03.02.2014

26. Australia: Anti-Islamic group moves to stop mosque in Ballarat, Victoria – An anti-Islamic group was mobilizing against Ballarat’s first mosque. *Restore Australia*, which described Islam on its website as an “aggressive totalitarian political ideology”, planned to letterbox people in Ballarat to “mobilize people to write to the council” to oppose the building of a mosque at 116 Elsworth Street East in Ballarat. *Restore Australia* chief executive officer Mike Holt said supporters of the group in Ballarat were being organized to protest the building of the mosque. He said Islam was incompatible with the Australian way of life, as “Islam wants to bring in sharia law. It doesn’t matter (which branch of Islam) because they all believe in the same Islam, the same prophet Muhammad and the same God Allah...A mosque is the thin end of the wedge to Islamise our society. They build a mosque and then more Muslims move in. We’re opposing the mosque on the grounds of a lack of parking, traffic congestion, pollution, and that property prices in the area will come down because of its presence.”

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/anti-islamic-group-moves-to-stop-mosque-in-ballarat-victoria/#more-28555>, retrieved on 03.02.2014

27. Germany: Cologne Central Mosque attacked a third time – The Central Mosque in Cologne was attacked for the third consecutive time since 02 of February 2014. In a written statement, the Religious Affairs Turkish Islamic Association said the assailant slammed a car into the door of the central mosque and tried to torch it throwing combustible material at the door of the conference hall of the mosque. The statement said that mosques in Hurth and Wesseling were also attacked on the same day.

In: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/todays-news/128186/cologne-central-mosque-attacked-a-third-time>, retrieved on 05.02.2014

28. US: Manteca Mosque Vandalized with Graffiti, Raw Bacon – The Islamic Center of Manteca (California) was reportedly hit with spray-painted hateful messages. Vandals also apparently left behind strips of raw bacon. Basim Elkarra, executive director of the Sacramento Valley chapter of CAIR, added that the Manteca mosque had been hit by vandals before, and



“Because of the nature of the vandalism and the fact that the mosque has been targeted in the past, we urged state law enforcement authorities and the FBI to investigate this disturbing incident as a possible hate crime.”

In: <http://fox40.com/2014/02/04/manteca-mosque-vandalized-with-graffiti-raw-bacon/>, retrieved on 05.02.2014

29. France: Another mosque desecrated – The mosque of the Moroccan cultural association in Sounna de Blois, a town situated between Orléans and Tours, was desecrated during the night of 11–12 February 2013 with a pig’s head and several pieces of pork, along with the slogan “MLE France” sprayed on the door of the mosque. The meaning of these initials was unknown.



The mayor of Blois and the prefect’s chief of staff visited the site to express their support for the Muslim community, and interior minister MaueValls issued a statement condemning the desecration: “These vile and heinous acts, deliberately targeting a Muslim place of worship, have only one objective, to attack the foundations of our Republic.”

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/another-french-mosque-desecrated/>, retrieved on 16.02.2014

30. US: Anti-Muslim messages found in books left at Bothell mosque –Worshippers at the Islamic Center of Bothell (Washington) were fearful of what would happen next after discovering 10 books with hate-motivated language in the mosque’s parking lot on 22 February 2014. Bothell police were investigating the incident and other incidents that happened at the mosque in months before. On the following day, the Washington chapter of the Council of American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-WA) sent a letter to the FBI, asking it to launch a deeper investigation.

In: <http://blogs.seattletimes.com/today/2014/02/anti-muslim-messages-found-in-books-left-at-bothell-mosque/>, retrieved on 24.02.2014

31. UK: Six arrested after firework thrown at Whitley Bay Islamic Centre – A firework was thrown at an Islamic centre in Tyneside. Around eight people were inside the Whitley Bay Islamic Cultural Centre, on Hillheads Road, and were praying at the time of the attack just before 2.30pm on 05 March 2014 afternoon. No one was injured. Police arrested two men aged 29, and four other men aged 27, 25, 23 and 19, who were then helping police with their enquiries. Police insisted that it was an isolated incident.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/six-arrested-after-firework-thrown-at-whitley-bay-islamic-centre/#more-29543>, retrieved on 08.03.2014

32. New Zealand: Man attacks mosque, head-butts police car – Members of the Islamic community in Hamilton have been abused while cleaning a mosque in the city in preparation for morning prayers on 14 March 2014. Inspector Greg Nicholls said a 48-year-old man faced three assault charges and two charges of intentional damage after allegedly assaulting one man and spitting and swearing at others at the mosque before head-butting a police car. He praised the behaviour of victims for showing restraint in the face of a racial attack, as “Instead of retaliating, the victims phoned 111 and responding police located the offender at a park across the street.”

In: <http://news.msn.co.nz/nationalnews/8814454/man-attacks-mosque-head-butts-police-car>, retrieved on 15.02.2014

33. Spain: Catholic Church accused of hiding Cordoba Cathedral’s Islamic history – Spanish campaigners accused the country’s Catholic Church of trying to cover up the Islamic history of Cordoba Cathedral, a world heritage site that was originally a mosque. It is one of the most famous Islamic sites in Europe, but those coming to learn about that are left none the wiser by the information leaflets given out to tourists, critics say.

Antonio Manuel Rodriguez, a law professor at Cordoba University, said: “For the citizens of Cordoba, what has hurt our feelings is that they have cut off the name and the memory of the monument”. He had been a member of a secular group of local campaigners who had gathered 146,000 signatures on a petition demanding that the common Islamic and Christian heritage of the site be recognized. The acclaimed British architect Norman Foster was among the signatories, as well as many Spanish writers and scientists and moderate Catholics.

A historical jewel in the southern city that was a capital of Islamic Spain in the Middle Ages, the building with its cobbled patios and minaret draws more than a million visitors each year. The entry ticket visitors receive bids them “welcome to the Santa

Iglesia Cathedral”, but does not mention that the building, now administered by the church, was a mosque for centuries. However, the “Save the Cordoba Mosque” petition said: “Over the past few years, the Diocese of Cordoba has erased the term ‘mosque’ from all the information leaflets of what is recognised worldwide as a symbol of cultural harmony,”. This “offers millions of tourists a distorted historical account, which crudely adulterates the essence of a complex building and an emblem of diversity.”

The visitors’ leaflets pointed out that a mosque was built on the site of a Visigoth church in the eighth century, but skims over its next 500 years as a place of worship for Muslims at the height of the Islamic rule in southern Spain. UNESCO, in its listing of Cordoba’s historic centre as a world heritage site, highlighted its place in the Andalusia region’s golden age, which began with its conquest by the Moors in the eighth century.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/catholic-church-accused-of-hiding-cordoba-cathedrals-islamic-history/#more-29765>, retrieved on 16.03.2014



34. Italy: mosque vandalized, Qur’an burnt – On the evening of 16 March 2014, vandals attacked the Mosque of Peace, located 80 kilometers from Rome, destroying its property and burning copies of the Noble Qur’an. The mayor of the city expressed his solidarity with the local Muslim community, calling on the city’s officials to “respond collectively to the provocations of those who seek to undermine peace

and tolerance in the city.” The leaders of the local Muslim community in charge of the “Mosque of Peace” through the association “Salsabil” also denounced the “act of vandalism” that would “undermine the coexistence between different communities on the territory of the province of Rieti.”

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/italian-mosque-vandalised-quran-burnt/#more-29906>, retrieved on 19.03.2014



35. UK: Jury shown videos of Michael Piggin throwing firebomb and spraying anti-Muslim graffiti – A jury was shown a video of a teenager accused of planning a repeat of the Columbine massacre throwing a molotov cocktail in an alley. Michael Piggin was accused of arming himself with guns and explosives as he plotted a terrorist attack on staff and pupils at his former school in

Loughborough, Leicestershire.

The jury was shown a video of Piggin lighting a rag stuffed inside a bottle of flammable liquid and then throwing it. It exploded leaving a trail of flames on the ground and up an exterior wall. Piggin then inspected the small fire and poured cola on it before walking away swigging from the drink bottle. A second video was shown to the courtroom of Piggin writing anti-Muslim graffiti on a wall. The teenager is seen spray-painting “No More Mosques!” in large black letters.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/jury-shown-videos-of-michael-piggin-throwing-firebomb-and-spraying-anti-muslim-graffiti/#more-29977>, retrieved on 22.01.2014

36. UK: Fascist group entering mosques and handing out inflammatory literature – A group purporting to be on a ‘Muslim anti-grooming campaign’ were entering



mosques and handing out inflammatory literature. In the latest video posted on the Britain First website, led by chairman and former British National Party member Paul Golding, members of the group could be seen standing inside a mosque in Bolton. They then hand over inflammatory and anti-Muslim leaflets to a mosque member.

On the website it stated that the team visited mosques in Bolton, Oldham, Rochdale and Burnley. They ended the video by visiting the home address of Gordon Birtwistle MP, Burnley MP who was quoted in an article earlier in March 2014 criticizing the group. As well as the Golden Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre in Rochdale, members of the group visited the JamiyatTabligh-ul-Islam mosque in Oldham and the Madina Mosque in Bolton.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/fascist-group-entering-mosques-and-handing-out-inflammatory-literature/#more-29986>, retrieved on 22.03.2014

37. UK: Neo-Nazi who plotted to blow up Mersey mosques branded ‘evil’ by judge – Ian Forman, a neo-Nazi who plotted to blow up Merseyside mosques, was branded “evil” by a judge on 25 March 2014. He was terror suspect who planned to explode home-made devices packed with nails and ball-bearings. He downloaded pictures of two mosques near his home and labelled them “targets” before making a string of *YouTube* posts threatening to “blow them up”. Forman, who frequently expressed his racist ideology and views against the disabled to friends and workmates, also posted on *YouTube* about “Mosques lighting up the sky to keep us warm in the winter”.

On 25 March 2014, a jury of seven men and five women at Kingston Crown Court found Forman guilty of engaging in conduct in the preparation of terrorist acts. Judge Paul Dodgson said: “The defendant had, in my judgement, very extreme and evil thoughts – I think the word evil is appropriate. As the jury found he at some points had the intention of carrying those evil thoughts out. For his sentencing there must be a message sent out by the court that this behaviour is regarded with extreme gravity. But, on the other hand, I must mitigate this by the acknowledgement that his intention wasn’t carried out to effect.”

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/neo-nazi-who-plotted-to-blow-up-mersey-mosques-branded-evil-by-judge/#more-30103>, retrieved on 26.03.2014

38. UK: Muslim prayer room signs vandalised at King’s College London – Muslim prayer room signs were vandalized at Guy’s campus, with one sign having “Muslim” scratched out and other with a “#jewish” sticker over the same word.



Students, who spotted the signs in the night of 27 March 2014, expressed fear of “threats and violence” that may be used against them from the blade used to deface the board. The College had been called on to look through CCTV to find those responsible, in what had been described as a “clear violation of safe space policy”.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/muslim-prayer-room-signs-vandalised-at-kings-college-london/#more-30181>, retrieved on 29.03.2014

39. US: Texas terror suspect planned mosque attack, officials say – Robert James Talbot Jr. considered himself a revolutionary seeking to create a different society by robbing an armored car, killing police and even blazing a bloody path through a service at a mosque where he would shoot men, women and children at prayer. He was ordered held without bond on 2nd April 2014 at a hearing in Houston.

In: <http://www.latimes.com/nation/nationnow/la-na-nn-texas-terror-suspect-mosque-attack-20140402.0.2322303.story#axzz2xoqoZRok>, retrieved on 03.04.2014

40. Canada: Montreal Islamic centre gets axe thrown through window – The Assahaba Islamic Community Centre in Montreal's East-End had an axe thrown through its window with an anti-Muslim note attached to it just after 7 April 2014 night's provincial election. The note also said "F— Liberals," the winning party.



Montreal Police spokesman Cmdr. Ian Lafrenière said investigators were treating the incident as a hate crime.

In: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2014/04/08/montreal-islamic-centre-gets-axe-thrown-through-window/>, retrieved on 10.04.2014

41. US: Christian protestor promotes hatred in front of Dearborn Mosque – An unidentified woman who claimed to be Christian held up a large sign along an expressway in Dearborn, Michigan across from the Islamic Center of America Mosque in what was clear an act of provocation to insult and slander Muslims. A member of the Mosque named "Norman S." approached the woman and urged her to come to the mosque and meet Muslims, but the woman refused.



In: <http://thearabdailynews.com/2014/04/19/christian-protestor-promotes-hatred-front-dearborn-mosque/>, retrieved on 20.04.2014

42. France: mosque files complaint after 'letterbox threat' – A mosque in Mantes-la-Ville, western suburbs of Paris, said on 18 April 2014 it had filed a complaint with the police after slices of pork pate and a threatening letter were stuffed into its letterbox on 16 April 2014. The next day, an anonymous letter arrived calling Muslims “cockroaches” and wishing “good luck” to the new mayor “because he has a lot of work to do for a good cleansing, in particular of the Muslim race”.

In: <http://www.nation.lk/edition/breaking-news/item/28227-french-mosque-files-complaint-after-letterbox-threat.html>, retrieved on 20.04.2014

II. Incidents Related to Muslim Cemeteries:

1. US: Murfreesboro mosque faces opposition over cemetery plans – A mosque in Rutherford County had been open for more than a year, but it seemed the legal battle against it was not over. Opponents of the Islamic Center of Murfreesboro wanted to take their case to the United States Supreme Court, and it came as the congregation was seeking to open a cemetery on the property.

Late on 09 December 2013, the original 14 plaintiffs, who sued in 2010 to stop construction of the mosque, filed a motion with the Tennessee State Supreme Court asking the court to stay its decision. Attorney Joe Brandon said: “We asked the Tennessee Supreme Court to stay its mandate, pending resolution of this case before the United States Supreme Court...**Unless the mandate is stayed, or the BZA stops its plan, there will be a cemetery, a sports field and, then, a Muslim Brotherhood training center targeting not only Rutherford County, but also Rutherford County and the cities of Shelbyville, Manchester, Lebanon, Tullahoma, Franklin and Woodbury.**”

The state’s high court declined to hear the appeal, claiming the Rutherford County Planning Commission failed to give proper notice when it approved the original site plans for the mosque.

In: <http://www.wsmv.com/story/24188056/murfreesboro-mosque-faces-opposition-over-cemetery-plans>, retrieved on 12.12.2013, emphasis added.

2. US: Possibility of Islamic Cemetery in Danville Causes Controversy – The Danville Masjid and Islamic Center wanted to form a cemetery at the end of Kingoff Drive, next to the Danville Expressway. But some folks were not happy. The Planning Commission voted unanimously to allow the cemetery’s plans to move forward, but that did not mean it was in the clear yet. Several neighbors said they were very against the

cemetery. They said that they were concerned about the burial procedures, the disruption of having funerals in their neighborhood, and the noise.

In: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2014/01/20/possibility-of-islamic-cemetery-in-danville-causes-controversy/>, retrieved on 21.01.2014

3. US: Republican Congressman regrets that religious freedom allows Muslims to build cemetery – Rep. Scott DesJarlais (R-Tenn.) is “deeply concerned” about a newly approved plan to build a cemetery for Muslim residents of the central Tennessee city of Murfreesboro. DesJarlais, a doctor who won his seat in 2010 in part because of his outspoken opposition to abortion rights, is best-known nationally for the 2012 revelation that he had urged one of his patients to get an abortion after he impregnated her. He expressed his anxiety about the cemetery project in a post on his Facebook page in the afternoon of 18 January 2014.



In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/republican-congressman-regrets-that-religious-freedom-allows-muslims-to-build-cemetery/#more-28282>, retrieved on 26.01.2014

III. Political and Social Campaigns against Islam and Muslims:

1. US: Allen West Calls Out ‘Why Islam?’ Billboard Campaign as ‘Dangerous’, ‘Disturbing’ – Former Republican Congressman and outspoken conservative commentator Allen B. West had expressed his disapproval at an Islamic billboard sign campaign on 19 October 2013. West proceeded to write that the billboards were an example of the “dangerous triumvirate of progressive socialism, secular humanism, and Islamic totalitarianism...”

The billboards West took issue with were posted by the online group ‘Why Islam?’ an organization managed by the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA). The billboard had the caption “Find Jesus in the Quran” and had a chapter-verse citation listed for the Islamic holy book that talked about Jesus. The billboard also included a phone

number where an individual could request a free copy of the Quran and the group's web address. According to the ICNA, there were about 60 such billboards posted throughout the United States and the signs had been posted at varying times over the past decade or so.

In: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/allen-west-calls-out-why-islam-billboard-campaign-as-dangerous-disturbing-107114/>, retrieved on 23.10.2013

2. France: GénérationIdentitaire stages anti-Islam stunt in Lorraine – Following the recent announcement that the mayor and municipal council had agreed to lease a plot of land to the city's Muslim association for the construction of a new mosque, GénérationIdentitaire anti-Muslim activists in the Lorraine capital of Metz started changing street signs, by giving them new names intended to suggest that the city was undergoing a process of Islamification.

The new names included "Place de la mosquée", "Rue de la lapidation", "Rue de la charia", "Rue du niqab" and "Place Allah Akbar". The signs also featured the additional note "With the collaboration of the mayor of Metz". GénérationIdentitaire Lorraine posted photos of the street signs on its *Facebook* page, along with a statement justifying the stunt as a "symbolic action", the aim of which was to denounce "the increasing Islamisation of our city and the entire region". By such actions the organization hoped to "raise the awareness of the population about the growing expansion of the Muslim yoke over our daily lives". It calls on the people of Metz to resist the building of the new mosque.



In: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2013/10/29/generation-identitaire-stages-anti-islam-stunt-in-lorraine/>, retrieved on 30.10.2013

3. France: Le Pen provokes indignation by implying four French hostages might have converted to Islam –The far right leader Marine Le Pen had provoked widespread indignation on 30 October 2013 by implying that four French hostages released in the Sahara might have been converted to radical Islam during their three years in captivity. Ms Le Pen told a radio interviewer that she was "uneasy" about the "astonishing" beards and "strange" clothes worn by three of the men when they arrived back in Paris on that day.

The president of the National Front, who has tried to launder her party's xenophobic image, was accused by mainstream politicians of "coming out in her true colours" and

making “indecent” and “unpatriotic” remarks. The spokesman for the ruling Socialist Party, Eduardo RihanCypel, said: “It seems that Ms Le Pen is so blinded by her hatred of Muslims that she cannot share in the whole nation’s joy at the release of our hostages.” French diplomats said that, judging by initial debriefing of the quartet, there could be no question of them having been “turned” or brainwashed.

In: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/le-pen-provokes-indignation-by-implying-four-french-hostages-might-have-converted-to-islam-8916406.html>, retrieved on 01.11.2013

4. Islamophobia comes to Tahiti – Earlier, the blog *Islamophobia Watch* covered the backlash against a plan to establish Tahiti’s first mosque, resulting in its closure shortly after opening and death threats directed against its imam, Hishan el-Barkani. *Des Dômes Et Des Minarets* drew attention to a 400-strong anti-mosque demonstration that took place in the second weekend of November 2013 in Papeete, the capital of French Polynesia. In addition to the predictable “no to the mosque”, the slogans that featured on the banners and placards carried by protestors included “no to Islam, no to the imam”, “the burqa, yuck”, “hands off my pig”, “la charia fait pas charrier” (which loosely translates as “sharia shouldn’t take the piss”) and “not racist but realist”.



Romain Bonnard, one of the organizers, explained the purpose of the protest: “This is to say no to radical Islam and to inform the public of what Islam and the excesses of that religion really are. It is a religion that wants to gain entry and take power by imposition, that is what we are condemning. What troubles us most is to see what is happening in France, the insecurity generated because of this religion and those who practise it.”

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/islamophobia-comes-to-tahiti/#more-25918>, retrieved on 18.11.2013

5. US: Anti-Islam activist Pam Geller says Pope Francis ‘sanctions savagery’ – Anti-Islam activist and blogger Pamela Geller lashed out at Pope Francis on 26 November 2013, claiming he condoned violence against Christians. She wrote at her blog: “At a

time when Christianity worldwide is under siege by Islamic jihadists, the leader of the Catholic Church claims that the quran teaches non-violence. As Christians across the Muslim world live in abject terror and fear kidnapping, rape and slaughter to the bloodcurdling cries of 'Allahuakbar,' the pope gives papal sanction to the savage."

In the apostolic exhortation *EvangeliiGaudium*, published on the same day, the pope contrasted "violent fundamentalism" with "authentic Islam." The latter, he wrote, was "opposed to every form of violence."

Geller wrote: "How does he know that? When did he become an imam? ...Nothing will be gained by this refusal to face reality. Christians will still be slaughtered in the name of Islam and jihad all over the Muslim world. And now the Pope has forbidden Catholics to speak honestly about what is happening and why. It's a disgrace," she concluded.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/anti-islam-activist-pam-geller-says-pope-francis-sanctions-savagery/#more-26356>, retrieved on 28.11.2013

6. France: Far-right demonstrators defend 'secularism' – On the weekend of 7–8 December 2013, the French "secularist" organization Résistance Républicaine organized an anti-Islam demonstration in Paris.



It was held under what some might consider the rather contradictory slogan of "pour la laïcité et la sauvegarde des fêtes chrétiennes" (for secularism and safeguarding Christian holidays). The role of secularists, according to Résistance Républicaine and its co-thinkers, was to defend the Christian culture of France against the onslaught of Islam. The participants chanted "Islamists – racists, fascists and assassins!" and "Fascism shall not pass, Sharia shall not pass".

Résistance Républicaine is a front organisation for Riposte Laïque, which is headed by ex-leftists Pierre Cassen and Christine Tasin. Cassen, who was one of the speakers at the demonstration, is in fact a former Trotskyist whose warped interpretation of secularism led him to embrace a virulent form of Islamophobia, taking him into the arms of the far right.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/paris-far-right-demonstrators-defend-secularism/#more-27083>, retrieved on 16.12.2013

7. Dutch ultranationalist leader insults Islam – The Leader of Dutch ultranationalist party for Freedom (PVV) Geert Wilders, who altered the Saudi Arabian flag in a slur campaign against Islam and subsequently offered to distribute it as a free sticker was condemned by the Dutch government and opposition parties.

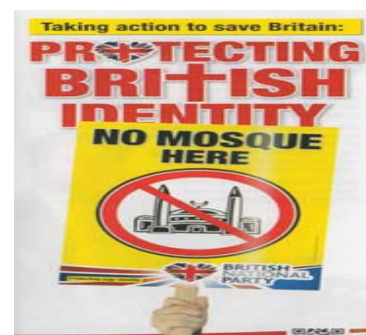
Wilders altered the Saudi flag using the Arabic alphabet to include insults to Islam. He stuck the flag to the door of his office in parliament and urged Dutch society to do the same. Dutch FM Frans Timmermans said: “The government doesn’t approve these acts and does not support Wilders by any means.” Deputy PM Lodewijk Asscher defined the act as “dreadful”, adding that Wilders’ motivation was to offend people, and the Muslims that contributed to Dutch society did not deserve it. The leader of the Labor Party (PvdA) Hans Spekman and leader of Greens (GL) Bram Ojik spoke out against Wilders’ insults.

In: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/?aType=haber&ArticleID=125369>, retrieved on 22.12.2013

Related: Google drops Wilders’ anti-Islam Gmail account – Google deactivated the islamsticker@gmail.com, a Gmail account Geert Wilders was using to spread his anti-Islam stickers. The deactivation was probably prompted by the many complaints Wilders’ umpteenth anti-Islam initiative had prompted. It was the politician himself who reported via *Twitter* on 26 December 2013 that his account had been closed. “Unbelievable; Google just blocked the account. It seems Mohammed Rabbae’s complaint was successful,” he tweeted. Rabbae had complained at Google that Wilders was abusing its service. His complaint –on behalf of the National Council of Moroccans– had been among many complaints that were lodged against Wilders after he came out with his anti-Islam sticker a week before; it read “Islam is a lie. Mohamed is a criminal. The Koran is poison.” The politician claimed the sticker was not meant as an action against Muslims as the majority of people of this faith were not violent. He had since launched a new account where people may order his sticker.

In: <http://www.nltimes.nl/2013/12/27/google-drops-wilders-anti-islam-gmail-account/>, retrieved on 28.12.2013

8. UK: Tory MP slams BNP leafleting in Enfield North – An MP slammed the “scaremongering” tactics of a far-right political party who have been canvassing the borough’s residents. After he was shown a British National Party leaflet that was posted through the letterbox of one of his Enfield North constituents earlier in January 2014, Nick de Bois reacted angrily accusing the right-wing party of “attempting to create tension for political gain”.



But the BNP were unabashed about their aims and a spokesman claimed they were campaigning in the borough because London was “being turned into a foreign country” by Muslims. Insisting that Mr de Bois was in a “state of denial” he added: “The fact is we are looking at the wholesale repression of the British and English population.” Referring to the claims made in the leaflet that the BNP was fighting for animal rights by opposing halal meat which they described as “ritual slaughter” he added: “Halal food is barbaric. It belongs somewhere 5,000 years ago. If people want to do that I would suggest they go and do it in another country as it is completely unnecessary.”

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/tory-mp-slams-bnp-leafleting-in-enfield-north/#more-27950>, retrieved on 15.01.2014

9. Poland: Anti-Islamic group patrols clubs to ‘protect’ Polish women – The far-right Polish Defence League (PLO) launched “patriotic patrols” in Poland’s bars and nightclubs in a bid, it said, to protect Polish women from being chatted up by Muslims. The Polish Defence League, which described itself as “showing the true face of Islam and acting against the Islamisation of Europe,” started the operation in December 2013 in cities including Warsaw, Poznan and Krakow.

The league stated on its official web site: “We are there to observe how Muslims behave and to intervene. In the space of one evening, in hundreds of places across the country, incidents occur involving the seduction of our female compatriots. This is a fight for the future of our country and our women. Because one of these girls, unwittingly charmed by an exotic prince could, along with her offspring, end up very badly in the Islamic world, which is advancing on us with great strides.” According to the PLO, which by the time of this news item had 3600 fans on its Facebook page, Polish women were warned during the patrols about the “threats” of getting involved with Muslim men, the *GazetaWyborcza* daily reports.

The Polish Defence League modeled itself on the far-right English Defence League (EDL) which was founded in Luton, southern England, in 2009 – though the organisation, with 25,000 members in the UK, had been in some disarray after the resignation of its founder members Tommy Robinson and Kevin Carroll. In post on an international anti-Islamist web site, the PLO warned Muslims, in English: **“In Poland, there will be NO sharia law. NO headbanging or shouting Allahu Akbar in the streets. NO insulting our religion and our culture. NO burning cars like in France. NO burning down police stations. NO imposing your ways on us. NO calling us the sons of apes and pigs. If you do, we will be the ones waging jihad...on YOU!”**

In: <http://www.thenews.pl/1/9/Artykul/158678,Antislamic-group-patrols-clubs-to-protect-Polish-women>, retrieved on 16.01.2014, emphasis added.

10. US: Coalition calls on Michigan Republican Party to condemn anti-Muslim comments by National Committeeman – On 15 January 2014, a coalition of American Muslim and Arab-American organizations based in Michigan called on the Michigan Republican Party to condemn recent hostile comments made about American Muslims by Republican National Committeeman Dave Agema, who recently posted on his Facebook account: “Have you ever been to a Muslim hospital? Have you heard a Muslim orchestra? Have you seen a Muslim band march in a parade? Have you witnessed a Muslim charity? Have you seen Muslims shaking hands with a Muslim Girl Scouts (sic)? Have you seen a Muslim Candy striper? Have you ever seen a Muslim do anything that contributes positively to the American way of life?”

Agema, who previously served as a Michigan State Representative from Grandville, had a prolific history of introducing anti-Muslim legislation and making racist and xenophobic comments. Agema introduced anti-Islam legislation under the guise of an anti-foreign laws bill and an Arizona style immigration bill claiming that Dearborn has “sleeper cells.”

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/coalition-calls-on-michigan-republican-party-to-condemn-anti-muslim-comments-by-national-committeeman/#more-28007>, retrieved on 16.01.2014



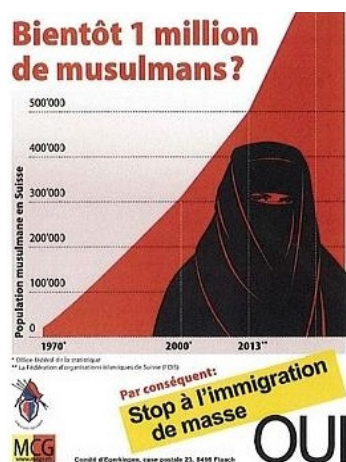
11. Denmark: Dansk Folkeparti leaders divided over whether to restrict Muslim immigration or ban it completely – Senior members of Dansk Folkeparti espoused the opinion that there were enough Muslims in Denmark and border controls should be established to stop more from entering the country.

DF's defence spokesperson Marie Krarup [pictured] wrote in a blog for *Berlingske* newspaper that the time had come to completely halt Muslim immigration, as "We should limit the size of the Muslim minority in Denmark." Anders Vistisen, number two on DF's list of candidates for the European Parliament, agreed that the number of Muslims in Denmark should be limited. DF's citizenship spokesperson, Christian Langballe, couldn't see how a total ban against Muslims could be put into place. "It is impractical to call a complete halt, but I think that Muslim immigration must be limited."

Reacting to the incident, Karina Lorentzen, the integration spokesperson for government coalition party Socialistisk Folkeparti, compared the opinions expressed by the DF members to Nazism, adding: "It is a sick mindset to identify all Muslims as a problem simply because they are Muslims...It is reminiscent of Hitler, who identified Jews as a problem simply because of their religion." Lorentzen said she "was not surprised" by the statements, as "What is more surprising is that DF has been able to put a lid on these discriminatory attitudes that are now becoming visible."

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/dansk-folkeparti-leaders-divided-over-whether-to-restrict-muslim-immigration-or-ban-it-completely/#more-28440>, retrieved on 31.01.2014

12. Switzerland: Local Islamophobes use 'mass immigration' referendum to push



anti-Muslim line – On 9 February 2014 the Swiss electorate were to vote in a referendum on a proposal to reintroduce immigration quotas. The initiative, "against mass immigration", by the right-wing Swiss People's Party had been gaining ground, with an opinion poll in January 2014 finding 43% support for the proposal, up 6% since December 2013. *Le Temps* reported that other right-wing forces backing the initiative had seized the opportunity to promote their own rabidly Islamophobic agenda.

The Egerkingen Committee, which co-ordinated the successful campaign for a "yes" vote in the 2009 referendum over a proposed ban on minarets, was using the 2014 anti-immigration campaign to denounce the threat of "creeping Islamisation", warning against a "massive increase in the Muslim population" that would alter the "essence of Switzerland". It had produced a poster that recycled the image of a woman wearing a full veil previously used in the anti-minaret campaign and predicted that there would soon be a million Muslims in Switzerland.

Daniel Zingg of the right-wing Protestant party the Federal Democratic Union recently declared at a press conference that Islam was not just a religion but “primarily a political system that is in opposition to our legal system”. He also advanced a theory according to which the number of Muslims determined the Islamisation of society. Zingg asserted that when Muslims made up 2–3% of the population, they begin to propagate their religion. From 4–5%, they begin to exert a “disproportionate influence” by demanding, for example, halal food. And when the number becomes greater, they attempt to gain the right to govern themselves according to Sharia.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/swiss-islamophobes-use-mass-immigration-referendum-to-push-anti-muslim-line/#more-28517>, retrieved on 03.02.2014

13. UK: Ukip MEP says British Muslims should sign charter rejecting violence

A Ukip MEP believed that British Muslims should sign a special code of conduct and warned that it was a big mistake for Europe to allow “an explosion of mosques across their land”. Gerard Batten, representing London and member of the party’s executive, told the *Guardian* on 04 February 2014 that he stood by a “[charter of Muslim understanding](#)”, which he commissioned in 2006. The document asked Muslims to sign a declaration rejecting violence and said parts of the Qur’an that promoted “violent physical Jihad” should be regarded as “inapplicable, invalid and non-Islamic”.



Critics said his comments represented the “ugliest side of Ukip” and “overlap with the far-right”, in spite of the efforts of party leader Nigel Farage to create a disciplined election machine ahead of the European elections. Asked why Muslims had been singled out, rather than followers of other faiths, Batten said: “Christians aren’t blowing people up at the moment, are they? Are there any bombs going off round the world claimed by Christian organisations? I don’t think so.”

In a separate video interview from 2010, Batten also proposed a ban on new mosques across Europe, suggested Muslim countries should not be “appeased” and warned of the threats of having “two incompatible systems living in the same place at the same time”.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/ukip-mep-says-british-muslims-should-sign-charter-rejecting-violence/#more-28654>, retrieved on 05.02.2014

14. Canada: Anti-Islam Facebook post forces PQ candidate to drop out – Jean Carrière, Parti Québécois candidate for LaFontaine, dropped out of the Quebec election race

after an anti-Islam Facebook post came to light. Although Jean Carrière said image was meant to be pro-feminist, party-leader Pauline Marois confirmed in the morning of 13 March 2014 that Jean Carrière was no longer running in his LaFontaine riding.

The candidate came under fire for an image he shared on his personal Facebook page. The image, dated 26 January 2014, showed a women holding up her middle finger, with a caption: “F--k Islam”. Carrière’s personal Facebook page was deactivated on 12 March night, and his Twitter account was no longer available. His profile on the PQ’s website was also pulled down, showing a 404 “Page not available” error message in the morning of 13 March 2014.

In: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-votes-2014/anti-islam-facebook-post-forces-pq-candidate-to-drop-out-1.2571031>, retrieved on 14.03.2014

15. UK: EDL disrupts Islam Awareness Week event at Bournemouth University – Bournemouth EDL members caused a stir during an event of Islamic Awareness Week held at Bournemouth University. A large group of men, claiming to be from counter-terrorism think tank Quilliam, attended the talk and posed some difficult questions to converted Muslim speakers Hussein Thomas and Musa Ugandhi. However, a video uploaded to the Bournemouth EDL YouTube channel confirmed that they were in fact members of the English Defence League.

The representative recording the talk justified their presence. He said: “The reason we’ve come here today is because we’re concerned that people have come to Bournemouth University to talk about Islam and there are components of Islam that are a threat to us and we’re concerned for our children who are of the age to be in university.”

In the YouTube description attached to the video, the Bournemouth EDL members described the Islamic Awareness Week event as “A Night of Cultural Terrorism at Bournemouth University”. They went on to say that they had no cause to disrupt the event, but “would have emptied the building by whatever means necessary” in the event of discussion around jihad or the promotion of sharia law.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/edl-disrupts-islam-awareness-week-event-at-bournemouth-university/#more-29883>, retrieved on 18.03.2014

16. Germany: Femen protestors disrupt Berlin Islam Week event – A German religious forum took an unexpected turn on 20 March 2014 when three topless protesters had to be dragged out of the building. The Berlin Islam Week event, held in one of the

city's town halls, was stopped in its tracks by members of extreme protest group Femen, who charged into the hall with slogans attacking "religious oppression" and Sharia law daubed on their bodies. Femen, which began in Eastern Europe, is notorious for using nudity to promote their message of female emancipation and protest against governments and organizations with which they disagree.

Following the event, Femen posted a statement online which attacked the Muslim system of law and claimed that the event was part of a culture which "is responsible for many crimes". It said: "Femen is outraged that the city of Berlin offered a public platform and support to the community that openly spreads inhuman ideology and calls for violence and incitement... Femen calls western government [sic], do not ignore the fact that the violent form of Islam found its niche in the western democratic society. It operates in the parallel world in the midst of our society and is responsible for many crimes. We want to encourage all women to free themselves from patriarchal structures! You are worth as much as your fathers and brothers, you have a right to physical integrity, you have a right to make your own decisions, you have a right to self-determination, to love and freedom!"

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/femen-protestors-disrupt-berlin-islam-week-event/#more-29980>, retrieved on 22.03.2014



17. Canada: Anti-Islamic pamphleteer gets nine months for promoting hate, but can still hand out flyers

A man charged for handing out anti-Islam flyers in Toronto was sentenced on 1st April 2014 to nine months in jail for promoting hate, among other charges, but was still allowed to hand out his flyers. In February 2014, Eric Brazau, 49,

was convicted of willful promotion of hatred, criminal harassment, mischief and breach of probation by failing to keep the peace. The judge called Mr. Brazau's conduct "despicable," but rejected the Crown's suggestion to stop Mr. Brazau from making and handing out the flyers because it would have imposed on him a higher standard than the Criminal Code's section on the wilful promotion of hatred.

In: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/anti-islamic-pamphleteer-gets-nine-months-for-promoting-hate-but-can-still-hand-out-flyers/article17760151/>, retrieved on 03.04.2014

18. US: Islam at center of 9/11 Memorial criticism – Those behind the national 9/11 museum, yet to be opened, were learning, hard way, about the importance of choosing words carefully, as a seven-minute video on the backgrounds of the 19 hijackers discusses their affiliation with al-Qaeda was dubbed controversial. Some

who had seen the video said it focused too much on Islam and unfairly implied an association between Islam and terrorism. Peter Gudaitis, of the Interfaith Center of New York, said: “We object to the terms ‘Islamic terrorism’ and ‘jihadist’. There are not real terms. They’re invented terms. I don’t think this is political correctness. Others may disagree.” The Rev. Chloe Breyer, of the Interfaith Center, said: “We’re challenging the museum to take another extra step in making sure there’s a distinction made between Islam and the identity of the hijackers.”

In: http://abclocal.go.com/wabc/story?section=news/local/new_york&id=9514510, retrieved on 25.04.2014

19. US: Islamic group accuses Republicans of fostering anti-Muslim sentiment – A Florida Islamic group was accusing some Republican Party lawmakers and local party organizations of fostering anti-Muslim sentiment. The Council on American-Islamic Relations, or CAIR, sent letters to almost every Republican Club or party extension in the state, asking the groups to stop bringing speakers who espouse anti-Islamic views. The letter said it represented the interests of more than 150,000 registered Florida Muslim voters.

In: <http://www.heraldtribune.com/article/20140424/ARTICLE/140429816?Title=Islamic-group-accuses-Republicans-of-fostering-anti-Muslim-sentiment>, retrieved on 25.04.2014

20. France: Front National bans halal school meals – Far-right National Front leader Marine Le Pen said on 04 April 2014 it would prevent schools from offering special lunches to Muslim pupils in the 11 towns it won in local elections, saying such arrangements were contrary to France’s secular values. France’s republic has a strict secular tradition enforceable by law, but faith-related demands have risen in recent years, especially from the country’s five-million-strong Muslim minority, the largest in Europe.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/front-national-bans-halal-school-meals/>, retrieved on 06.04.2014

IV. Intolerance against Islam and its Sacred Symbols:

1. France: Anti-Muslim graffiti in Alsace – L’Alsace

reported that in the morning of 17 November 2013, graffiti attacking Muslims and French president François Hollande was discovered on the wall of a disused service station on the road between Hirtzbach and Carspach in Haut-Rhin, having been sprayed on the previous night. The slogans read “Muslims out” and “Hollande too”,



followed by “Enough!!!” Other similar slogans were found on the road between Carspach and Ballersdorf. Hirtzbach’s deputy mayor Olivier Pflieger noted that such racist vandalism had become “part of everyday life in France”, adding “We cannot allow this to happen”.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/anti-muslim-graffiti-in-alsace/>, retrieved on 21.11.2013

2. US: Ohio District Stops Showing Film about Islam –

An Ohio school district had agreed to change its curriculum after a mother and public interest law firm filed public records requests related to several Islam-related materials. In 2011, Jenny McKeigue’s son was required to memorize the five pillars of Islam for his seventh-grade world history class. She also requested the district remove a video titled “30 Days: Muslims and America” from the curriculum. At first, they refused. According to the Thomas More Law Center (TMLC), a year and a half after McKeigue’s complaint, the Olmsted Falls district had removed the video and stopped requiring the memory work. Richard Thompson, TMLC’s chief counsel, said: “Teachers may not constitutionally show videotapes that violate the neutrality they must maintain toward religion. Under the guise of teaching the history of Islam to seventh graders, history teachers were proselytizing students to the Islamic faith.”

In: <http://news.heartland.org/newspaper-article/2013/11/23/ohio-district-stops-showing-film-about-islam>, retrieved on 25.11.2013

3. UK: Koran ‘was ripped up at Birmingham City match’ –

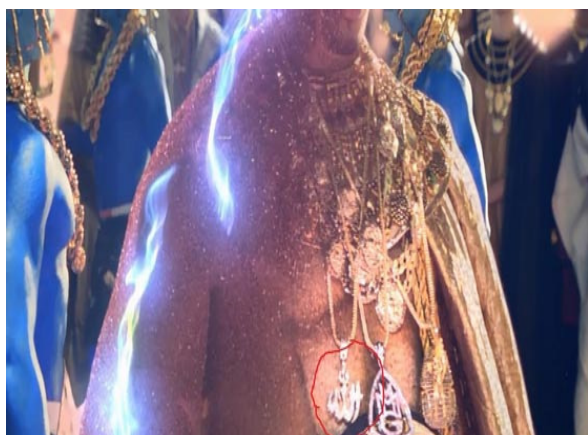
Police were treating allegations that Boro fans ripped up copies of the Koran to goad Blues supporters during a match as a hate crime. Middlesbrough FC immediately suspended two of their fans from all of their games after claims that they provocatively tore out pages from the Muslim holy book during the 2–2 draw in the weekend of 7–8 December 2013. West Midlands Police were treating the incident as a “hate crime” and were liaising with Cleveland Police.

In: <http://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/local-news/koran-was-ripped-up-birmingham-6406631>, retrieved on 16.12.2013

4. Russia: Probe Launched Into Koran-Burning Video – Investigations were launched in Moscow into a video showing Russian men burning the Koran and humiliating an injured young man on the subway. Moscow police said on 9 January 2013 that a special investigative unit was established to identify those behind the video. The clip, which appeared on *YouTube* and elsewhere on the Internet on 5 January 2013, showed at least two men burning a Russian translation of the Koran while cursing the Muslim holy book. The men's faces were not seen. The same voices were heard later in the video demanding that a frightened young man on a Moscow subway train "denounce Allah". The man was nursing a head injury and appeared to have just been beaten. The last part of the video showed pictures of men with soccer scarves and a Russian nationalist flag while an anti-Chechen song was played.

In: <http://www.rferl.org/content/koran-burning-video-russia/25224838.html>, retrieved on 10.01.2014

5. Muslims Want Blasphemous Video Removed – Muslims around the world posted an online petition on 25 February 2014, urging *YouTube* to remove a video by a US pop singer which included a controversial scene in which 'God' pendant was seen being burned. A petition started by ShazadIqbal, from Bradford, UK, on *Change.org*



website read: "This petition is lodged in regards to Katy Perry's music video 'Dark Horse'; hosted by KatyPerryVEVO, on YouTube. The video is considered as highly controversial to its viewers as a result of its portrayal of blasphemy. At 01:15 into the video Dark Horse; a man is shown being burned, whilst wearing a pendant (also burned) forming the word 'Allah', which is the Arabic word for God."

The video, which had a cartoonish Ancient Egypt theme, featured other nonsensical aspects such as cat-human hybrid as body guards with whom Perry pole danced with, a dog which walked on its hind legs, and Perry eating spicy junk food. Petitioners argued that the pop star was meant to symbolize the opposition of God, making the video blasphemous.

Garnering more than 35,000 signatures, the petition was supported by Muslims from different countries around the globe.

Meanwhile and after more than 65,000 signatures, the offending image was quietly erased as of 27 February 2014.

In: <http://www.onislam.net/english/news/americas/469623-muslims-want-blasphemous-video-removed.html>, retrieved on 26.02.2014, and <http://news.radio.com/2014/02/27/after-muslim-backed-petition-katy-perry-erases-blasphemous-allah-symbol-from-dark-horse-video/>, retrieved on 28.02.2014

6. South Korean girl band slammed for misusing Qur'anic verses in song lyrics – South Korean girl band 2NE1 angered Muslims all over the world after it was discovered that they used a verse from the Qur'an as lyrics in a track from their latest album. On 12 March 2014, the Korea Muslim Federation demanded that the band apologized for the misuse of the Qur'anic verses and revise the song lyrics. On inspection, Muslims realized the lyrics were taken from verses 32–34 of the 78th chapter in the Qur'an. The track, which went viral on the internet, offended many Muslims, who considered it blasphemous to use the Qur'an for purposes other than the worship and remembrance of God. YG Entertainment, the firm responsible for producing the track, said that they were willing to delete the segment.

In: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/news/130938/south-korean-girl-band-slammed-for-misusing-quranic-verses-in-song-lyrics>, retrieved on 14.03.2014

7.US: Clarion Fund's new Islamophobic film, 'Honor Diaries' – Richard Silverstein, a Seattle based Jew and self-described “Jewish progressive” and creator of the Israel Palestine Forum, a progressive forum dedicated to discussing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict reviewed the Clarion Fund's latest exercise in Islam-bashing:



The Clarion Fund (now the 'Clarion Project-#1 news site on the threat of Islamic extremism') rides again. After producing three classic Islamophobic films, Obsession, Third Jihad and Iranium, T-H-E-Y'R-E B-A-C-K with a new one, Honor Diaries. The new project focuses on honor killings and Islam's supposed hatred of women. One has to ask why a film about the purported abuse of Muslim women was produced by Jews, and ones with a distinct ideological agenda at that.

Honor Diaries calls itself a “woman's film” (it was launched on March 8th, International Women's Day) when its focus is decrying the alleged

backwardness and misogyny of Islam. Here is the blurb from the film's website in which you can see the sly manipulation of feminism for the purpose of Muslim-bashing:

The film gives a platform to exclusively female voices and seeks to expose the paralyzing political correctness that prevents many from identifying, understanding and addressing this international human rights disaster. Freedom of movement, the right to education, forced marriage, and female genital mutilation are some of the systematic abuses explored in depth.

Spurred by the Arab Spring, women who were once silent are starting to speak out about gender inequality and are bringing visibility to a long history of oppression. This project draws together leading women's rights activists and provides a platform where their voices can be heard and serves as inspiration to motivate others to speak out.

More than a movie, Honor Diaries is a movement meant to inspire viewers to learn more about issues facing women in Muslim-majority societies, and to act for change.

The words "Arab Spring" above are the "hook" for the film. Its producers erroneously saw the Arab Spring as a revolt against Islam. So they devised this film as a wedge to further divide the mass of westerners against Islam. If the Arab Spring represented democracy, feminism, and turning toward western values, then it offered a perfect tool to discredit traditional Islam. Of course, this analysis of the Arab Spring is totally wrong. It did represent a turn toward populism and even democracy in some national contexts, but it in no way rejected Islam.

Another aspect of the marketing of this film is quite devious and sophisticated. Instead of taking on Islam head-on as it did so outlandishly in the previous three films, here the trash-talking is downplayed. It doesn't preoccupy itself with terrorism or claim that all Muslims are terrorists as the earlier films did. Instead, it embraces a subject as American as apple pie: women's rights. We all agree that oppression of women is wrong. So if Clarion can paint a picture of Islamic societies as oppressing women, then it's achieved its goal of discrediting Islam, but done it through the back-door as it were.

In: <http://www.richardsilverstein.com/2014/03/27/clarion-funds-new-islamophobic-film-honor-diaries/>,
retrieved on 30.03.2014

V. Discrimination against Muslim Individuals and Communities:

1.US: Dallas County Sheriff Faces Problems for Allowing Special Meals for Muslim Inmates – A decision by Dallas County Sheriff Lupe Valdez to allow Muslim inmates in the Dallas County Jail to receive special meals during Ramadan had sparked controversy. An article in an online Muslim newsletter promoted Sheriff Valdez's efforts to foster better relations with the Muslim community. But the article started making news for its reference to the special meals offered during the Ramadan holiday. Carole Haynes, a Dallas area conservative blogger, said: "I find it very strange. I can see why people are outraged." She was among those concerned that any inmates are getting special meals or treatment.

In: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2013/10/28/dallas-county-sheriff-allows-special-meals-for-muslim-inmates/>,
retrieved on 30.10.2013

2. US: 10-Year Old Booted from Bus for Speaking Arabic – "A new lawsuit filed Friday in Brooklyn Federal Court charges that a 10-year-old Brooklyn boy was called a "terrorist" and banned from boarding a bus when he recited a Muslim prayer in Arabic after losing his MetroCard. According to the family's lawyer, HyderNaqvi, the boy was trying to board a bus home from school in Sheepshead Bay in October 2012 when he realized he had lost his MetroCard. He recited the following prayer in Arabic as he searched for, and found, his card: "I stand in the name of God the most merciful, the most beneficent." After hearing him do so, the driver became angry, called the boy a "terrorist," and slammed the door shut..."

In: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2013/10/31/10-year-old-booted-from-bus-for-speaking-arabic/>,
retrieved on 06.11.2013

3. UK: MI5 humiliates British Muslims – British Muslims had complained about falling victims to repeated follow-up calls, visits and questioning by MI5 agents trying to recruit them as informants in their Muslim communities. Known as Schedule 7, the curious but wide-ranging legal provision enabled the authorities to stop virtually anyone at British ports of entry for up to nine hours with no evidence or even suspicion of involvement in crime. For many individuals subjected to the regulation, however, an airport interrogation was just the beginning of a series of strange encounters with the security forces.

British intelligence agencies were using such stops to recruit young Muslim men as informants. Ahmed, a Londoner native Muslim who requested his real name not be used, said: "The psychology of the whole thing — it's humiliating, it's aggressive."

The misery of Ahemd started in 2006 when he was stopped for the first time as he was returning home from a trip to Jordan to study Arabic. The native Londoner was questioned for nine hours about his travel history, family and mosque. The interrogators, who identified themselves as agents from the domestic security agency MI5 and the national security police Special Branch, took fingerprints, photographs and an oral swab.

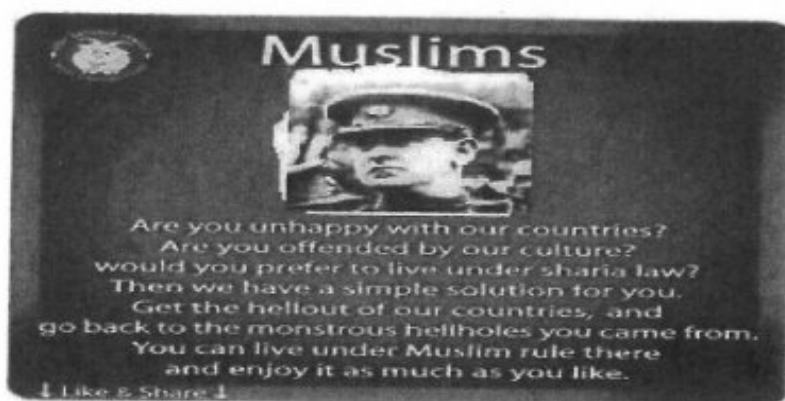
Ahmed's unforgettable experience was done under a legal cover in the British law, known as Schedule 7. A provision of the sweeping Terrorism Act of 2000, Schedule 7 gave the authorities broad powers during such detentions. Property may be confiscated for up to seven days. Any information on cellphones, computers or other electronic devices may be downloaded and the copies kept. Refusing to answer questions could be considered a criminal offense.

In: http://voiceofrussia.com/news/2013_11_12/MI5-humiliates-British-Muslims-8391/, retrieved on 14.11.2013

4. US: Muslim woman bombarded with slurs at New School: suit – JamilahMoudiab, a New Jersey Muslim woman, slapped The New School with a lawsuit on 15 November 2013 alleging she had to quit her job there in March 2013 after being routinely bombarded with racist slurs by co-workers – and was even ordered not to wear her Hijab to work. She filed a civil-rights lawsuit in Manhattan federal court that also alleged her supervisor, Monique NgoziNri, told her shortly after she was hired in 2011 that the Manhattan university was a “religious free zone” and that “if [she] wants to stay at The New School, [she] must not wear a headdress.” Moudiab, who quit her job as an international student advisor in March 2013, claimed mischievous co-workers even anonymously placed a Christian cross and Rosary beads on her desk to “further castigate” her Muslim beliefs.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/muslim-woman-bombarded-with-slurs-at-new-school-suit/#more-25856>, retrieved on 16.11.2013

5. Ireland: Shatter condemns hate mail sent to Muslim Community, says gardaí will take “appropriate action” – Irish Justice Minister Alan Shatter condemned the sending of hate mail to the Muslim community, and said he was bringing the matter to the attention of Garda Commissioner. An unsigned letter, which featured an image of Michael Collins, was posted to a number of schools and mosques recently, threatening extreme violence if building plans for a new mosque in north Dublin get underway.



WE ARE THE DEFENDERS OF IRELAND AND WE TAKE OFFENCE OF MUSLIMS IN OUR COUNTRY , WE WILL DEFEND THIS COUNTRY BY ANY MEANS AGAINST THE EXPANSION OF THE MUSLIM FAITH . WE ARE READY AS THE TRUE HOLDERS OF THE IRISH PEOPLES HERITAGE AND HISTORY TO USE WHATEVER POWERS WE NEED TO STOP YOU THE MUSLIM PEOPLE WHO HAVE NO RIGHT TO BE ON OUR ISLAND .

WE WILL ATTACK ANY MUSLIM MAN WOMEN AND CHILD THAT ENTERS ANY MOSQUE IN IRELAND AND ESPECIALLY IF THE NEW LARGER MOSQUE IS BUILT IN NORTH DUBLIN AND OUR CHILDREN WILL ATTACK YOURS IN SCHOOLS , MUSLIMS HAVE NO RIGHT TO REMAIN IN IRELAND , THE IRISH PEOPLE ARE NOT HAPPY WITH YOUR PRESENCE IN THIS COUNTRY WHICH BELONGS TO THE TRUE IRISH PEOPLE.

JUST BECAUSE SOME SAD POLITICIANS BACK YOU BEING HERE THEY HAVE NEVER SPOKEN FOR THE MAJORITY OF IRISH PEOPLE , ALL THE LEADERS CAN SHAKE HANDS AS MUCH AS THEY WANT BUT THE TRUE FACT REMAINS THE IRISH PEOPLE DO NOT WANT YOU HERE AND WE ARE NOW TASKED TO MAKE SURE YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN BECOME AWARE HOW LITTLE WE WANT YOU HERE .

YOU HAVE NEVER SHOWN ANY INTEGRATION IN ANY COUNTRY AND THIS IS EVIDENT BY HUGE WALLS AND GATES AROUND THE MOSQUES .

MUSLIM TAXI DRIVERS ARE BEING ATTACKED NOT FOR MONEY BUT BECAUSE THEY COMPLAINED ABOUT CHRISTIAN STATUES AT TAXI RANKS UP AND DOWN THE COUNTRY

In: <http://www.thejournal.ie/muslims-attacked-racism-1191193-Nov2013/>, retrieved on 26.11.2013

5. UK: Bacon attack on Wigan shop worker – A hunk of raw bacon was thrown at a shop worker in what police believe was a racially-motivated attack. The incident happened at the Pemberton Service Station on Ormskirk Road, Pemberton, at about 4.30am on 25 November 2013. The Asian attendant was working alone in the station when the door opened and the offender threw the slice of raw bacon. Police Constable Roy Lunio from Greater Manchester Police said: “Because of



the connotations attached to the meat and the fact it was deliberately thrown at an Asian man, we are treating this as a racially motivated crime. To target someone in this way, simply because of their religion or race, is utterly abhorrent and the offender should be ashamed of themselves. This is not a prank, this is not funny or a laugh, it is a very serious and cowardly thing to do and we need to trace him.”

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/bacon-attack-on-wigan-shop-worker/#more-26510>, retrieved on 30.11.2013

6.UK:Imam Loses Eye in Racial Attack – On 07 December 2013, 60-year-old imam Hafiz Salik in Yorkshire city of Hull had been left seriously injured with possibility of losing an eye after he was attacked on his way home with family. In a bid to reassure the Muslim community, Humberside Police officers attended the mosque for prayers, confirming that the attack was very rare. The police had also issued a statement with the details of the attacks, putting the description of the attacker as a white man, 5ft 6in tall, well-built, short brown hair and aged 25–30.

In: <http://www.onislam.net/english/news/europe/466791-uk-imam-loses-eye-in-racial-attack.html>, retrieved on 10.12.2013

7. UK: Pig's head stuck on a spike outside Portsmouth Islamic school – On 3rd December 2013, a pig's head was stuck on a fence spike outside a Muslim school in Portsmouth. The attack on the Madani Academy in Fratton had been branded “a despicable incident” by the Islamic community.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/pigs-head-stuck-on-a-spike-outside-portsmouth-islamic-school/#more-27203>, retrieved on 16.12.2013

8. US: CAIR calls for FBI investigation into vandalism of Muslim's vehicle – On 12 December 2013, the Council on American–Islamic Relations called for the FBI to aid in the investigation of a vandalism incident involving a black Muslim man's vehicle in the city on 07 December 2013. Watertown resident IssaAlzouma's 2003 Chevrolet Avalanche had its windshield shattered, and the front– and back–seat windows on the driver's side smashed. **A note left on the windshield contained several racist and anti-Islamic slurs.**

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/watertown-ny-cair-calls-for-fbi-investigation-into-vandalism-of-muslims-vehicle/#more-27111>, retrieved on 16.12.2013, emphasis added.

9. Japan: Court: Police can gather personal information on Muslims – The Tokyo District Court on 15 January 2014 awarded damages in a lawsuit over leaked personal data but said **police were allowed to collect such information on individuals if they were Muslim.** The plaintiffs' personal information, including nationalities, portraits, place of employment, family composition and places frequented, was leaked in 2010 when the contents of 114 documents related to international terrorism were posted on the Internet. The court ruled that the plaintiffs, all Muslims, should receive about 90 million yen in compensation, pointing to the insufficient management of information by Tokyo's Metropolitan Police Department.

However, the court also said police could gather information on individuals just because they were Muslim, citing the terrorist attacks carried out by Islamic radicals around the world. The ruling said: "There is a sufficient danger that such acts could also occur in Japan." According to the ruling, police needed to gather information to understand the activities of Muslims for the early discovery of terrorists and to prevent international terrorism. The court also tacitly condoned such police action as monitoring areas around mosques and even entering the places of worship to investigate. It said the gathering of information by police would not affect the religious activities of those being investigated.

In: http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind_news/social_affairs/AJ201401160063, retrieved on 29.01.2014, emphasis added.

10. Germany: Muslims outraged at archbishop's comments – Muslims in Germany criticized comments by a senior Roman Catholic archbishop that suggested they were worth less than Catholics. Cardinal Joachim Meisner told members of the conservative Catholic group Neocatechumenal Way: "I always say one of your families replaces three Muslim families."

In: <http://www.kansascity.com/2014/01/29/4784051/german-muslims-outraged-at-archbishops.html>, retrieved on 30.01.2014

11. Austria: Red Cross doctor in Austria rejects blood donations from Muslims – A doctor working for the Red Cross in the Austrian city of Linz caused outrage by criticizing a blood donation campaign by an Islamic charity, claiming that Muslims who come from Muslim countries have bad blood. The IRG foundation had been campaigning for Muslims to donate blood, but a Red Cross doctor claimed that Muslims all at very least had Hepatitis B.

In: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2014/02/12/red-cross-doctor-in-austria-rejects-blood-donations-from-muslims/>, retrieved on 13.02.2014

12. US: CAIR Asks Va. Sheriff to Drop Trainer Who Says Mosques 'Have No Right to Exist', CIA Director is Secret Muslim – On 20 February 2014, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) called on Virginia Muslims and all those concerned about the proliferation of Islamophobia and other forms of bigotry in American society to contact the Culpeper County Sheriff's Office and ask that it dropped a three-day training program on "Jihadi Networks in America" that was to be offered in the last week of February 2014 by John Guandolo, a notorious anti-Muslim conspiracy theorist.

In an article published on 19 February 2014 by Virginia's *Free Lance-Star*, an official with the Southern Poverty Law Center – an organization that monitors hate groups – said: “Guandolo, who resigned from the FBI ahead of a misconduct investigation, has made a career out of spreading anti-Muslim conspiracy theories. Most recently, he claimed that CIA director John Brennan is a secret Muslim agent for the Saudis. It's hard to believe that Culpeper County Sheriff's Office would knowingly get involved with such a disreputable figure.”

In: <http://www.sacbee.com/2014/02/20/6175362/cair-asks-va-sheriff-to-drop-trainer.html>, retrieved on 21.02.2014

13. US: Police arrest man for threatening to stab two Muslim teens – Albuquerque police arrested a man accused of threatening to stab a couple of teenagers playing basketball, **simply because he hated Muslims**. Nilsson Wood was accused of threatening a 15-year-old and his friend with a knife. The incident happened at the basketball court that was part of the Islamic Center of New Mexico.

In: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2014/02/24/police-arrest-man-for-threatening-to-stab-two-muslim-teens/>, retrieved on 25.02.2014, emphasis added.

14. UK: Legoland cancels Muslim family fun day in fear of “guest and employee safety” – Legoland cancelled a family outing organized by a prominent Muslim scholar in fear of guest and staff safety after they received a number of threatening calls, emails and social media posts. The family fun day which was organised by Sheikh Haitham al Haddad of the Muslim Research and Development Foundation (MRDF) for Sunday 9th March 2014 and would not be going ahead after a barrage of violent messages were made by far-right Islamophobic extremists. The English Defence League, Casuals United and other far-right groups vowed to hold a protest outside Legoland, many threatening to use violence to prevent the family outing.

In: <http://www.5pillarz.com/2014/02/26/legoland-cancels-muslim-family-fun-day-in-fear-of-guest-and-employee-safety/>, retrieved on 01.03.2014

15. France: French airforce sergeant who planned to shoot Muslims has case dismissed – The *Collectif contre l'islamophobie en France* drew attention to reports that Christophe Lavigne, a sergeant in the French airforce with far-right links, would not be prosecuted. Lavigne was arrested in August 2012 and charged with planning an armed attack on worshippers at the Al Forqane mosque in the Lyon suburb of Vénissieux to coincide with the end of Ramadan.

Lavigne would stand trial in June 2014 on a charge of desecration of a place of worship in connection with a terrorist enterprise, having reportedly confessed to an earlier

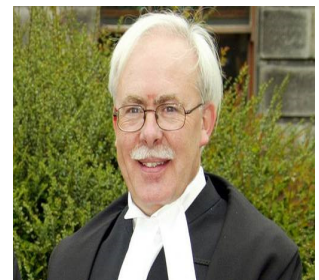
firebomb attack on a mosque in Libourne. The CCIF comments: “There is no doubt that he represents a real terrorist threat, as he has already shown in practice by throwing a Molotov cocktail at the mosque in Libourne in August 2012. So how could this armed, dangerous and recidivist Islamophobe have been able to escape conviction and not be expelled from the French armed forces either?”

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/french-airforce-sergeant-who-planned-to-shoot-muslims-has-case-dismissed/>, retrieved on 26.03.2014

16. US: Shooting Death of Sacramento Muslim Man Eyed as Possible Hate Crime – On 27 March 2014, the Council of American Islamic Relations (CAIR) held a press conference for Hassan Alawsi, a Sacramento-area Muslim man shot and killed in the parking lot of Home Depot off of Florin Road on 16 March 2014. At first, the Sacramento County Sheriff’s Department thought Alawsi’s murder was random but information from the family of the alleged shooter, Jeffrey Michael Caylor, lead them to believe it may have been racially motivated. **Sheriff’s Department Sergeant Jim Barnes said: “It seems he has a dislike for what he describes as a Muslim community.”** Investigators had Caylor, 44, in custody. Video of the suspect showed him stalking Alawsi in the minutes leading up to the shooting. Still, the Sheriff’s Department would not confirm Alawsi’s death to be a hate crime.

In: <http://fox40.com/2014/03/27/shooting-death-of-sacramento-muslim-man-eyed-as-possible-hate-crime/>, retrieved on 28.03.2014, emphasis added.

17. Ireland: Outrage as judge claims: ‘Muslims feel they can beat their wives’ – A judge caused outrage after saying he thought “Muslims feel they can actually beat their wives” during the trial of a Somali man accused of burglary at his former wife’s house. Judge Anthony Halpin’s comments made before a packed courtroom on 27 March 2014 caused a government minister and the Immigrant Council of Ireland to say he needed to immediately clarify or withdraw the remark made during a criminal case.



The judge made the statement just days after telling Tallaght Court he was to be reassigned elsewhere, saying he “may have stepped on some toes”.

In: <http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/courts/outrage-as-judge-claims-muslims-feel-they-can-beat-their-wives-30133991.html>, retrieved on 29.03.2014

18. 5. US: Man made anti-Muslim remarks, spat on teenage girl on bus in Queens – Police on 15 April 2014 were asking the public to help them find a suspect who allegedly spat on a 15-year-old girl and raised his fist to her while making anti-Muslim statements on a bus in Queens. The incident happened around 9 a.m. on 07 April 2014, on a Q88 Metropolitan Transportation Authority bus at the Horace Harding Expressway (Interstate 495) and Kissena Boulevard, police said.



In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/police-man-made-anti-muslim-remarks-spat-on-teenage-girl-on-bus-in-queens/>, retrieved on 17.04.2014

VI. Incidents Related to Hijab (Veil):

1.UK: Woman Fined for Punching Somali Wearing Burka – A woman had been ordered to pay a total of £355 after being found guilty of punching and racially abusing a Somali woman wearing a burka on 29 June 2013. Tracy Davies, 46, from Charlton, southeast London, attacked the 55-year-old victim in Woolwich, the same area where soldier Lee Rigby was murdered in May 2013 – the drummer's death led to a spike in reported crimes against Muslims and Islamic places of worship.

In: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2013/10/04/woman-fined-for-punching-somali-wearing-burka/>, retrieved on 09.10.2013

2. UK: British minister fans flames by backing ban on Muslim face veils in court – British Minister Ken Clarke told *BBC* radio on 04 November 2014: *"We do need a clear rule. I don't think a witness should be allowed to give evidence from behind a veil."* Clarke, a minister without a portfolio, was also a criminal lawyer and the holder of several posts, including Justice Minister and Home Secretary in the past. He had also argued that wearing an Islamic women's dress in court is akin to being *"in a bag"*, which was likely to add to the already heated debate following the September 2013 case where a judge banned a veiled Muslim woman from testifying at her own trial.

In: <http://rt.com/news/islam-veil-uk-minister-177/>, retrieved on 06.11.2013

3. Russia: Municipal deputy urges Moscow ban on hijab – Municipal deputy of the Yakimanka District Dmitry Zakharov was going to address Moscow mayor Sergey Sobyenin with a request to ban wearing hijab in city. He told the *Metro* daily: "I believe it is not right for any religious formation to demand special attitude. In fact, hijab is outer manifestation of such demand. It's no good, I think we need to ban wearing it in public places: in the streets, in state and educational establishments...For instance, if a girl wears hijab to school, it's more likely that girls in her class won't communicate

with her. And even more likely, she won't be able to communicate with the boys there. So after graduation we will get an alien, rather than a child integrated in the society."

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/municipal-deputy-urges-moscow-ban-on-hijab/>, retrieved on 08.11.2013

4. Czech Republic: Young Muslim women leave Prague nursing school over hijab ban – *Czech Television* (CT) said on 08 November 2013 that two Muslim girls left a nursing secondary school in Prague as they were not permitted to wear their hijabs, being the first to have ended their studies for this reason in the Czech Republic. The principal of the Prague school Ivanka Kohoutova said the school had made no mistake. She said since the law did not define the wearing of hijab, schools could create their own rules.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/young-muslim-women-leave-prague-nursing-school-over-hijab-ban/>, retrieved on 12.11.2013

5. France: Baby-Loup hijab ban upheld by appeals court – A French court had upheld the controversial sacking of a childcare worker who wore a headscarf to work. In a case that had gripped France for five years, a Paris appeals court ruled on 27 November 2013 that the dismissal of nursery worker Fatima Afif was legal. Baby-Loup, the crèche employing Fatima Afif in the multicultural Parisian suburb of Chanteloup-les-Vignes, fired her in 2008 after she refused to remove her Islamic headscarf at work. The judge followed the advice of the state prosecutor, who had asked for the sacking to be confirmed in the name of France's secularism. 27 November's ruling stated that the crèche had a "public service mission" and had a right to "impose neutrality on its personnel".

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/baby-loup-hijab-ban-upheld-by-appeals-court/#more-26331>, retrieved on 28.11.2013

6. Canada: Canadian professors wear veil in protest against law targeting Muslims – *According to CBC news*, two Canadian non-Muslim professors, Nora Jaffari, a history professor at Concordia University, and Catherine Lu, a professor of political science at McGill university, *decided to put on the hijab to workplace as a protest against a draft law that would ban teachers from wearing the veil in the country*. Nora Jaffary was quoted as saying by *CBS news*: "I wear it as a kind of sign of solidarity." Catherine Lu wore the Muslim headscarf in September 2013 in the hope to trigger a discussion about the topic in her classroom. Professor Jaffari was still reportedly wearing the veil on the campus at the time of this news (27 November 2013).

In: <http://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2013/11/113707/canadian-professors-wear-veil-in-protest-against-law-targeting-muslims/>, retrieved on 28.11.2013

7. Australia: Thugs bash Muslim schoolgirl wearing hijab in Wantirna South (Melbourne) – The high school student was walking home from Westfield Knox along Stud Rd when she was set upon by a group of teenagers, according to Knox councillor Joe Cossari, who said it was a racial attack. The teen was punched to the ground and kicked, but did not report the assault to police because she feared reprisal.

In: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2013/12/02/thugs-bash-muslim-schoolgirl-wearing-hijab-in-wantirna-south/>, retrieved on 04.12.2013

8. France to maintain a headscarf ban despite legal advice –France decided on 23 December 2013 to maintain a ban on Muslim headscarves for volunteer school monitors despite a warning that it overstepped the law requiring religious neutrality in the public service. The Council of State, which advised the government on disputed administrative issues, said in a 32–page analysis that this neutrality did not apply to mothers who helped escort schoolchildren on outings such as museum visits. Education Minister Vincent Peillon promptly announced the ban would continue because the Council’s opinion also said that schools could impose internal rules against religious wear. “The memo (establishing the ban) remains valid,” he said in a communiqué after the Council’s analysis was released.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/france-to-maintain-a-headscarf-ban-despite-legal-advice/#more-27547>, retrieved on 25.12.2013

9. Italy fines Tunisian woman for wearing Islamic veil in mosque way – Police in the city of Novara, a stronghold of Italy’s anti-immigration Northern League, stopped the Muslim woman on a Friday (24 January 2014) while she was walking with her husband to prayers wearing a black niqab that covered her face but left her eyes exposed. Police handed her a 500–euro fine under a bylaw introduced in January 2014 by the mayor of Novara which banned clothing in public that prevented identification by police.

In: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/islam/58038/muslims-in-russia-mark-100th-anniversary-of-st-petersburg-mosque-photo>, retrieved on 29.01.2014

10. US: Florida girl attacked after wearing hijab to school – A Florida girl said she had been verbally and physically assaulted because she wore a hijab, or head scarf, to school. ZahrahHabibulla, 14, said she did not have problems at school with other children until she started wearing her hijab on 14 December 2013. The Polk County teen said she wore the hijab for religious reasons.



The Polk County School District released the following statement on 03 February: “Since learning of these concerns, school officials have taken a proactive role in

addressing any issues to ensure the safety and welfare of the student. The School Board remains committed to providing an educational environment that is safe, secure and free from harassment or bullying.”

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/florida-girl-attacked-after-wearing-hijab-to-school/#more-28661>, retrieved on 05.02.2014

11. UK: Staffing agency says no job for teenager ‘if she wears a headscarf’ – An 18-year-old girl who applied for a job at Roosendaal staffing agency *All-In* was shocked to be told she could not work there if she wore a headscarf. The girl, named by free newspaper *Spits* as Leila, had not worn a headscarf to the interview but had done so during a previous internship. *All-In* asked her about this and added “we are a Dutch company and are allowed to make demands.” Leila, who told *Spits* she had no intention of wearing a headscarf to work, later phoned back the company asking for clarification and recorded the phone call. In that conversation it was again made clear to the girl that “the company is Dutch and I can require this of my staff”. *All-In* spokeswoman Judith van Aalst told *Spits* she had only wanted to warn Leila about possible client reactions, as “Some 95% of our clients are Polish and she might have been bullied. That is why I raised the headscarf issue.” Leila then made a formal complaint to the police.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/staffing-agency-says-no-job-for-teenager-if-she-wears-a-headscarf/#more-28776>, retrieved on 09.02.2014

12. France: Local firm bans Muslim headscarves at work – A privately-owned French company claimed to have become the first in the country to ban the wearing of Muslim headscarves and other prominent religious symbols at work. But critics said the move, which had the backing of employees, was against the law. From 11 February 2014 onward the 4,000 workers at recycling company Paprec, based in the Parisian suburbs would no longer be allowed to demonstrate their religious faith by wearing items like the Yarmulke/Kippah (the Jewish skullcap), Christian crosses and Muslim head or face covers.



Paprec’s CEO Jean-Luc Petithuguenin said he set the new rules in eight-article agreement that followed closely the principles already laid in French secular laws. The new restrictions

were modeled on France’s landmark 2004 law that banned the wearing of conspicuous religious symbols in French state schools and other government buildings.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/french-firm-bans-muslim-headscarves-at-work/#more-28903>,
retrieved on 13.02.2014

13. Finland: Helsinki clothing store bosses fined over headscarf sacking – Helsinki District court fined managers at a Helsinki clothing retailer for discriminating against an employee on the basis of religion. They received 20 day-fines for sacking a Muslim worker who was told she should not wear a headscarf.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/helsinki-clothing-store-bosses-fined-over-headscarf-sacking/>,
retrieved on 25.03.2014

14. US: Planet Fitness kicked Muslim woman out for wearing head scarf: lawsuit – Tarainia McDaniel, a Muslim woman, said a gym in Albuquerque booted her out because she was wearing a head scarf. The woman reportedly told staff at the gym that the head scarf was an essential part of her Muslim faith. In return, she was told to go find a baseball cap on 3rd October 2011.



McDaniel's civil lawsuit, filed under the New Mexico Human Rights Act and the Unfair Practices Act, alleged that Planet Fitness illegally based the decision to deny her access upon her religion, or alternatively upon her race — as an African-American — and that the gym had no legitimate reason to deny her entry. Planet Fitness denied those claims. The company's attorney Erika Anderson said the head covering McDaniel was wearing violated the gym's dress code policy. Planet Fitness prohibited members from wearing "jeans, work boots, bandanas, skull caps or revealing apparel."

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/planet-fitness-kicked-muslim-woman-out-for-wearing-head-scarf-lawsuit/>, retrieved on 25.03.2014

B. Statement by His Excellency Mr. IyadAmeenMadani, Secretary General of the OIC at the 4th

Istanbul Process Meeting on the follow-up of Implementation of HRC Resolution 16/18

Doha, State of Qatar, 24 March 2014

His Excellency Dr. Ibrahim Alnaimi, Chairman Doha International Centre for Interfaith Dialogue,

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I participate in this Fourth Round of the Istanbul Process Meeting on the implementation of Res 16/18 and want to sincerely thank the government of Qatar and the Doha International Centre for Interfaith Dialogue for hosting this event.

In today's increasingly interconnected world, where fast flow of information and human migration has transformed socio-cultural boundaries, religious intolerance and incitement is a recipe for disaster. Combating religious discrimination and intolerance, therefore, remains a formidable challenge of our times. If not addressed squarely, such intolerance will have serious repercussions for the unity, stability and coherence of our societies. Its long term impact on the multi-cultural fabric of current international order as well as regional and international peace and security are even more problematic.

One of the contemporary manifestations of such intolerance is Islamophobia, which constitutes a matter of vital concern at the OIC. Recent manifestations of this menace have resulted in scores of killings and human sufferings in Central African Republic and Myanmar.

Distinguished Participants,

For over a decade the OIC sought to maximize protection for religious minorities by introducing a specific UN resolution on "combating defamation of religions". First introduced in 1999, the resolution was adopted by consensus but gradually lost support, mainly from Western countries, on the grounds that it: a) unduly limits freedom of expression; b) seeks to protect religions or set of beliefs instead of individuals and communities; and c) focuses mainly on Muslims and Islam.

Over the years, discussion on this resolution became overtly intense and controversial, which led to a gradual decrease in support of this resolution both at the Human Rights Council (HRC) and the UN General Assembly and marginalized the whole debate of Islamophobia and religious intolerance. In order to make progress on this subject, the OIC embarked on a different approach by approaching the issue from the lens of existing human rights law.

At the 15th Session of the HRC, the OIC Secretary General outlined an Eight-point approach for action at the national and international levels, aimed at addressing the issue of religious intolerance. The US Secretary of State, in acknowledging the importance of the eight points towards building a consensus asserted that “it is time to overcome the false divide that pits religious sensitivities against freedom of expression and pursue a new approach based on concrete steps to fight intolerance wherever it occurs”.

The positive momentum to address the issue of combating religious intolerance was duly reflected in a new OIC sponsored resolution on the subject, commonly known as Res. 16/18, which was adopted by consensus at the 16th session of the HRC in March 2011. Res 16/18 provides for various substantive, administrative, political and legislative actions to be taken at the national and international levels to address the concerns relating to freedom of religion or incitement to hatred and discrimination. Since then the resolution has been adopted by consensus both in the HRC and UNGA sessions every year.

In July 2011, the OIC Secretary General along with former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, held a meeting in Istanbul on the subject of combating intolerance, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence on the basis of religion or belief. Foreign Ministers and officials from 28 countries from around the world and international organizations as well as the EU High Representative were invited to participate. The joint statement issued at the end of the Istanbul meeting called upon all relevant stakeholders across the world to take seriously the call for action set forth in Res 16/18; and to continue to strengthen the foundations of tolerance and respect for religious diversity as well as enhancing the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms around the world.

The Istanbul meeting was a timely initiative and was dubbed the Istanbul Process. It

aims at ensuring a sustained and structured process of engagement with a view to following up on the implementation of Res 16/18. The process provides for a three pronged approach namely:

1. conducting a series of events at multiple venues, to discuss and assess implementation of Res 16/18, at the level of experts;
2. reporting to the HRC through the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, based on the findings of experts as reached through the process of technical engagement; and
3. monitoring the implementation of resolution 16/18 by the HRC through the available reporting mechanisms.

The implementation of events held under the framework of the Istanbul process lies in developing a better understanding of stakeholder's different perspectives, interests and concerns and accordingly devising a suitable plan of action based on positive and effective good practices shared in these meetings.

Distinguished Participants,

To date, three Expert Meetings have been held under this Process, respectively hosted by the United States, in Washington D.C., in December 2011, the United Kingdom, in association with Canada, in Wilton Park, London in December 2012 and the OIC, in Geneva, in June 2013.

During the First meeting in Washington, the focus was prohibiting discrimination based on religion or belief and training government officials, including on how to implement effective outreach to religious communities. Discussion focused mainly on the need to ensure appropriate training of relevant government officials to tackle the issue of discrimination as well as appropriate popular awareness raising on the right to seek legal recourse against religious intolerance and discrimination. It was emphasized that effective national security policy and protection of human rights were mutually reinforcing and that profiling based on religion or ethnicity not only violates human rights, but also provides a false sense of security.

The Second meeting, held in Wilton Park, United Kingdom, also focused on specific points of the Action Plan and interalia highlighted the importance of a) sharing available best practices to counter incitement; b) regular reporting to the HRC on steps taken by governments to effectively implement Res. 16/18; c) speaking out by the

political and religious leaders against intolerance; d) using the freedom of expression positively to combat intolerance; and e) education as central to promoting inclusion and combating intolerance.

The Third Expert meeting, hosted by the OIC, focused on concrete action points namely “Speaking out against intolerance, including advocacy of religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence”; “Adopting measures to criminalize incitement to imminent violence based on religion or belief”; and “Recognizing that the open, constructive and respectful debate of ideas, as well as interfaith and intercultural dialogue at the local, national and international levels, can play a positive role in combating religious hatred, incitement and violence”.

Today’s meeting, hosted by Qatar is a succession of these meetings under the Istanbul Process. It would have been more in line with the previous meetings, if this meeting had taken the same route to dwell on effective implementation of one or more of the agreed points of its Action Plans. Nevertheless, enhancing channels for dialogue, in particular interfaith collaboration goes with the aim of combating religious discrimination and fostering tolerant and equal societies. Resolution 16/18 also acknowledges that open, constructive and respectful debate of ideas, as well as interfaith and intercultural dialogue at the local, national and international levels can play a positive role in combating religious hatred, incitement and violence.

Through these meetings the OIC aims to initiate discussion on defining clearly the bounds of hate speech or acts that may fall under that category because there is a clear divergence of views on this important subject between two main convictions. There are those who are ready to speak out against intolerance and discrimination but are clearly not ready to determine the threshold between freedom of expression and hate speech and least to even discuss its criminalization. Lack of such clarity or even an effort to delineate or discuss this important shortcoming continues to be a source of concern for many. Consensus on Res. 16/18 would thus remain fragile unless it stands the test of full and effective implementation through open and candid discussions to determine where freedom of expression ends and incitement to religious hatred begins.

Freedom of expression is not an absolute right. OIC’s position is firmly grounded in Article 19 and 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which provide clear limitations, including the duty of the State to prohibit by law, “any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence”. In this spirit, the OIC has been active in engaging in constructive

debates at the international level to further delineate boundaries between the free speech and the hate speech, including incitement to violence.

It is also important to highlight that OIC has always upheld the principle of openly discussing all ideas, values or beliefs in an environment of tolerance and respect. Its position on the need to protect the sanctity of religions and their symbols is not to accord exceptional protection to a particular set of values, but to avoid defamatory stereotyping and insults that result in negative profiling of their adherents and lead to undue discrimination, hostility and violence against them.

Distinguished Participants,

Islam like other religions recognizes the role of critical thinking. However, there must be a distinction between criticism or constructive discussion, which is a legitimate part of freedom of expression, and sheer disrespect, defamation, insult and negative stereotyping that falls into the category of inciting religious hatred. This is a very important aspect of the larger discourse that requires careful consideration.

In many societies religious convictions or spiritual values constitute an essential part of individuals' daily lives and is the backbone of their individual and communitarian identities. Hence, an attack on their religion or disrespect of their religious beliefs is an attack on their individual and collective identity and dignity. It is essential to draw a line between free speech and hate speech. While interfaith and intercultural dialogue can help better understanding, it must also be complemented with integrated international efforts to combat incitement to religious intolerance, discrimination and hatred through effective legal means.

I would also like to propose that while focusing on the interfaith dialogue as a mean to advancing freedom of religion, we must also look at the broader picture and try addressing interrelated issues such as causes, tools available to address the problem with particular reference to the loopholes and grey areas. Interfaith and intercultural dialogue must also be complemented with integrated international efforts to combat incitement to religious intolerance, discrimination and hatred through effective legal means. The Istanbul Process serves as an avenue for such an integrated approach.

I thank you all.

SEVENTH
OIC OBSERVATORY

REPORT ON ISLAMOPHOBIA

