

**ORGANIZATION OF
ISLAMIC COOPERATION**



NINTH OIC OBSERVATORY
REPORT ON

ISLAMOPHOBIA

May 2015 – September 2016

**PRESENTED TO THE
43rd Council of Foreign Ministers**

Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan

18-19 October 2016



Original: English

NINTH OIC OBSERVATORY
REPORT ON
ISLAMOPHOBIA

May 2015 – September 2016

PRESENTED TO THE
43RD COUNCIL OF FOREIGN MINISTERS

Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan

18-19 October 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD by the OIC Secretary General

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

1. TRENDS BRINGING SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS ON ISLAMOPHOBIA, INTOLERANCE AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MUSLIMS	7
1.1. <i>The Refugee Crisis and the Rise of 'Reflexive' Prejudice against Muslims in Europe</i>	7
1.2. <i>The 2016 US Presidential Campaigns and the Rise of Anti-Islam Sentiment, Racism and intolerance against Islam</i>	9
1.3. <i>The Continued Wave of Terrorism in Europe and the Rise of Islamophobia</i>	11
2. MANIFESTATIONS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA	13
2.1. Islamophobia in the USA and Canada	13
2.1.1. <i>Polls and Reports on Islamophobia in the United States and Canada</i>	13
2.1.2. <i>Islamophobic Discourses and Campaigns</i>	17
2.1.3. <i>Surveillance against Islam and Muslims</i>	22
2.1.4. <i>The Rise of Far Rights</i>	25
2.2. Islamophobia in Europe	28
2.2.3. <i>Polls and Reports on Islamophobia in Europe</i>	28
2.2.4. <i>Islamophobic Discourses and Campaigns in Europe</i>	33
2.2.5. <i>The Continued Rise of Far Rights</i>	35
2.3. Islamophobia in the Rest of the World	45
2.3.1. <i>Muslims in Myanmar</i>	45
2.3.2. <i>The Continued Islamophobia in Australia</i>	47
2.3.3. <i>Islamophobia in India</i>	50
2.3.4. <i>Islamophobia in Thailand</i>	52
2.4. Other Islamophobic Trends	55
2.4.1. <i>Islamophobic Gestures and Policies against Veil, Hijab, and Burqa</i>	55
2.4.2. <i>Discrimination against Muslims in Employment</i>	60

3.	SOME POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS	63
3.1.	Public Policy	63
3.2.	Court Decisions and Trials against Islamophobes	66
3.3.	Positive Views on Islam	70
3.4.	Counter-balances on Far-Rights	75
3.5.	Supports on Mosques	83
3.6.	Positive Development on Hijab	87
3.7.	Positive Development on Inter-Faiths	88
4.	MONITORED INSTITUTIONS IN CONNECTION WITH THE SUBJECT OF ISLAMOPHOBIA	101
4.1.	The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)	102
4.2.	Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA)	102
4.3.	Middle East Forum (MEF)	103
4.4.	David Horowitz Freedom Center	103
4.5.	Jihad Watch	103
4.6.	Society of Americans for National Existence (SANE)	103
4.7.	Abstraction Fund	104
4.8.	Clarion Project	104
4.9.	ACT for America	104
4.10.	The Allegheny Foundation	105
4.11.	The American Public Policy Alliance (APPA)	105
4.12.	Former Muslims United (FMU)	105
4.13.	Center for Security Policy (CSP)	105
4.14.	The Counterterrorism & Security Education and Research Foundation (CTSERF)	106
4.15.	Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI)	106
4.16.	Stop Islamization of Nations (SION)	106
4.17.	Forum for Middle East Understanding (FMEU)	106
4.18.	American-Islamic Forum for Democracy (AIFD)	106
4.19.	International Network for Hate Studies (INHS)	107
4.20.	Center for American Progress (CAP)	107
4.21.	The Islamophobia Research and Documentation Project (IRDP)	107

4.22. Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding	107
4.23. American against Islamophobia Project	108
4.24. Zaytuna College	108
4.25. Jews against Islamophobia Coalition (JAI)	108
4.26. Pew Research Center	108
4.27. Human Rights First	109
5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	110
ANNEXES: ISLAMOPHOBIC INCIDENTS	113
<i>I. Incidents Related to Mosques</i>	113
<i>II. Political and Social Campaigns against Islam and Muslims</i>	119
<i>III. Intolerance against Islam and its Sacred Symbols</i>	123
<i>IV. Discrimination against Muslim Individuals and Communities</i>	125
<i>V. Incidents Related to Hijab (Veil)</i>	130

FOREWORD BY THE OIC SECRETARY GENERAL



Secretary General of OIC
Iyad bin Amin Madani

It is a pleasure for me to submit the 9th Annual Report of Islamophobia prepared by the Islamophobia Observatory, through which the OIC keeps spotlighting the phenomenon of discrimination against Muslims together with its various manifestations that have seriously disrupt the broad segment of Muslims' life across the world.

Through this observatory, the OIC also seeks to monitor cases of violence and hatred with a view to document and in particular to submit them to the Council of Foreign Ministers of the OIC Member States. In a wider context, the OIC wishes to raise global awareness on the obvious danger of Islamophobia as well as on discriminatory policies and practices against Muslims.

Modern transportation and communication have turned the world into a small global village where religions and cultures should coexist and where races and nations must live side by side as neighbors. While such a circumstances could facilitate mutuality and coexistence among human races, we can yet see that this opportunity has been under-going serious threat from the enemies of peace and the peddlers of hatred.

Islamophobia is a sentiment, an excessive fear against Islam that transform into gestures of intolerance and deliberate act of discriminations against Muslims, insults upon Islamic sacred symbols, and event violent crimes against people with Islamic attires. Islamophobia also concerns with intentional attempts to tarnish the image of Islam as religion together with its over one billion followers who have in fact built up radiant civilizations and stood as an exemplary model of tolerance and coexistence. Islamophobia is actually part of racist movements that usurps the right to freedom of thought, belief and identity and targets its victims not for particular action they could have committed, but rather on the basis of their appearances and religious backgrounds. It usurps human rights at their most basic level.

Therefore, Islamophobia does not represent a threat to Muslims only. Rather, it constitutes a threat to the very principles of justice, equality and freedom, just as it represents a threat to security and social harmony. It runs over the achievements of human society evolved over centuries, as well as of human endeavor and sacrifice on the basis of which international institutions have been set up to ensure the preservation of humanity's achievements. In addition, Islamophobia is not a matter of concern for the OIC Member States only. It is rather a cause for mankind at large, the interests of the entire international community, given that it quite simply represents a threat to international peace and security.

Eventually, this phenomenon of Islamophobia commands specific measures to be taken at legal, cultural, religious, academic, political, and humanitarian levels, and I am pleased to state here that the OIC has been trying to tackle this issue, through efforts, strategy, and programs. The OIC seizes every opportunity to open doors for dialogue with the other, since the negative stereotypical image of Islam been etched in the hearts and minds of the hatred advocates cannot be removed except by removing first the fear from Islam and its misapprehension. Through sustained positive

dialogue aimed at creating mutual understanding the OIC is trying to address the problem right into the mind and soul of people towards the establishment of coexistence and mutual respect.

Islamophobia must be seen as a racist trend that is prohibited by all international standards and laws. It usurps man's fundamental freedom of expression and belief and enlarges the gulf separating human fellows which can take one or another form of terrorism.

Within this context I wish to bring into the serious attention of decision-makers in the Islamic world that the most dangerous stage of Islamophobia has begun through institutionalization of hate toward Muslims in the heart of national policies, laws and school curriculum of some countries to poison the mind of innocent children in order to insure the continuity of hatred against Muslims through generations.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation, under the terms of its charter and in implementation of its summit and ministerial resolutions, has been consistently present on the international arena, striving to support justice, tolerance, moderation and peace, and combating terrorism and extremism on the one hand, while confronting Islamophobia on the other. Along this noble and long-distance track, the OIC seeks the constant supports from Member States to help the organization to fulfill its endeavor towards banishing hatred and racism while spreading love, justice, peace and tolerance among all humankind.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ninth Annual report of the OIC Islamophobia Observatory covers the period from May 2015 to September 2016. The report contains 5 (five) main chapters and an Annex.

Chapter 1 on '*Islamophobia, Intolerance, and Discriminations against Muslims*' describes the increasing trend of Islamophobia under the covered period, indicated by the growing fear against Islam and Muslims in certain parts of the world which led to negative perceptions among non-Muslims. Within such circumstances, Islam was seen as a religion of intrinsic violence whose disciples had a tendency to spread harm to the followers of other religions. Islam was also portrayed as an extreme and violent religion prone to bloodshed, a stigma that trigger intolerant attitudes amongst non-Muslims *vis-à-vis* their otherwise. These negative stereotyping eventually ended up into the dread or hatred of Islam that includes multi-level discrimination against Muslims around the world, reflected through exclusion of Muslims from the economic, social, and public life. This negative trend was mostly boosted by 3 (three) factors which have multiplied Islamophobia, namely: the Trump phenomenon, terrorist attacks in Europe, and the immigrants issue. Along this Chapter, the Observatory elaborates these three factors focusing on their contribution towards the growing Islamophobia in the US and in Europe during the reviewed period.

Chapter 2 reveals '*Manifestations of Islamophobia*' around the world, being classified into 3 (three) different categories based on geographical consideration: a) Islamophobia in the United States and Canada; b) Islamophobia in Europe, and; c) Islamophobia in the rest of the world. In addition to these three categories, d) 'Other Islamophobic trends' forms a section under the same chapter since it shows a general trend of fear against Islam and its attires which is not necessary regional or geographical in term of character. For this latest category of Chapter 2, the Observatory focuses on Islamophobic gestures and policies against Veil, Hijab, and Burqa; and also on discriminations against Muslims in Employment. Chapter 2 provides a review on how Islamophobia remains to strongly exist in the United States and Canada, and how it continued to take root through intensive media campaigns and public discourses showing 'fear' towards Islam; and also through the significant number of incidents occurring sporadically against Muslims, mosques, Islamic centers, as well as Islamic attires. This Chapter also reveals the fact that more and more Europeans were critical to Muslim population, a condition that feeds to Islamophobia in the continent and tends to lead European societies towards intolerant attitudes against Muslim minorities. It also presents evidence that the number of Islamophobes in Europe keeps increasing during the reviewed period, and that the anti-Islam sentiments has been nibbling the countries across the European continent. Chapter 2 also exposes the concerning trend of Islamophobia in 4 (four) locus of different regions: a) Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar; b) Islamophobia in Australia; c) Islamophobia in India, and; Islamophobia in Thailand. These locus were chosen based on the Observatory's assessment on the level severity, or due to the potential growing of Islamophobia in the areas. They were presented here in this report in hoping to have particular attention from Member States.

Chapter 3 highlights some '*Positive Developments*' in term of actions, attitudes, sentiments, initiatives as well as other steps and positions taken by governments or by non-Muslim individuals against Islamophobes. All of these positive signs were classified into seven categories through which such friendly signs were reflected, comprising: public policy, court decision and trials against Islamophobes, positive views on Islam, counter-balances to Far-Rights, support on mosques, positive attitude towards hijabs, and positive development on inter-faiths. In fact, through this chapter the Observatory wants to bring upon the Member States' attention that counter-balancing power to the Islamophobia does exist in places where the issue was growing. Most of them were the long-existing products of the spirit of tolerance and

harmony within the local society, and many of them flourish as reaction to the growing hate sentiments against Islam and Muslims, based on their awareness on the danger of Islamophobia within their own society. The positive gestures elaborated in this chapter were undertaken mostly by non-Muslims, whether they are representing the governments, religious groups, communities, or individuals.

Chapter 4 presents the result of Observatory's observation on institutions around the world who have been working on the subject of Islamophobia. Twenty seven institutions were presented in the current report—all operates in the US. There exists a huge number of institutions related to Islamophobia so that observing all of them is less feasible hence the chapter elaborates only the most active institutions, particularly those who have most pertinence with the OIC's measures and undertakings in this area; and since Islamophobia issue is mostly alarming in Europe and the US, it seems to be beneficial to focus only on institutions operating in these two hot spots. Scrutinizing those institutions, the Observatory made a classification based on their vision, mission, programs, activities, gestures, or simply on the constant attitudes and positions taken by their key figures; hoping that such a classification could help the OIC in establishing the right position *vis-à-vis* the institutions which are grouped into 3 categories: 1) Potential Partner; 2) Potential Threats; 3) Potential Counterpart among Threats, and; 4) Potential Ally.

Chapter 5, which is the last chapter of this report, presents the *conclusion* of the overall chapters, followed by a set of *recommendation* that proposes some steps and actions suggested to be taken by the OIC as well as by the relevant stakeholders including Member States, while to encourage them to consider taking actions to renounce extremism and to counter Islamophobia. The main background of this recommendation is the fact that Islamophobia trend worldwide during the reviewed period has reached an alarming level hence requires immediate actions at international and national levels. Collective and worldwide endeavor to combat Islamophobia is expected to minimize its negative impacts on social life based on tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

Finally, the report also includes an Annex showing a list of Islamophobic incidents happened around the world under the reviewed period, which was classified into 5 (five) categories: *Incidents Related to Mosques, Political and Social Campaigns against Islam and Muslims, Intolerance against Islam and its Sacred Symbols, Discrimination against Muslim Individuals and Communities, and Incidents Related to Hijab.*

INTRODUCTION

Like other phobias, Islam-phobia is a kind of fear, or more precisely an excessive fear against Islam and anything associable with Islam i.e. Muslims, mosques, Islamic center, minarets, the Holy Qur'an, Hijab and so on. Very often, such a fear is directed towards certain practices like Halal food standard, men with beard, type of dress and clothes, or simply towards names that sounds 'Arabic'. Islamophobia also constitutes racism and discriminations against Muslim individuals in their daily life, in media, in workplace, in political sphere, etc. Islamophobia rests in the mind of people but it may also reflect in xenophobic attitudes of hatred and intolerance. Obviously, Islamophobia often manifests in violent acts such as burning mosques, vandalizing Muslims' properties, abusing women wearing scarf, or insulting sacred symbol of Islam. Therefore, the nature of Islamophobia initially involved psychological rather than political, economic, or social elements, and eventually it spills over, affecting the multiple dimensions of human life. At a subsequent point, the disease of Islamophobia was then intermingled with other issues related to politics, economy, social conflicts, religious tensions, extremism, terrorism, democratic values, Freedom of Expression, and so forth.

There exists a general pattern: that Islamophobia is usually growing fertile in non-Muslim societies, or in countries where Muslims are amongst the minority groups, despite the fact that the situation is quite *vice versa* in some regions. For instance, Islamophobia tends to be high among the Jews living in Gaza, or among the Buddhists living in the three southern provinces of Thailand, places where Muslims constitutes the majority. However, in most of the case, the paranoia against Islam were growing strongly in places where Muslims were demographically less, such as those in the US, Italy, Spain, Germany, Netherlands, Denmark, UK, Norway, Sweden, Belgium, Russia, Myanmar, China, India, Australia, etc. where the number of Muslims are less than 5% of the total population. Such a situation is quite logic since there is a connection between the minority status of Muslim communities and the tend-to-be suspicious gesture of the mainstream majorities, which is considered as 'normal' even in the most democratic countries.

However, the minority status of Muslims was not the sole factor, because the seeds of Islamophobia are found diverse in different places. In Southeast Asia such as in Myanmar and Thailand, the growing phobia against Islam could be regarded as an excess to the existing political issues. In China's Xinjiang Province, the Islamophobia seems to be imposed by 'local' government. In Australia, the rising Islamophobia has its roots in external factors from outside of the country, particularly due to the series terrorist attacks in Europe as well as the phenomenon of ISIS in the Middle East. In many cases in the West, which is the main concern due to its severity, Islamophobia often have strong connections with the issue of integration related the historical fact that most of Muslims who live in western countries were products of immigrant influx during the previous generations. As a matter of survival, they had been struggling to integrate into the mainstream societies through cultural, social, and sometimes religious assimilations. This process was not always smooth and often involved clash of culture and identity, those contributed towards the growing Islamophobia in Europe that was tripled since last year due to the phenomenon of terrorism and extremism. In the US, the growing phobia was pushed by the mix-factors of domestic politics and massive changes of the global politics in response to the phenomenon of terrorism and extremism. The Islamophobia in the US were also pushed by the changing map of demography that have made Americans get 'worried for the 'Sharia invasion' through the growing number of Muslim immigrants. Above all, terrorism and extremism deserve particular attention as they seem to be the most significant factor to the current heightening of Islamophobia around the world. After the long absence of major terrorist attack since the 9/11, the world have now observed the new phase of terror, because of which people started questioning the peaceful nature of Islam. Islam had been hijacked by extremist groups, and the entire Muslims were overly-generalized as having radical ideology that prone to be terrorists.

The outcome was so predictable. The fear of Islam and Muslims was very common discourse in the US, in Europe, and in many other parts of the world. Over one hundred anti-Islamic laws has been applied or undergoing within the US, while one can easily hear anti-Islam statements by many candidates in the run-up to the coming elections in November of this year. Cultural and religious traditions associated with Islam have been banned, which include Hijab in France and Belgium, minarets in Switzerland, and halal meat in many western countries. The Austrian Government has launched a policy to have its own translation of the Holy Quran. Far right ideology becomes very popular in Germany, France, UK, Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, and Australia. Mosques were burned and vandalized. Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) was used as an object of insults through derogatory cartoon. Women with hijab were threatened and abused in public transport, and so on, and so forth. Incident, intolerance, and discrimination against Islam and Muslims happened almost everywhere around the world, creating a vicious circle of Islamophobia.

The main task of the Islamophobia Observatory is to 'monitor' those events on day-to-day basis, scanning the minds, public feelings, incidents, and everything that serves as possible indicator of Islamophobia. All of the information were then gathered and presented in this report with the expectation that the Member States would have a picture on the trend of Islamophobia around the world during more or less the latest one year period. It is therefore of the Observatory's fervent hope that this report could be used as materials for making policies and decisions on the relevant issues.

1. CURRENT TRENDS IMPACTING ISLAMOPHOBIA, INTOLERANCE AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MUSLIMS

There was an increasing level of Islamophobia under the covered period, indicated by the growing fear against Islam and Muslims in certain parts of the world which led to negative perceptions among non-Muslims. Within such circumstances, Islam was seen as a serious threat; a religion of intrinsic violence whose disciples had a tendency to spread harm to the followers of other religions. Islam has been portrayed as an 'alien' religion prone to bloodshed, a stigma that trigger intolerant attitudes amongst non-Muslims *vis-à-vis* their otherwise. These negative stereotyping eventually ended up into negative sentiments, dread or hatred of Islam that includes multi-level discrimination against Muslims, manifested into exclusion of Muslims around the world from the economic, social, and public life. Within this context, the Observatory noticed that the negative trend was mostly boosted by 3 (three) factors which have multiplied Islamophobia level particularly in Europe and in the US, namely: the issue of Syrian refugees, the current election in the United States, and the issue of terrorism.

1.1. The Refugee Crisis and the Rise of 'Reflexive Prejudice' against Muslims in Europe¹

Migrants and refugees from Muslim majority countries arrive at a time when European Muslim populations themselves are struggling for equality, fairness and non-discriminatory behaviours; but there is a side to the refugee crisis and the wave of mass migration recently witnessed that is all but lost in the current climate. To a large extent, it is because of a wilful neglect of the success stories of European Muslim populations – the majorities among Europe's Muslim communities who are patriotic, law-abiding, well-educated and integrated; socially, economically and politically. Their experiences are lost in the imagined panic of the 'Islamisation of Europe' and their rights as European citizens to assembly, association, freedom from discrimination and freedom of religion, thought and conscience, are more often portrayed as enablers of deviant behaviours than as the legitimate exercise of civil and political rights. The backdrop of austerity has made matters worse with those most reliant on public services for social welfare and economic support struggling to comprehend why refugees from other countries should attract resources that ought to be the preserve of national citizens. It is the pervasiveness of ethno-nationalism that is most perceptible among developments over the last year. Whether it is the assertive demarcation of cultural boundaries, differentiating majority cultures (good) from minority cultures (bad), or the reviving of strict border controls to limit migration to and within Europe, nationalism has reared its ugly head across Europe and both European Muslims and migrants or refugees have been caught in its hairs.

Such reflexive prejudice feeds to an existing anti-Muslim prejudice directed at European Muslim communities, which is illustrated in the following two polls:

A poll conducted by *YouGov* on the eve of Ramadan 2015 found declining support among Britons for refuge to those fleeing conflict and persecution. In 2014, 31% (of a 5,216 sample) said the UK should not provide refuge to those fleeing conflict and persecution. In 2015, that figure rose to 42%. Moreover, a particular disregard was observable in relation

¹ Excerpted from analysis provided by Dr. Shehnaz Bunglawala, Head of Research at Muslim Engagement and Development in the United Kingdom.

to Muslim migrants with 34% of Britons agreeing the country should provide some support to refugees but 47% saying this offer of refuge should not extend to those fleeing conflict in the Middle East. Why?

There are clues as to reasons why in the poll conducted by the *Pew Research Center* over a year later, in July 2016. The Pew survey assessed the views of Europeans in ten countries on the recent wave of migration and largely affirmed the argument that populist notions about fears of terrorism, social welfare and employment – all anti-migrant tropes disseminated by mainstream media - were noticeable in the hostile views displayed towards migrants and domestic Muslim populations. There are a number of issues arising from the Pew survey that are worth noting:

Firstly, the correlation observed between perceptions of refugees and negative attitudes toward Muslims already living in Europe is significant, as is the fact that the most negative attitudes were found among those countries with the smallest Muslim communities. One cannot evade the fact that how Muslims are portrayed is having a greater impact on attitudes towards them than direct encounters and that this has negative consequences for both European Muslim communities and migrants and refugees from Muslim majority countries who hope to make Europe their future home. Countering the sheer volume of anti-Muslim prejudice borne of portrayals of Muslims than by experience of living alongside them, remains a major challenge for Muslim communities, old and new.

Secondly, the results disclose the strength of political orientation on attitudes towards Muslims with those who support far right or centre-right parties more likely to hold negative opinions about Muslims than those from a centre-left or left-wing persuasion. It is widely known that groups and movements from the centre-left or left-wing pole of the political spectrum are more open to dialogue, collaboration and solidarity with Muslims on issues of social justice, political and civil rights and anti-racism and while Muslims have strongly supported left-wing causes and movements, a simple binary belies the residual anti-Muslim prejudice evident among left-wing circles too. For example, a *YouGov* poll published in March 2015 which asked if Britons thought “*Islam is generally compatible with the values of British society*” or if “*There is a fundamental clash between Islam and the values of British society*,” found that 89% of UKIP supporters believed “*There is a fundamental clash between Islam and the values of British society*,” and 68% of Conservative supporters believed so too. But 48% of Labour supporters also agreed that there is a fundamental incompatibility between Islam and British values. Issues of gender equality, Islamic dress, halal slaughter methods and so forth cut across political orientation and though left wing supporters are less likely to be hostile in their attitudes to Muslims, latent hostility to aspects of Islamic belief and lifestyles persist and these require deeper engagement. But nor should the hostility of the centre-right and far right be ignored. At a time when far right parties are dominating the European political landscape, European Muslims need to defy ‘post-factual politics’ and challenge media scaremongering and political rhetoric steeped in half-truths, falsehoods and wilful distortion of the facts. Falsehoods that fail to acknowledge the major contributions waves of migrants have made to European history, half-truths about national histories that distort the confluence of cultures, races and religions that have shaped their present, and the misplaced finger of blame pointed at migrants for failures by local and central governments.

Thirdly, the Pew results found that Roma and Muslims groups face higher rates of negative perceptions in the ten EU countries polled compared to Jews. Again, this coheres with a poll conducted by *YouGov* in 2015 across seven European countries assessing the ‘least tolerated’ minority groups. Roma and Muslims top the list in all seven countries: Denmark, Finland, France, Britain, Germany, Norway and Sweden.

Brief, reflexive prejudice in Europe has been on the rise, and it works to visit anti-Muslim hostility towards domestic Muslim populations on Europe’s newly arrived migrants and refugees and vice versa, where migrants from Muslim majority countries are portrayed through the prism of ‘closed’ views on Islam, eliding to eclipse the ‘open’ views that are

demonstrable in the lives of European Muslim communities — Open views such as seeing Islam as diverse and progressive, with internal differences, debates and development; as distinctively different, but not deficient and as equally worthy of respect; and as a genuine religious faith, practised sincerely by its adherents.

1.2. The 2016 US Presidential Campaigns and the Rise of Anti-Islam Sentiment, Racism and Intolerance²

There is a virtual unanimity in the US media that the current presidential campaigns and the two major political parties' candidates are running the worst campaigns in recent memory; and what makes this year's presidential race so disturbing, especially for American Muslims, is the unprecedented spike in openly racist, Islamophobic, anti-immigrant and ultra-White nationalist rhetoric spewed by the Republican Party candidate, the bombastic Donald Trump. Observers may wonder how it is possible for a major party candidate to promote shamelessly anti-democratic and blatantly non-American values, and to advocate openly hostile and intimidating policies in this year's election campaign for the president of the United States of America. Why and how is Donald Trump's embarrassingly intolerant policy positions during the campaign not only tolerated but supported by millions during the Republican Party primary elections and endorsed by their party convention to nominate him as their Party's candidate. That same Republican Party is—no less, the Party of Abraham Lincoln. At its core, what is happening in America this year is not a deviation from the mainstream American political culture, although at times, it may appear so. Indeed, what is currently witnessed in America is a part and parcel of the “American Way” and firmly enshrined within the core values of the “Idea of America”. American elections, choosing individuals for leadership positions to run the legislative and executive branches of the US government, are less about particular persons running for office. Rather, the elections, especially the presidential ones are about fiercely debating the fundamental American core values which are in permanent tension and need of constant balance through time and space. The core set of values, manifesting the “Idea of America”, consist of the following: Individual freedoms while respecting and aspiring for equality of all Americans; unity of the nation while preserving and cherishing diversity of its predominantly immigrant populations from across the globe; absolute commitment and insistence upon the rule of law while making sure that the laws of the nation are ethical; and promoting common wealth while protecting individuals rights of access to private wealth.

By engaging in a historic ‘Great Debate’ about these values, Americans are perpetually trying, in the words of the Preamble to the Constitution, *“to form a more perfect union.”* However, there are no general agreements on how best to realize the majestic goal of achieving the desired balance between and among these conflicting set of core values through changing times. It is for this important reason then that engaging in civic and civil debates becomes so essential, especially during the election campaigns. Unlike any country in Europe, Asia, or Africa, America is a nation where its inhabitants from across the globe have chosen to become Americans. Even the oldest and earliest non-Native Americans trace their genealogies to immigrants who had come to America by choice, except for slaves who were forcibly brought to the continent. As such, Americans are, as journalist and writer Rose Wilder Lane in 1936 has described, *“The most reckless and lawless of peoples...we are also the most imaginative, the most temperamental, the most infinitely varied.”* It is, therefore, in this wider historical dynamics of American history and politics that presidential campaigns of 2016 must be understood and their likely outcome assessed.

² Excerpted from analysis provided by Dr. M. Nazif Shahrani, Professor of Anthropology, Middle Eastern and Central Asian Studies at the School of Global and International Studies, Indiana University-Bloomington, USA.

Presidential elections in the US makes it necessary that every four years political parties through their presidential nominees' campaigns reevaluate problems and prospects of the United States globally and offer plans and programs to fix its imperfections and make it a more perfect union. In his diagnoses of the problems facing America now, Donald Trump has focused among other things on America's rising debt and budget deficit, unsecured borders especially with Mexico, threats from the Daesh (Islamic State), presumed unfair trade agreements with China and more importantly grievances of the poor and xenophobic white Americans who think they are neglected or have lost their rightful place in today's America. These are definitely important issues which concern the peoples of the United States with varying degrees of urgency. The difference in this year's election is how Donald Trump, a man who has never held an elected office and has no experience in government at all, indulges in a scary narrative of the nation heading off a cliff and that, if elected, he will "make America Great again."

Trump, depicted in the US media as an overly self-confident megalomaniacal billionaire businessmen, while sharing such overconfidence with countless other American politicians, is nevertheless a distinctly atypical candidate. Trump seems to personify all the deadly sins of hubris, greed, lust, malicious envy, gluttony, inordinate anger, and apathy while displaying very few of the valued virtues of prudence, justice, temperance, and charity so critical for a world leader. So far, Trump has refused to disclose his tax returns, and for a candidate who bases his claim to presidency for his success as a businessman, not revealing his tax records is unfathomable. He has not released anything meaningful about his health records either, something essential because he would be the oldest president ever elected. And he has not offered any serious or credible policy proposals. These are very grave concerns about the candidate who has made some grossly egregious remarks which are widely reported by the mainstream US media during his campaign. *New York Times* and *Washington Post* are among others.

Some of Trump's most aggressive statements include: opening up the press laws for change so as to weaken the First Amendment of the US Constitution, and be able to ban the news organizations he does not like. A charge that a federal judge can't be impartial towards him because the judge is of Mexican American parentage. He has said the same of a Muslim American judge also. He has threatened to punish the Mexican American judge if he is elected president. Trump has also indicated that he would, illegally, order the military to torture detainees and target innocent civilians for such abuse. He has invited gun owners to violence as a political tool to stop nominees for judgeship by Hillary Clinton, should she become president. He has also suggested banning all Muslims from entry to the United States and forcing Muslim Americans to be registered and monitored. In justification of his Islamophobia, he has erroneously claimed that American Muslims in New Jersey celebrated after the despicable criminal attacks of 9/11, 2001 against the US. And Trump has even threatened his own Republican Party critics to stop or they will be paying a big price. By bringing racism, Islamophobia and paranoia into the mainstream during this year's presidential campaign and advocating for "America First," Trump has garnered support from the white supremacist camp such as David Duke of the Ku Klux Klan fame and his ilk. Trump has called more than half of the eleven million Latin American undocumented immigrants, rapists and criminals and wishes all of them to be deported. He says also that he will build a wall along the Mexican border and make Mexico pay for it in order to put an end the southern border security problem. These and other such ravings by Trump have deeply divided the American public as never before. In an editorial opinion, the *Washington Post* of edition August 31, 2016 asked "Will American voters allow themselves to be insulted, taken for granted and made fools of?" The *Post*'s answer was that "Donald Trump seems to be betting that the answer is yes". In July 22, 2016 the following was another bold warning: "The *Post*'s View: Donald Trump is a unique threat to American democracy."

It is indeed a fair warning and very much in line with the expectation of continuous debate of the values inherent in "The Idea of America". The threats to the unity of America as a nation while maintaining its prideful diversity as the microcosm of a global community is taken very seriously by vast majority of Americans. Indeed, keeping unity as well as the

diversity of the American nation is commanded boldly in vibrant discussions daily in the media, in classrooms, on the streets and public spaces of every kind across the United States. American political culture and its supportive institutions have to be strong, regardless of the outcome of this year's presidential elections, extremist views expressed by Donald Trump and his supporters. The centrality of the American value of national unity must continue to be balanced with due respect to the preservation of the nation's racial, cultural and religious-sectarian diversity. Islamophobia may linger on, but it is a fervent hope that the rights of American Muslims as citizens will be safeguarded, strengthened and preserved.

1.3. The Continued Wave of Terrorism in Europe and the Rise of Islamophobia

Amidst the on-going concern of extremism related the ISIS phenomenon, a new wave of terror had been brought into the heart of Europe through a series of violent attack targeting main cities in the region. This new wave of terror was initiated in January 2015, when two militants forced their way into the offices of French newspaper Charlie Hebdo in Paris, killed 11 people and injured 11 others in the same building. They also killed a French National Police officer outside the building, followed by several related attacks in the Ile-de-France region, where a further 5 were killed and 11 wounded. A week later, a Jewish supermarket in the same city was also targeted, killed 17 people and wounded 22, including civilians and police officers. These incidents provoked a global outrage and massive backlash against Islam and Muslims in many parts of the world during the following months, the situation which get even worse as the wave of terror continued. In November 2015, an attack of larger scale hit Paris when three suicide bombers struck outside the Stade de France during a football match, that was followed by mass shootings, and a suicide bombing at cafes, restaurants and theatre, together killed 130 people, injured 368 people not to include seven attackers who died on scene. The attacks were claimed as the deadliest attack on France since World War II and the deadliest in the European Union since the Madrid train bombing in 2004. On 22 of March 2016, three suicide bombings occurred in Belgium: two at Brussels Airport in Zaventem, and one at Maalbeek metro station in central Brussels. Thirty-two civilians and three perpetrators were killed, and more than 300 people were injured, because of which the Belgian government declared three days of national mourning.

Such a new wave of terrorism has brought about a huge impact on Islamophobia, for the number of incident have multiplied almost everywhere across the globe. Particularly in Europe, innocent Muslims have been victimized, facing immediate backlash while the sentiment soon transformed into a bold stigma: that Islam encourages violence; that the religion is not really compatible with liberal values; that Muslims prone to be extremists and terrorists; that Islam is an out-of-date religion which need a Reformation to adapt modernity; and so on.

Brief, there are a number of consequences arising from the new wave of terrorist attacks in Europe that are worth noting:

Firstly, this terror had widened the issue of Islam in Europe away beyond the frame of 'integration'. Islam was now seen as not only a threat to European identity, culture, demography, and society, but also as a political and security threats for the western world. Based on the Observatory's monitoring, the current debates and discourses in Europe were very much focusing around the issue of Islam's compatibility with the western values.

Secondly, the wave of terror has multiplied the level of Islamophobia in Europe, leaving Muslims with so many uncertainties, especially for it was then followed by a massive backlash towards Muslims and Islamic attires. A huge

number of attacks against Muslims were recorded during the last 16 months, showing significant impact on the life of Muslims living in Europe.

Thirdly, this new wave of terrorism has once again brought the issue of 'Freedom of Expression' into the milieu of public debate in Europe; and unfortunately the constructive debates on freedom of expression *vis-à-vis* its limits and manifestation tended to be overridden by the strengthening anti-Islam sentiments. Public opinions were overshadowed by the idea that free speech is a 'fixed price' for European societies, and there should not be any space for negotiation with other 'ideologies', including Islam.

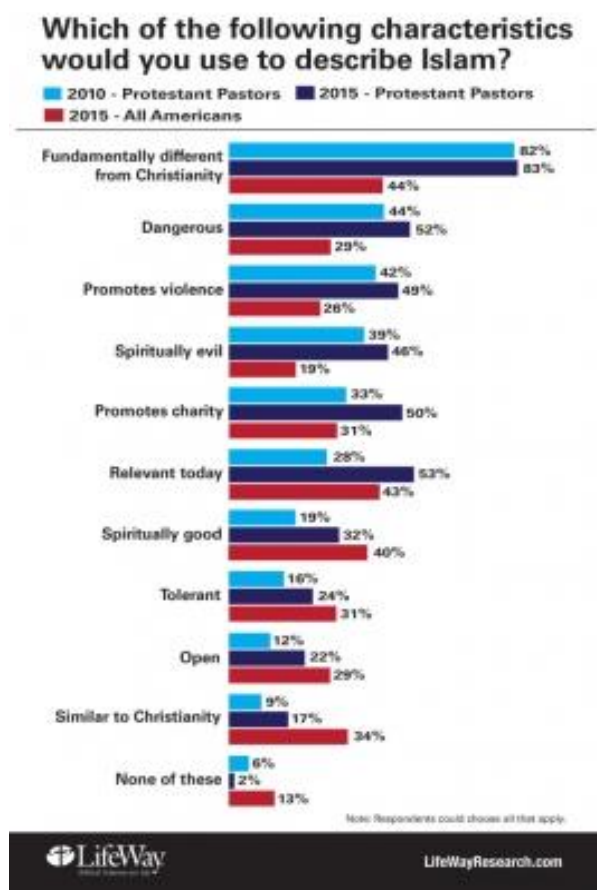
2. MANIFESTATIONS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

2.1. Islamophobia in the USA and Canada

2.1.3. Polls and Reports

Islamophobia — in the form of prejudice and discrimination against Muslims — has been on the rise in the US since 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001. It still continue until today and had even been worsening over the years due to some factors such as the US' military engagement in the Middle East, negative portrayal of Muslims in the media, the spread of anti-Islam rhetoric, as well as lack of understanding of the religion itself. As a result, living as Muslim in the American

society today would be much different with the same life of twenty years ago, at the period before 9/11 tragedy happened. It is now very common to see that the safety tips, concise and chilling, were passed from friend to Muslim friend on social media, by imams to their congregations, by Islamic groups to their members, by parents to their children heading off to school: When in the subway, stood away from the platform edge, preferably with your back against a wall. Walk in groups after dark. Stay alert at all times. More particularly in the days since the first Paris terrorist attacks in 2014, Muslims in American big cities and elsewhere had guarded against a violent backlash, changing their routines and trying to manage their fear. Still, the violence had come. Quite recently, several Muslims in New York, mostly women wearing head scarves, had reported being victims of verbal abuse and physical assault. Even some non-Muslims — including at least one Latino mistaken for a Muslim — had been subjected to Islamophobic taunts.³ In an episode the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) reported, two Muslim women in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn said that a man claiming to be a postal worker assaulted them, elbowing one and spitting in her face, and telling them he was going to burn down their 'temple'.⁴ Brief, the United States is not anymore a very safe place to live for Muslims since more and more American non-Muslims feels anxious and fearful with their presence. A poll conducted by Public Policy Polling in North Carolina showed that 40 per cent of Americans felt that Islam



and the practice of this religion should be made illegal in the US. Another 40 per cent said it should be legal, while 20

³ See *NY Times News*' entry "After attacks in Paris, New York Muslims cope with a backlash" in: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/26/nyregion/im-frightened-after-paris-terrorist-attacks-new-york-city-muslims-cope-with-a-backlash.html?_r=0, retrieved on 26.11.2015

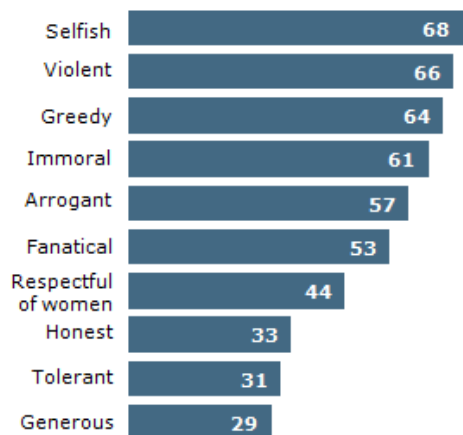
⁴ See *NY Times News*' entry "I'm Frightened': After Attacks in Paris, New York Muslims Cope with a Backlash", in: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/26/nyregion/im-frightened-after-paris-terrorist-attacks-new-york-city-muslims-cope-with-a-backlash.html?_r=0, retrieved on 25.11.2015

per cent said they were unsure. Most of respondents heard about Muslims in the context of chaos, war and destruction, meaning the absence a normal portrait of what Muslims look like.” Whereas, a Federal Bureau of Investigation report shows that from 1980 to 2005, only six per cent of terrorist attacks on US soil were committed by Muslims.⁵ Not only in public space, Islamophobia trend has even been common in schoolyards. The director of the Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition, said that Islamophobia and hate speech against Muslims were on the rise in classrooms in Wisconsin. Many Muslim students faced threats and bullying that went unreported, as the Muslim community and

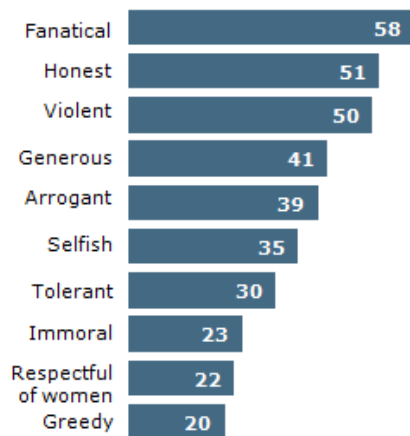
families were not willing to come forward and make an issue out of that, because they feel targeted to begin with. Wisconsin's Muslim community was still reeling from the 2012 shooting at the Sikh Temple in Oak Creek, near Milwaukee. The victims were thought to have been targeted because the shooter believed they were Muslims, though in fact they were members of the Sikh faith.⁶

Characteristics Associated With Westerners and Muslims

Traits associated with Westerners among Muslims in predominantly Muslim countries



Traits associated with Muslims among non-Muslims in the U.S., Russia and W. Europe



Median % of Muslims across seven Muslim countries who say each of these traits describes people in Western countries and median % of non-Muslims across the U.S., Russia and four Western European countries who say each of these traits describes Muslims.

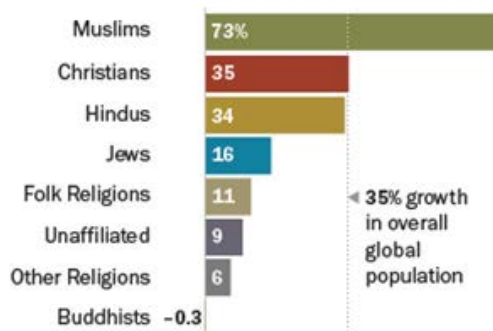
PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q47a-j.

The series of terrorist attack hitting Paris and Brussels had made the situation even worse. In the aftermath of the incidents, Muslims around the US faced backlash, including vandalism to mosques and Islamic centers, hate-filled phone and online messages and threats of violence. Advocacy leaders said they had come to expect some anti-Muslim sentiment following such attacks, but they saw a spike that seems notable, stirred by anti-Muslim sentiment in the media. A spokesman for CAIR remarked that the picture was getting increasingly bleak, that there had been an accumulation of anti-Islamic rhetoric which triggered overt acts of violence and vandalism in the US. Currently, the rise in the level of anti-Muslim sentiment was clearly reflected by some GOP presidential candidates, governors and others speaking out in opposition to the US accepting more

Islam Growing Fastest

Muslims are the only major religious group projected to increase faster than the world's population as a whole.

Estimated change in population size, 2010-2050



Source: The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

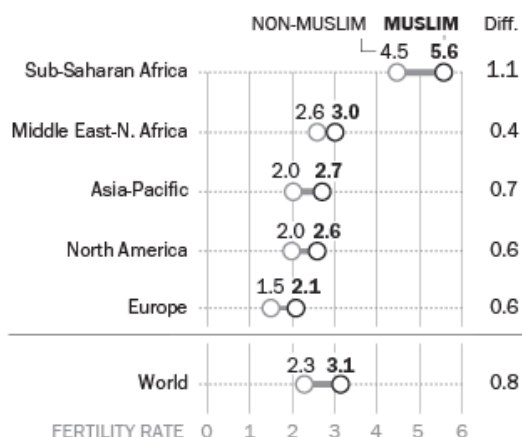
⁵ See *The Statesman.com*'s entry "America battles Islamophobia", in: <http://www.thestatesman.com/news/opinion/america-battles-islamophobia/98737.html>, retrieved on 24.10.2015

⁶ See *Opposing-Views.com*'s entry "Anti-Muslim Hate Speech on rise at Schools", in: <http://www.opposingviews.com/i/religion/islamic-group-reports-increased-islamophobia-wisconsin-schools>, retrieved on 08.03.2016

Syrian refugees.⁷ In the weeks since terrorists killed 130 people in Paris, bullet holes were found at a mosque in Connecticut, threats were called in to two others in Florida and a man left a fake bomb outside a fourth in Virginia. More than 30 of the country's governors announced that Syrian refugees were not welcome in their states, while Southwest Airlines tried to keep a Philadelphia pizza parlor owner and his friend off a flight after a fellow passenger heard them speaking Arabic. Hate crimes against Muslims were tracked by the FBI were on the rise even as attacks against other groups fell, according to the figures released earlier in November 2015. The Southern Poverty Law Center said that crimes against Muslims were likely to be much higher than the official numbers, up to 6,000 by the group's estimates.⁸

Most of polls and survey predict that such a negative trend will continue to deteriorate in the coming future, mainly because the existing fear of Islam and Muslims has been perpetuated by the on-going phenomenon of extremism and violent terrorism. The mainstream Judeo-Christian American society, according to those reports, were in a growing doubt that Islam is a religion of peace. For instance, despite the polarizing opinions among American pastors on Islam, most evangelicals saw it as a violent and dangerous faith, while the majority of mainline pastors associate it with peace, love and compassion according to [LifeWay Research](#). Though a growing number of all pastors labelled Islam violent, simultaneously a sharply rising minority called it spiritually good. A majority of pastors considered Islam dangerous (52 per cent, up from 44 per cent five years ago) and almost half said it was spiritually evil (46 per cent, up from 39 per cent), yet there had also been an increase in those who consider Islam

Muslim and Non-Muslim Fertility Rates, by Region, 2010-2015



Note: Latin America-Caribbean not shown due to lack of reliable data. Differences are calculated from unrounded numbers.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

in positive terms. Fifty percent said Islam promotes charity, up from 33 per cent, and almost a third (32 per cent) said Islam was spiritually good. Asked which of two well-known descriptions was closer to their beliefs, 59 per cent of evangelical pastors chose evangelist Franklin Graham's characterisation of Islam as *"a very evil and a very wicked religion,"* while 51 per cent of mainline pastors choose former President George W. Bush's comment, *"the Muslim faith is based upon peace and love and compassion."* The view that Islam was dangerous was increasingly prominent amongst evangelical pastors (59 per cent up from 50 per cent five years before), while mainline pastors were increasingly saying that it was a tolerant religion (35 per cent, up from 25 per cent). The statistics showed that although there was a gulf of opinion between various pastors, the American public were even more divided. While 31 per cent of Americans said Islam was tolerant, almost as many (26 per cent) said it promotes violence.⁹ Such a growing fear often meet with the far-right groups campaign that Muslims will soon or later taking over America citing the statistic that showed Muslims as the fastest-growing religious group in the world. The growth and regional

migration of Muslims, combined with the ongoing impact of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and other extremist groups that commit acts of violence in the name of Islam, have brought Muslims and the Islamic faith to the forefront of the political debate in many countries. Yet many facts about Muslims are not well known in some of these places, and

⁷ See ABCNews's entry "Muslims face backlash after Paris Attacks", in: <http://abcnews.go.com/US>, retrieved on 18.11.2015

⁸ See NBCNewYork.com's entry "Muslims face bigotry in wake of Paris attack", in: <http://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/national-international/Muslims-Face-Bigotry-in-Wake-of-Paris-Attacks-353170781.html>, retrieved on 26.11.2015

⁹ See The Christian Today News' entry "Islam is dangerous, say over half of US protestant pastors", in: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/islam.is.dangerous.say.over.half.of.us.protestant.pastors/68518.htm>, retrieved on 24.10.2015

most Americans – who live in a country with a relatively small Muslim population – say they know little or nothing about Islam.¹⁰

It is then not so surprising to note that at the current period towards election in the US, Islamophobic minded politicians continued to gain constant popularity among the voters. For instance, the top-line results in the latest Public Policy Polling survey suggest Iowa Republicans were largely in line with GOP voters nationally, but that was not what so important in this poll. What seemed to be far more striking fact was: *"[Donald Trump is] probably not hurting himself too much with his negativity toward Muslims either – only 49% of Republicans think the religion of Islam should even be legal in the United States with 30% saying it shouldn't be and 21% not sure. Among Trump voters there is almost even division with 38% thinking Islam should be allowed and 36% that it should not."* In addition, many of the same social conservatives who believe Americans' freedom of religion must be protected at all costs also believe that a faith tradition they don't like *should be illegal*. When these Iowa Republicans view the Constitution, they see a First Amendment that exists for them, not those they find offensive. After Ben Carson said Muslims should be disqualified for the presidency because of their faith, his campaign manager boasted, *"While the left wing is huffing and puffing over it, Republican primary voters are with us at least 80-20. People in Iowa particularly, are like, 'Yeah! We're not going to vote for a Muslim either.'"* Given the PPP findings, it seems Team Carson, as offensive as its posture is, knows its audience. The same poll found that 69% of Iowa Republicans – over two-thirds – believe President Obama is *"waging a war on Christianity."*¹¹ Presidential hopeful Ben Carson incited controversy when stating he would not advocate a Muslim becoming president. Carson then clarified a Muslim would have to subjugate beliefs to hold the office, but *The New York Times* reported on a new poll showing a portion of Republican primary voters would go further with 40 percent of North Carolina conservatives opined that Islam should be banned in the US. According to *The Times*, 40 percent of participants opposed banning Islam, and 20 percent were unsure in addition to the portion who favored outlawing the faith. Another 72% of North Carolina conservatives also believed a Muslim shouldn't have the chance to run for president, and only 16 percent said they would be fine with it.¹²

Despite less in term of number and intensity, reports and polls revealed that the current situation of Islamophobia in Canada was not so different from the US. Canadian Muslim groups were hearing reports of backlash toward community members — including bullying toward Muslim children and the torching of an Ontario mosque — following the terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015. One day after the Paris attack, the Kawartha Muslim Religious Association in Peterborough was set ablaze on 14 November 2015 in what the association said as *"clearly a hate crime."* The same building, which is the city's only mosque, was also vandalized immediately after the 9/11 terror attacks in 2001, hence Canadian Muslims were on high alert following the arson. The National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM) said there has been a spike in incidents reported to the NCCM, including online reports of bullying and targeting Muslim children in schools in addition to various online threats through social media.¹³

¹⁰ See *PEW-Research.org's* entry "Muslims and Islam: Key findings in the U.S. and around the world", in: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/22/muslims-and-islam-key-findings-in-the-u-s-and-around-the-world/>, retrieved on 23.07.2016

¹¹ See *Mint Press News's* entry "Poll: Nearly a Third of Iowa GOP Wants to Criminalize Islam", in: <http://www.mintpressnews.com/poll-nearly-a-third-of-iowa-gop-wants-to-criminalize-islam/209909/>, retrieved on 30.09.2015

¹² See *National Deseret News's* entry "40% of North Carolina's conservatives think Islam should be illegal", in: <http://national.deseretnews.com/article/6268/40-of-North-Carolinas-conservatives-think-Islam-should-be-illegal.html>, Retrieved 06.10.2015

¹³ See *News.vice.com's* entry "Canadian Muslims Report More Backlash after Ontario Mosque Torched", in: <https://news.vice.com/article/canadian-muslims-report-more-backlash-after-ontario-mosque-torched>, retrieved on 16.11.2015

2.1.4. Islamophobic Discourses and Campaigns

- ***"Those shining the light on the oppression in Islam are the real Liberals"*** -

On 15 May HBO 'Real Time' host Bill Maher interviewed Ayaan Hirsi Ali about liberals and why they insisted upon defending Islam. Maher said: *"We know Sharia law is popular in many more countries than you even named. When I have liberals on this show one of the big arguments is well, you're painting with a broad brush...Of course Saudi Arabia is backwards but what about Indonesia and Turkey and Jordan? Well, I looked up Turkey and Indonesia and Jordan and here are some of the statistics here. Sharia law, 72 percent of Indonesians favor it. Jordan –71 percent. Stoning of adulterers in Indonesia – 48 percent popular, Jordan — 67 percent. Death for leaving Islam. Jordan, 82 percent. These are their bastions of freedom and democracy. How do we get liberals and some of them are people I really used to respect — how do we get them to understand that we're the liberals in this debate? The people that are facing, shining a light on oppression and demanding that it will end – how can that not be the liberal cause? What do you say to liberals?"*¹⁴

- ***"In any war between the civilized man and the savage, support the civilized man"*** -

The woman behind the Prophet Muhammad cartoon contest in Texas, Pamela Geller, told *the Associated Press* in an interview on 7 May 2015 had no regrets. Geller's American Freedom Defense Initiative organized the contest to draw Islam's prophet. Her group was also behind controversial ads in the New York subway saying: *"In any war between the civilized man and the savage, support the civilized man."* In smaller letters, it also said: *"Support Israel. Defeat Jihad."* Geller also run an organization called Stop Islamization of America, which spearheaded the effort to prevent the construction of a Muslim community center near the site of the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.¹⁵

- ***"Satan delivered Islam to Muhammad, Following Islam will lead you to hell"*** -

Dallas megachurch pastor Robert Jeffress said on 10 May during his 'Countdown to the Apocalypse,' sermon series that it was Satan who delivered the religion of Islam to the prophet Muhammad and further asserted that following that religion will 'lead you to hell.' In his six-week sermon series, Jeffress, who pastors Dallas' 11,000-member First Baptist Church, explained how Jesus told of the rise of radical Islam and that increased Christian persecution around the world would precede His return to this Earth. The 59-year-old attempted to denounce the claim that Muhammad was delivered Islam by an angel and stated that the angel Muhammad was really the devil disguised as an angel of light. Jeffress said: *"It was Satan himself who delivered those delusions to those people to lead people by the millions away from God....Islam is a false religion that will lead you to hell. It is based on a false book that is based on a fraud. It was founded by a false prophet who was leading people away instead of to the one true God."* Jeffress added that just as

¹⁴ See *The Breitbart News'* entry "Maher: Those shining the light on the oppression in Islam are the real Liberals", in: <http://www.breitbart.com/video/2015/05/16/maher-those-shining-the-light-on-the-oppression-of-islam-are-the-real-liberals/>, retrieved on 17.05.2015

¹⁵ See *The Ideastream News'* entry "No regrets for organizer of cartoon Contest", in: <http://www.ideastream.org/news/npr/405052650>, retrieved on 08.05.2015

the Antichrist would seek to rid the world of Jews and Christians, religious minorities across the world were being killed and persecuted at an alarming rate by Islamic radicals who feel called by their faith to commit such acts.¹⁶

- "Islam is not consistent with the American constitution" -

Ben Carson, Republican Presidential hopeful at that time, argued that Islam was not consistent with the American Constitution, in saying, *"I would not advocate that we would put a Muslim in charge of this nation."* Carson, appearing on NBC's 'Meet the Press' on 20 September, was asked if a president's faith should matter, saying he guessed "it depends on what that faith is. If it is inconsistent with the values and principles of America then of course it should matter." **Chuck Todd:** *Should a president's faith matter? Should your faith matter to voters?* **Ben Carson:** *Well I guess it depends on what that faith is. If it is inconsistent with the values and principles of America then of course it should matter. But, if it fits within the realm of America and consistent with the constitution then no problem.* **Todd:** *So do you believe that Islam is consistent with the Constitution?* **Carson:** *No I do not, I do not. I would not advocate that we would put a Muslim in charge of this nation. I absolutely would not agree with that.* **Todd:** *And would you ever consider voting for a Muslim for Congress?* **Carson:** *Congress is a different story. But it depends on who that Muslim is and policies are. Just as it depends on what anybody else is. You know, if there is somebody who is of any faith, but they say things, and their life that has been consistent with things that will elevate this nation and make it possible for everybody to succeed and bring peace and harmony, then I am with them.*¹⁷

- "Mohammed, the founder of Islam, instructed his followers to kill their enemies and amputate their limbs" -

Robert Jeffress said the ISIS terrorists who murdered 29 victims in Paris were following the teachings of the Koran which instructs Muslims to kill 'the infidels', during a recent sermon at First Baptist Church in Dallas. He further said, *"Mohammed, the founder of Islam, instructed his followers to kill their enemies and amputate their limbs."* He also said that the responsibility of government is to protect its citizens. *"It is time for us to lay aside political correctness. The evil, evil religion of radical Islam is the belief system causing this. The Koran is laced with verse after verse which says 'kill the infidel.' There are over 35 sword verses laced with violence. At one time alone Mohammed beheaded over 600 Jews for not fighting in his army,"* the pastor of First Baptist further said. *"It is impossible to defeat an enemy you are unable to identify,"* Jeffress further said during his sermon which was met with frequent applause and cheering. He explained that was why he was identifying Islam as the enemy which must be defeated.¹⁸

¹⁶ See *The Christianpost.com News*' entry "Megachurch Pastor Robert Jeffress: Satan 'Delivered' Islam to Muhammad, Following Islam Will 'Lead You to Hell'", in: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/megachurch-pastor-robert-jeffress-satan-delivered-islam-to-muhammad-following-islam-will-lead-you-to-hell-139026/>, retrieved on 13.05.2015

¹⁷ See *The Dailycaller.com*'s entry "Carson: Islam Is Not Consistent with the Constitution", in: <http://dailycaller.com/2015/09/20/carson-islam-is-not-consistent-with-the-constitution-video/>, retrieved on 21.09.2015

¹⁸ See *Examiner.com*'s entry "Robert Jeffress says ISIS followed Koran in Paris massacre", in: <http://www.examiner.com/article/robert-jeffress-says-isis-followed-koran-paris-massacre>, retrieved at 18.11.2015

- "Islam is a false religion" -

Further at the same sermon, megachurch pastor Robert Jeffress issued some fiery words about the Islamic faith, calling it a "false religion" that "is inspired by Satan himself." *"Make no mistake about it — Islam is just not another way to approach God,"* Jeffress said. *"Islam is a false religion and it is inspired by Satan himself who Jesus said came to steal, kill and destroy, and this weekend we saw the fruit of Satan's destruction in the acts of these terrorists."* The pastor went on to say that he believed that the terrorists were *"acting according to the teaching of Islam,"* and that it is imperative that the U.S. take action to stop the Islamic State. Jeffress said. *"And that is the evil, evil religion of radical Islam."*¹⁹

- "Islam is barbarian medievalism ... Arm yourselves" -

In various posts to social media following the deadly attacks in France on 13 November 2015, state Rep. Jay Rodne, told Americans to "arm yourselves" and warned one commenter not to be an *"apologist for brutal barbarians. Islam is barbarian medievalism. Wake the f**k up. Obama wants to import 1.5 million Muslims into the US. This is absolute madness!"*, reads one post to Rodne's personal Facebook page. *"Islam is incompatible with western civilization! How anyone people need to die? In the interim, Amicans, arm yourselves!!!!".* "When asked about his remarks, Rodne said: *"I'm concerned about the safety and security of the people of the state of Washington first and foremost and that Trumps, in my view, concerns about being compassionate. Especially when given our current threat environment, we have no reliable way to vet these migrants coming in from Syria."*²⁰

- "There's something nasty coming out of Islam" -

Donald Trump said in a 'Morning Joe' appearance just days after a reportedly Christian white guy surrendered to police in a mass shooting at a Planned Parenthood: **Heilemann:** *"Do you think that Islam is an inherently peaceful religion that's been perverted by some? Or do you think Islam is an inherently violent religion?"* **Trump:** *"All I can say is there's something going on. I don't know that that question can be answered. It could be answered two ways. It could be answered both ways. But there's something going on there. There's a lot of hatred coming out of at least a big part of it. You see the hatred. We see it every day. You see it, whether it's in Paris, or whether it's the World Trade Center"...* *"There's something nasty coming out of there. You could answer it any way you want. But at least we have to know the problem."*²¹

- "Muslims worldwide were 'going wild' to cheer 9/11" -

Again Trump ramped up his incendiary rhetoric on 28 November, claiming that Muslims around the world were 'going wild' to cheer the 11 September, 2001 attacks. Earlier in that month, the tycoon invited scrutiny after saying that Arab

¹⁹ See *Blaze.com*'s entry "Megachurch Pastor said 'Islam is a false religion' during fiery sermon" in: <http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2015/11/19/islam-is-inspired-by-satan-himself-megachurch-pastors-fiery-sermon-about-the-muslim-faith/>, retrieved at 19.11.2015

²⁰ See *Komonews.com*'s entry "Legislator: 'Islam Is Barbarian Medievalism...Arm Yourselves'", in: <http://komonews.com/news/local/legislator-islam-is-barbarian-medievalism--arm-yourselves>, retrieved on 20.11.2015

²¹ See *The Dailykos.com*'s entry "Donald Trump: There's Something Nasty Coming Out of Islam", in: <http://www.dailykos.com/story/2015/11/30/1455360/-Donald-Trump-There-s-something-nasty-coming-out-of-Islam>, retrieved on 30.11.2015

and Muslim Americans had celebrated the terror strikes. He also voiced support for a database to track Muslims in the country. But at the weekend rally in Sarasota, Florida, Trump took it a step further in saying: *"Everybody admits that worldwide, the Muslims were absolutely going wild."* A 2008 Gallup poll found that only seven percent of Muslims around the world said the 9/11 attacks were completely justified and viewed the United States unfavorably.²²

- "We should shut down mosques" -

Donald Trump knew everything about a lot of things, according to himself. But his grasp of the religious freedom remains a bit weak. Donald J. Trump had a plan to counter jihadist ideology in America: Tear apart the First Amendment. On Monday morning 16 November, the Republican presidential candidate two-time SNL host appeared on MSNBC's 'Morning Joe', where the panel discussed the French interior minister's call for the dissolution of extremist-linked mosques in France in the wake of last week's Paris attacks. Host Joe Scarborough then asked if a Trump administration would consider shutting down mosques in this country. *"I would hate to do it but it would be something that you're going to have strongly consider because some of the ideas, some of the hatred—the absolute hatred—is coming from these areas,"* Trump said.²³

- "Islam is a problem, saying Syrian refugees have values at odds with ours may not be wrong" -

HBO's "Real Time" host Bill Maher declared, *"I think that Islam is a problem"* and that people who think Syrian refugees have values at odds with US values, *"may not be wrong"* on Friday 20th November. Maher stated, *"I think that Islam is a problem, but I don't think American Muslims are the problem. That is not the squeaky wheel that needs the oil, in this problem."* After Senator said that while the vetting process for Syrian refugees *"perhaps"* should be *"more serious,"* focusing on them while ignoring the visa waiver program, *"is like attacking Brazil after Pearl Harbor."* Maher said, *"I think we all agree on that. That's what I'm saying, it's not the squeaky wheel."*²⁴

- "Koran is Satan's greatest success" -

Tila Tequila is an inter-dimensional quantum-hopper. Among the latest controversy from Tila was the nasty 'revelation' saying that "Satan's greatest success" was having Mohammed's students a twist God's Message, and discredit Jesus, and write it in the Koran. She later seemed to contradict herself by saying the Koran was "1/3 of God's book," which also included the Torah and the New Testament.²⁵

²² See *The Middleeast Eye.net*'s entry "Trump claims Muslims worldwide were 'going wild' to cheer 9/11", in: <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/trump-claims-muslims-worldwide-were-going-wild-cheer-911-1882149446>, retrieved on 30.11.2015

²³ See *The Dailybeast.com*'s entry "Trump Keeps on Saying We Should Shut Down Mosques", in: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/11/16/trump-keeps-on-saying-we-should-shut-down-mosques.html>, retrieved at 16.11.2015

²⁴ See *The Breitbart.com*'s entry "Maher: 'Islam Is a Problem, Saying Syrian Refugees Have Values At Odds With Ours May Not Be Wrong'", in: <http://www.breitbart.com/video/2015/11/20/maher-islam-is-a-problem-saying-syrian-refugees-have-values-at-odds-with-ours-may-not-be-wrong/>, retrieved on 20.11.2015

²⁵ See *Starcasm.net*'s entry "Tila Tequila: Koran is Satan's greatest success", in: <http://starcasm.net/archives/331294>, retrieved on 11.10.2015

- “Founding Fathers wouldn’t have trusted a Muslim president” -

Ben Carson offered up a new explanation for why he had been opposing to a Muslim American becoming president, citing fears of ‘different loyalties’ that he believed the Founding Fathers articulated by barring immigrants from becoming chief executive. The implication was that outwardly patriotic Muslims could not be fully trusted as loyal Americans given their faith. He had previously cited theories popular on the far right, warning that seemingly assimilated Muslim Americans might be using religious edicts to conceal an extremist plot. Carson’s comment came at an appearance at the National Press Club on 8 October 2015, when an audience member asked why he felt a Muslim citizen could not be loyal to the Constitution as president given that there were already Muslim military officers, Policemen, and judges – all positions that required fidelity to the law.²⁶

- “Islam hates us more than you even know” -

Donald Trump again made negative political comment concerning Islam. When asked on CNN whether he believed the West was at war with Islam, the Republican presidential candidate said: “*I think Islam hates us*”. Millions of Americans agreed with Trump’s assertions that such a ‘hatred’ was not a product of grievances, political factors, or even an extremist interpretation of Islam; but rather it was a direct byproduct of mainstream Islamic teaching.²⁷

- “Muslims have taken over America!” -

On March’s ‘The Jim Bakker Show’, Rick Wiles was warning the studio audience by saying “*we have been taken over*” by Muslims. Wiles, who hosted the End Times radio program “*Trunews*,” declared that he would stand up and fight the Muslim takeover to his death. “*I am not surrendering this nation to Muslims*,” he said while pounding on his desk, as an audience member blew.²⁸

- “F*CK ISLAM!” -

A group of Murican bikers had an evening of Islamophobic events in Arizona on 29 May, gathering for what they called a response to the attack in Texas where 2 armed terrorists with ties to ISIS. The bikers, determined to further the cause of mocking Islam and inciting violence, decided to form a protest at a mosque the two terrorist attended, which located in Phoenix. Such a day of hate started at a Denny’s restaurant in Phoenix, where yet another cartoon contest mocking Islam kicked off the festivities, followed by a patriotic ride to the mosque for a peaceful protest at a time when Muslims

²⁶ See *MSNBC.com*’s entry “Ben Carson: Founding Fathers wouldn’t have trusted a Muslim president”, in: <http://www.msnbc.com/msnbc/ben-carson-founding-fathers-wouldnt-have-trusted-muslim-president>, retrieved on 12.10.2015

²⁷ See *The Blaze.com*’s entry “‘Islam Hates Us’ more than you even know”, in: <http://www.theblaze.com/contributions/islam-hates-us-more-than-you-even-know/>, retrieved on 16.03.2016

²⁸ See *Right-wing watch.org news*’ entry “Rick Wiles: Muslims have taken over America!”, in: <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/rick-wiles-muslims-have-taken-over-america>, retrieved on 22.03.2016

show up for evening prayers. The protest consisted of a bunch of trash wearing “F*CK ISLAM!” shirts, waving American flags and shouting obscenities and carrying spelled signs in an effort to incite violence.²⁹

- “The Islamic Faith is pure evil” -

A local councilor in Oregon urging Americans to block Muslims from office, and his outburst came as a Michigan city had made history by electing the first-ever Muslim-majority council. A national organization was condemning a city councilor in Dallas Oregon, wrote in his own public Facebook page that “*The Islamic faith is pure evil*” and compared Muslims to Hitler. His outburst came as Hamtramck, a historically Polish-Catholic enclave of Detroit, was the first city to have a Muslim-majority population in 2013, the emerging demographic that had reshaped the city’s political and cultural atmosphere in recent years. The negative statement was precisely directed towards three Muslim candidates who won seats in Hamtramck’s six-member council on 5 November 2015.³⁰

2.1.5. Surveillance against Islam and Muslims

Muslims living in the United States have been under close surveillance by the US authorities since the 9/11 terrorist attack in 2001; and the Observatory believes that this intelligent activity is still ongoing until today. For instances, according to an online documents by NSA whistle-blower Edward Snowden, the US government had spied on thousands of law-abiding Muslim-Americans including top US lawyers and academics since the last two decades. The monitoring activity was authorized under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), a law intended to target individuals involved in international terrorism, espionage or sabotage. The leaked documents published by The Intercept included a list of 7,485 email addresses monitored since 2002. Five of the emails identified by journalists had been described as leading “highly public, outwardly exemplary lives”. A document dating from 2006 from the same cache of files instructed intelligence agency staff on how to properly record the identity of those under surveillance and used the fake name of ‘Mohammed Raghead’ as an example. Five of those identified as targets of surveillance included Faisal Gill, a lawyer and one-time Republican candidate for the Virginia House of Delegates who served as a Senior Policy Advisor at the Department of Homeland Security under President George W. Bush.³¹ Such a ‘theory’ found an evidence in April 2014, when the NYPD announced that it had disbanded a controversial surveillance unit known as the Citywide Debriefing Team, that had sent plainclothes detectives into Muslim communities to listen in on conversations and build detailed files on where people ate, prayed and shopped, of which *The Times* had reviewed reports generated by the debriefing team in early 2009, giving a up-close view of how the squad operates, functioning as a recruiter for the Intelligence Division, the arm of the department that is dedicated to foiling terrorist plots. They also showed that the division’s counterterrorism mission had come to intersect in some new and potentially uncomfortable ways with the department’s more traditional crime-fighting work. They showed that religion had become a normal topic of police inquiry in the city’s holding cells and lockup facilities. Some reports written by detectives after debriefing sessions noted whether a prisoner attended mosque, celebrated Muslim holidays or had made a pilgrimage to Mecca. The report on the food cart vendor described the location of his Flushing mosque and noted that worshippers were a “mix of Afghani, Persian

²⁹ See *Addictinginfo.org*’s entry “Armed bikers in ‘F*CK ISLAM!’ shirts plan to mock Islam, incite violence at mosque”, in: <http://www.addictinginfo.org/2015/05/28/armed-bikers-in-fck-islam-shirts-plan-to-mock-islam-incite-violence-at-mosque/>, on 30.05.2015

³⁰ See *World Bulletin News*’ entry “Oregon Councilor Admits Own Anti-Muslim Bigotry”, in: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/news/166228/oregon-councilor-admits-own-anti-muslim-bigotry>, retrieved on 11.11.2015

³¹ ‘Mohammed Raghead’ – the name the FBI were giving to Muslim-American ‘Joe Bloggs’, available at: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/mohammed-raghead-the-name-the-fbi-were-giving-to-muslim-american-joe-bloggs/#more-33980>, retrieved on 10.07.2014

(Iranians) and Pakistani.” The department’s wide-ranging surveillance of mosques and Muslim civic institutions and businesses has stoked controversy since The Associated Press first published documents detailing the monitoring in 2011.³²

Despite the wide controversies, until today such a monitoring policy continued to gain significant supports and was stirred up by Xenophobists to cultivate supports for their political campaigns. Such a trend for instance shown by far-



right politicians who had spent weeks playing on conservatives’ worst instincts following to November’s terrorist violence in Paris. For instance, on 16 November 2015, Trump told MSNBC that he would grudgingly have to “*strongly consider*” using government power to shut down American houses of worship as part of an anti-Muslim agenda. Three days after on 19 November, he went a little further in saying that when it comes to the government closing religious institutions, “*We’re going to have no choice.*”

When Trump sat down with *Yahoo News*, and a reporter raised the possibility of registering Muslims in a government database or creating special forms of identification for Muslim Americans, Trump responded, “*We’re going to have to look at a lot of things very closely.*”³³ The stance was supported by Trump’s alike, Senator Marco Rubio. He even went further than Trump in advocating the crackdown on U.S. Muslims. He did not just want to consider shutting down mosques, as Trump says, but wanted to shut down “any place where radicals were being inspired.” “*It’s not about closing down mosques. It’s about closing down any place — whether it’s a cafe, a diner, an internet site — any place where radicals are being inspired,*” Rubio said to *Fox News* on 19 November, when asked if he agreed with Trump. Emphasizing the requirement for Muslims surveillance policy, he said: “*The bigger problem we have is our inability to find out where these places are, because we’ve crippled our intelligence programs, both through unauthorized disclosures by a traitor, in Edward Snowden, or by some of the things this president has put in place with the support even of some from my own party to diminish our intelligence capabilities.*”³⁴

The issue of Syrian refugees was another fuel for members of the far right groups for stirring up the controversy, for the group emphasized on the need for the government to apply close monitoring on refugees coming from Muslim countries such as those from Syria, Iraq, and Somalia. In this context, the name of Erik Rush was no stranger to making genocidal statements about Muslims, so it was no surprise to see him refer to Muslim refugees as “*human garbage*” and “*a demonstrable threat to public health and public safety*” in a media column. After kicking off his weekly *WorldNetDaily* column, titled “*Islam: A Treatable Malignancy,*” by saying that ISIS is “*Barack Hussein’s Obama’s mercenary army,*” Rush accused the president of “*inundating America with Muslims*” as just “*one component in his grand plan of sabotage*” against America. He wrote that people should try to “*neutralize this threat with every means at their disposal,*” claiming

³² Information on these is available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/11/nyregion/new-york-police-recruit-muslims-to-be-informers.html?_r=0

³³ See *MSNBC.com*’s entry “Trump Crosses New Line, Endorses Database for Muslim Americans”, in: <http://www.msnbc.com/rachel-maddow-show/trump-crosses-new-line-endorses-database-muslim-americans>, retrieved at 19.11.2015

³⁴ See *Think Progress.org*’s entry “Rubio Trumps Trump: Shut Down Any Place Muslims Gather To Be ‘Inspired’ — Not Just Mosques”, in: <http://thinkprogress.org/politics/2015/11/20/3724509/rubio-trump-shut-down-mosques/>, retrieved on 20.11.2015

that all Muslims, including children, are a danger to society and should be stripped of their First Amendment rights. *“Muslims — all Muslims — have repeatedly proved that they represent a societal malignancy,”* Rush wrote, *“They will always perform as a body of enemy operatives, insidiously and incrementally worming their way into non-Muslim nations with the express intention of undermining and conquering them. Every individual has a part to play in this tragic comedy, from the helpless baby to the trained combatant.”* Erik Rush tried to bend the mind of American news viewers in mentioning that Europeans had been turning out by the thousands in protest of their governments’ intention to open doors to Muslim refugees.³⁵

It is very clear that the far right groups in the US have been equating all Muslims, with terrorists, and there was a serious problem of consistency among these groups. For instance, Ted Cruz believed that Christian refugees from Syria pose no risk to American security, but he was open to looking beyond religion and actually vetting those emigrants, as he said in a new interview. The Texas senator instead thinks that Muslims fleeing the Syrian civil war should be repopulated to other Muslim countries, but the Christian population, he believed, has nowhere else to go, and Cruz batted away concerns by telling reporters that Christians posed *“no meaningful risk”* to national security. Cruz even introduced legislation in the Senate to cut off federal funding for refugee resettlement, allying himself with Ben Carson, and he also said he supports governors who were closing their borders to the refugees.³⁶



At last, it is very unfortunate to note that such a ‘surveillance activity’ is also undertaken by non-governmental groups, which is truly dangerous due to the obvious impacts on the victims. For instance, an anti-Islam group which staged an armed protest outside a Dallas Islamic center had posted names and addresses of Muslims and ‘Muslim Sympathisers’ on its Facebook page, bringing about tensions in north Texas. The group, which called itself the Bureau of American Islamic Relations, staged an armed protest outside an Islamic centre in the Dallas suburb of Irving. The Observatory came to know that the list of more than 50 names was taken from a record of people who spoke or signed up to express an opinion at an Irving city council meeting in March 2015 where the council voted to endorse a planned state bill emphasizing the already enshrined primacy of domestic laws above foreign laws. Many Muslims in the community felt targeted by the event, which came after the Irving mayor, Beth Van Duyne, made waves in the rightwing media by

³⁵ See *Rightwingwatch.org*’s entry “Right-Wing Pundit: Muslim Refugees Are Human Garbage”, in: <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/right-wing-pundit-muslim-refugees-are-human-garbage>, retrieved on 12.11.2015

³⁶ See *CNN.com*’s entry “Ted Cruz: Muslim Refugees from Syria Should Go to Other Islamic Countries”, in: <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/11/17/politics/ted-cruz-refugees-syria/index.html>, retrieved at 18.11.2015

making references to an Islamic dispute mediation panel that wrongly became characterized as an 'illegal Sharia court'.³⁷

2.1.4. The Rise of Far-Rights

In the United States, in addition to the story on notorious Trump elaborated in the earlier part of this report, the popularity of far right groups has dominated roughly half of the American political and public discourses during the latest one-year period. The groups' campaigns, including those against Islam, its sacred symbols, and Muslim immigrants, decorated media headlines and won public applause and supports despite rational critics and opposition.

The Observatory highlights for instance, the controversy in media when activist Pamela Geller clashed with CNN's Chris Cuomo on 28 May 2015, accusing him of "*very shallow journalism*" and pushing back against a comparison that he made between saying the N-word and drawing cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad. The heated segment started with Cuomo discussing the Garland shooting that unfolded earlier in May when militants attacked the venue where Geller's cartoon contest was held, before asking why she was now trying to publicly post the winning cartoon on Washington D.C. buses. The conversation heated up after Cuomo, who called the shooters 'crazy extremists' who 'bought into an ideology that was sick,' accused Geller of calculating her event in a way that would be provocative — a claim that she dismissed as nonsense. Cuomo said "*The N-word gets treated the same way that depictions of Muhammad does... We don't say it because it's offensive, not because legally I can't.*" Geller dismissed that comparison and called it a dishonest narrative, defending cartoons of Muhammad as political speech that was permissible under the First Amendment. While Cuomo did not dispute that fact, he continued to question the wisdom behind it. Geller accused the CNN host of making past negative statements about her, before continuing to lambaste the N-word comparison. She said: "*It's not analogous ... it's outrageous. It's a dishonest narrative and I am not going to debate intellectual dishonesty.*" Geller also accused Cuomo of "very shallow journalism" after he asked why she opposed the controversial mosque that was planned near Ground Zero. While she said that she had no problem with mosques in general, she found the proposed house of worship problematic. Cuomo countered, "*And you don't see that as what you're doing with the Prophet Muhammad?*" Geller answered that the two were very different from one another, before challenging the host to reveal where he would draw the line when it came to free speech.³⁸

Ben Carson, the failed Republican Presidential hopeful, at one point argued that Islam was not consistent with the American Constitution, in saying, "*I would not advocate that we would put a Muslim in charge of this nation.*" Carson, appearing on NBC's 'Meet the Press' on 20 September, was asked if a president's faith should matter, saying he guessed, "*It depends on what that faith is. If it is inconsistent with the values and principles of America then of course it should matter.*" Instead of making him less popular, the controversy over Ben Carson's comments about Islam's compatibility with the U.S. Constitution was proving to be a fundraising asset for the neurosurgeon's campaign for the Republican presidential nomination. On 21 September 2015, the super PAC Committee supporting Carson, sent an email asking supporters to back his response to "Meet the Press" moderator Chuck Todd that he could not advocate a Muslim to be President because Islam was not compatible with the Constitution. Within 12 hours, about 400 people had

³⁷ See *The Guardian.com News*' entry "Anti-Islam group publishes addresses of Muslims and Muslim sympathisers", in: <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/nov/25/anti-muslim-group-publishes-names-texas>, retrieved on 25.11.2015

³⁸ See the Blaze's entry "Snap Out of It: CNN Host Likens Drawing the Prophet Muhammad to Saying the N-Word" in: <http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2015/05/28/snap-out-of-it-cnn-host-likens-drawing-the-prophet-muhammad-to-saying-the-n-word/>, retrieved on 30.05.2015

contributed around \$31,000, according to super PAC head John Philip Sousa. Sousa said: “*It broke all records...We’ve never gotten that kind of response.*” On 23 September in the morning, the campaign sent out an email from Carson, who pledged: “*I will not back down,*” according to campaign communications director Doug Watts. In two hours, Watts said, \$300,000 had flowed in from donors. The day before, Watts said that fundraising had not been affected by the controversy, saying that it had neither hurt nor helped the campaign and that Carson’s comments were not a calculated attempt to appeal to his base.³⁹

In Canada, the anti-Islam movement *Patriotische Europäer Gegen die Islamisierung Des Abendlandes* (PEGIDA) has now come to Canada, as the movement held its first demonstration on 19 September 2015 in front of the Ontario legislature in Toronto, where they were met by almost 100 anti-racist counter-demonstrators. The dozen or so PEGIDA protesters who gathered at Queen’s Park held signs that equated Islam with terrorism and mocked the Prophet Muhammad, and were separated from the counter-demonstrators by a line of police who at times struggled to maintain calm. The PEGIDA protesters gave speeches and sang songs, but were drowned out by their opponents. The demonstration ended when some anti-racism protesters pushed through and knocked down part of the canopy tent under which PEGIDA members had gathered, chanting “*Nazi scum, off our streets!*” Police managed to lead the outnumbered PEGIDA people away to safety as the larger group cheered in victory. The movement’s Canadian Facebook page boasts about 5,500 fans — a number that was growing by the day. A PEGIDA march in Montreal in 2015 spring was cancelled at the last minute when it became clear the group would be heavily outnumbered by counter-demonstrators.⁴⁰ PEGIDA itself has its root in Europe and Germany has been the ‘*epicentrum*’ since this anti-Islam movement was first initiated in the city of Dresden in October 2014 which soon transformed into a national movement in Germany. Following the Charlie Hebdo incident, the PEGIDA phenomenon had even multiplied across Europe such as those in Denmark, Norway, France, Spain, UK, Netherland, and Hungary. This movement organized weekly demonstrations against what it considers “*The Islamisation of the Western world*”, calling for restrictive immigration rules for Muslims. Quite recently, PEGIDA again re-drew massive support due to the government’s policy regarding the issue of Syrian refugee. The group has become increasingly active as refugee numbers have soared in recent months. Meanwhile, Chancellor Merkel’s administration had taken the right step with regard to the policy on Syrian Refugee, because of which she had been facing an increasingly domestic pressures especially those coming from the far-right groups. Merkel’s administration



³⁹ See NBC News’s entry “Ben Carson Nabs Big Fundraising Haul in Wake of Islam Comments”, in: <http://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2016-election/carson-nabs-big-fundraising-haul-wake-islam-comments-n432521>, retrieved on 24.09.2015

⁴⁰ See BuzzFeed.com’s entry “The Anti-Islam Group Pegida Held Its First Protest In Canada”, in: <http://www.buzzfeed.com/ishmaeldaro/pegida-protest-toronto#.ulE45qyz9>, retrieved on 21.09.2015

has been suffering constant domestic pressures since her decision to give shelter to up to 1.5 million asylum seekers during 2015. Such pressures were also directed towards Chancellor Merkel as an individual, such as the recent publication of her picture on veil by local media which reflect a strong anti-Islam sentiments. The PEGIDA itself had slammed Merkel as 'The Most Dangerous Women in Europe' while demanding her resignation.⁴¹

A heating discourse against Islamic attires had also surfaced on Canadian public, stirred by far right groups, and to a certain extent had gained public supports, and this time was related to Niqab. The Conservatives and the Bloc Quebecois had been fueling a debate on whether or not to allow people to take the citizenship oath while wearing a Niqab. Other parties had called out these arguments as unnecessary fear mongering, but the fact that none had framed it as xenophobia, it was deplorable racism as Islamophobia was on the rise in Canada. Conservative 'anti-terror' legislation Bill C-51 criminalized the advocacy or promotion of terrorist acts and made it easier for police to arrest someone suspected of being a terrorist, while Bill C-24 ascribed a 'second-class' citizenship to Canadians who were born abroad – revocable for convictions of terrorism or treason. These pieces of legislation did not name Muslims as explicit targets, but due to the prejudiced association between Islam and terrorism, their implementation would disproportionately affect Muslims. Similarly, the proposed Quebec Charter of Values, which nominally addressed all religious attire, was widely criticized for Islamophobic intentions.⁴²

⁴¹ See, *TheLocal.de*'s entry "Pegida: Merkel 'Europe's most dangerous woman", in: <http://www.thelocal.de/20151013/pegida-merkel-europes-most-dangerous-woman>, retrieved on 14.10.2015

⁴² See *McGilldaily.com*'s entry "Islamophobia is not a false debate", in: <http://www.mcgilldaily.com/2015/10/islamophobia-is-not-a-false-debate/>, retrieved on 05.10.2015

2.2. Islamophobia in Europe

2.2.1. Polls and Reports

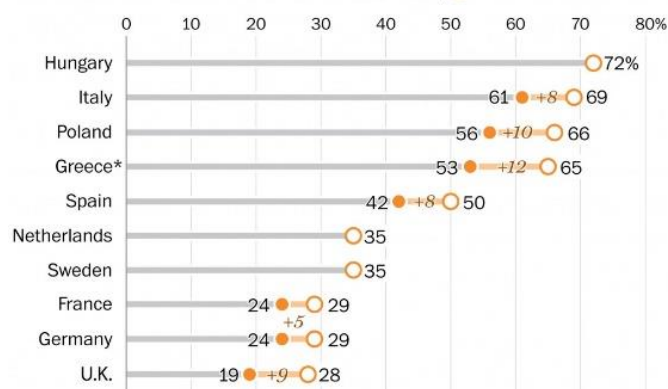
It became common in Europe, particularly in the aftermath of terrorist attacks, that people then blamed the entire Muslim population, accusing Islam as violent religion that caused all the calamity brought by the terrorist. Many of them for took to Twitter their condemnation, and at the same time express their support for 'the removal of Islam' from their society. For instance, soon after terrorist attack in Paris and Brussels, the hashtag 'StopIslam' surfaced on Twitter, condemning Islam and Muslims with thousands followers within hours.⁴³ The mainstream society was pretty much pointing the finger at all Muslims for the existence of terror, forgetting the fact that many Muslims were among the victims and that Islam as religion condemns such act of terror. People Islam and Muslims have nothing to do with the violent attacks, being blamed for such the heinous action, and becoming the victims of prejudice.



Indeed, the quite recent terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels had risen the anti-Muslim hostility in Europe, as was

Unfavorable views of Muslims on the rise in Europe

Percent unfavorable view of Muslims in ● 2015, ○ 2016



Note: Greece was not surveyed in 2015, so the figure used here comes from 2014.

Source: Pew Research Center

LAZARO GAMIO/THE WASHINGTON POST

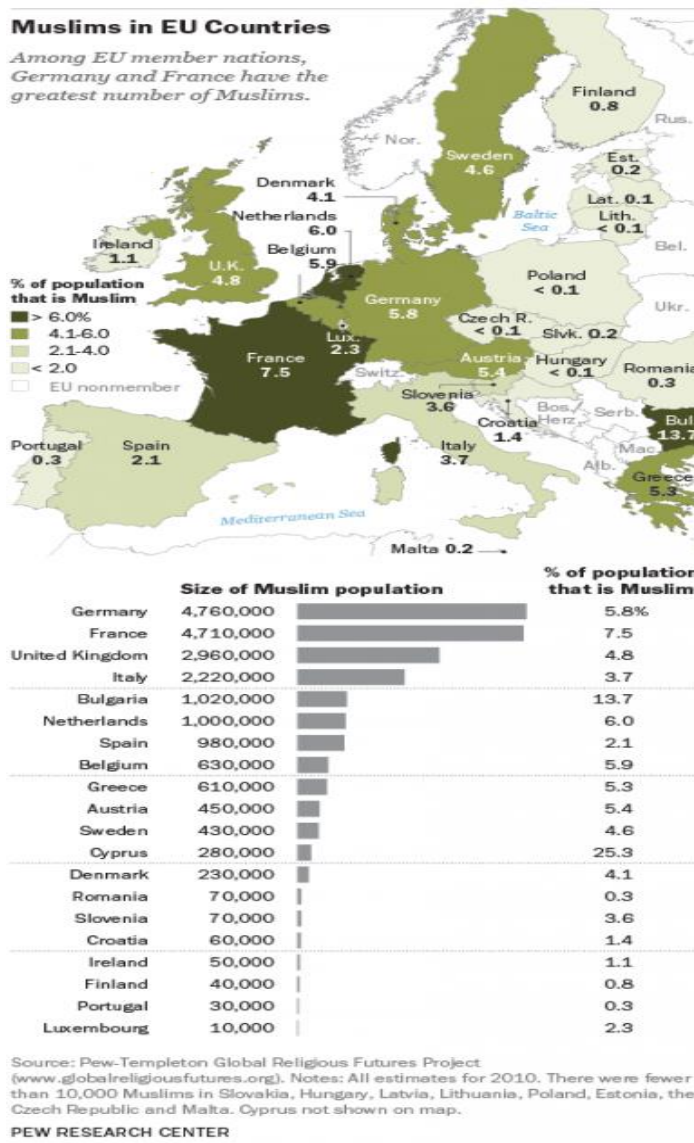
reported to the European Parliament on 26 May by the European Muslim Initiative for Social Cohesion. According to the report, the concern on terrorism had met with the escalation of anti-immigration attitudes across Europe, hence converged on the stereotypical image of Islam as the primary security threat for European societies.⁴⁴ A poll conducted to see the European people's views on immigration show a sharp increase in anti-Muslim sentiment. Seven out of 10 countries in Europe that took part in a Pew Research Center poll they have much higher number of people with unfavorable views of Muslims compared to the same time last year. Most of people also believe that migrants would increase the likelihood of terrorism and fewer job in their countries.⁴⁵

⁴³ Excerpted from Bahar Azizi, *Sott.net*'s entry "The biggest victims of terror are Muslims", in: <http://www.sott.net/article/315066-SOTT-Exclusive-Reality-check-The-biggest-victims-of-terror-are-Muslims>, retrieved on 23.03.2016

⁴⁴ See *KXOTNews.com*'s entry "Islamophobia on the rise globally", in: <http://www.kxotnews.com/world/islamophobia-on-the-rise-globally-european-muslim-body-7052.html>, retrieved on 30.05.2015

⁴⁵ See *Daily-Caller.com*'s entry "Islamophobia Is Growing Rapidly Across Europe, Poll Finds", in: <http://dailycaller.com/2016/07/12/islamophobia-is-growing-rapidly-across-europe-poll-finds/>, retrieved on 13.07.2016

Such a concern is quite understandable considering the fact that since 2014, hundreds of thousands of refugees from Syria have drawn renewed attention to the continent's Muslim population. Many European countries, including France, Belgium, Germany, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, have been concerned about the growing Muslim communities in their countries, the circumstances that have led to calls for restrictions on immigration.⁴⁶ Whereas according to the statistics as shown in the figure, the number of Muslims in Europe is actually still less significant, while at the contrary the Muslim population in Europe suffers more and more discrimination and intolerance due to their minority status, due to their religions, and even worse due to the fast growing of Islamophobia in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks. For instance in the UK, according to police figures, in the aftermath of Charlie Hebdo incident the number of hate crimes against Muslims in London has risen by almost three quarters in a year, with women who wear veils particularly vulnerable. Quoting the official report, there were 816 Islamophobic offences recorded across the city in the 12 months up to July 2015, compared with 478 for the previous 12 months. The overall rise was just over 70%, but the percentage is diverse in different boroughs. For instance, in Merton the figure rose by 262%, from eight to 29, while in Richmond-upon-Thames nine crimes were reported, compared with just one for the previous year. Tell Mama, an organisation that monitors Islamophobic incidents in the UK, said that about 60% of victims were women who wear a headscarf or hijab. It is believed that the real number could be much higher because not all victims were willing to report the crime.⁴⁷ In different part of the country, the situation is not better. In West Yorkshire for instance, Islamophobic offences had more than doubled since 2010, and this year there had been a spate of incidents in the cities of Huddersfield, Holmfirth, Dewsbury and Batley. The Islamophobia issue was so serious hence a special event was held in Huddersfield to raise awareness of the problem and look at ways of tackling the problem. In addition, the majority of offences were recorded by UK Police as there were more and more people who racially or



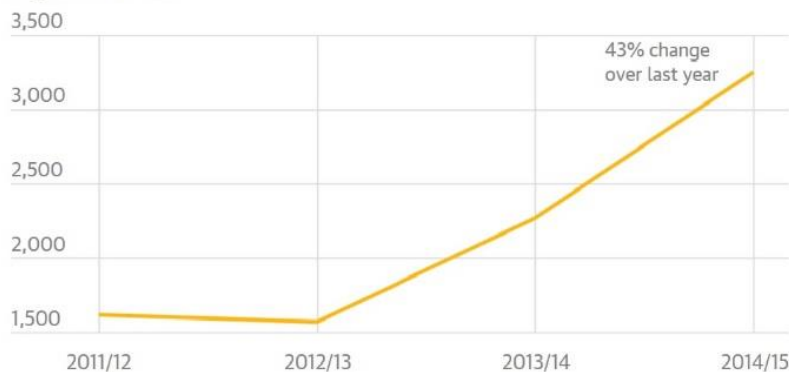
⁴⁶ See PEW Research.org's entry "5 facts about the Muslim population in Europe", in: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/19/5-facts-about-the-muslim-population-in-europe/>, retrieved on 20.07.2016

⁴⁷ See The Guardian News' entry "Hate crimes against Muslims soar in London", in: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/07/hate-crimes-against-muslims-soar-london-islamophobia>, retrieved on 08.09.2015

religiously aggravated public fear, alarm or distress, and there have also been the increase of harassment and assault.⁴⁸

Religious hate crimes

England and Wales



Guardian graphic

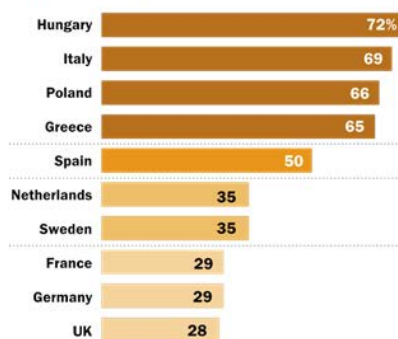
Source: Home Office

16 in England found that negative attitudes towards migrants and Muslims were widespread among school pupils. The data, based on questionnaires sent to more than 60 schools across the UK by charity *Show Racism The Red Card* (SRTTC) found that 60 per cent of children questioned believed "asylum seekers and immigrants are stealing our jobs". The survey's results come shortly after Labour MP Tristram Hunt's embarrassing encounter with a schoolchild, who told the minister that he would vote UKIP because he would like to get all the foreigners out of the country. Of the 5,945 children surveyed, 49 per cent agreed with the statement that migration was out of control or not being managed properly. Meanwhile, only 41 per cent of children did not think that Muslims were taking over England, and just under half (47 per cent) thought that relations between Muslims and non-Muslims were poor.⁵⁰ There is therefore no wonder that incidents of anti-Muslim abuse and attacks in public areas rose by

The conclusion was fortified by the report of Government's working group on anti-Muslim hatred that showed a spike in Islamophobic hate crime of more than 300 per cent in the week following the killings on 13 November 2015 in France. The report mentioned that most victims of the hate crimes were Muslim girls and women aged from 14 to 45 in traditional Islamic dress; while the large number of the reported attacks were in public places, including on buses and trains.⁴⁹ The Observatory was concerned with the fact that the growing Islamophobia was obviously not only developed among adults. A survey conducted to almost 6,000 children aged 10 to

Views of Muslims more negative in eastern and southern Europe

Unfavorable view of Muslims in our country



Note: In Poland, question was asked of a subsample of 686 respondents.

Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey, Q36c.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER



⁴⁸ See *Examiner.co.uk*'s entry "Anti-Muslim Hate Crime Rockets Across West Yorkshire", in: <http://www.examiner.co.uk/news/west-yorkshire-news/anti-muslim-hate-crime-rockets-10431459>, retrieved on 12.11.2015

⁴⁹ See *Independent.co.uk*'s entry "Paris Attacks: Women Targeted as Hate Crime against British Muslims Soars Following Terrorist Atrocity", in: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/paris-attacks-british-muslims-face-300-spike-in-racial-attacks-in-week-following-terror-a6744376.html>, retrieved on 13.11.2015

⁵⁰ See *India Times.com*'s entry "Almost a third of UK school pupils believe 'Muslims are taking over our country', study claims", in: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/uk/Almost-a-third-of-UK-school-pupils-believe-Muslims-are-taking-over-our-country-study-claims/articleshow/47352575.cms>, retrieved on 21.05.2015

326% in 2015, as reported by Tell MAMA.⁵¹ The Observatory noted another interesting fact that Islamophobia Europe had become 'racialized' and affected other minority groups such as what was found in Scotland. In a groundbreaking study, experts from four UK universities questioned almost 400 young people aged 12-25 to discover the truth about prejudice, and it was concluded that "*Islamophobia impacts on all communities. Frequently young Sikhs, Hindus, non-religious ethnic minorities including those of African descent and Eastern Europeans have discussed being mistaken for Muslims and experiencing Islamophobia...It's not just a Muslim issue. It requires a coherent society-wide strategy in tackling it.*" The report, compiled by Napier University in collaboration with Edinburgh, Newcastle and St Andrews universities.⁵²

The situation of Islamophobia in Germany is not too different. Nearly two-thirds of Germans believe that Islam does not belong to Germany, according to an opinion poll, which also found that only 22% of Germans consider Islam to be an integral part of German society. In a similar poll conducted in 2015, 37% of Germans said that Islam belongs to Germany, 15% more than now. The results indicate that German attitudes toward Islam are hardening after Chancellor Angela Merkel's decision to allow more than 1.1 million mostly Muslim migrants to enter Germany in 2015. The poll has opened yet another chapter in the decade-long debate over the phrase, "Islam belongs to Germany." The words were first uttered in September 2006 — at the time there were 3.5 million Muslims in Germany, compared to nearly six million today — by then Interior Minister Wolfgang Schauble.⁵³ The crisis brought on by the flood of primarily Muslim migrants and "economic refugees" had certainly been molding the attitudes of Germans and that fact was already showing up at the voting booth. The Alternative for Germany (AfD) party won sweeping victories in preliminary elections earlier this year, trouncing the traditionally dominant coalition headed by Chancellor Angela Merkel. For her part, Merkel seems to be softening her stance in response to the growing unrest among the public regarding the Muslim migrants. It was quite clear to the Observatory that German people were quite nervous about the overall effect of mass Muslim immigration, with substantial numbers declaring that Islam has no place in their politics or their culture.⁵⁴

⁵¹ See The Guardian News' entry "Incidents of anti-Muslim abuse up by 326% in 2015, says Tell MAMA", in: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/jun/29/incidents-of-anti-muslim-abuse-up-by-326-in-2015-says-tell-mama>, retrieved on 30.06.2016

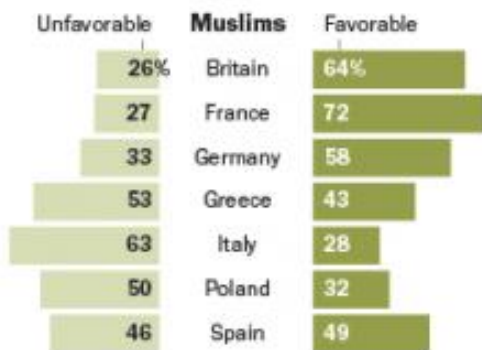
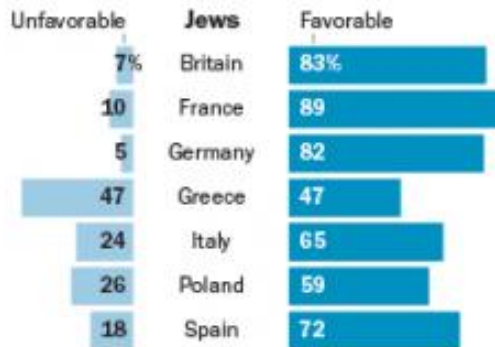
⁵² See *The National.scot*'s entry "It's not only Muslims who are the victims of racialized Islamophobia in Scotland", in: <http://www.thenational.scot/news/its-not-only-muslims-who-are-the-victims-of-racialised-islamophobia-in-scotland.8415>, retrieved on 05.10.2015

⁵³ See *Gate-Stone-Institute.org*'s entry "Islam is a political ideology that is not compatible with the German Constitution", in: <https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/8392/islam-belongs-to-germany>, retrieved on 06.07.2016

⁵⁴ See *Hot-Air.com*'s entry "New polling shows majority of Germans feel Islam has no place in their culture", in: <http://hotair.com/archives/2016/05/06/new-polling-shows-majority-of-germans-feel-islam-has-no-place-in-their-culture/>, retrieved on 06.05.2016

How Europe Views Jews, Muslims

% in each country who have ... views of Jews/Muslims



Source: Spring 2014 Global Attitude Survey. Q37 a,c.
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

As the Daesh cheered and took credit for the terrorist attacks in France, emotions were running high in the nation -- especially among its 5 million-strong Muslim population, which were accustomed to being under watch and threat after extremists. According to reports, worshippers at the Grand Mosque of Paris in the city's 5th district and Muslim centers across the country were bracing for backlash as a few reports trickled out of anti-Muslim acts. Muslims were preparing to be "collateral victims of terrorism" as over the weekend, red crosses were painted onto a wall of an eastern Paris mosque, while slogans reading "*France, wake up!*" and "*Death to Muslims*" were written on the walls of other mosques around the city.⁵⁵ Such a connection between terrorist attack and Islamophobia was endorsed by Report from Spain. In April 2016 Spanish police said they had identified 14 people linked to far-right groups who took part in a protest outside of Madrid's main mosque after the deadly Brussels airport and metro attacks. The protesters gathered at the Omar mosque in Madrid and placed a large placard that read: "*Today Brussels, tomorrow Madrid?*" Since the Brussels attacks, several mosques had been vandalized in Spanish cities such as Salamanca in the west and Granada in the south.⁵⁶ Polls and surveys also shown that Islamophobia was on the rise in the Netherlands, revealed that one third of the country's mosques had been subject to threats or vandalism since last year. Mosques had endured aggression in the form of threatening letters, arson attempts, placement of a pig's head and defacement of property. The report believed that rise of anti-Muslim sentiment in the Netherlands was in response to growing fears of terrorist attacks by radical groups, amidst the media report that roughly 220 Dutch

Muslims had joined terrorist organizations like ISIS, sparking fears that they could launch terror attacks at home.⁵⁷

Scrutinizing the reports and surveys conducted to measure Europeans' public sentiments towards Islam and Muslims, the Observatory concludes some points as the following:

- a. Islam and Muslims have been victimized for terrorist attacks hitting European cities
- b. Anti-Muslim hate-crimes had increased significantly in the United Kingdom, Germany, and France

⁵⁵ See *Huffingtonpost's* entry "French Come Together To Support Muslims After Attacks", in: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/paris-muslims-interfaith_5648d60be4b045bf3def8a7e, retrieved on 15.11.2015

⁵⁶ See *The Local.es's* entry "Hate crime against Muslims rises tenfold in Spain", in: <http://www.thelocal.es/20160413/hate-crime-against-muslims-rises-tenfold-in-spain>, retrieved on 14.04.2016

⁵⁷ See *Opposing-Views.com's* entry "Islamophobia on The Rise in The Netherlands", in: <http://www.opposingviews.com/i/world/islamophobia-rise-netherlands>, retrieved on 19.03.2016

- c. Racism against Muslims have been growing amongst the younger European generation
- d. There is a strong connection between the rise of Islamophobia in Europe and the influx of Muslim refugees
- e. Islamophobia Europe have been racialized hence affected other minority groups such as Sikhs, Hindus, and other minorities of African descents.

2.2.2. *Islamophobic Discourses and Campaigns*

- "Muslims worship the devil" -

Reverend Robert West, who stood for the British National Party in the Boston and Skegness Parliamentary elections, was teaching at Walton Girls' High School and Sixth Form in Grantham when the incidents took place. A National College for Teaching and Leadership panel found that Reverend West told pupils he was 'allergic to Mohammedans' and said there was a problem with people being Muslim because we are fighting them. Reverend West also told his class that "*any Non-Christian God is demonic*" and that "*Muslims worship the devil*".⁵⁸

- "Islam is demonic" -

Anti-Islamic graffiti "*Islam is demonic*" was sprayed on the walls of the Islamic Society of Wales Mosque, Victoria Road and Jamie Mosque on Stow Hill in Newport in the UK. Gwent Police was investigating.⁵⁹

- "Muslims should be put into concentration camps" –

Martin Konvicka wrote on his Facebook profile that Muslims should be put into concentration camps or that they should be made into meat and bone meal. Samkova said the criminal complaint was filed on 18 November, while a spokesman for Konvicka's group called it an attack on freedom of speech. Bloc against Islam held a rally on 17 November 2015, marking the anniversary of a student march that kicked off the Velvet Revolution in 1989 – supported by President Milos Zeman, who was known for his anti-Islam rhetoric. Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka said in an interview with the business daily *Hospodarske noviny* published in the following day that Zeman had aligned himself with populists tapping into fear of Islamic State and the migrant crisis. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed alarm that the Czech Republic's detention policy for migrants had been accompanied by an increasingly xenophobic public discourse, including repeated Islamophobic statements by President Milos Zeman, and a public petition 'Against Immigration' launched by former President Vaclav Klaus.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ See *Lincoln Shire Echo's* entry "School teacher told his pupils at girls school Muslims worship the devil", in: <http://www.lincolnshireecho.co.uk/School-teacher-told-pupils-girls-school-Muslims/story-26485884-detail/story.html>, retrieved on 13.05.2015

⁵⁹ See *BBC.com's* entry "Islam Is Demonic' Graffiti Sprayed on Newport Mosque", in: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-34919160>, retrieved on 25.11.2015

⁶⁰ See *Toll.org's* entry "Far-Right Group Leader's Lawyer Says He Is Accused of Inciting Hatred Against Muslims Via Facebook Posts", in: <http://www.tol.org/client/article/25292-czech-republic-islam-far-right-martin-konvicka.html>, retrieved on 25.11.2015

- “Islam will be the death of Europe” -

Thousands of people joined anti-migrant protests in three eastern European capitals after leaders from the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia opposed an EU scheme to fix refugee quotas. In the Polish capital Warsaw, nearly 5,000 people, many chanting anti-Islamic slogans, marched through the city, an AFP correspondent said. *“Islam will be the death of Europe”*, one of the banners said. Organizers claimed the demonstration drew 10,000 people but police refused to confirm the figure.⁶¹

- “Muslims are not welcome here” -

The mayor of France's southern town of Beziers, politician Robert Menard, paid a visit to a social housing where refugees stayed, during which he had seen in a video published on 11 September 2015 saying, *“You’re not welcome here.”* The video which went viral on social media showed the mayor encountering the Syrian refugee with police officers and a translator. *“You entered here by breaking the doors. You are stealing water and electricity. You should not be occupying these apartments,”* the mayor added.⁶²

- “Islam was never part of Europe” -

Hungary's Prime Minister, Viktor Orban, defended his hardline stance against refugees, the vast majority of whom were Muslim, saying in an interview published on 16 October 2015 that Islam had never been part of Europe. Speaking to Germany's Focus news weekly about the record migrant influx, he said: *“The language of the European elite is ideological and dogmatic...Islam has never been part of Europe, it came to us.”* He conceded that Germany's Turkish migrants, who arrived in their tens of thousands from the 1960s for work, by now belong to German history and therefore Europe's too.⁶³

- “Sharia allow Muslim to marry multiple wives and have up to 20 children each” -

Baroness Cox, a member of Britain's House of Lords, warned on 23 October that British recognition of Sharia-guided arbitration panels was leading to discrimination against Muslim women, calling the phenomenon *“religiously sanctioned gender discrimination.”* Cox, a longtime critic of radical Islam, warned that as a result of the acceptance of Islamic law panels, some Muslim men in the UK had been able to practice polygamy. She said: *“My Muslim friends tell me that in some communities with high polygamy and divorce rates, men may have up to 20 children each.”* Britain's Daily

⁶¹ See Worthynews's entry “Thousands Protest Migrants In Eastern Europe: 'Islam Will Be The Death Of Europe’”, in: <http://www.worthynews.com/21683-thousands-protest-migrants-in-eastern-europe-islam-will-be-the-death-of-europe>, retrieved on 28.11.2015

⁶² See Daily Sabah News's entry “‘You're Not Welcome Here,' France's Far-Right Mayor Tells Syrian Refugee”, In: <http://www.dailysabah.com/europe/2015/09/15/youre-not-welcome-here-frances-far-right-mayor-tells-syrian-refugee>, retrieved on 16.11.2015

⁶³ See Yahoo News' entry “Islam was never part of Europe: Hungary's Orban”, in: <http://news.yahoo.com/islam-never-part-europe-hungarys-orban-105713024.html>, retrieved on 17.10.2015

Telegraph [reported](#) that Cox would like to close a legal loophole which she believed allows Sharia courts to discriminate against women.⁶⁴

- “We are a Christian State, Islam is a foreign body” -

In March 2016, Ms. Von Storch of the anti-mass migration Alternative for Germany (AfD) proposed ban on minarets, discrediting the completely religious communities in Germany and threatening their existence. Ms. Von Storch was not the only leading member of the AfD to come out calling for stricter laws regarding Islam. The party’s Deputy Chairman Alexander Gauland also spoke to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* and said, “*We are a Christian-secular state, Islam is a foreign body. A Euro-Islam does not exist in reality,*” and implying that Islam was simply not compatible with the ideas the AfD was founded on.⁶⁵

2.2.6. The Continued Rise of Far-Rights

European Right groups were very active advocating sectarian identity in the continent, not because they want to promote Christianity but because they want to resist against Islam and the integration of Muslims into the mainstream society– something they called as ‘the Islamization of Europe’. Public spaces had therefore become a major battleground on which there were bans on head scarves and other signs of religious attires in schools (in France and Netherlands) and on full-face veils on the streets (in France and Belgium), and efforts to block the construction of mosques (in countries throughout Europe), ban on minarets (in Switzerland), and so on and so forth. The pushback against Islam also concerned the individual body with campaigns to prohibit circumcision and halal food in Norway. Notably, these measures were being advocated in the name of protecting liberal secularism. The hijab was said to offend



⁶⁴ See *The Blaze.com*’s entry “British Peer Warns Shariah Courts Allow Muslim Men to Marry Multiple Wives and Have up to 20 Children Each”, in: <http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2015/10/25/british-peer-warns-shariah-courts-allow-muslim-men-to-marry-multiple-wives-and-have-up-to-20-children-each/>, retrieved on 26.10.2015

⁶⁵ See *Breitbart.com*’s entry “AfD Under Fire: ‘We Are a Christian State, Islam is a Foreign Body... Euro-Islam Does Not Exist’”, in: <http://www.breitbart.com/london/2016/04/19/council-muslims-calls-afd-nazis-minaret-ban/>, retrieved on 20.04.2016

women's rights; circumcision was considered offending children's rights; while halal food stocks were regarded as abusing animal rights by ritual slaughter.⁶⁶ The carnage in the French capital in November 2015 seemed bound to further complicate the European Union's task in sharing out hundreds of thousands of migrants who had entered the continent; to strengthen the position of Far right groups, and at the same time to boost Islamophobia across Europe. Within such euphoria, the Far Rights' anti-Islam rhetoric spreaded in almost everywhere in Europe, and the Observatory was concerned mostly with those happening in the Netherland, UK, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Finland, France, and Poland.

In **Netherlands**, the notorious Wilders continued making bubbles by sending a letter to the Dutch parliament requesting that an exhibition of cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad to be shown in the Dutch parliament, an initiative that provoked reactions from other politicians.⁶⁷ During a parliamentary debate on 10 September, Wilders termed the wave of refugees pushing into Europe as an 'Islamic invasion', a xenophobic statement that exposed deep divisions over how the Netherlands should respond to the refugee crisis. The statement was mainly aimed at denouncing the the call from European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker who appealed to EU members to share out refugees arriving on the bloc's fringes, while some EU countries opposed the idea of mandatory quotas, as supported by German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Meanwhile, the conservative Dutch government's position on the refugee issue was 'agree with condition', in saying that it was only willing to take in more refugees if all EU states will do the same. Trying to influence the Government's position, Wilders called the wave of refugees passing through Hungary and other countries "*an Islamic invasion of Europe, of the Netherlands...Masses of young men in their twenties with beards singing Allahu Akbar across Europe. It's an invasion that threatens our prosperity, our security, our culture and identity.*"⁶⁸

In **Germany**, domestic pressures against Merkel's administration was becoming stronger has since Merkel's decision to give shelter to up to 1.5 million asylum seekers from Syria. German Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservative allies, the Christian Social Union (CSU), rebuffed her 'open door' approach to the European migrant crisis, echoing the concerns of Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban who declared



his opposition to vast numbers of Muslims taking residence in European countries. Edmund Stoiber, the Chairman of CSU said that Mrs. Merkel relied upon for her coalition's parliamentary dominance – added that he did not recognise

⁶⁶ See *The Islamophobia Watch's* entry "How the right exploits Christianity and secularism to attack Muslims", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/how-the-right-exploits-christianity-and-secularism-to-attack-muslims/>

⁶⁷ See Alwaba.com's entry "'Dutch politician calls for Prophet Mohammed cartoon contest'", in: <http://www.alwaba.com/news/dutch-politician-calls-prophet-mohammed-cartoon-contest-700074>, retrieved on 29.05.2015

⁶⁸ See Reuters News' entry "Wilders tells Dutch parliament refugee crisis is 'Islamic invasion'", in: <http://in.reuters.com/article/2015/09/10/europe-migrants-netherlands-idINKCN0RA14B20150910>, retrieved on 11.09.2015

the German Chancellor's statement when she claimed *"We can do it"* about Germany's approach to the migrant crisis. The statement of the CSU leader referred to Mrs. Merkel's earlier declaration that "Islam belongs to Germany" in a speech aimed at rebuking anti-immigration protesters. *"Former president Wulff said Islam belongs to Germany. That is true. I also hold this opinion,"* she said, hours ahead of the anti-immigration PEGIDA marches in a number of German cities. But the Chairman of her sister party the CSU showed disagreement in saying: *"I don't adopt this proposition...The Muslims belong to Germany, not Islam. Islam is not a core element of German culture and also is not part of our history and tradition. When people talk about the fact that changed Germany, then one thing must be clear: we Germans have grown a dominant culture, which is also enshrined in Basic Laws: tolerance, press and religion, and in our relationship to Israel. This dominant culture of the Basic Law cannot be for disposal, no matter how many immigrants come to us".* Mr. Wulff's comments came shortly after Hungary's PM Viktor Orban warned that Christianity could become a minority religion in Europe if the current migration wave were to continue. He was pilloried by the liberal-Left and mainstream, Western media for his comments. Sweden's firebrand MP Kent Ekeröth told *Breitbart London* a little bit earlier that he believed his country was being "Islamised" by a recent wave of immigration.⁶⁹

The strong pressures against Merkel's administration were also seen on the street. Around 300 protesters linked with the far-right movement Pro-NRW, referencing the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia, gathered at Breslauer Platz in Cologne in November 2015 to protest against what they see as the Islamisation of Europe. The participants held banners depicting the controversial Muhammad cartoon drawn by Danish illustrator Kurt Westergaard, in which the Prophet Muhammad was depicted wearing a bomb instead of a 'turban'. Protesters also waved German flags and held banners calling for a ban on mosques and a stop to the acceptance of refugees in Europe.⁷⁰

Anti-Islam group PEGIDA stepped up its attacks on Chancellor Angela Merkel on 12 October 2015, slammed Merkel as 'The most dangerous woman in Europe' and demanded her resignation. PEGIDA leader Tatjana Festerling told a rally of thousands of supporters in the eastern city of Dresden that Merkel's policy of welcoming refugees had turned Germany into a gigantic camp in the jungle. Festerling, who came fourth in Dresden's mayoral elections in June 2015 with 10 percent of the vote, denounced Merkel as 'irresponsible' while described her as 'the



⁶⁹ See The Breitbart.com's entry "Migrant Rift: Merkel's Conservative Allies Declare 'Islam Not A German Tradition'", in: <http://www.breitbart.com/london/2015/09/21/migrant-rift-merkels-conservative-allies-declare-islam-not-a-german-tradition/>, retrieved on 23.09.2015

⁷⁰ See The Ruptly.tv News' entry "Far-Right Supporters of Pro-NRW Call For Ban On Mosques in Cologne", in: <https://ruptly.tv/vod/view/38424/germany-far-right-supporters-of-pro-nrw-call-for-ban-on-mosques-in-cologne>, retrieved on 23.11.2015

most dangerous woman in Europe'.⁷¹ On Germany's streets, the movement continued holding regular event to denounce Islam, and it staged its biggest rally on 19 October, as thousands of people participated in its first anniversary demonstration. Taking advantage of the refugee crisis in Europe, the anti-Islam group claimed that the refugees and migrants seeking a better life in Germany were ripping the social benefits of the German people. Some of the banners read: *"Money for our children instead of money for your asylum seekers!"*, *"Merkel has to go!"* and *"Deport! Deport!"* Other banners read: *"Hell comes with fake refugees"* and *"Every people should have its country, not every people a piece of Germany"*.⁷² – It was also reported a PEGIDA protest on more or less the same time (11 October) attracted a crowd of several thousand in Utrecht, the Netherlands. Media estimated that the crowd was about 7,000-8,000.⁷³

Three days after the terrorist attacks in Paris, the square in front of Dresden's famous opera house - the Semperoper - was full as 10,000 people came to protest the German government's refugee policies. That was a few more thousand than the week before, but only half as many as during PEGIDA's high point in the wake of the 'Charlie Hebdo' January 2015 attacks. Supporters of the PEGIDA felt validated by the terrorist attacks and had connected them to the presence of many refugees in Germany. They were calling for a halt to Germany's welcoming refugee policy.⁷⁴ The Observatory also noted with concern the parallel anti-Islam demonstrations on streets, for instance the one by the Leipzig faction of anti-Islam group Pegida turned violent on 14 September. An estimated 500 people marched for Pegida in Leipzig on that day in a protest that soon devolved into violent clashes, injuring two officers as Pegida demonstrators started hurling objects like bottles and fireworks at police. Another 1,000 counter-protesters also showed up to demonstrate against Pegida. Police said that counter-protesters also



⁷¹ See Yahoo News's entry "German anti-Islam protesters slam 'Dangerous Merkel'", in: <http://news.yahoo.com/german-anti-islam-protesters-slam-dangerous-merkel-203608672.html>, retrieved on 13.10.2015

⁷² See The Neuropo.eu's entry "The German far-right movement PEGIDA staged one of its biggest rally in months", in: <http://neuropo.eu/article/far-right-pegida-on-the-rise-again/>, retrieved on 21.10.2015

⁷³ See The Christian Today News's entry "Anti-Islam rally attracts thousands in the Netherlands", in: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/anti-islam.rally.attracts.thousands.in.the.netherlands/67469.htm>, retrieved on 14.10.2015

⁷⁴ See DW.com News' entry "In Dresden, Russian flags of protest against Islam and Merkel", in: <http://www.dw.com/en/in-dresden-russian-flags-of-protest-against-islam-and-merkel/a-18865803>, retrieved on 22.11.2015

breached the peace, turning over police barricades and resisting police. Pegida supporters in Dresden - where the anti-Islam movement began - also formed a protest on the same day, drawing more than 5,000 people for the first time in months. Co-founder and leader Lutz Bachmann told supporters at the demonstration that he wanted to establish PEGIDA as an official political party to run in local, state and federal elections. A supporter of the PEGIDA movement, Tatjana Festerling, was a candidate in the Dresden mayoral election earlier in 2015 before she announced her withdrawal after garnering 9.6 percent of the votes. Bachmann had previously stepped down as leader after a photo surfaced of him styled as Adolf Hitler, but he was later reinstated.⁷⁵

Unfortunately, such unfriendly position gained vast support from the public due to negative responses against Muslim refugees in countries within the same continent. In **Sweden** for instance, a spokesman for the country's immigration agency said that Sweden had no more space to accommodate refugees and asylum seekers. The claim came as the Swedish army was drafted in to help manage the influx of immigrants into the country. Hundreds of thousands of refugees had arrived in Sweden in 2015, after the country announced in 2013 that it would provide asylum to any people fleeing the Syrian civil war who made it to its shores. Sweden's immigration agency, Migrationsverket, should have to draft in the country's disaster management agency, as well as officers from the army, to help manage the influx but they said "*We don't have any more space,*" the agency's lead spokesman, Fredrik Bengtsson. He said state accommodation had all been full since 2012 and now officials stated that they could not find any more accommodation.⁷⁶

In **France**, Right-wing leaders around Europe rushed to demand an end to an influx of refugees and migrants from the Middle East and Africa after a wave of deadly attacks in Paris claimed by ISIS militants. In France, National Front leader Marine Le Pen demanded that Paris take back control of its national borders permanently from the EU and "*annihilate Islamist fundamentalism.*" In a televised statement, she said France must outlaw Islamist organizations, shut down radical mosques, expel foreign preachers of hatred and illegal immigrants, strip bi-national Islamists of their French citizenship and deport them. She did not mention Europe's migration crisis but she had previously opposed any more refugees or migrants. Marine Le Pen was parlaying fear of Islam, migrants and open borders into political support. Now, with France angry and in mourning in the aftermath of Paris attack on



Friday 13 November 2015, she was seizing the opportunity to expand her appeal and show her clout, underscoring how far-right messages were resonating across Europe. "*France and the French are no longer safe,*" Ms. Le Pen said

⁷⁵ See *TheLocal.de*'s entry "Two police injured as anti-Islam rallies reignite", in: <http://www.thelocal.de/20150915/two-police-hurt-in-anti-islam-protest-turned-riot>, retrieved on 17.09.2015

⁷⁶ See *The Ibtimes News*' entry "We Have No More Room' For Refugees and Migrants, Says Liberal Nordic Nation", in: <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/sweden-we-have-no-more-room-refugees-migrants-says-liberal-nordic-nation-1528077>, retrieved on 10.11.2015

in a speech the day after the attacks, demanding a crackdown on Islamists in the country. Analysts said Ms. Le Pen's already favorable prospects in regional elections and had most likely been given a lift, strengthening her position as a possible presidential candidate in 2017. She had also succeeded in pulling the political center of gravity in France to the right, forcing the main center-right party to adopt a stronger anti-immigration stance and taking positions in the wake of Friday's attacks that were subsequently adopted by President François Hollande, a Socialist.⁷⁷

In **Poland**, the country's designated Europe minister said Warsaw could not take in refugees under an EU quota system after the wave of attacks. In a comment on the right-leaning news portal *wPolityce.pl*, Konrad Szymanski said his incoming government did not agree with the previous Polish administration's commitment to accept a share of an EU-wide relocation of immigrants.⁷⁸ At the same time, thousands of protesters gathered in several Polish cities, as right-wing groups rallied against plans to resettle refugees in Europe while counter-protesters marched in solidarity with those seeking safety. Around 10,000 right-wing protesters clutching the national flag assembled on the streets in the capital of Warsaw in November, and chanted slogans including "*Today refugees, tomorrow terrorists!*" and "*Poland, free of Islam!*"⁷⁹ **Finland** also responded similarly against Muslim immigrants. Two bedsheet-sized pieces of white fabric espoused anti-immigration and anti-Islam sentiments, were hung among the trees behind a game fence along a highway. The banners were seen along national road eight in Satakunta, in western Finland. In large capital letters, saw the banners' text: "Islam is destroying Finland," and "Protect the children's future, say no to immigration."⁸⁰



⁷⁷ See *NY Times News*' entry "Marine Le Pen's Anti-Islam Message Gains Influence in France", in: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/18/world/europe/marine-le-pens-anti-islam-message-gains-influence-in-france.html?_r=0, retrieved at 17.11.2015

⁷⁸ See *The Buenos Aires Herald News*' entry "Univision Anchor Repeats: Islam Doesn't Inspire Terrorists", in: <http://buenosairesherald.com/article/203019/europe%E2%80%99s-farright-calls-for-border-closures>, retrieved on 15.11.2015

⁷⁹ See *The Independent News*' entry "Refugees' Crisis: Thousands Gather at Protests in Poland", in: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/refugees-crisis-pro-and-anti-refugee-protests-take-place-in-poland-in-pictures-10499352.html>, retrieved on 15.11.2015

⁸⁰ See *Yle.fi*'s entry "Police: roadside anti-immigration, anti-Islam banners to be removed", in: http://yle.fi/uutiset/police_roadside_anti-immigration_-_islam_banners_to_be_removed/8295073, retrieved on 11.09.2015



In the **UK**, Far-right and fascist organizations in Britain were no exception, stepping up Islamophobic and anti-EU activities in the wake of terror attacks in Paris and Brussels and were attempting a possible British withdrawal from Europe in the June referendum. The far-right parties and organizations across the continent also attack on the migrant influx into Europe and taking advantage to increase their profile and to gain political benefits. Such a conclusion was shared by locals. For instances, Victoria Brittain, a former editor the Guardian, thought those actions were to *“mainly encourage the existing groups to feel they are visible, I don't think they actually have much impact in spreading a negative message against Muslims, because these groups are so*

unattractive and extreme in their self-presentation they don't bring in new people much”. Also TellMAMA, a non-profit NGO that records all anti-Islam activities in the UK stated that *“While the numbers remain small, groups like Britain First will film their activities, no matter the size, and upload content to drive up web traffic and possible party membership or donations”*.⁸¹ Meanwhile, the British Government remained proportional in responding the major incident in Paris, despite a non-confrontation stance against Far rights groups. The Prime Minister made the comments as he vowed to use military force and tougher counter-terrorism laws to stop a Paris style terror attack happening on British soil. Mr. Cameron also described extremism as *“an epidemic”* in his first speech since the atrocities carried out by ISIS militants in the French capital. The terror attacks, which targeted the Bataclan concert venue, the Stade de France football stadium along with cafes and restaurants, left 129 people dead in total. Discussing what drives Islamic extremists at the annual Lord Mayor's Banquet, Mr Cameron said: *“Of course, this extremist ideology is not true Islam. “That cannot be said clearly enough”*.⁸²

In Czech, a hundred of Czech opponents of Islam blocked the traffic at the Dolni Dvoriste crossing at the border with Austria on 16 September, a step the opposition Dawn party initiated to make the Italian cabinet send the army to protect the border against refugees. One day earlier, Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka (Social Democrats, CSSD) promised that the state would deploy the military if the police failed to cope with the wave of migrants. The border blockade was organised by the Dawn-National Coalition Party in cooperation with the non-parliamentary Bloc Against Islam. The crowd was addressed by Miroslav Adamec, who heads the Bloc Against Islam south Bohemian branch. He said the other countries had been closing their borders, while the Czech cabinet was waiting for instructions from Brussels. Jana

⁸¹ See *The World Bulletin News*' entry “UK far-right steps up propaganda targeting Muslims”, in: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/headlines/171115/uk-far-right-steps-up-propaganda-targeting-muslims>, retrieved on 02.04.2016

⁸² See *Express.co.uk News*' entry “DAVID Cameron said tonight it is “not good enough” to say Islam is a religion of peace but then “deny any connection” to Islamic extremism”, in: <http://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/619912/David-Cameron-Islam-Muslim-religion-peace-Paris-terror-attacks>, retrieved at 17.11.2015

Volfova, chairwoman of the Czech Sovereignty grouping who moderated the protest meeting, said: “We want our homeland to remain our homeland. We don’t want our children to wear burqas and worship Islam.”⁸³

The **Italy** was among countries in Europe who responded properly the November incident in Paris. Shortly after the first shots rang out in Paris on Friday 13th November 2015, police in Rome moved swiftly to beef up security at the city’s main high-traffic tourist destinations, from the Vatican to the Coliseum. But they also moved extra security forces to other destinations. They weren’t worried that some of the refugees might be involved in terror attacks; they were worried



that Italians would be the ones attacking the refugees in retaliation for the Paris attacks. Since the refugee exodus that had driven more than half a million people out of North Africa and the Middle East began in 2014, there had been a steady drumbeat by many mostly right-wing political parties across Europe that the migrant boats were filled with radical Islamists and jihadi fighters.⁸⁴

Immigrant issue was obviously not the only factor that contributed towards the growing

popularity of Far right groups. The Observatory also noted that the presence of mosques and Islamic centers in Europe had been somehow liaised with the trend of terrorist attacks in European cities. The Mosques were looked at as agents who spread the ideology of Islam, who sustain the Islamisation in Europe, and even regarded as the breeding place of terrorists rather than a place for performing religious rituals, only because some terrorist perpetrators happened to pray in certain mosques in the past. Therefore, Far rights campaign was also directed against the presence of Mosques and Islamic centers on the European terrain. In **Finland**, there was a protest against plans to build a grand mosque for the Muslim community was organized by the Finnish Defence League, a group that was against Islam and claimed that their action was for democracy and freedom.⁸⁵ In the **UK**, *Britain First* provoked Muslims by ‘invading’ two Bury Park mosques in Luton. They also held a large scale demonstration through Luton on mid-May staged a protest through the

⁸³ See *The Ceskenoviny News*’ entry “Local opponents of Islam shortly block border with Austria”, in: <http://www.ceskenoviny.cz/zpravy/czech-opponents-of-islam-shortly-block-border-with-austria/1259292>, retrieved on 17.09.2015

⁸⁴ See *The Daily Beast News*’s entry “Europe Prepares for Anti-Refugee Violence”, in: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/11/15/will-paris-fuel-anti-refugee-violence.html>, retrieved on 15.11.2015

⁸⁵ See *Yle.fi*’s entry “Demonstration in Helsinki against Grand Mosque Plans”, in: http://yle.fi/uutiset/demonstration_in_helsinki_against_grand_mosque_plans/8456578, retrieved on 14.11.2015

town in 27 June 2015 to “*demonstrate that Luton is an English town not a mini caliphate.*”⁸⁶ The city of Dudley braced itself for another anti-mosque protest on 13 June - the third in the space of four months. A group called All Football Fans/Firms March Against Islamisation (AFFFMAI) said they intended to march through the town centre to object to a replacement mosque being built on Hall Street. Chief Inspector Phil Dolby broke the news to concerned residents, religious leaders and traders who attended a public debrief at Dudley Council House on 19 May, to provide feedback about policing of the Britain First march. Town traders said they felt persistent protesters were giving Dudley a bad name and remarked made during the Britain First protest on May 9, also weighed heavily on people's minds.⁸⁷ In the city of Burton, members of Britain First gathered to discuss plans for a protest against the building of a new mosque. Leader Paul Golding was accompanied by Deputy Jayda Fransen and four other senior figures. They met with Staffordshire Police officers to discuss the route of the march, organized in opposition to the new mosque in Uxbridge Street. The group had previously stated that they wanted to march along Station Street before delivering speeches in the Market Place. Jayda Fransen said: “*We are against the construction or extension of any mosques in the UK.*”⁸⁸ In London, Protestors from the far-right group targeted the East London Mosque in Whitechapel. The group of protesters gathered outside the mosque on 10 April, with Union flags and a large banner saying, “*No more mosques*” and “*We want our country back.*” The protest spilled onto Whitechapel Road and scuffles took place between protesters and worshippers. The police didn't intervene in the protest, and no arrests were made, despite the hostile and Islamophobic demonstration.⁸⁹

In meanwhile, the Observatory was also concerned with the stronger influence of Far right ideology in Europe who resist against Islam and Muslims on the pretext of Freedom of Expression, like for instance what was happening in **Norway**, when *Jyllands-Posten* editor Flemming Rose, the actor behind the controversial 2005 publication of Prophet Muhammad cartoons, was being honoured by a Norwegian free speech group. He was to receive 100,000 Norwegian kroner from the free speech group Fritt Ord for his “steadfast defence of free speech” over the past decade. Fritt Ord wrote in a press release on 31 August that Rose had consistently pushed forward the notion of free speech as a basic human right. Rose was honoured by Fritt Ord along with Norwegian journalist Vebjørn Selbekk, who as the editor-in-chief of *Magazinet* republished the Muhammad caricatures in 2006. Earlier in 2015, he released the book ‘Fyktens makt’ (The Power of Fear) about the publication’s effects on Norway. Rose too was due to release a book looking back on the decade that followed the *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons. That book, ‘Hymne til friheden’ (Hymns to Freedom) came out in September 2015. Rose also wrote the book ‘The Tyranny of Silence’, which detailed his reasoning for publishing the cartoons. Rose was also unsuccessfully nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize earlier in 2015 by a Norwegian

⁸⁶ See *The Luton Today News*’ entry “Far-right group Britain First announce Luton march after staging mosque ‘invasions’”, in: <http://www.lutontoday.co.uk/news/crime/far-right-group-britain-first-announce-luton-march-after-staging-mosque-invasions-1-6753462>, retrieved on 22.05.2015

⁸⁷ See *Stourbridge News*’ entry “Football firms plan to stage anti-mosque protest in Dudley”, in: http://www.stourbridgenews.co.uk/news/12963933.Football_firms_plan_to_stage_anti_mosque_protest_in_Dudley/, retrieved on 22.05.2015

⁸⁸ See *M.Burtonmail.co.uk News*’ entry “Britain First attend meeting ahead of march over Burton mosque”, in: <http://m.burtonmail.co.uk/Britain-attend-meeting-ahead-march-Burton-mosque/story-27919576-detail/story.html>, retrieved on 05.10.2015

⁸⁹ See *The World Bulletin News*’ entry “Far-right protesters target mosque in London”, in: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/haberler/171500/far-right-protesters-target-mosque-in-london>, retrieved on 13.04.2016

MP. The Danish press club awarded him its annual Publicistpris for “being a strong and central actor in the international debate about freedom of speech.”⁹⁰

⁹⁰ See *TheLocal.no*'s entry “Muhammad cartoon editor gets Norway prize”, in: <http://www.thelocal.no/20150831/muhammed-cartoon-editor-gets-norwegian-prize>, retrieved on 01.09.2015

2.3. Islamophobia in the Rest of the World

2.3.5. Muslims in Myanmar

Myanmar census officially revealed an undeniable fact that Islam does not pose threat to Buddhism, because Muslims make up just over two per cent of Myanmar's population, undercutting claims by Buddhist hardliners that Islam poses a threat to the dominance of their faith. Full details from the 2014 count was withheld for almost a year to avoid stirring tensions in the Buddhist-majority nation ahead of elections that propelled Aung San Suu Kyi's pro-democracy party to power.⁹¹ In fact, Islamophobia has rippled across Myanmar in recent years, with Buddhist nationalists sending alarmist messages about the growth of the Muslim population in the country. In most of the case, such Islamophobia concern was connected to the tragedy of humanity suffered by Rohingya Muslims living in the country.

The Observatory understands that the root cause of Rohingya issue is rather political than Islamophobia, for the issue came to surface because the Burmese Government did not want to recognize the Burmese nationality of Rohingya Muslims, although many have lived in the country for generations. Burmese authorities keep pressuring the Rohingya to declare that they were Bengali, a term the government preferred because it considered them as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. Since

what was happening during the last 2 years period—amidst the calamity brought into the fate of Rohingya people—Myanmar government had been pressured to legalize as much of the Rohingya population as possible as citizens, but the way they had gone had created serious issues, such as the requirement for Rohingyas to self-identify as Bengali, which most find offensive and many did not do. As the consequence, thousands of Muslim Rohingya in the western state of Rakhine were still being held as virtual



prisoners in camps with scarce food, water and health care. Hundreds had died, many from preventable conditions such as malnutrition and diseases, and thousands decided to flee and being vanished in the wilderness of the open sea. Many others were assassinated by the Buddhist-majority during communal conflicts cited the religious affiliation of Rohingya community—making Islamophobia among the vicious circle of Rohingya issue. Few were lucky enough such

⁹¹ See *Pakistan-Today.com.pk*'s entry "Islam does not pose threat to Buddhism, reveals Myanmar census", in: <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2016/07/21/foreign/islam-does-not-pose-threat-to-buddhism-reveals-myanmar-census/>, retrieved on 22.7.2016

as the 500 members of Rohingya who washed to shore in western Indonesia on 10 May 2015 and sheltered in Aceh province.⁹² The tragedy against humanity continued to appear as headlines in world media, while International Human Rights Watch and the Rohingya themselves had accused the Burmese government of a campaign of ethnic cleansing, a charge the government always denied. In fact, the Myanmar government and the Buddhist majority had shown a very minimum intention to resolve the issue. In a video message posted on *Facebook* in the week between 13 to 19 September, Thein Sein said repeatedly and firmly that there were no Rohingya Muslims in the predominantly Buddhist nation. He said a string of controversial laws on race and religion were passed under his watch and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation — which represents more than a billion Muslims across the globe — tried unsuccessfully to open an office in western Rakhine state. The president's comments came as the U.S., Britain and other governments expressed concern about rising religious tensions ahead of the 8 November general election in the country that many hope would be relatively free and fair following decades of military rule.⁹³ The position of the Buddhist majority was of no difference. Standing before a monastery, Myanmar's most infamous monk did something that would have seemed unthinkable a few years before: He launched into the formerly untouchable Aung San Suu Kyi, accusing her of being lackadaisical about the threat Muslims posed to both the country's security and Buddhist traditions and values. The comments by Ashin Wirathu highlight the rising role Buddhist nationalism — and by extension Islamophobia — was playing as the country heads into general election. The issue had shaped who can vote, who can run and, quite possibly, what form the new government will take.⁹⁴

The elections could have brought about changes regarding the new government's policy on Rohingya, but such a hope seemed to receive less resonance despite some level of progress at the political level. As was reported by Arakan



Rohingya Union⁹⁵, since the new Government of Burma sworn by the end of March 2016 and led by the Nobel laureate Daw Aung Suu Kyi, the Government had consistently downplayed the Rohingya issue while placing the ethnic armed conflict at country's eastern frontier as a national priority. However, the Burmese Government has now begun to acknowledge the importance of resolving the

⁹² See: *The Blaze.com*'s entry "500 Muslims Persecuted by Buddhists Flee, Wash Ashore on Two Boats in Indonesia", in: <http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2015/05/10/500-muslims-persecuted-by-buddhists-flee-wash-ashore-on-two-boats-in-indonesia/>, retrieved on 11.05.2015

⁹³ See *Star Tribune.com*'s entry "As elections approach, Myanmar president seeks to capitalize on anti-Muslim sentiment", in: <http://www.startribune.com/myanmar-leader-seeks-to-capitalize-on-anti-muslim-sentiment/328001861/>, retrieved on 18.09.2015

⁹⁴ See *Daily Star.com*'s entry "Islamophobia Casts Shadow Over Myanmar Historic Election", in: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/World/2015/Nov-03/321388-islamophobia-casts-shadow-over-myanmar-historic-election.ashx>, retrieved on 03.11.2015

⁹⁵ See Arakan Rohingya Union Narrative Report dated 24 June 2016 titled "New violence in Central Burma and renewed initiative by the government of Burma for resolving Rohingya Issue", available in hard copy.

issues in Arakan/Rakhine state and the necessity to bring peace, evidently due to mounting international pressure. On 22 May 2016, at the joint press conference during the visit by the U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry to Burma, the leader of the ruling NLD Party/State Counselor/Foreign Minister, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, spoke on the Rohingya issue in a more conciliatory tone for the first time since the new Government took office.

As the result, Islamophobia remains to be concerning in Myanmar, a conclusion justified by a series on incidents. For instance, on 23 June 2016, violence broke out in Waw Township in Central Burma. Resulting from an alleged personal dispute, a group of Buddhist mob has reportedly attacked Myanmar Muslim community and destroyed much of the mosque and children's elementary school, displacing members of the small Muslim community in the Township.⁹⁶ In Hpakant Township, Kachin State, a Prayer Hall was destroyed and set fire by Buddhist mob after several requests from local and national level Islamic organizations to democratic government were ignored. Mosque's board of trustees and national Islamic organizations sent several request letters to government officials including State Counsellor to save this place of worship, but no actions were seen. Proudly waving Buddhist Flags, hundreds of people led by monks participated in evening attack in Lone Khin village. Local Muslims fled in fear of further attacks. Although it was built with the permission of local authorities 25 years before, radical ultra-nationalist group tried to wipe out the Prayer Hall in accusing it as an illegal place of worship. A Muslim cemetery was also reported to be destroyed in central Bago Region.⁹⁷ The Observatory hopes that the Myanmar new Government soon to settle the citizenship issue of Rohingyas, and to make serious efforts to protect all minorities living in the country, including through the enforcement of rule of law against the perpetrators of criminal acts frequently done by members of Buddhist mainstream society.

2.3.6. *The Continued Islamophobia in Australia*

In Australia, Islamophobia is usually associated with hostile and discriminatory practices towards Muslim individuals or



communities and the exclusion of Muslims in social, cultural and political affairs. It also often manifest into discrimination against certain race. For instance, by early 2000s, Australian racism turned from being anti-Asian to anti-Arab and anti-Muslim, following the increased immigration and settling of Arabs and Muslims in Australia since the last decade. Today, due to the spread of violent terrorism and extremism at the global

scene, such racism and social exclusion had transformed into constant phobia. According to a new report by the

⁹⁶ See *M-Mediagroup.com*'s entry "Mosque and properties under mob attacks in Thuyethamain Village, Waw", in: <http://www.m-mediagroup.com/en/archives/8688>, retrieved on 24.06.2016

⁹⁷ See entry *M-Mediagroup.com*'s "Prayer Hall in northern Myanmar destroyed and set fire", in: <http://www.m-mediagroup.com/en/archives/8708>, retrieved on 02.07.2016

Australian Human Rights Commission, Muslim Australians experienced discrimination and abuse on a daily or regular basis, and such discrimination had been particularly noticeable since the Lindt Cafe siege in 2015. The research found that the Racial Discrimination Act has only a limited ability to protect Muslim Australians, because religious identity was not covered under the act. Report on *Freedom from Discrimination* mentioned that many other Australians also experience racial discrimination as a constant feature in the workplace, on the street and in the media.⁹⁸ The few months back Brussels attacks had delivered a serious blow to Australia's multicultural society, for Australian Muslims began to feel excluded and the wider community began to treat Muslims with suspicion and the question of identity came to the forefront. In 2016, more than ever, Australian Muslims were faced with the challenge of remaining faithful to the essence of Islam and engaging with society in a manner that pursues the dignity and welfare of all. Faced with many challenges, Australian Muslims were aware that society had changed. This sense of instability, combined with faithfulness to a religion, had given rise to some fears and question that were perfectly normal to ask, whether Muslims could be loyal to the Australian secularized society.⁹⁹

Particular for Australia, the Observatory noticed that the Islamophobia trend was up and down so quickly within a short range of time. For instance, at one point during the reviewed period, the level of Islamophobia was very low as was reported by three universities (University of Queensland, University of South Australia and Australian National University)¹⁰⁰. The report titled '*Islamophobia, Social Distance and Fear of Terrorism in Australia*' that was released on the end of 2015 said that 70% Australians admitted of 'very low' level of Islamophobia while ONLY 10% were found having highly fearful of Muslims. The report concluded that "*Most Australians display low levels of Islamophobia, and are willing to have Muslims in their family or friendship group although they are even more welcoming of members of other major religions*". However, at different points along the year, the Observatory also noticed the alarming increase of campaigns and xenophobic acts by Far-Rights groups to spread hates against Islam and Muslims, such as on April 2015 when hundreds of neo-Nazis, rabid ultra-nationalists, Christian fundamentalists and other racist bigots gathered together on the streets under the banner of 'Reclaim Australia' which was sponsored by United Patriots Front (UPF), the Group that saw its actions as the first battle in what it called a war against the Islamicisation of Australia. One month later, in May, they held more mobilizations to build support for their violent racist agenda. The key organizer of these Reclaim Australia protests was Shermon Burgess, known as the great Aussie patriot, whose regular YouTube videos illustrated his frothing hatred of Muslims and the 'communist menace'. Burgess was previously a member of the Australian Defence League, an organisation that made headlines in September 2014 when one of its leaders, Ralph Cermina, released a video threatening another Cronulla-style riot. He promised that 'mosques and prayer rooms are going to burn'. This UPF group also held a protest in Melbourne on 31 May outside the Richmond Town Hall to take on "*Islam in Australia and the a*sholes who protect them*".¹⁰¹ Violence broke out between anti-Islam groups and campaigners against racism in the Australian state of Victoria, with some protesters brawling on the steps of a Melbourne town hall. Media reported that scuffles began when members of far-right group UPF attempted to storm the building but their efforts were thwarted by hundreds of counter-protesters. On the same day, the far right groups launched into speeches railing 'left-wing traitors', 'halal certification' and what they called 'the Islamic terror threat'.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ See *SMH.com.au*'s entry "An Anti-Islam party has invited controversial Dutch MP Geert Wilders to Perth for a Launch", in: <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/muslims-face-racial-discrimination-but-dont-have-protection-under-act-report-finds-20151103-gkq8hw.html>, retrieved on 06.11.2015

⁹⁹ See *Muslim Village.com*'s entry "Can Muslims be loyal citizens?", in: <http://muslimvillage.com/2016/04/23/118084/australia-can-muslims-loyal-citizens/>, retrieved on 24.04.2016

¹⁰⁰ The Report for instance available at: https://www.unisa.edu.au/Global/EASS/MnM/Publications/Islamophobia_report.pdf

¹⁰¹ See *Red Flag.org.au*'s entry "Far right racists organizing more protests", in: <https://redflag.org.au/article/far-right-racists-organising-more-protests>, retrieved on 27.05.2015

¹⁰² See *Albawaba.com*'s entry "Protesters clash at anti-Islam rally in Australia", in: <http://www.albawaba.com/news/protesters-clash-anti-islam-rally-australia-701722>, retrieved on 01.06.2015

Another chaos caused by UPF also happened in Bendigo, when anti-mosque protest turned violent over the weekend of 29-30 August, when protesters broke through police lines to attack anti-racism protesters. The UPF organised the protest against plans to build a mosque in the northern Victorian city claiming that the residents did not want it. They marched on Bendigo City Hall but were met by a group of anti-racism protesters. Police separated the two groups until UPF-aligned protesters broke through and attacked the other group.¹⁰³ The anti-Muslim protests sparked in Bendigo since 2014 were mostly organized by UPF based in Sydney and Melbourne.

Through media, the Observatory observed and wish to mention some names of focal members of this group including



their quoted Islamophobic statements: Blair Cottrell, Victorian Leader of UPF—*“At the end of the day, you can either be a Muslim or an Australian. It must be either/or because the two do not correlate and do not correspond!”*; Shermon Burgess, National Leader of UPF— *“Hello, my dear patriotic Australians and left-wing traitors who might actually learn something.”* In every action, they always sing provocative anthem ‘Eureka Brigade song’ read such as: *“We’re sick of your Sharia, burn your f***ing mosques, It’s time to show you muzzrats we’re the f***ing boss, You thought you had it easy, but you surely lost, Cronulla was Australia’s Muslim holocaust.”* Ross May

“We’re gonna kick the Muslims out and the Jews and anyone else who gets in our way. We’re gonna kick ‘em out”.¹⁰⁴

Another key actor of UPF was a self-described ‘biblical crusader’ with a long history of posting videos to social media in which he posed with semi-automatic weapons and threatens to take up arms against the Government and Muslims. Chris Shortis, from Victoria, was one of three spokespeople in the UPF’s leadership team, who also spoke at rallies in Bendigo, Richmond, and CBD; and his online statements were similar to those of far-right Norwegian mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik. Mr Shortis claimed that Islam is a *“demonic religion”*, while saying that the Port Arthur massacre was a *“wicked ploy”* by the government to disarm gun owners, and outlines an apocalyptic vision in which the United Nations is attempting install the Pope as leader of a new world government. *“Patriots,”* he claimed, would be forced to take up arms and fight against the government and Muslims. *“You are not going to defeat Islam by negotiation ... our media, our western governments who are fawning them on our doorstep are making our problem worse,”* he says in one video entitled ‘Uncovering Islam’.¹

Another development happened in Australia and left the Observatory with negative sign of Far right’s strengthening in this country. On 13 October 2015 in Perth, Australia’s newest political party ‘The Australian Liberty Alliance’ (ALA) was launched and attracted much attention due to its anti- Islam stance and its decision to invite Dutch anti-immigration firebrand Geert Wilders as a guest speaker. The new party’s manifesto called for a ‘Stop to Islamisation of Australia’,

¹⁰³ See *Sunshine Coast Daily.com.au*’s entry “Mosque protesters rush police and attack anti-racism group”, in: <http://www.sunshinecoastdaily.com.au/news/Mosque-protesters-rush-police-to-attack-anti-racis/2757368/>, retrieved on 01.09.2015

¹⁰⁴ See *ABC.net.au*’s entry “People behind anti-Muslim protests in Australia”, in: <http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2015/s4330308.htm>, retrieved on 11.10.2015

including limits on Muslim immigration and a ban on full face coverings.¹⁰⁵ ALA puts its growth down to social media given it received virtually no mainstream news coverage and claimed it had its request to advertise nationally in Rupert Murdoch's News Corp newspapers knocked back. Furthermore, ALA party that advocates Donald Trump's idea of banning Muslim immigration said its membership had quadrupled in size since its launch with disaffected National and Liberal party members comprising the bulk of those joining. The ALA candidate Kirralie Smith stated that *"Being opposed to a mosque does not make you a racist, mosques are not a race"*.¹⁰⁶ Debbie Robinson, political candidate and ALA's co-founder said: *"I do believe that people are waking up to the dangers and the problems that will come from increased (Muslim) immigration. Islam is a problem and if we don't take steps to put laws in place to protect our culture and our society, then we are going to lose our freedom."* According to a report, the ALA party allegedly sought to have anti-Muslim representatives in the Federal Parliament in all parts of Australia. Robinson would run in Western Australia, while 'anti-halal' candidate Kirralie Smith would take NSW, and Bernard Gaynor would represent Queensland.¹⁰⁷ The Observatory noticed that this new party was very active in outreaching the Australian public. It had its WA launch on 12 March 2016 at the Perth Convention Centre, calling for an end to *"Islamisation of Australia"* and guarantees of free speech, finishing one leg of what organizers said was a national tour leading up to the next federal election. Almost 200 hundred people attended the event, which had Senate candidates from across the state address the crowd on their policies and values. ALA Director and WA Senate candidate Debbie Robinson said members were all passionate about their beliefs and deserved the right to express them. In her speech Mrs Robinson said while the party had more than one policy, Islam was the greatest threat facing the world at the moment. She told the crowd *"We have so much to be thankful for here in Australia, but we must never take our liberty for granted. Make no mistake - Islam is at war with us."* The party had pledged to *"stop the Islamisation of Australia"*, ban full-face coverings in public spaces and introduce a ten-year moratorium on immigration from Organization of Islamic Cooperation countries.¹⁰⁸

2.3.3. The situation Muslims in India

In this report, the Observatory would like to highlight on the general picture of Islamophobia in India¹⁰⁹ as the situation of Muslims in India is increasingly capturing worldwide attention, particularly because India's Muslims faced appalling socioeconomic deprivation and were victims of official government neglect and frequent police harassment. Despite claims by the Government concerning the secular and democratic character of India's polity, Muslims had to confront systematic and escalating discrimination. Violence against Muslims in India was becoming more frequent in the form of mob attacks on Muslims by Hindus. This has led to an increase in sectarian clashes between Hindu and Muslim communities. Theoretically, the Indian Constitution safeguards the rights of minorities and the Government, led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), should protect the rights of the Muslim minority and tolerated indifference to violence perpetrated against Muslims. Since the country's independence in 1947 and right up to the present decade, the Muslim

¹⁰⁵ See *The Strait Times News'* entry "Latest wave of anti-immigrant sentiment focuses on growing Muslim community", in: <http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/australianz/far-right-wing-on-the-rise-again-in-australia>, retrieved on 18.10.2015

¹⁰⁶ See *SMH.com.au's* entry "Australian Liberty Alliance, claimed major growth", in: <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/australian-liberty-alliance-the-antiislam-donald-trumpstyle-party-claims-major-growth-20160406-go08lq.html>, retrieved on 08.04.2016

¹⁰⁷ See *Morocco World News'* entry "Australia's Anti-Islam Party Says Islam is a 'Dangerous Problem'", in: <http://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2015/10/171156/australias-anti-islam-party-says-islam-is-a-dangerous-problem/>, retrieved on 26.10.2015

¹⁰⁸ See *ABC.net.au's* entry "Anti-Islam party Australian Liberty Alliance says members vilified, labeled bigots", in: <http://mobile.abc.net.au/news/2016-03-13/australian-liberty-alliance-says-members-vilified/7242778>, retrieved on 14.03.2016

¹⁰⁹ On this section, the islamophobia Observatory relies on various reports and information codified and assessed by the Minority Affairs Department of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

community in various parts of the country had suffered hundreds of violent, sectarian attacks. A peak involved the Gujarat riots of 2002 when 2,000 Muslims were killed in a state-sponsored pogrom. At this time, Indian political culture had been dominated by a process of categorizing people along communal lines (Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, etc)— a communalization process which seeped into the heart of Indian state bureaucracy and the civic apparatus. This had resulted in the strengthening of the main Hindu Nationalist Party, the BJP which have the agenda to legitimize the superiority of Hinduism, or the Hindutva. The main actor in this regard is the RSS party (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh known also as Sangh) and its off shoots and informal branches. The RSS had demonized the Muslim community and asserted a politics on the birth-based hierarchy of caste and gender. According to the statistic, the Muslim Population is estimated to be 184 million in 2016, which is the third largest in the world after Indonesia and Pakistan and forms the largest religious minority in India. They are not a homogeneous group, divided by language, ethnicity, culture and economic position. Population rates across all South Asian countries were expected to rise significantly by 2050, and the largest change would be in India, poised to become the most populous nation. Between 2010—2050 the Hindu population is to increase by 35 percent to 1.38 billion in 2050, but Indian Muslims will increase by 76 percent to 310 million in the same period. This means that the largest increase in the Muslim population of South Asia will occur in India.

The present government of India is condoning the rise in Islamophobia and fueling communalism sentiment leading to repeated cycles of violence. The hatred campaign against Muslims by the hard-line Hindus were even compounded by the inaction of Prime Minister Modi. Some leaders within the government of India led by the Prime Minister held a strong hatred towards Muslims, and were allowing religious sectarian conflict to spread. This could be seen from the number of incidents in 2015 where there were reports of Muslims being killed by Hindu vigilante groups over suspicions that they had killed or stolen cows for beef. The violence erupted after an aggressive push by several BJP leaders and right-wing Hindu groups to protect cows, and ban beef consumption. Anti-Muslim rhetoric by several BJP leaders including members of parliament further stroked insecurities among Muslim minorities. The authorities did not prosecute those responsible for the violent attacks on Muslims and there is government indifference to growing religious intolerance.

Meanwhile, the Indian Muslim community also faced rising challenges across all sectors of society since they suffered from lack of economic opportunities, lack of education and lack of political empowerment. They were discriminated in employment, housing and schooling. Muslim women too face continuing discrimination because of their Hijab. Muslims were the victims of discrimination at all levels and they often live in terrible conditions. In 2005, the national government in India, led by the Congress party, created a committee, termed the “Prime Ministers’ High-Level Committee on the Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community in India,” to study the status of the Muslim community to enable the state to identify areas of intervention. Informally known as the Sachar Committee, named after its Chairperson, Rajendra Sachar, the Committee submitted a report in 2006. Unfortunately most of the recommendations of the Sachar Committee report were not fulfilled. In addition, poverty and illiteracy continued to be among the most common problems facing the Indian Muslim community. For instance, nearly 40% of Indians live below the poverty line, and this figure rises to 66% amongst Muslims. Almost a quarter of India’s 370,000 beggars are Muslims, according to data from the 2011 Census which reinforced the point that the Muslim community still lags behind despite the country’s rapid economic growth. The reason for Muslim decline laid in poor state investment in infrastructure for Muslims and continuing official and private discrimination. In government employment, the share of Muslims employed is 4.9 percent noting that the government (provincial and national) is a major employer, accounting for 70 percent of all employment. In key sectors that are important for the protection of population rights, the share is also low. The proportion of Muslims in the Judiciary (5 percent) and the Police services (4 percent) are below their share in the population and even below their share of the educated population. Higher education indices for 2014-15 put the gross enrolment rate at 13.8% for Muslims, compared to an all-India figure of 23.6%. Within their community, the literacy rate of Muslim adult males is 81%, compared to 91% among Hindus, 94% among Christians and 84% among Sikhs,

according to a 2013 report of the National Sample Survey Organisation. Muslim population inside jails is going up too. Of the people lodged in Maharashtra jails in 2013, 31.09% were Muslims. The state average was 19.06%. Brief, the trend of Islamophobia in India is worth close attention despite the main issue remain political.

2.3.4. *The situation of Muslims in Thailand*

The Islamophobia Observatory was alerted by an event in Thailand in October 2015 when a Buddhist monk urged the government to burn a mosque for every Buddhist monk killed by insurgents in the deep South; and to let Buddhist people in the southern provinces to carry guns. The radical Islamophobic views were posted on *Facebook* by Aphichat



Promjan, chief lecturer monk at Benjamabophit Temple. Te monk said: *"If a Buddhist monk in the three southern border provinces died from an explosion or being shot at the hands of the 'Malayu bandits', a mosque should be burned, starting from the northern part of Thailand southwards."*¹¹⁰ Such a provocative statement by Thai Buddhist religious leader served as a serious warning of the upcoming Islamophobic violent acts across Thailand, and the possibility of the same calamity as what had been happening in Myanmar; as such a concern was not without reason. *Firstly*, Thailand and Myanmar both located in the same region; while both are Buddhist majority countries, hence there was a big potential that the extreme stance against

Rohingya Muslim minority in Myanmar might be copied up by their fellow religions in Thailand. *Secondly*, Islamophobia had been existing in Thailand since many years ago, despite the various level of severity. *Thirdly*, there had been a prolonging tensions in the southern part of the country bringing Muslim minorities on the opposite confrontation against the Buddhist majority, hence such a political issue could be manipulated at any time and transform into severe Islamophobic euphoria.

Reviewing the issue¹¹¹, the situation in Thailand is more political in term of character. Within the Thailand's realm as a majority-Buddhist country, there exist 1,424,728 member of Muslim communities living in three southern border provinces of Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat. Most of them are from the Malayu-ethnic, forming the majority (85%) of the population in those provinces. Thus, while the Malayu as minority in Thailand, Buddhists are also the minority in the southern border provinces (15%), and the situation was less peaceful since there was an ongoing conflict in these Thailand's southern border provinces. Following a resurgence of violence in 2004, the government declared Martial

¹¹⁰ See *Thaivisa.com*'s entry "Monk calls on Thai govt to burn down 1 mosque for 1 dead Buddhist monk", in: <http://news.thaivisa.com/thailand/monk-calls-on-thai-govt-to-burn-down-1-mosque-for-1-dead-buddhist-monk/119595/>, retrieved on 03.11.2015

¹¹¹ In this section, the Islamophobia Observatory relies on information contained in the Report titled "Thailand's Alternative Report on Racial Discrimination towards Malayu in Southern Border Provinces" presented by the "Alliance for CERD Alternative Report on Racial Discrimination towards Malayu in Southern Border Provinces of Thailand (ACARM)", to the 81st Session Submitted to Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD).

Law and sent more troops into the region. Since then, the conflict had claimed the lives of nearly 5,000 people, mostly civilians and injured nearly 9,000 more. Amid the conflict, Malayu and Buddhist-Thai villagers were vulnerable to violence perpetrated by both the Malayu insurgency and the Thai military. As the consequence, the prolonging tension in the southern provinces had influenced the mainstream society's attitude, as well as the government's policy, *vis-à-vis* Muslim communities living in the country. Too often, government policies to address the conflict have been ineffective. At worse, they have exacerbated the situation. Human rights violations and discrimination towards the Malayu have created an environment of distrust between Malayu communities and local authorities, frustrating efforts to deal with the insurgency. Again the main issue in Thailand is political rather than Islamophobia, but the two issues were intermingled very closely because the prolonging political tension has created fear and suspicion among religions, and led to discriminative policies and measures against Muslims by the majority-controlled government. In *vice versa*, such a phobia against Islam as well as the discriminative policies by the government had provoked reaction from the minority and subsequently added fuel to the existing fire. Based on report of the ground by ACARM, the Observatory noted at least 5 (five) indicators towards Islamophobic 'gesture' against Muslim minority in the southern provinces of Thailand:

First, the presence of discriminatory law against Muslims. The southernmost border provinces is the only region in Thailand to operate under Martial Law. This law gives the military supreme power over the civil authority operating in that region. It also gives the military full power of search, compulsory requisition, prohibition, seizure, occupation, destruction or alteration of any place, and eviction. There exists also the Emergency Decree on Public Administration through which state officials have the authority to arrest and detain individuals without charge for up to 30 days in the interests of national security. The application of these laws in the provinces had overwhelmingly targeted the Malayu population and served to construct barriers between Malayu Muslims and Buddhist Thais and strengthen ethnic and religious divisions.

Second, there is an acute suspicion against Muslims by the Buddhist Majority as well as by the Thai Government. Muslims feel that the Thai Government places collective blame on the Muslim population for violence in the provinces. This perception is borne out by the fact that officers closely monitored Muslim communities while in contrast, applied measures to protect Buddhist community, the policy which draw wider lines of ethnic and religious divides. In 2007, the Ministry of the Interior trained approximately 2,000 Buddhist territorial defense volunteers and increased the number of village leader assistants in Buddhist communities. The Ministry also assisted in the establishment of a people's force consisting of village guards and village protection volunteers with the aim of enabling Buddhists people to protect themselves, while soldiers have conducted trainings. Teachers in government schools were also armed with weapons for self-defense. According to the government, the military presence in the province is to enable both Buddhist and Muslim communities to freely practice their religion but the reality is that the military did not apply the same protection to Muslims as it did to Buddhists. Therefore, religious divisions seems to be emphasized and strengthened by intention.

Third, Blacklisting Policy by which State officers held lists of individuals suspected of being insurgents, of which Muslim communities refer as 'Blacklists'. The main problem is there was no standardized list, since each branch of government has its own list which is different one from another. Those who call for justice in the provinces could be included into the blacklist along with the name of their institutions. Students who graduate from universities in predominantly Muslim schools were also often blacklisted and their names were under close surveillance by state officers. *Fourth*, restrictions on Muslims' movement and expression. Four Muslims, especially men, it is common to be stopped at checkpoints and questioned. Checkpoint officers regularly threaten Malayu men and display negative attitudes towards them in the form of hostile remarks and behaviour. For Instance, a Muslim student was questioned for 2 hours at a checkpoint because he was found to have a camera in his possession. Another individual was made to sing the Thai national anthem. The first question one man was directly asked at a checkpoint was which terrorist group did he belong to. *Fifth*, discrimination

in employment. Graduates from universities in predominantly Arab or Malay speaking countries have difficulty finding employment upon their return while the Government tends to target these graduates for investigation. There was a belief among state officials that those who study abroad in Muslim countries prone to join the insurgency. Such a prejudice were propagated amongst the mainstream community and thus created a barrier to employment opportunities. Many graduates from Arab or Muslim countries were unable to secure employment in their field of study and usually end up as farmers or teachers in Islamic schools. Many were then seeking employment in Malaysia. In addition, there was unofficial ban on hijab at workplaces while in certain workplaces there was an obligation to wear inappropriate uniforms which make Muslim women feel uncomfortable hence decided to resign. *Sixth*, discrimination on cultural expression. Even though the Government had adopted the Islamic Law Administrative Organization Act to accommodate Islamic customs, government officers still ostensibly treat Islamic leaders with suspicion and failed to adequately implement the Acts' provisions. On the pretext of national security and of promoting a unified Thai identity and nation, the government applied policies that impede conditions considered potential to lead to self-determination of the Malayu Muslims. Being combined with frequent displays of cultural insensitivity, such a policy had exacerbated tensions between Muslims on one side *vis-à-vis* Buddhist community and the government on the other side.

The Observatory expects that the government of Thailand does not underestimate the potential danger of Islamophobia gestures been intentionally and unintentionally applied in the southern provinces, because such a gesture would produce reaction and deepen resistances among the Muslim minority which, in turn would contribute to the prolonging political tensions in the provinces.

2.4. Other Islamophobic Trends

2.4.1. Islamophobic Gestures and Policies against Veil, Hijab, and Burqa

Public phobia against veil, hijab, and burqa started from France in 2010, when President Nicolas Sarkozy and leaders in both houses of the French Parliament overwhelmingly favored the ban, reasoning that face veils threatened France's secularism, women's rights, and public safety. Later step was when the National Assembly of France on 13 July 2010 proposed a bill which then passed by the Senate of France on 14 September 2010, resulting in the ban on the wearing of face-covering headgear, including masks, burqa, helmets, balaclava, niqabs and other veils covering the face in public places.¹¹² The key argument supporting this proposal was that face-coverings prevent the clear identification of a person, which was both a security risk, and a social hindrance within a society which relies on facial recognition and expression in communication. Brief, as of 11 April 2011, it was illegal in France to wear a face-covering veil or other mask in public places such as the street, shops, museums, public transportation, and parks.

More than 10 years after France passed its first anti-veil law restricting women from wearing veils in public schools, the head coverings of observant Muslim women had become one of the most potent flash points in the nation's tense relations with its vibrant and growing Muslim population. Mainstream politicians continued to push for new measures to deny veiled women access to jobs, educational institutions and community life. They often say they were doing so for the benefit of public order or in the name of secularism, the French term for the separation of church and state. But critics said these efforts, rather than promoting a sense of secular inclusion, had encouraged rampant discrimination against Muslims in general and veiled women in particular. The result had been to fuel a sense among many Muslims that was engaging in a form of state racism.¹¹³ Manuel Valls for instance wanted to ban hijab-wearing Muslim women from higher education in the name of their 'liberation' by declaring his willingness to prohibit the Muslim headscarf in universities. Doing so, the French Prime Minister gestured his intense attacks against Muslims, justifying the targeting of veiled Muslim women, while the majority of French people saw Islam as incompatible with the values of the Republic.¹¹⁴ Such comments sparked a fresh war of words between campaigners for religious freedom and those who believe the veil should be banned. Such as, health minister Thierry Mandon said: *"There is no need for a law on the headscarf at university. Students have every right to wear a headscarf. The headscarf*



¹¹² Parliament Moves France Closer to a Ban on Facial Veils, available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/14/world/europe/14burqa.html?_r=0

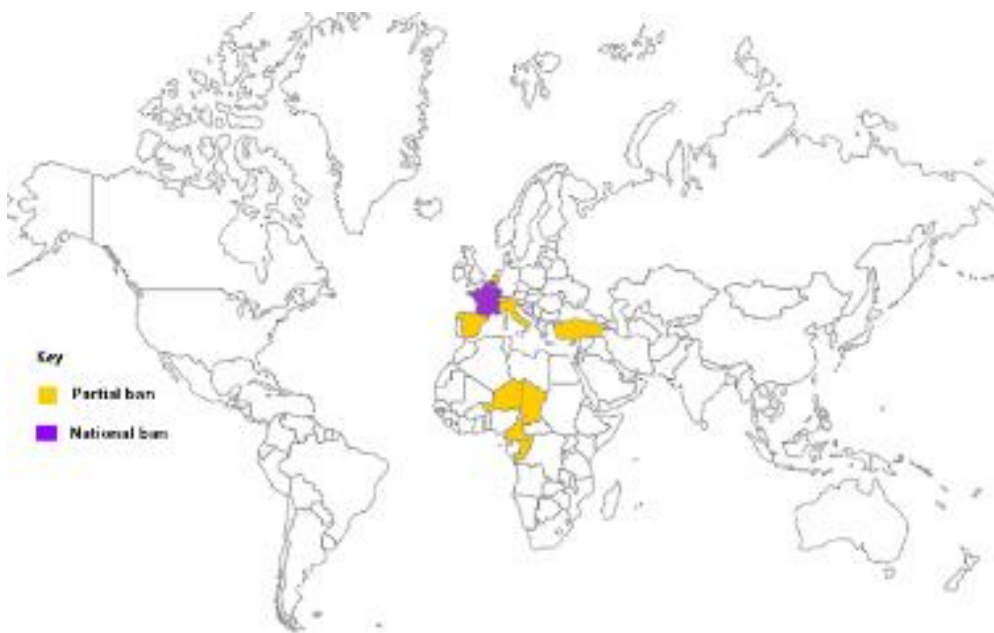
¹¹³ See *The NY-Times News*' entry "French Muslims Say Veil Bans Give Cover to Bias", in: <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/27/world/europe/muslim-frenchwomen-struggle-with-discrimination-as-bans-on-veils-expand.html>, retrieved on 27.05.2015

¹¹⁴ See *Middle East Eye News*' entry "France's PM ignored his country's real problems to focus on banning the headscarf", in: <http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/french-prime-minister-manuel-valls-508634950>, retrieved on 25.04.2016

is not banned in French society." Also education minister Najat Vallaud-Belkacem said *"Our universities also have a lot of foreign students. Are we going to ban them access because in their culture there's a certain type of clothing?"*¹¹⁵

Actually, many legal measures were attempted to challenge the discriminative Law, including one taken to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) with regards to human rights claims. The challenger claimed that the law violated Articles 8-10 and Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights, including the "right to respect for private and family life," "freedom of thought, conscience and religion," "freedom of expression," and "prohibition of discrimination."¹¹⁶ Unfortunately, the Court decided that the ban did not explicitly target Muslims, siding with the French government on a ban of any clothing covering the face, with few exceptions. The ECHR held that there had been no violation of Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) of the European Convention on Human Rights, and no violation of Article 9 (right to respect for freedom of thought, conscience and religion); no violation of Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination) of the European Convention combined with Articles 8 or 9. The court was accepting the argument of the French government that the law was based on a certain idea of living together.¹¹⁷ The trend in France was therefore followed by Belgium and Netherlands and continued to spill over European cities. Today, the idea of banning burqa, hijab, veil, and headscarf has even started to grow in many countries of different continents.

In Switzerland, a right-wing politician who brought about the demise of minaret construction in Switzerland started its try to get voters to ban face veils, echoing an earlier move in neighbouring France. Walter Wobmann and his allies launched on 29 September, their "yes to the veil ban" initiative, a measure they said was to preserve Swiss culture and



quell a rising tide of radical Islam. If they get 100,000 signatures, the measure would come up for a popular referendum under the Swiss system of direct democracy. Walter Wobmann, the Swiss People's Party Member of Parliament from Solothurn said: *"In our culture, you don't cover your face, you show it. That's our culture, that's our society...Veiling is a symbol of radical Islam, which we don't want here."* Michael Sorg, spokesman for the Social Democrats, said the initiative

was unnecessary and harmful to Switzerland's image. He said hardly anyone living in the wealthy Alpine republic of 8.2 million people wore the face-covering niqab or burka, so the law would practically affect only about 5,000 tourists, as

¹¹⁵ See *Express.co.uk*'s entry "Universities ordered to ban the Muslim veil by French PM", in: <http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/661018/Universities-ordered-to-ban-the-Muslim-veil-by-French-PM>, retrieved on 15.04.2016

¹¹⁶ Muslims Lose Their Fight to Overturn Veil Ban, available at: <http://thinkprogress.org/world/2014/07/01/3455215/france-veil-ban-hurts-muslims/>

¹¹⁷ France's burqa ban upheld by human rights court, available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/01/france-burqa-ban-upheld-human-rights-court>

well as local residents since about five percent of Swiss residents are Muslim.¹¹⁸ Unfortunately, such argument did not resonate, as finally a new Law passed on 23 November stated that any woman wearing a burqa in public in the Swiss canton of Ticino would be fined up to 10,000 Swiss Francs, (£6,500, or roughly \$10,000). The ban received with scorn from human rights organizations such as Amnesty International, who called Monday of 23rd as 'a black day for human rights in Ticino.' Many however had voiced their support on Twitter for the ban. The law would make no exception for tourists- even though Ticino was a popular destination, with 40,000 visitors from the Middle East in 2014 alone.¹¹⁹ Following France, Belgium and the Netherlands in applying similar bans in light of heightened paranoia surrounding violent terror in Europe, for the first time in Switzerland's history, the country has enforced a ban on the full-face veil.¹²⁰

In the UK, UKIP's leader Paul Nuttall raised to public the idea of banning niqab in saying on 23 May "*The wearing of the full face veil in public should be banned in Britain*". His comments followed an announcement of a new law by the Government in the Netherlands, approved by the cabinet sitting in The Hague, which would ban the wearing of all face coverings including ski-masks and helmets in certain public places. Mr Nuttall, the party's deputy leader, was in temporary charge of UKIP while Nigel Farage took a break. He added: "*Belgium and France and now the Netherlands have argued that the burqa is not conducive to western liberal society, and that people's faces need to be exposed so they can communicate and integrate.*"¹²¹

In Sweden, the conservative mayor of the city of Vaxjo in southern Sweden, Bo Frank, on 8 May suggested that women should be banned from wearing full-faced veils. He wrote on his blog: "*It ought to be banned!! It (the burqa) doesn't belong in Sweden. Europe, the world,*" adding the incident "*pi**d me off*". He went on to describe the woman as the men's "slave" in saying: "*Yes, I interpreted it almost as a form of slavery. It doesn't feel right considering we host a Pride week in Vaxjo.*"¹²²

The Netherlands moved further with its Burqa-ban policy, which was now moving towards banning headscarfs. The Dutch government approved on 22 May, a proposal partially banning face-covering veils in public areas like schools, hospitals and on public transportation, but not in the streets, and violating the law could result in fines of US\$450. The government mentioned in a statement: "*Face-covering clothing will in future not be accepted in education and healthcare institutions, government buildings and on public transport.*" The Government denied religious arguments on the policy as Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte explained: "*The bill does not have any religious background...The government tried to find a balance between people's freedom to wear the clothes they want and the importance of*

¹¹⁸ See *Reuters.com*'s entry "After toppling minarets, Swiss politician takes aim at face veils", in: <http://in.reuters.com/article/2015/09/28/switzerland-veil-initiative-idINKN0RS22120150928>, retrieved on 29.09.2015

¹¹⁹ See *HNGN.com*'s entry "New Law fines women who wear Burqas \$10,000", in: <http://www.hngn.com/articles/154347/20151126/new-law-switzerland-fines-women-who-wear-burqas-10-000.htm>, retrieved on 28.11.2015

¹²⁰ See *Telegraph.co.uk*'s entry "Burka bans: The countries where Muslim women can't wear veils", in: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/life/burka-bans-the-countries-where-muslim-women-cant-wear-veils/>, retrieved on 09.07.2016

¹²¹ See *Express.co.uk*'s entry "Burqa not conducive to western liberal society: We should follow ban says UKIP", in: <http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/579622/Ukip-Paul-Nuttall-Netherlands-new-law-face-coverings-ban-discrimination-religious-freedom>, retrieved on 25.05.2015

¹²² See *The Local.se*'s entry "Sweden mayor compares burqa with slavery", in: <http://www.thelocal.se/20150509/mayor-compares-burqa-with-slavery>, retrieved on 10.05.2015

mutual and recognizable communication." Meanwhile, a bill proposed by Rutte's previous government, seek towards implementing the full prohibition of veils in public spaces, including in the streets was now withdrawn.¹²³

In Germany, the anti-immigration Alternative for Germany (AfD) said that Islam was not compatible with the German Constitution and vowed to press for bans on minarets and burqas during its party congress. The European Parliament leader for the AfD, Beatrix von Storch said that *"Islam is in itself a political ideology that is incompatible with the Basic Law,"* in an interview with *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, while calling for a ban on full veils for Muslim women and minarets. Another party's leader, Mr Alexander Gauland, who leads the AfD in Brandenburg said *"Islam is not a religion like Catholic or Protestant Christianity, but rather intellectually always associated with the takeover of the state, that is why the Islamisation of Germany is a danger"*.¹²⁴

Bulgaria also started to join the euphoria. The mayor of the city of Pazardzhik, in southern Bulgaria, had proposed to ban the wearing of burqas in buildings housing branches of local and central government, citing security reasons. The proposal, which had to be endorsed by the city parliament to take effect, had angered the Roma population inhabiting one of the city's neighborhoods. According to media news, about 100 women were wearing burqas in that neighborhood and say they won't take them down when visiting public administration buildings. Pazardzhik Mayor Todor Popov said: *"After all, we are unable to ensure anyone's safety if people who can't be seen enter those public buildings. No one can say who the person is under this clothing,"* and he added that the proposal aimed to safeguard the security of officials and the people visiting public administration buildings. The municipal authorities denied allegations the proposed ban would discriminate against people on the grounds of religion. The city mayor also proposed a fine of BGN 500 (EUR 250) for first-time offenders, to be doubled in case of repeated offence.¹²⁵ It means that Muslims in the city of Pazardzhik were facing the country's first ever ban on full-face veils. Muslims make up about 12 percent of Bulgaria's 7.2 million population and most belong to a centuries-old community, largely ethnic Turks, among whom full-face veils were not common. The ban applied only to public places, and does not cover face covering used for medical purposes, and Violators could be fined up to the equivalent of \$600 (\$527) for repeat offenses.¹²⁶ Responding to this incident, Bulgarian Prosecutor-General Sotir Tsatsarov said that there should be restrictions on wearing the burqa in public places, and that such restrictions should exist in relation to educational institutions, public places, just as such prohibitions exist in some Western European countries, in particular at educational institutions. Tsatsarov stated that the restrictions on the burqa should be discussed carefully *"so as not to encroach on religious feelings, faith is something pure and politics is far from it in purity"*. Tsatsarov comments were related to an ongoing trial against 14 people in Pazardzhik accused of spreading an anti-democratic ideology and terrorist propaganda. He also said that the Bulgarian legislation needed to be amended to address flaws that do not contribute to the fight against terrorism.¹²⁷ Bulgaria's Education Minister Meglena Kouneva had expressed support for Sotir Tsatsarov's idea of banning the wearing of the burqa at schools.

¹²³ See *TelesurTV.net's* entry "Dutch Government to ban Burqa in certain public areas", in: <http://www.telesurTV.net/english/news/Dutch-Government-to-Ban-Burqa-in-Certain-Public-Areas-20150523-0032.html>, retrieved on 24.05.2015

¹²⁴ See *The Strait Times News'* entry "German anti-immigrant AfD party wants ban on minarets and burqas", in: <http://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/german-anti-immigrant-afd-party-wants-ban-on-minarets-and-burqas>, retrieved on 18.04.2016

¹²⁵ See *Novinite.com's* entry "Bulgaria's Pazardzhik Mayor proposes ban on burqas in Public Administration Buildings", in: <http://m.novinite.com/articles/173997/Bulgaria's+Pazardzhik+Mayor+Proposes+Ban+on+Burqas+in+Public+Administration+Buildings>, retrieved on 13.04.2016

¹²⁶ See *Tol.org's* entry "Bulgarian City Banned Islamic Veils", in: <http://www.tol.org/client/article/25841-bulgaria-islam-burqa-pazardzhik.html>, retrieved on 30.04.2016

¹²⁷ See *Sofia-Globe.com's* entry "Bulgarian Prosecutor-General wants bans on burqa in public places", in: <http://sofiaglobe.com/2016/04/01/bulgarian-prosecutor-general-wants-bans-on-burqa-in-public-places/>, retrieved on 02.04.2016

Kouneva, speaking at a meeting with teachers and heads of schools from the towns of Haskovo, Kurdzhali and Stara Zagora, said that she thought that the idea of banning burqas from schools was correct.¹²⁸

In Africa, Guinea's president on 22 November pledged to close Islamic schools where teachers and students wear the full veil, or niqab. Alpha Conde cited the fight against terrorism following terror attacks in neighboring Mali that killed 19 as the reason for the decision. He said during his rally of the Guinean People party: *"I will close all Quranic schools where students and teachers wear the full veil."*¹²⁹ Some West African countries banned the niqab during 2015 in response to Boko Haram suicide attacks carried out by veiled female bombers, such as Congo. The violence in the Central African Republic left Muslims seeking shelter in Congo, prompting the Congo government to ban women from



wearing full-face veils in public. Officials explained the ban was to counter extremism. It signified that Congo joined France as the only countries to ban veils and burqas in the public. The law also banned Muslims from other countries from sleeping at mosques.¹³⁰

Malta was also part of the 'party'. Equality Minister Helena Dalli hinted that the government might ban the wearing of burqas in public

after she argued that the law which prohibited individuals from covering their face in public should be clarified to avoid any misinterpretation. Speaking on Facebook, Dalli said that in an open society, people should not be allowed to cover their face in public if this would make others feel unsafe or fearing their security. Without elaborating, the minister added this kind of clothes should be banned for other reasons.¹³¹

¹²⁸ See *Sofia-Globe.com*'s entry "Bulgarian education minister backs burqa ban idea", in: <http://sofiaglobe.com/2016/04/03/bulgarian-education-minister-backs-burqa-ban-idea/>, retrieved on 04.04.2016

¹²⁹ See *AA.com.tr*'s entry "Islamic Schools Where Veil Is Worn Were to Close", in: <http://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/guinea-to-close-islamic-schools-where-veil-is-worn/477630>, retrieved on 25.11.2015

¹³⁰ See *The Breitbart.com*'s entry "Congo bans full-face veil in public as Muslims flood the country", in: <http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2015/05/03/congo-bans-full-face-veil-in-public-as-muslims-flood-the-country/>, retrieved on 04.05.2015

¹³¹ See *Malta-Today.com.mt*'s entry "Minister says people should not cover their face", in: <http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/58085/burqas-in-malta-minister-says-people-should-not-cover-their-face#.ViSPmH4rKM8>, retrieved on 12.10.2015

2.4.2. Discrimination against Muslims in Employment

During the reviewed period, the Observatory noted that discriminations against Muslims continued to exist even more open, since Muslim Workers were fired, alienated, and discriminated because of their religion or simply because of the dress they put on. In some cases, Muslims were anticipated from entering the workforce like what was happening in the United States when a hate group publicized the identities of pro-Palestinian student activists and professors in an effort to stigmatize them and dissuade employers from hiring them in the future. The group kept an online database of 54 people in a website called "canary mission" saying that "*It is your duty to ensure that today's radicals are not tomorrow's employees,*" in a video explanation. In the website, which had run since March of last year, no names of editors were displayed.¹³² Of the same situation is what was found in France and in the UK. According to a study by the French Institute Montaigne, to increase an applicant's chances of being hired in France, their name must sound anything but Muslim. The study published on 8 October 2015, revealed that job applicants suffered strong discrimination over their religion, especially practicing Muslims. In France, an applicant perceived to be Muslim was two times less likely (10.4 percent) to get selected for a job interview than a Catholic (20.8 percent). If the candidate was a Muslim male, his chances to get interviewed were four times less likely at 4.7 percent compared to 17.9 percent. Institute Montaigne researcher, Marie-Anne Valfort, compiled the results of 6,231 fictitious job applications submitted between September 2013 and September 2014. A lecturer at Sorbonne University in Paris created identical fictitious profiles, except for their first name, religion, and affiliations.¹³³ In the UK, a report said that if you were Muslim, you were half as likely to hold a managerial job than the average Brit, and far more likely to be unemployed.¹³⁴

In Europe, France was closely monitored by the Observatory due to constant discrimination against Muslim workers, for the French government bars public employees from displaying their religious beliefs on the job. In 2004, the country banned the wearing of '*conspicuous religious symbols*' including the Muslim face veil. The ban was eventually extended to schoolchildren and even parents who wanted to accompany classes on trips. In 2010, the country banned face coverings of all kinds, including masks, Niqabs and the full body dress known as a burqa, in public spaces 'except under specified circumstances'.¹³⁵ Among the recent regretful incidents was the case of Christiane



¹³² See *The Daily Sabah News*' entry Islamophobia on rise in US, pro-Palestinians blacklisted in: <http://www.dailysabah.com/americas/2015/05/29/islamophobia-on-rise-in-us-pro-palestinians-blacklisted>, retrieved on 30.05.2015

¹³³ See *Morocco-World-News.com*'s entry "Islamophobia in France affects Muslim job applicants", in: <http://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2015/10/170086/islamophobia-in-france-affects-muslim-job-applicants-study/>, retrieved on 12.10.2015

¹³⁴ See *Vice.com*'s entry "How Britain's young Muslims deal with the media's portrayal of Islam", in: <http://www.vice.com/read/british-muslims-200>, retrieved on 14.10.2015

¹³⁵ See *Daily-Mail.co.uk*'s entry "French Ban On Muslim Headscarves Is Upheld by Human Rights Court After Woman Sacked For Refusing To Remove Hers Loses Appeal", in: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3335020/French-ban-Muslim-headscarves-upheld-human-rights-court-woman-sacked-refusing-remove-loses-appeal.html#ixzz3wCqhQJX6>, retrieved on 25.11.2015

Ebrahimian who refused to take off headscarf in a Nanterre hospital, and her contract was terminated after patients complained about her head covering. Despite legal attempts, Ebrahimian lost her appeal at the European Court of Human Rights, and the public employees banned from displaying 'suspicious religious symbols'. Ms Ebrahimian was born and lived in Paris, while she was recruited to the hospital on a fixed term contract as a social worker, but the facts proved useless.

New Zealand and Australia have also shown the similar picture of discrimination against Muslim at employment. University of Waikato Islamic studies reviewed on patterns and disparity of New Zealand Muslims and found that Muslims were more educated and qualified than Christians. However, having foreign sounding names and dressing differently made it tough to find a job. A Herald investigation into the state of faith also found that not all religions and their followers were equal in New Zealand. Adherents of some religions, such as Islam, were far less likely to be employed than followers of faiths such as Christianity or people with no religion. Jews and Hindus held the highest education level with almost a third holding tertiary qualifications. However, Muslims were three times more likely to be without a job than Christians or people not affiliated to any religion. The report author, Yaghoob Foroutan, said: "*The results ... have shown that about one-fifth of New Zealand Muslims are highly educated, but they also hold the highest unemployment rate as compared to other religious groups in New Zealand....Muslims are less likely to be employed ... [and have] the lowest level of managerial and professional occupations than all other religious groups in New Zealand.*" Overall, the report said that Muslims were two times more likely to be unemployed than non-Muslims and the unemployment rate was relatively higher, at about 15 per cent, for Muslims born in Iraq, Iran and Malaysia.¹³⁶

In Australia, Muslims were facing institutionalized discrimination that was impeding their ability to convert relatively high education levels into matching employment outcomes. Researchers had found evidence of religious discrimination, and studies were pointing to a clear employment bias against foreign-sounding names in job applications, particular Middle Eastern names. International Centre for Muslim and non-Muslim Understanding director, Riaz Hassan, said figures from the 2011 census revealed about 32 per cent of the Muslim population was employed compared with 46.8 per cent of the general population. The differences were even starker in the prime employment age groups. Among 25 to 44-year-olds, 54 per cent of the Muslim population was employed and 7.4 per cent unemployed. This compared with 78.4 per cent employment and 3.8 per cent unemployment for the general population in that age group. In contrast, Muslim males had a 45 per cent Year 12 completion rate compared with 37 per cent of the general population, and a 17.9 per cent university qualification rate against 13.9 per cent for all Australians. For Muslim women, Year 12 retention was 42 per cent (compared with 40 per cent) and university qualifications were 15.3 per cent (against 16.5 per cent). Professor Hassan highlighted that employment discrimination was common across many migrant groups but Muslim Australians tended to experience a marginally higher level of discrimination. He cited a study by Australian National University economists that involved sending out 4000 fake employment applications and gauging the call-back rate based on race. That study found people with Anglo-Saxon names had significantly higher

Education and employment indicators (%)

By religion 2011	University degree	Year 12 completion	Unemployment rate	
ISLAM	23.9	25	12.1	
CATHOLIC	17.9	18	4.7	
ANGLICAN	14.3	14.6	4.5	
BUDDHISM	27.2	24.1	8.6	
HINDUISM	54.5	15.6	6.8	

Employment call back rate based on origin of names (%)

	Anglo-Saxon	Middle Eastern	Chinese	Italian	Indigenous
Brisbane	42	28	27	33	30
Sydney	38	21	20	34	31
Melbourne	27	16	17	29	18

Sources: 2011 Census data cited in *The People of Australia* report, 2009 ANU study based on 4000 fake job applications

¹³⁶ See NZ Herald.co.nz's entry "Muslims most likely to be unemployed" in: http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11448269, retrieved on 15.05.2015

call-back rates and people with Middle Eastern names the lowest. His centre was picking up the same trend in its monitoring of the employment situation. One well-qualified Muslim woman had applied for junior positions using her real name. When she reapplied using an anglicized name, she received a call back in 30 minutes.¹³⁷

In another part of Asia, the Observatory was concerned to what was happening in India. A news report said that a Mumbai-based company turned down a Muslim youth for a job because of his religion. The Observatory was aware that the Indian National Commission for Minorities had ordered an investigation, and the Maharashtra Government promised its own inquiry, while the National Human Rights Commission was urged to look into the issue. Non-Muslims saw this xenophobic case as normal, for some said that they had seen such a thing coming. For instance, one of them was quoted saying: *"It is a logical culmination of the anti-minorities tirade launched during the past one year...The environment in the country has become so poisonous that such things are bound to happen."* After all, covert discrimination against Muslims in jobs and housing was so commonplace that it was now widely accepted as a fact of life. There was a well-known study by a left-wing researcher who sent identical CVs to several companies, but under different assumed names--some Hindu and some Muslim, and he found that most of the applications which were turned down were the ones which had been sent under Muslim names.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ See *The-Australian.com.au*'s entry "Mismatched Muslims: school smart, job poor", in: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/in-depth/community-under-siege/mismatched-muslims-school-smart-job-poor/story-fnubfp6c-1227370520083>, retrieved on 27.05.2015

¹³⁸ See *First-Post.com*'s entry "No job for Muslim MBA? This should come as no surprise in Modi's India" in: <http://www.firstpost.com/india/no-job-muslim-mba-come-no-surprise-modis-india-2257594.html>, retrieved on 23.05.2015

3. SOME POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

Despite the continued alarming trend of Islamophobia in the US and Europe, the Observatory noted with pleasure that during the covered period, there were efforts in many countries around the world that promoted the positive image of Islam, supported harmony and tolerance, while countered anti-Islam sentiments and other Islamophobic activities, of which the Observatory would consider as positive signs towards combatting Islamophobia and incitement of hatred and violence towards Islam and Muslims. The following instances of positive trends are worth mentioning:

3.1. *Public Policy*

In the US: the Washington D.C. transit system on 28 May 2015 decided to suspend all 'issue-oriented' advertising after being asked to run a subway ads featuring a cartoon depiction of the Prophet Mohammad (pbuh). The ban was approved unanimously by the board of directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, that prohibits political, religious and advocacy ads through the end of the year. The transit system had been asked by the American Freedom Defense Initiative to display the cartoon that won first prize at an event in Texas at which two gunmen opened fire near the venue and wounded a security guard before they were shot and killed by police. The ads, which called for Americans to support free speech, features a bearded, turban-wearing 'Muhammad' waving a sword and shouting: "You can't draw me!" In reply, a cartoon bubble portrays an artist grasping a pencil and saying: "That's why I draw you."¹³⁹

In the US: a school district in California had decided to ban the drawing of all religious figures after one parent complained about an assignment that asked students to depict the Muslim prophet Muhammad. Seventh Grade students at High Desert School under the Acton-Agua Dulce Unified School District were given worksheets in history class on "Vocabulary Pictures: The Rise of Islam," by a teacher and asked to draw photos of Quran, Mecca and Muhammad. After consulting with an expert on Islam, Superintendent Brent Woodard announced that he had ordered all school staff to stop giving assignments on the depiction of any religious leader; and to permanently suspend the practice of drawing or depiction of any religious leader.¹⁴⁰

In the US: the FBI had issued a warning to New York law enforcement agencies about a man who organized a protest at a Phoenix mosque earlier in 2015. The agency learned that Jon Ritzheimer had posted a video on 18 November saying he was going to confront the Albany-based group, and he reportedly went on a profanity-laced tirade against Muslims and President Barack Obama. Ritzheimer previously organized an armed protest of a Phoenix mosque during which he led a group of nearly 250 people who carried weapons and a drawing of the Prophet Muhammad to the Islamic Community Center of Phoenix. The protest came about a month after a shootout outside a Prophet Muhammad cartoon-drawing contest in a Dallas suburb where two men showed up with assault rifles while they formerly worshipped at the Phoenix mosque where the protest was held.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ See *Religion News*' entry "No images of Prophet Muhammad or any issue ads will run on D.C. transit", in: <http://www.religionnews.com/2015/05/29/no-images-of-prophet-muhammad-or-any-other-issue-ads-will-run-on-d-c-transit/>, retrieved on 30.05.2015

¹⁴⁰ See *Christian Today News*' entry "California School District bans depiction of all religious figures after complaint on Muhammad drawing assignment", in: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/california.school.district.bans.depiction.of.all.religious.figures.after.complaint.on.muhammad.drawing.assignment/70666.htm>, retrieved at 16.11.2015

¹⁴¹ See *Fox News*' entry "FBI reportedly warns New York officials about anti-Islam protester", in: <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2015/11/28/fbi-reportedly-warns-new-york-officials-anti-islam-protester.html>, retrieved on 28.11.2015

In the US: A vendor on a Colorado Army post was ordered to stop selling a T-shirt with an anti-Islam message after shoppers complained. The T-shirt depicts the Statue of Liberty wearing a burqa, the all-covering dress worn by some Muslim women, with the words, *"Don't let this happen America."* It was being sold at a kiosk outside the Fort Carson Post Exchange, a retail store. The Army and Air Force Exchange Service, which operated the exchange, said that it ordered the vendor to stop selling the shirt because it violates rules against religious or political merchandise. The Military Religious Freedom Foundation said one of its clients complained about the shirt. The foundation advocated on religious liberty issues in the military.¹⁴²



In the US: Burlington Police were monitoring the grounds of the Christian church that would become a mosque after threats appeared on social media. Chief Jeffrey Smythe confirmed on 23 November 2015 that the department was aware of threats made on Facebook to vandalize, damage and desecrate Life's Journey United Church of Christ's building and grounds at 1908 S. Mebane St. The posts appeared over the weekend before. Some were made on Alamance County Taking Back Alamance County's Facebook page. Smythe said he had been in touch with the Rev. Phil Hardy and planned to meet this week with Shaher Sayed, prayer leader of Burlington Masjid. Burlington Masjid would be Alamance County's first mosque.¹⁴³

In the US: the FBI had developed an interactive program for teachers and students aimed at training them to prevent kids from being recruited by violent extremists. The background is that in recent years, Islamist terror groups had had more success cultivating lone wolf attackers in the West than in creating active cells. Using the Internet, as well as some mosques that were centers for radical activity, such efforts present a consistent challenge for American law enforcement. Their answer had been to step up efforts to monitor such activity in spite of attempts by groups purporting to represent the interests of American Muslims and Arab-Americans to prevent the gathering of such intelligence. Authorities understood that preventing children from being wooed by radicals was just as important.¹⁴⁴

In Canada: Quebec Solitaire Party co-leader Françoise David tabled a motion in the National Assembly on 1 October 2015 *"condemning islamophobia, and calls for hatred and violence toward Quebecers of Muslim faith."* The motion passed unanimously, after some early opposition from the Parti Québécois and Coalition Avenir Québec. Immigration Minister Kathleen Weil supported the motion in saying: *"We see the same comments in other jurisdictions, we see the same comments in other parts of Canada. You just have to be connected to the Internet and you see it. I think what's important is that governments and elected officials, people who represent a society that respects the rights and liberties of its citizens, that respects the foundations of a democracy, they act responsibly when these things happen and I think this was a gesture of responsibility."* The move came after a pregnant Muslim woman was attacked by two teenage

¹⁴² See CNS News' entry "Vendor on army post told to stop selling anti-Islam T-shirt", in: <http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/vendor-army-post-told-stop-selling-anti-islam-t-shirt>, retrieved on 05.11.2015

¹⁴³ See The Times News' entry "Police respond to social media threats against planned mosque", in: <http://www.thetimesnews.com/article/20151123/NEWS/151129594>, retrieved on 26.11.2015

¹⁴⁴ See The Commentary Magazine News' entry "Terror Recruiters Benefit from Islamophobia Fears", in: <https://www.commentarymagazine.com/terrorism/islamophobia-myth-fbi/>, retrieved on 22.11.2015

boys by end of September 2015 in Canada's French speaking Montreal. The two teenagers allegedly approached the woman from behind and tried to rip off her hijab.¹⁴⁵

In Canada: a series of incidents against Muslim women in Ottawa had prompted the city's police to issue an appeal to others who may have been victimized to come forward. In an email sent on the third week of October to members of the Muslim community, the authority urged the reporting of all forms of abuse. It was mentioned in the email: *"In recent days, female members of Ottawa's Muslim community have voiced concerns about safety, following incidents of verbal abuse towards them"...* *"If these types of incidents are not reported, little can be done to help other members of the community from also being victimized."*¹⁴⁶

In the UK: Islamophobia would be treated in the same way as anti-Semitic attacks against Jews. The decision came after a government study showed the country had seen a 43 percent rise in religious hate crime during the first three months of the year. Prime Minister David Cameron revealed that he would provide new funding to improve security in religious buildings. Quoted by Sky News, Mr. Cameron stated: *"I want British Muslims to know we will back them to stand against those who spread hate and to counter the narrative which says Muslims do not feel British. And I want police to take more action against those who persecute others simply because of their religion."*¹⁴⁷

In the US: federal, state, and local law enforcement officials in Minnesota met with more than three dozen local Muslims to let them know that authorities were there to protect them, and to urge community members to report incidents of hate crimes. On 24 March 2016 a meeting was held in response to the recent attacks in Brussels. Several community members told authorities that after high-profile events like that, they felt scared. US Attorney Andy Luger told the group that law enforcement's job was to keep everyone safe, including Muslims. FBI Special Agent in Charge Rick Thornton said the community needed to know that Minnesota authorities would aggressively deal with acts of violence targeting Muslims.¹⁴⁸

In Spain: the Spanish government published new guidelines for teaching Islam in public preschools and primary and secondary schools. The guidelines were being touted as a way to prevent Muslim children and young people from being drawn into terrorism by exposing them to a 'moderate' interpretation of Islam. On closer inspection, however, the guidelines drafted by the Islamic Commission of Spain and approved by the Ministry of Education were aimed at stirring

¹⁴⁵ See *The World Bulletin News*' entry "Quebec passes motion on Islamophobia after racist attack", in: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/todays-news/164886/pregnant-muslim-woman-attacked-in-canada>, retrieved on 04.10.2015

¹⁴⁶ See *The Globe-and-mail.com*'s entry "Incidents prompt Ottawa police to urge Muslim women to report abuse", in: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/incidents-prompt-ottawa-police-to-urge-muslim-women-to-report-abuse/article26860309/>, retrieved on 18.10.2015

¹⁴⁷ See *The Daily Sabah News*' entry "UK puts anti-Muslim hate crimes into new crime category", in: <http://www.dailysabah.com/europe/2015/10/15/uk-puts-anti-muslim-hate-crimes-into-new-crime-category>, retrieved on 15.10.2015

¹⁴⁸ See *CBS News.com*'s entry "Minnesota officials tell Muslims: We're here to protect you", in: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/minnesota-officials-tell-muslims-were-here-to-protect-you/>, retrieved on 25.03.2016

religious fervor and promoting Islamic identity among young Muslims in Spain. The new plan amounts to a government-approved program to establish a full-fledged Islamic studies curriculum at public schools nationwide.¹⁴⁹

3.2. *Court Decisions and Trials against Islamophobes*

In the US, a man who ran for Congress in 2014 in East Tennessee had pleaded guilty to plotting an attack on a small Muslim enclave in New York. Federal agents began investigating Robert Doggart of Signal Mountain following a Facebook posting in which he claimed a community outside of Hancock, New York, was planning a terrorist attack and must be utterly destroyed, according to the plea agreement entered in April 2015. This area was known as 'Islamberg,' a self-named community consisting primarily of Muslims. Via cellphone, Doggart also told unnamed people cooperating with the FBI that his plan involved killing residents and burning at least three buildings. He met with at least one source in Nashville. During the same call, Doggart told the person on the phone that pistols couldn't be carried from Tennessee to New York because the city doesn't have carry permit reciprocity, but that "AR-15s, M-4s or M-16s" could be brought. Doggart said he planned to bring his M-4 rifle with four magazines, according to the court document. He pleaded guilty to a charge of interstate communication of threats. Doggart faced up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.¹⁵⁰

In the US, a Texas judge was admonished publicly for referring to a district attorney as a 'New York Jew' and insulting another prosecutor's beard, saying it made him look 'like a Muslim.' In a ruling released on 18 May, the state's Commission on Judicial Conduct admonished Tinsley Schildknecht of the 106th District Court in Lamesa. The commission required Schildknecht to obtain four hours of instruction on recognizing and eliminating explicit and implicit bias and/or prejudice, Texas Lawyer reported. The admonition, which also criticized Schildknecht for holding marathon court sessions that lasted until 4 AM, said the judge in July 2015 referred to District Attorney Michael Munk as a 'New York Jew' in a private conversation with the DA's secretary and later told Munk and another attorney, "*When I tell people why you are different and have different thoughts, I explain because you are from New York and because you are Jewish.*" The admonition said that in September 2015, Schildknecht told an assistant district attorney, "*You look like a Muslim and I wouldn't hire you.*"¹⁵¹

In the US, a man was being held on felony ethnic intimidation for he showed up at the Islamic Center of Cleveland on West 130th Street and claimed he wanted to join the mosque but then began calling members 'Pedophiles', and 'Terrorists'. Witnesses told police the man then grabbed an axe from his vehicle but Police were already nearby directing traffic at the mosque because of the religious holiday. The man reportedly fled in his car but was captured by Parma officers a short time later.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ See *The Gate Stone Institute News*' entry "Courses on Islam in Public Schools" in: <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/7747/spain-schools-islam>, retrieved on 29/04/2016

¹⁵⁰ See *The Times News*' entry "Tennessee man pleads guilty to plotting attack on Muslims", in: <http://www.timesnews.net/article/9087750/tennessee-man-pleads-guilty-to-plotting-attack-on-muslims>, retrieved on 20.05.2015

¹⁵¹ See *ABA Journal.com*'s entry "Texas judge disciplined for remarks about Jews, Muslims", in: <http://www.abajournal.com/news/article/texas-judge-is-admonished-for-new-york-jew-and-muslim-beard-comments-marath/>, retrieved on 20.05.2015

¹⁵² See *The Fox8 News*' entry "Man arrested in Parma for calling mosque members pedophiles, terrorists", in: <http://fox8.com/2015/09/24/man-arrested-in-parma-for-calling-mosque-members-pedophiles-terrorists/>, retrieved on 25.09.2015

In Canada, a security guard at Toronto's Pearson Airport was suspended pending an investigation after making offensive remarks to a Muslim cab driver that were captured on a cellphone video. The video was shot on 16 September during what appeared to be a confrontation between the guard and taxi drivers at Pearson's Terminal 1. On the video, which was sent to *CBC News*, the guard accused a taxi driver of being a "scooper", a term used to describe cabbies who illegally solicited fares from inside the terminal. The security guard swore, called the driver a "bad guy" and accused him of "harassing" passengers waiting in line for a taxi. At some point, the person shooting the video was identified as a Muslim. The guard responds by saying, *"I don't give a damn"*, and went on to make offensive remarks about the Prophet Muhammad. Alan Cakehead, a manager at ASP Security, confirmed to *CBC News* on the following day that his company was investigating a complaint about the incident. Cakehead said he spoke to three people at the airport who filed a complaint, adding: *"ASP has a strict human rights policy. If we find through our investigation that there has been a violation of that policy, disciplinary action will be taken. That may include dismissal."* He said the security guard was suspended without pay while the investigation took place.¹⁵³

In the US, the Justice Department was suing the city of Des Plaines, saying the city broke federal law when it refused the request of a group of Bosnian Sufi Muslims to open a mosque in one of the western suburb's industrial areas. On 30 September, federal prosecutors filed a complaint, signed by Atty. Gen. Loretta Lynch and Atty. Zachary Fardon, against the city in federal court in Chicago, alleging Des Plaines officials violated the rights under the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of the group known as the American Islamic Center when the city in 2013 refused to allow the AIC to renovate a vacant office building for use as a mosque and community center. The AIC was described in the complaint as *"a non-profit religious organization of Bosnian Muslims that practices a Sufi approach to Islam."* The Justice Department's complaint came even as the AIC continued its own legal battle in federal court against the city over the zoning decision.¹⁵⁴

In the UK, a McDonald's customer was jailed for 12 weeks in prison after asking a Muslim employee if he was going to chop off his head. Drunken Patrick Maughan, 65, was harassing the assistant manager of the local restaurant in Crawley, West Sussex, by making reference to the sickening ISIL-style beheadings. After that he mimicked the way Muslims prayed. Melanie Wotton, prosecuting, said: *"At about 7pm Maughan went into McDonald's where Mr Mahroof was working as an assistant manager and Mr Bahar as a security guard. Maughan leant over the counter and read Mr Mahroof's name badge before asking him 'Are you Mohamed?' and adding 'Are you a Muslim?' Mr Mahroof responded by saying 'yes' and when Maughan asked him again he ignored him. Maughan then said 'I'm Christian, you are a Muslim, do you want to chop off my head?' and he made a gesture across his throat to show a beheading. He was asked to leave, but after turning away, he returned to the counter to harass Mohamed some more"*. The court heard Maughan was given a 15-month community order in June 2015 for a separate incident of racially aggravated harassment. Maria Kempshall, chair of the bench of magistrates, said: *"These offences are so serious only a custodial sentence can be justified. These were aggravated offences of harassment of a racial nature against two people carrying*

¹⁵³ See *CBC Canada News's* entry "Toronto Airport security guard suspended for anti-Muslim comments", in: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/toronto-airport-security-guard-suspended-for-anti-muslim-comments-1.3231968>, retrieved on 18.09.2015

¹⁵⁴ See *Cook-Country Record.com's* entry "Justice Department: Des Plaines broke federal law in denying Islamic group's request to open mosque in former office building", in: <http://cookcountyrecord.com/stories/510640649-justice-department-des-plaines-broke-federal-law-in-denying-islamic-group-s-request-to-open-mosque-in-former-office-building>, retrieved on 01.10.2015

out their employment in a public place. This was also the second similar racially aggravated offence you have committed in a short time span."¹⁵⁵

In the US, the man accused of firebombing a Corvallis mosque was convicted of a federal hate crime charge. Cody Seth Crawford pleaded 'no contest' on 3 November 2015 to a charge of damaging religious property. Prosecutors would ask that he might be sentenced to five years of probation. Authorities said Crawford was motivated by racial hatred after accused of throwing a soda bottle containing gasoline and mineral oil into a window at the Salman Alfarisi Islamic Center in Corvallis, setting the office area inside aflame in 2010. Mohamed Osman Mohamud had worshipped for a time at the damaged mosque but for many years Crawford had maintained his innocence.¹⁵⁶

In the UK, a Londoner who racially abused a Turkish pensioner had been jailed after footage of his foul-mouthed tirade went viral on YouTube. Kashif Samuels was given a 16-week prison sentence after being found guilty of an aggravated public order offence on a crowded bus in North London a month before. Filmed by another passenger, video showed Samuels telling his victim to "Go back to Turkey" before shouting Islamophobic abuse. It ended with Samuels throwing the victim's walking frame off the bus. Samuels sat in Highbury Magistrates' Court dock in silence, with his eyes closed, as the footage was played during a sentencing hearing. Prosecutors told the court the victim could not be traced but they had established he was an elderly Turkish man.¹⁵⁷

In the US, the Court of Appeals found on the second week of October that the New York City Police Department's (NYPD) warrantless blanket surveillance program unfairly discriminated against New Jersey Muslims on the basis of religion. The decision in *'Hassan v. City of New York'* reversed an earlier district court ruling dismissing the case. In July 2014, the Brennan Center for Justice filed an amicus brief supporting Mr. Hassan and his co-plaintiffs, pointing out the NYPD's long-standing surveillance of First Amendment-protected activity by various disfavored groups, including African-American communities and anti-Vietnam War protestors. The Brennan Center urged to reverse the district court's decision.¹⁵⁸

In the UK, Pastor James McConnell faced a three-day trial for broadcasting a sermon over the Internet using a public electronics communications network where he called Islam 'satanic' and 'heathen'. The charges, which also included allegedly sending a grossly offensive message using a public electronics communications network, stem from a sermon he gave at a



¹⁵⁵ See *The World Bulletin News*' entry "Man jailed for Islamophobic abuse of McDonald's staff", in: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/islamophobia/164007/man-jailed-for-islamophobic-abuse-of-mcdonalds-staff>, retrieved on 08.09.2015

¹⁵⁶ See *The Daily Astorian.com*'s entry "Man Convicted of Firebombing Corvallis Mosque in 2010", in: <http://www.dailystorian.com/man-convicted-of-firebombing-corvallis-mosque-in-2010-da-ap-webfeeds-news-northwest7fe11614889641fe8428297f56607a86>, retrieved on 03.11.2015

¹⁵⁷ See *The Worldbulletin News*' entry "Man jailed for Islamophobic attack on bus", in: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/todays-news/166073/uk-man-jailed-for-islamophobic-attack-on-bus>, retrieved on 07.11.2015

¹⁵⁸ See *The Brennan Center News*' entry "Federal Appeals Court finds NYPD surveillance discriminated against Muslims", in: <http://www.brennancenter.org/press-release/federal-appeals-court-says-suit-challenging-nypd-surveillance-can-continue>, retrieved on 14.10.2015

Belfast, Northern Ireland, church in May 2014. However, supporters outside the church defended by saying on 1 October: *"The issue is the freedom of speech; the freedom of conscience; the freedom of worship and the freedom of preaching the Gospel and saying what is in your heart."*¹⁵⁹

In France, Marine Le Pen was standing trial over comments she made five years before comparing Muslim street prayers to a foreign occupation. Le Pen, whose National Front party was known for its anti-immigration and anti-Islam views, was to be judged on charges of inciting racial hatred in Lyon, where faced four anti-racism and human rights organizations. Despite her popularity on the rise in France, Le Pen faced up to a year in prison and a fine of 45,000 euros (\$51,000). However, political experts said she could emerge from the trial even stronger among many National Front voters.¹⁶⁰

In the US, two Muslim truck drivers who were fired for refusing to deliver shipments containing alcohol were awarded \$40,000 in compensatory damages and \$200,000 in punitive damages by the jury in their discrimination claim. The case involved *Star Transport's* firing of drivers Mahad Abass Mohamed and Abdkiarim Hassan Bulshale, both of Somali heritage, in 2009 after they refused to deliver beer for the company, citing their adherence to Islamic law. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission brought suit on their behalf (*EEOC v. Star Transport Co., Inc.* (N.D. Ill.)), and argued that the employer had failed to provide reasonable accommodations to the employees, as it could have easily reassigned the drivers but did not and sued it for religious discrimination. The jury awarded Mohamed and Bulshale \$20,000 each in compensatory damages and \$100,000 each in punitive damages. The judge awarded each approximately \$1,500 in back pay.¹⁶¹

In the UK, a man had been charged for using social media to incite racial hatred after posting anti-Muslim tweets in the days after the Brussels attacks. Matthew Doyle was scheduled to appear in court on March 26. He was charged with publishing or distributing written material which was threatening, abusive or insulting and likely or intended to stir up racial hatred. Doyle had tweeted about confronting a Muslim woman in the Croydon area of south London and asking her views on the Brussels attacks. He said she replied that the attacks had nothing to do with her, a response he described as *"mealy mouthed."* He later used an anti-Muslim epithet to describe her. British law protects freedom of speech, but the Crown Prosecution Service said a person can be charged with inciting racial hatred if they said or did something which was *"threatening, abusive or insulting and, by doing so, either intends to stir up racial hatred, or makes it likely that racial hatred will be stirred up."* Doyle quickly deleted both tweets but the images of the postings were captured and re-tweeted many times. He was taken in for questioning shortly after the tweets appeared. Police and political leaders had warned of a possible surge in hate crimes against British Muslims in response to the Brussels attack.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ See *The Christian Post News's* entry "Pastor persecuted for calling Islam 'Satanic' faces trial", in: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/pastor-persecuted-for-calling-islam-satanic-faces-trial-in-december-for-islamophobia-146676/>, Retrieved on 03.10.2015

¹⁶⁰ See *The Fox News's* entry "French far right leader Marine Le Pen on trial over Muslim prayer comments", in: <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2015/10/20/french-far-right-leader-marine-le-pen-on-trial-over-muslim-prayer-comments/>, retrieved on 21.10.2015

¹⁶¹ See *The World Bulletin NNes's* entry "Fired Muslim truck drivers win discrimination lawsuit", in: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/news/165687/fired-muslim-truck-drivers-win-discrimination-lawsuit>, retrieved on 28.10.2015

¹⁶² See *The NY Post News's* entry "Man arrested for tweeting about Muslims", in: <http://nypost.com/2016/03/25/man-arrested-for-tweeting-about-muslims/>, retrieved on 26.03.2016

In Germany, the founder of Germany's xenophobic and anti-Islamic PEGIDA movement appeared in court on 26 April



2016 on hate speech charges for branding refugees 'cattle' and 'scum' on social media. Lutz Bachmann, founder of Germany's anti-Islamic PEGIDA "*Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident*" movement, was charged in October 2015 with inciting racial hatred through a series of widely-shared Facebook posts. Bachmann was wearing dark, rectangular sunglasses as part of his protest against German censorship laws. The trial was held under tight security in Dresden in the former communist east, the birthplace of PEGIDA, which bitterly opposes Chancellor Angela Merkel's liberal migration policy that brought more than a million asylum seekers to Germany in 2015. The court said the 43-year-old's comments, which date back to 2014, also "*disrupted public order*" and constituted an "*attack on the*

dignity" of refugees. If found guilty, Bachmann could face between three months and five years in jail.¹⁶³

3.3. Positive Views on Islam

In the US, Bill O'Reilly said on 7 May 2015 that the 'Draw the Prophet' event that was attacked few days before in Garland, Texas, was wrong in part because "*Jesus would not have sponsored that event.*" The O'Reilly Factor host had repeatedly criticized the event, which was targeted by Elton Simpson, 31, and Nadir Soofi, 34. Both men died in a shootout with police on 3 May. Mr. O'Reilly added: "*The goal of every decent person in the world should be to defeat the jihad, and in order to do that you have to rally the world to the side of good — our side. The emotional displays, like insulting the Prophet Muhammad, make it more difficult to rally law-abiding Muslims.*"¹⁶⁴



In India, the Election Commission on 20 May 2015 expressed strong displeasure over Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut's remark that Muslims should be stripped of voting rights and advised him to be more circumspect in future in his public utterance. In its order issued on the same day, the Commission, while rejecting his explanation, said that by making such remarks he had violated the provisions of the election code. Raut had made the remarks in an editorial published in Shiv Sena's mouthpiece 'Saamna', when model code of conduct was in force then for the bypoll in Vandre East and Tasgaon Kavathe Mahankali assembly constituencies of Maharashtra. The EC had earlier issued him a show

¹⁶³ See *The Breitbart News*' entry "Head of Anti-Islam PEGIDA Germany due in court for 'Hate Speech'", in: <http://www.breitbart.com/london/2016/04/19/head-anti-islam-pegida-germany-due-court-hate-speech/>, retrieved on 20.04.2016

¹⁶⁴ See *The Washington Times News*' entry "Bill O'Reilly: 'Jesus would not have sponsored' a 'Draw the Prophet' contest", in: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/may/8/bill-oreilly-jesus-would-not-have-sponsored-pamela/>, retrieved on 09.05.2015

cause notice based on a complaint filed against him. According to EC, his remark suggesting that Muslims should be disenfranchised violated sub para (1) of Para 1 of the poll code, which restrains party leaders and candidates from making communal appeals and statements that can create mutual hatred, and sub-para 4 of Para 1, which debars "corrupt practices" and offences under electoral laws. The Commission also reminded him of a Supreme Court observation which said that *"the duty at the top echelons of leadership at the state and national level of all political parties is to set the trend for giving the needed information to the electorate by adopting desirable standards so that it percolates to the lower levels and provides a congenial desirable standards for a free and fair poll."*¹⁶⁵



In Australia, a group of church ministers and community workers had urged a far-right group to reconsider its plans to march through Luton planned on 27 June 2015. In an open letter to the group leader, church leaders from across Luton challenged the group's self-proclaimed Christian stance and asked for its plans to be shelved. It reads: *"Britain First regularly claim to be defending Christian Britain... however the atmosphere on your marches, and those like them, and*



the way you operate does not represent Christianity nor the church in Luton. As Christians we are committed to share our faith, but we're also called to love our neighbour, and live at peace with them." It adds: *"There are problems between members of our communities, but we are committed to dealing with them positively together, and have people and structures we can call on for help in resolution of things that could divide us. Marches like this do not deal with extremism, they simply have the potential to stir up more trouble as the Luton community feels threatened by the march, and many from all communities are angered by your intended presence."*¹⁶⁶

In the US, Hillary Clinton argued on Saturday 14th November night's Democratic debate, that it's not just wrong to broadly blame all of Islam for the acts of radical terrorists, but also potentially dangerous to America's national security interests. Clinton said: *"I think that you can talk about Islamists who clearly are also jihadists. But I think it's not particularly helpful. To make the case that Sen. Sanders was just making that I agree with, we've got to reach out to Muslim countries, we've got to have them be part of our coalition. If they hear people running for president who basically shortcut it to say we are somehow against Islam, that was one of the real contributions — despite all the other problems that George W. Bush made after 9/11 — when he basically said after going to a mosque in Washington. We are not at war with Islam or Muslims. We are at war with violent extremism. We*

¹⁶⁵ See *First-Post.com*'s entry "EC expresses displeasure over Sena MP Sanjay Raut's remarks on Muslims", in: <http://www.firstpost.com/politics/ec-expresses-displeasure-sena-mp-sanjay-rauts-remarks-muslims-2254962.html>, retrieved on 21.05.2015

¹⁶⁶ See *The Luton Today News*' entry "Christian leaders urge Britain First to cancel plans for march through Luton", in: <http://www.lutontoday.co.uk/news/christian-leaders-urge-britain-first-to-cancel-plans-for-march-through-luton-1-6757775>, retrieved on 22.05.2015

*are at war with people who use their religion for purposes of power and oppression. And yes, we are at war with those people. But I don't want us to be painting with too broad a brush".*¹⁶⁷

In the UK, Theresa May made a statement on the Paris attacks in refer to the day when Jeremy Corbyn had made his concerns about both the government's use of drones and any shoot-to-kill policy for terrorists on British streets. Theresa May's statement was striking for the level of cross-party agreement. Andy Burnham paid generous tribute to the Home Secretary and pledged Labour's support for her anti-terror crackdown. The only discordant note came on the question of police funding. Burnham aligned himself with Bernard Hogan-Howe's warning that cuts of more than 10 percent to police funding would make it harder to keep the streets safe. She stressed that the kind of weapons used in Paris on Friday night were 'not readily available in the UK' and said she would urge other EU countries to toughen up their firearms laws in an attempt to restrict the supply of automatic weapons. She also declared that *'the attacks have nothing to do with Islam'*.¹⁶⁸

In Canada, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau issued a statement on 16 November 2015 on the fire that took place at the mosque in Peterborough, saying *"I am deeply disturbed by the fire that took place at the Kawartha Muslim Religious Association's mosque in Peterborough on November 14, 2015. The values that make our country great are values that celebrate our diversity and our religious tolerance. Canada is a country that is strong, not in spite of our differences, but because of them. Muslim-Canadians contribute enormously to the social and economic fabric of our nation, and Canadian authorities will not abide innocent and peaceful citizens being targeted by acts of vandalism and intolerance. The recent terrorist attacks in Paris have shocked peace-loving people in all countries around the world. We must remain focused on those responsible for the atrocities committed in France. It is equally important for Canadians to understand that Muslims around the world are also being persecuted regularly by these violent extremists. We are in this together. To the families who attend the mosque for prayer every week, the Government of Canada and our law enforcement agencies will protect your rights and make every effort to apprehend any perpetrator. I hope your mosque will be open for prayer again very soon."*¹⁶⁹



In the US, Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky said on 17 November 2015 that the civilized parts of Islam need to rise up and effectively serve as boots on the ground in the fight against the Islamic State terrorist group in Iraq and Syria. He said: *"I think a long-lasting victory in the Middle East and a long-lasting peace that means something ultimately will have*

¹⁶⁷ See Vox.com's entry "Hillary Clinton: Blaming all of Islam for terrorist attacks is a huge strategic mistake", in: <http://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2015/11/14/9736860/hillary-clinton-democratic-debate-islam-terrorism>, retrieved on 14.11.2015

¹⁶⁸ See The Mirror News' entry "The Paris attacks 'have nothing to do with Islam'", in: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/theresa-slams-perverted-paris-attacks-6842397>, retrieved on 16.11.2015

¹⁶⁹ See PM.gc.ca's entry "Statement by the Prime Minister of Canada on the fire that took place at the mosque in Peterborough", in: <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2015/11/16/statement-prime-minister-canada-fire-took-place-mosque-peterborough>, retrieved on 16.11.2015

to be that the civilized parts of Islam — which I think are 90 to 95 percent of Islam — they have to rise up,” Mr. Paul added: “They need to be the boots on the ground and they need to stamp out this aberration. I’ve met so many good people who are of the Islamic faith — they need to rise up and they need to say what ISIS is doing ... does not represent our religion”. Mr. Paul also said if America goes over and occupies Sunni Muslim cities, “it’ll be another generation that will rise up within years to battle us.”¹⁷⁰

In the US, the French-American Scott Atran stated that what inspires the world’s most violent group was not the Koran or Islam’s religious teachings, but its potential laid in the promise of a purpose-filled life for thousands of young people who feel that they were lacking one. He said “For them, jihad is an employer that is egalitarian, fraternal, and much more persuasive than the prospect of a marginalized life. That little fragment was reminiscent of former State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf and her suggestion that the only way to end ISIS was by finding them jobs, and totally contradicts an earlier paragraph within the post that lays out Acevedo’s view of ISIS’ mission. Terrorists of the self-styled Islamic state seek to attack a way of life that is very different to the one set forth by their values. The true objective of the ISIS jihadists is to disrupt the democratic principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. That is the victory that they pursue and the strategy has worked before”.¹⁷¹

In the US, The Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated: “The bottom line is that we are in a contest of ideas against an ideology of hate, and we have to win. Let’s be clear, though, Islam is not our adversary. Muslims are peaceful and tolerant people, and have nothing whatsoever to do with terrorism. The obsession in some quarters with a clash of civilization, or repeating the specific words radical Islamic terrorism isn’t just a distraction, it gives these criminals, these murderers more standing than they deserve. It actually plays into their hands by alienating partners we need by our side.”¹⁷²

In Australia, the federal government was hoping to build better relations with the Muslim community as it stressed more inclusive discussions. Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs, said that some Muslim communities were feeling marginalized, disenfranchised and ignored. The senator had been consulting with more than 100 Muslim groups around the country on national security issues. Senator Fierravanti-Wells said it was important to have a two-way discussion about problems within the community.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ See *The Washington Time News*’ entry “People who believe in Islam need to rise up”, in: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/nov/19/rand-paul-people-who-believe-islam-need-rise-up/>, retrieved on 19.11.2015

¹⁷¹ See *The News-Buster.org*’s entry “Univision Anchor Repeats: Islam Doesn’t Inspire Terrorists”, in: <http://www.newsbusters.org/blogs/latino/jorge-bonilla/2015/11/21/univision-anchor-repeats-islam-doesnt-inspire-terrorists>, retrieved on 21.11.2015

¹⁷² See *The Real Clear Politics News*’ entry “Hillary: Islam Is Not Our Adversary, “Muslims Are Peaceful, Tolerant And Have Nothing To Do With Terrorism”, in: http://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2015/11/19/hillary_clinton_islam_not_adversary_muslims_peaceful_tolerant_nothing_to_do_with_terrorism.html, retrieved on 19.11.2015

¹⁷³ See *The 9-News*’ entry “We need to listen to Muslims: Liberal”, in: <http://www.9news.com.au/national/2015/10/02/18/25/we-need-to-listen-to-muslims-liberal>, retrieved on 01/10/2015

In the US, Senator Bernie Sanders on 28 October invoked his ancestors' deaths in Holocaust concentration camps as he embraced a Muslim student and promised to lead the fight against racism. He mentioned that his ancestors' deaths in Holocaust concentration camps he was likening to the fictional construct of Islamophobia. Sanders said: *"Let me be very personal if I might. I'm Jewish, my father's family died in concentration camps. I will do everything that I can to rid this country of the ugly stain of racism that has existed for far too many years."* Sanders also said: *"Our job is to build a nation in which we all stand together as one. There is a lot of anger being generated, hatred being generated against Muslims in this country, that is absolutely correct. There is hatred being generated against immigrants in this country. This is absolutely untrue. The anger is against the jihad that is being waged against the United States, as well as against non-Muslim minorities in Muslim countries."*¹⁷⁴



In Australia, the Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews warned in citing the far-right group United Patriots Front who held protest to object against the building of a mosque in the regional Victorian city. He said on 9 October 2015: *"Some of these fringe groups, many of whom don't live in Bendigo, many of whom don't even live in Victoria ... are travelling to Bendigo to cause trouble and not much more....It's all about hate and bigotry, and that's simply wrong and we need to call it out."* The statement was made as anti-mosque protesters were travelling from interstate to bring hate and bigotry to Bendigo.¹⁷⁵

In the US, the Secretary of State John Kerry said on 27 March 2016 that proposals by Republican presidential candidates to ban Muslims from the country or increase surveillance in Muslim neighborhoods after terrorist attacks overseas were *"an embarrassment"*. In an interview on CBS's *"Face the Nation,"* Kerry said foreign leaders were aghast. He added: *"Everywhere I go, every leader I meet, they ask about what is happening in America. They cannot believe it. I think it is fair to say they're shocked."* Kerry's statement was issued as Republicans Donald Trump, front-runner for the party's 2016 nomination, and Ted Cruz, his main challenger, stepped up their calls for measures aimed at Muslims in the US after the bombings in Brussels. Cruz also asked to empower law enforcement to patrol and secure Muslim neighborhoods before they become *"radicalized"*. However, Kerry said: the talk *"upsets people's sense of equilibrium about our steadiness, about our reliability, it's clear to me that what's happening is an embarrassment to our country."*¹⁷⁶

In the US, Muslim civil rights groups were speaking out after a local commissioner in Kansas shared controversial comments and a slide show at a government meeting that included terrorists and criminals who had a derivative of the name *"Muhammed."* Debate began after Sedgwick County Commissioner Karl Peterjohn prefaced a speech about radical Islam during an 18 November meeting by warning that *"It's going to be politically incorrect."* *"There is a clear and present danger in our own country,"* Peterjohn warned, saying that his statements were sparked by the Paris terror

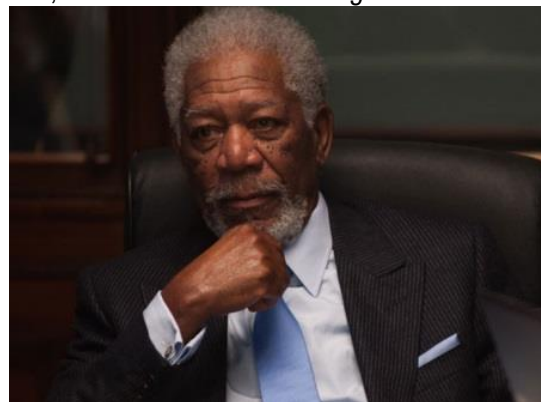
¹⁷⁴ See *The Breitbart News'* entry "Bernie Sanders vows to lead fight not against jihad terror, but against Islamophobia" in: <http://www.breitbart.com/jihad/2015/10/29/bernie-sanders-vows-to-lead-fight-not-against-jihad-terror-but-against-islamophobia/>, retrieved on 30.10.2015

¹⁷⁵ See *The Guardian News'* entry "Anti-mosque protesters 'bringing hate and bigotry' to Bendigo, says Premier", in: <http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/oct/09/anti-mosque-protesters-bringing-hate-and-bigotry-to-bendigo-says-premier>, retrieved on 10.10.2015

¹⁷⁶ See *Dailygazette's* entry "Kerry said: Republican talk about Muslims embarrasses US", in: <http://www.dailygazette.com/news/2016/mar/27/kerry-says-republican-talk-about-muslims-embarrass/>, retrieved on 28/03/2016

attacks and that they served as a “public warning.” The politician said that he had been cautious to speak out, but that he felt compelled to do so. *“Not all Muslims are terrorists, not all Russians were communists, not all Germans were Nazis,”* Peterjohn said.¹⁷⁷

In the US, Morgan Freeman stated that Islam aims for peace while news reports of Islamic extremism by a tiny percentage of Muslims do not reflect the mindset of the majority of Muslims, Freeman stated. *“Meeting Muslims face to face, I’ve learned that Islam aims for people to live in peace,”* Freeman remarked. *“But watching the news today, you’d be forgiven for not knowing that. A tiny percentage of Muslims are waging war against the West.”* Freeman told his viewers that apocalypse, a Greek word meaning lifting the veil was about enlightenment not war and death. *“It’s a state of mind and heart that helps us see the truth. Not some far off day of judgment. It’s here, it’s now,”* he concluded.¹⁷⁸



In Switzerland, the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said on 8 April 2016, that the vast majority of victims of violent extremism worldwide were Muslims and the objective of extremists *“is for us to turn on each other, and our unity is the ultimate rebuke for that bankrupt strategy”*. He underscored that the action plan he presented to the United Nations General Assembly in January 2016 contained concrete recommendations and could be the basis of a global partnership to defeat violent extremism. While it might be inevitable to draw on examples, such as Islamic State (IS) or Boko Haram, *“the phenomenon of violent extremism conducive to terrorism is not rooted or confined to any religion, region, nationality or ethnic group”*. The Secretary-General told the Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism – The Way Forward, co-hosted by the Government of Switzerland and the UN. Ban stressed: *“Let us also recognize that the vast majority of victims worldwide are Muslims.”*¹⁷⁹

3.4. Counter-balances on Far Rights

In France, a French mayor was suspended in May 2015 from his party after calling for the country to ban Islam. Robert Chardon, the UMP mayor of Venelles in southern France, tweeted: *“The Muslim religion must be banned in France”* and added that anyone practicing the religion must be *“immediately escorted to the border”*. He also claimed Islam would be banned in France by 2027. The tweet was part of a discussion former president Nicolas Sarkozy began with the public, using the hashtag #NSDirect. Sarkozy, the leader of the UMP party and was likely to run for president again in 2017, immediately distanced himself from the comments, writing: *“I condemn this proposal even if secularism also*

¹⁷⁷ See *The Blaze.com*’s entry “Politician Unleashes ‘Public Warning’ About Radical Islam — And His Slide Show Is Raising Some Eyebrows: ‘I’ve Held My...Breath for Quite a while’”, in: <http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2015/11/20/county-commissioner-unleashes-public-warning-about-radical-islam-but-its-his-slideshow-thats-raising-some-eyebrows-ive-held-my-breath-for-quite-awhile/> retrieved on 20.11.2015

¹⁷⁸ See *Newsbusters*’ entry “Morgan Freeman: Islam Aims for Peace”, in: <http://www.newsbusters.org/blogs/culture/mairead-mcardle/2016/04/12/morgan-freeman-islam-aims-peace>, retrieved on 13/04/2016

¹⁷⁹ See *The Navhind Times News*’ entry “Majority of extremism victims are Muslims: Ban Ki-moon”, in: <http://www.navhindtimes.in/majority-of-extremism-victims-are-muslims-ban-ki-moon/>, retrieved on 11.04.2016

means fixing limits. Rights and limits go together.” UMP Vice-president Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet announced the party was suspending Mr Chardon pending a procedure to remove him from the UMP.¹⁸⁰

In the US, on 10 May 2015 at ‘ABC’s *This Week With George Stephanopoulos*,’ Fox News’ Greta Van Susteren discussed the terror attack in Texas the week before at Pam Geller’s “Draw Mohammed” art contest and said that Geller was “mocking an entire religion of Muslims.” Van Susteren said, “Here’s the problem. There’s no one I know who denies that she had a First Amendment right and all of them do. They had a First Amendment right to do that, but with every right comes some sort of judgment. You have a First Amendment right. The Nazis did to march in Skokie when 20% of the population in Skokie was Holocaust victims in the 1977. Sometimes you use good judgment. What she was doing was mocking an entire religion of Muslims.”¹⁸¹

In Australia, Joining efforts to combat growing Islamophobia in Australia, two Victorian women had launched an online initiative to show support for victims of anti-Muslim attacks in the south-eastern state. Susie Latham told *Herald Sun* on



31 May: “I don’t think people realize how it impacts on individuals...If you don’t agree with what’s being said there’s nowhere to say ‘hey, if you’re saying stuff about Muslims you’re not saying it on my behalf.” Disturbed by the surge of Islamophobic attacks across the country, Latham along with her friend and human rights academic Linda Briskman launched a website that aims to fight bigotry. The website, voicesagainstbigotry.org, urged Australians to add their name to a list of people denouncing discrimination against Muslims. Launched since April, the anti-hate website drew more than 400 names in just over a week. Besides fighting rising anti-

Muslim sentiments, the initiative was also prompted by reports about the launch of an anti-Muslim political party by the end of 2015.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ See *PJ-Media.com*’s entry “French Mayor calls for banning Islam, deporting Muslims”, in: <http://pjmedia.com/tatler/2015/05/18/french-mayor-calls-for-banning-islam-deporting-muslims/>, retrieved on 19.05.2015

¹⁸¹ See *The Breitbart News*’ entry “Van Susteren: Geller was mocking an entire religion of Muslims”, in: <http://www.breitbart.com/video/2015/05/10/van-susteren-geller-was-mocking-an-entire-religion-of-muslims/>, retrieved on 11.05.2015

¹⁸² See *Onislam News*’ entry “Aussies Launch Website to Fight Bigotry”, in: <http://www.onislam.net/english/news/asia-pacific/486667-aussies-launch-website-to-fight-bigotry.html>, retrieved on 31.05.2015

In Germany, At *iftar* held in Berlin on 30 June at Villa Borsig, Merkel said: *“It is obvious that Islam is a part of Germany”*. Calling for more inter-religious trust and respect for Islam in Germany and across Europe, Merkel described Ramadan as a time when Muslims reflect and examine their lives. Recalling the increase in the number of violent acts perpetrated in the name of different religions in recent years, Merkel added: *“It is unfortunate that most of these acts are attributed to Islam.”* Merkel also said she did not approve of discrimination against German Muslims and opposed those who regard Muslims with suspicion because she considered Islam as part of Germany.¹⁸³



In Australia, a group of church ministers and community workers had urged a far-right group to reconsider its plans to march through Luton planned on 27 June. In an open letter to the group leader, church leaders from across Luton



challenged the group's self-proclaimed Christian stance and asked for its plans to be shelved. It reads: *“Britain First regularly claim to be defending Christian Britain... however the atmosphere on your marches, and those like them, and the way you operate does not represent Christianity nor the church in Luton. As Christians we are committed to share our faith, but we're also called to love our neighbour, and live at peace with them.”* It adds: *“There are problems between members of our communities, but we are committed to dealing with them positively together, and have people and structures we can call on for help in resolution of things that could*

*divide us. Marches like this do not deal with extremism, they simply have the potential to stir up more trouble as the Luton community feels threatened by the march, and many from all communities are angered by your intended presence.”*¹⁸⁴

In the US, commuters heading toward the George Washington Bridge were being asked to take a closer look at the Islamic faith in a new billboard on I-95. The billboard, near the Vince Lombardi Service Plaza, bore the message “Muhammad believed in peace, social justice, women’s rights” and included a phone number and website for more information. It has been part of a national campaign by the Islamic Circle of North America, which said on 31 August

¹⁸³ See *Today's Zaman News*' entry “German Chancellor Merkel joins iftar, calls Islam part of Germany”, in: http://www.todayszaman.com/national_german-chancellor-merkel-joins-iftar-calls-islam-part-of-germany_392530.html, retrieved on 02.07.2015

¹⁸⁴ See *Luton today's* entry “Christian leaders urge Britain First to cancel plans for march through Luton”, in: <http://www.lutontoday.co.uk/news/christian-leaders-urge-britain-first-to-cancel-plans-for-march-through-luton-1-6757775>, retrieved on 22.05.2015

that it had added 30 billboards to the 80 it had already posted in cities across the United States. The goal was to raise awareness about the faith and to dispel myths about Muslim Americans, said Naeem Baig, the organization's president.

See *Northjersey*'s entry "N.J. billboard looks to raise awareness about Islam", in: <http://www.northjersey.com/news/n-j-billboard-looks-to-raise-awareness-about-islam-1.1401597>, retrieved on 01.09.2015

In the UK, Britain First had vented their fury after a group of Church of England Clergy penned an open letter slamming them over their attitude to Islam. The far-right pseudo-political group were planning to march on 17 October against a proposed mosque to be built in the town of Burton, Staffordshire. In response 13 members of the clergy raised their concerns about the event as well as reiterating their support for the local Muslim community. The letter to the Burton Mail reads: *Thirteen of us Church of England Clergy in the Deanery of Tutbury, had one of our regular meetings on September 9. We were disturbed by the intention, reported in the day's Burton Mail, of the organisation Britain First, to march in town on Saturday, October 17, in protest against plans for construction of a new mosque in Uxbridge Street. We support, under the law, freedom of worship and religious assembly. We support, under the law, building for that purpose. We also support the right to legal civil protest. What disturbs us is the implication that 'Britishness' and Islam should be seen as incompatible. We hope the people of Burton will not let the good community relations be damaged by a confrontation with a considerable level of participation from outside our area. We offer good wishes to our brothers and sisters in the Muslim community.*¹⁸⁵

In the US, the FBI arrested Martin Alan Schnitzler on a federal charge of making a telephonic threat to kill, injure or intimidate using fire or an explosive. If convicted, Schnitzler could face up to 10 years in prison as he left a message at the Islamic Society of Pinellas County on 13 November claiming that he was "going to personally have a militia ... come down to ... firebomb you (and) shoot whoever is there." Federal authorities said they obtained the voicemail from the Islamic Center and the cellphone number from its caller ID system.¹⁸⁶

In the US, A Muslim advocate wearing a stars-and-stripes hijab on Fox News slammed Donald Trump's plan to close mosques in the wake of the Paris terror attacks, saying the idea violates the First Amendment. Saba Ahmed, president and founder of the Republican Muslim Coalition, said on "The Kelly File" that the proposal was chilling to those who value religious freedom. "Megyn, we go to the mosque to pray," Ahmed said. "It's absolutely horrifying to hear that our constitutional rights of free exercise of religion are going to be challenged just because somebody thinks that there may

¹⁸⁵ See *Huffingtonpost*'s entry "Britain First Slammed by Church of England Clergy Over Planned Burton Mosque March", in: http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/09/27/britain-first-christian-mosque-march_n_8203184.html, retrieved on 28.09.2015

¹⁸⁶ See *The Tampa Bay News*' entry "FBI arrests Seminole man for threatening Pinellas Mosque and leaving his name", in: <http://www.tampabay.com/news/publicsafety/crime/fbi-arrests-seminole-man-accused-of-calling-in-threats-to-two-pinellas/2254311>, retrieved at 17.11.2015

be some attendees who may disagree with your views. The thing is, you wouldn't shut down churches just because there was one or two Christians who were acting badly. The mosque has nothing to do with terrorists," she added. Ahmed later told Mic that she wore the scarf to "portray that there are patriotic American Muslims and we just want to live in peace." Ahmed was debating Trump spokeswoman Katrina Pierson, who defended the Republican presidential front-runner's plan to shut down mosques in the wake of ISIS attacks that left more than 120 dead in France.



"Well, Megyn, we don't have the right to plot terrorism and kill Americans," she said.¹⁸⁷

In France, Muslim students published a moving video slamming the terrorists as anti-Islamic cowards. The group, Etudiants

Musulmans de France, produced the emotional video in the aftermath of the attacks in Paris that killed 129 people. In the footage, a narrator said: "They think they are fighting crusaders, and they invoke the Koran, and quote its verses...but shedding the blood of an innocent has no justification, not in Islam or anywhere." He added: "They wanted France to be weak, they made our French hearts strong"¹⁸⁸

In the world, Muslims took to social media to condemn the perpetrators and defend Islam as a faith of nonviolence even before the Daesh claimed responsibility for the shootings and explosions that killed more than 120 in Paris on Friday night 13th November. The bloodshed was linked to Islamic extremists early on, following reports that the perpetrators had referred to French policy towards Muslims and screamed "Allahu Akbar" during the attacks. President François Hollande officially named ISIS as the group behind what he called an "act of war" just before noon local time on 14th November 2015. Several Muslim religious and political leaders officially denounced the attacks before the group took responsibility.¹⁸⁹



¹⁸⁷ See *Th-Hill.com*'s entry "Muslim advocate in American flag hijab slams Trump's mosque plan", in: <http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/260605-muslim-advocate-in-american-flag-slams-trumps-mosque-plan>, retrieved at 18.11.2015

¹⁸⁸ See *The Mirror News*' entry "Paris attacks: Watch French Muslim students condemn terrorists as 'anti-Islamic cowards' in emotional video", in: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/paris-attacks-watch-french-muslim-6840221>, retrieved at 16.11.2015

¹⁸⁹ See *The Time News*' entry "Muslims around the world speak out against terrorist attacks in Paris, in: <http://time.com/4112830/muslims-paris-terror-attacks-islam-condemn/>, retrieved on 14.11.2015

In France, a 27-year-old musician Olga turned up at two popular restaurants in the Rue de Charonne in Paris to lay flowers for her dead neighbors, denouncing terrorist attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015. She said: *"I don't understand why this happened, why these people were killed,"* said the mother of two toddlers, with a violin strapped to her back. *"I am carrying my violin because I believe music will protect us,"* she added forlornly.¹⁹⁰



In Canada, residents of Toronto were offering to accompany Muslims who were concerned about their safety on public transit following a series of reported anti-Muslim incidents in Canada's largest city, including one where two women were accosted and verbally harassed on a train. The campaign was tweeting with the hashtag #IllRideWithYou and aims to show solidarity with the city's Muslims. The hashtag was originally used following a reported rise in hostility toward Muslims in Australia December before, when a gunman held 17 people hostage. Two people were killed in that attack, as well as the gunman. The hashtag #StandWithMuslimsTO was also trending as Twitter users condemned attacks against Muslims and urged residents to stand up for those subjected to hate. Some said they were shocked something like this would happen in their city, and Muslims responded by expressing their thanks to those who helped the hashtags trend. A march was also held in support of Toronto's Muslim community.¹⁹¹

In Canada, a pilot project launched by an Islamic school in Mississauga to give Muslim students artistic outlets to help them cope with bullying, exclusion and Islamophobia. At workshop in Mississauga, young Muslims were given the option of using visual art, poetry, music and creative writing to express themselves. Ali, a therapist, asked a tough question, *"How is Islam perceived by people around you?"* tough answers were received from the crowd: *"Oppressing," "Dangerous,"* and *"My friends think ISIS represents Islam,"* the children said. Ali stated that *"We want the kids to feel that something was done. That their artistic expression didn't just end here."*¹⁹²

In the US, left-wing activist and Hollywood actor George Clooney and his wife Amal hosted fundraisers for Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton in April 2016. Ahead of the fundraisers and a contest in which a raffle winner would meet Clinton, the actor was ramping up his criticism of GOP frontrunner Donald Trump, whom he previously described as a *"xenophobic fascist."* In a letter being sent out to supporters of Clinton's White House bid by her campaign, Clooney described Trump as a racist Islamophobe who wants to commit war crimes. While Clooney did not use Trump's name in the letter, he shared some choice words for the New York billionaire and anyone who agreed with him on immigration and national security. *"If you listen to the loudest voices out there today, you'd think we're a country that hates Mexicans,*

¹⁹⁰ See VOA News' entry "Analysts: IS Militants Trying to Inflamm West-Muslim Relations", in: <http://m.voanews.com/a/analysts-islamic-state-trying-to-inflame-west-muslim-relations/3060289.html>, retrieved on 15.11.2015

¹⁹¹ See The Muslim-Village.com's entry "#IllRideWithYou: Canadians support Muslims as Islamophobia rises", in: <http://muslimvillage.com/2015/11/22/114761/illridewithyou-canadians-support-muslims-as-islamophobia-rises/>, retrieved on 25.11.2015

¹⁹² See The Star News' entry "Mississauga workshop aims to fight Islamophobia with art", in: <http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2016/03/10/mississauga-workshop-aims-to-fight-islamophobia-with-art.html>, retrieved on 11.03.2016

*hates Muslims, and thinks that committing war crimes is the best way to make America great again,” Clooney wrote in the letter, which was obtained by a media.*¹⁹³

In the US, Fresno Pacific University hosted an informational discussion on 24 March, which sought to differentiate ISIS from Islam. The attacks in Brussels still fresh in the minds of many Americans, and Fresno Pacific students and staff learned valuable insights during a session titled Islam vs. ISIS. Islamic cultural center director Reza Nekumanesh explained the clear distinction between the two. *“Muslims are a peaceful people who just want to live in the community and do good and be productive citizens,” Nekumanesh explained. “ISIS is a geo-political organization that wants to destroy. Big difference.”* The discussion was organized by Fresno Pacific senior Nuriddin Ziyadinov.¹⁹⁴

In the US and the UK, faith-based organizations and people of faith were speaking against anti-Muslim rhetoric which was eroding the values of religious freedom in the US. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was the first organization to issue a statement on religious freedom and pluralism following the campaign call by a Republican presidential candidate to ban Muslims from entering the United States. In Britain, the response of Muslim leaders to fear and suspicion about their religion and their culture was to organize for the second-year running a *“Visit-My-Mosque”* day where non-Muslims were invited into mosques to observe religious practices and to share a cup of tea. The Prime Minister, David Cameron, visited the Makkah Mosque in London. The Islamic Center of Boise had received an increased number of requests for education on the Islamic religion and culture.¹⁹⁵

In the US, At the Council of Peoples Organization, a group of Muslims, Arabs and South Asians released a message: *“We are already doing it. To Ted Cruz and others — we are working hand in hand with law enforcement to make sure nothing happens here. More importantly, if there is something, then we’ve got to say something and the kids are going to say something.”* The statement was in response to Mr. Cruz, a Texas Republican running for president, declared that he wanted the police *“to patrol and secure”* Muslim communities in the United States because they might harbor terrorists.¹⁹⁶

In Canada, Local young Muslims organized a series of events to combat mounting Islamophobic sentiments in the wake of terrorist attacks. The Empowerment events, took place in Toronto, across Canada and in parts of the United States, aimed to spur broader conversations of inclusion and tolerance regardless of religion or cultural background. Acts of hate especially against Muslims had been on the rise since the 9/11 attacks, said Farheen Khan, one of the events organizers. She added: *“People are blaming all Muslims every time an attack happens.... Then you have people like Donald Trump whose rhetoric are only adding fuel to the fire.”* Khan and her colleagues had been running a blog, *Muslimsactually.com*, publishing stories of love, generosity and compassion. They had been partnering with another group, the Uniting Muslims and Allies for Humanity, in running those series of events bringing together humanitarians,

¹⁹³ See *The Breitbart News’* entry “George Clooney Accuses Donald Trump of Racism, Islamophobia, and ‘War Crimes’ in Letter for Hillary Clinton”, in: <http://www.breitbart.com/big-hollywood/2016/03/22/george-clooney-accuses-donald-trump-of-racism-islamophobia-and-war-crimes-in-letter-for-hillary-clinton/>, retrieved on 23.03.2016

¹⁹⁴ See *ABC-30.com’s* entry “Community leaders explain difference between Islam and ISIS at Fresno Pacific”, in: <http://abc30.com/news/community-leaders-explain-difference-between-islam-and-isis-at-fresno-pacific/1261825/>, retrieved on 25.03.2016

¹⁹⁵ See *Idaho-Statesman.com’s* entry “Community connections can fight Islamophobia”, in: <http://www.idahostatesman.com/living/religion/article67016327.html>, retrieved on 19.03.2016

¹⁹⁶ See *The NY Times News’* entry “New York Muslims Reject Ted Cruz’s Prescriptions for Monitoring”, in: http://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/03/24/nyregion/new-york-muslims-reject-ted-cruzs-prescriptions-for-monitoring.html?_r=1&referer=https://www.google.com/, retrieved on 24.03.2016

artists, politicians and social advocates, of which the goal was to encourage community members to treat everyone with respect and dignity.¹⁹⁷

In the US, Oshkosh Muslims taught the Northeast Wisconsin community about their religion to shake fears and misunderstandings about Islam. Images like those from the deadly terror attack in Brussels on March 22 appeared to mind when many people heard about the Islamic religion. Pat Boyer from De Pere said: *"Along with the bloodshed and all of the things that happened, it hasn't been a positive thing."* Pew research showed just half of Americans had ever met a Muslim person possibly less in Wisconsin alone, where less than one percent of the population is Muslim. *"There's a lot of fear about Islam, a lot of misnomers and stereotypes about Islam,"* Umair Ahmed said, from the Muslim Community in Oshkosh, *"And they have nothing to do with the truth."* The Muslim community stepped out of their Oshkosh home and introduced their holy book, the Quran, to the greater Green Bay area and taught people what Islam really represents. Ahmed stated, *"True Islam stands for nonviolence, compassion, human rights."* Many visitors took home books and pamphlets to continue their education about Islam.¹⁹⁸

In Australia, a grassroots community organization, the IGMG, was holding its second annual *"Hello, I am a Muslim"* campaign. For the second year in a row on 12 March, 2016 thousands of Muslims in Europe and Australia aimed to break down barriers with the public by holding meetings points for people to come and discuss Islam. The event was attended by thousands in Europe and Australia in an effort to breakdown the prejudice and stereotypes of Muslims. General Secretary for IGMG Kadir Arslan said: *"Studies have shown that where there is no personal contact with Muslims takes place, the fear of Islam is the greatest and Muslims in those areas are under the threat."* For grassroots campaign it was important to counter the effects of Islamophobia through discussion. In 2015 they had more than 100 meetings points in various locations in Europe with more than a 1000 Muslim volunteers resulting in a face to face meeting of more than 61,000 people. This year, they have even more than 150 locations in 8 different locations. In Austria they had street meeting points in Gmunden, Wels, Linz, Steyr, Perg in Vöcklabruck on the town square, they wanted to make the most natural way to promote a positive encounter between Muslims and non-Muslims. Their aim was for citizens to approach any street meeting point with their questions about Islam and Muslims to answer and to remove any possible prejudice. In return, they thanked those who visit with a rose and a traditional Turkish sesame bagel.¹⁹⁹

In the UK, Britain First's 'Christian intervention' attracted no more than 10 supporters as the far-right group staged a picket outside a major mosque in East London. The group was led by Deputy Leader Jayda Franken and arrived outside the mosque, but left shortly after police intervened. A Britain First banner was held aloft while Franken waved a white cross in a protest that lasted only 20 minutes. *"I'm out here doing God's work peacefully. I'm saying to you 'turn away from the false prophet and embrace the savior Jesus Christ,'"* Franken told passersby. Police and mosque staff tried to prevent the situation from escalating.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁷ See *Metro-News.ca's* entry "Toronto Muslims fighting back against Islamophobia", in: <http://www.metronews.ca/news/toronto/2016/03/23/youth-fighting-islamophobia.html>, retrieved on 25.03.2016

¹⁹⁸ See *Wbay.com's* entry "Oshkosh Muslims spread true meaning of Islam", in: <http://wbay.com/2016/03/26/oshkosh-muslims-spread-true-meaning-of-islam/>, retrieved on 27.03.2016

¹⁹⁹ See *The World Bulletin News's* entry "Grassroots campaign to dispel Islamophobia", in: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/world/170392/grassroots-campaign-to-dispel-islamophobia>, retrieved on 13.03.2016

²⁰⁰ See *Sott's* entry "Far-right Britain First stages picket outside London Mosque", in: <http://www.sott.net/article/313531-Bigots-on-parade-Far-right-Britain-First-stages-criinge-worthy-picket-outside-London-Mosque>, retrieved on 03.03.2016

In the US, a group of Penn students held a 'solidarity luncheon' as the inaugural meeting for the new group Students Against Islamophobia and Discrimination. The group outlined its goals and called for minority groups to partner in the fight against prejudice. They read a statement regarding Islamophobia, coauthored the Penn Association for Gender Equity, and introduced their plan to combat Islamophobia on campus and in Philadelphia. Another aim was to facilitate dialogue, create programs and speak out against Islamophobia, according to the letter. *"Islamophobia affects not just Muslims, but anyone who can be construed as Muslim. Arab Christians and South Asian Sikhs, among other groups, are also affected."*²⁰¹



In the US, Facebook boss Mark Zuckerberg had launched a thinly veiled attack on Donald Trump's plan to ban Muslims from entering the US. Speaking at a conference on April 12, the billionaire said: *"I hear fearful voices calling for building walls and distancing people they label as others. For blocking free expression, for slowing immigration, reducing trade, and in some cases around the world even cutting access to the internet."* Mr Zuckerberg, known for his liberal political views, also claimed it takes "courage" to a "welcome a refugee seeking war".²⁰²

In France, The Sciences Po University in Paris hosted a "Hijab Day" on 20 April 2016, as student organizers attempted to end the stigma around women who wear the veil. The group's Facebook account invited fellow students to cover their hair in a bit to demystify the veil. They wrote *"It's also about showing support to the idea of being in charge of our own bodies. We dress how we want, and don't accept being told otherwise, veiled or not, we are all equal."* The group took aim at the disturbing declarations of France's Women's Rights Minister, who faced ridicule and calls to resign after comparing women who wear the Muslim headscarf and veil to *"negroes who supported slavery"*. Over 250 people attended the scheduled event, and pictures on social media suggested that there was a definite interest.²⁰³

In Australia, Artist Fatima Killeen uses her work to highlight injustice for the Muslim diaspora. Killeen said, blaming and shaming all Muslims for the misdeeds of a few was damaging community relations in Australia. Like many Australian Muslims, the Moroccan-born artist was worried about Islamophobia aimed at ordinary Muslims who were blamed for the crimes of others, particularly the so-called Islamic State and other radical groups based overseas. She pointed to an attack on three Muslim girls in Geelong in March, because they were wearing headscarves, as an example. *"They are young little girls who've been playing in park and have been targeted simply for having scarves on, I think it's very hurtful to see that,"* she said. *"I think if there was education on all of the subjects of tolerance and respect of other religions and ethnic backgrounds and if it was targeted at schools for example, I think there'll be better outcomes."* Killeen said she was not afraid to be political in her work. One of her pieces, called Looted, hangs in the Islamic Museum of Australia (IMA) in Melbourne. It depicted a crime scene and a finger print. *"I wanted to tell the world that Iraq has not*

²⁰¹ See *The DP.com*'s entry "Anti-Islamophobia group forms on campus", in: <http://www.thedp.com/article/2016/04/anti-islamophobia-group-forms>, retrieved on 06.04.2016

²⁰² See *Express.co.uk*'s entry "Facebook boss Mark Zuckerberg slams Donald Trump's plan to ban Muslims from entering US", in: <http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/660506/Mark-Zuckerberg-Donald-Trump-Muslim-Islam>, retrieved on 14.04.2016

²⁰³ See *The Local.fr*'s entry "Paris students invited to wear Muslim veils for Hijab Day", in: <http://www.thelocal.fr/20160420/paris-uni-students-invited-to-wear-veils-for-hijab-day>, retrieved on 21.04.2016

only been targeted for its oil resource, but also the National Museum of Baghdad has been targeted," Killeen said of the allied invasion of Iraq in 2003. She stated the IMA was an important institution for Australian Muslims.²⁰⁴

3.5. Supports on Mosques

In the US, the Edmond city council unanimously approved an expansion plan for the mosque on University Drive. Leaders at the mosque said there had been an increase in worshippers since the place was built in 1992. Adam Soltani, CAIR Oklahoma said: *"We have our student population that comes from the university, but we have a lot of families that have moved into Edmond and need a larger place to worship."* In previous Edmond city council meetings, they were met with opposition from some metro church leaders, and just a month before their front door was vandalized with bacon. Since then they had increased security and tried to meet the opposition with education, and it apparently paid off. The city said mosque leaders could knockdown two buildings to make way for parking and add another fellowship hall, taking the mosque from about 700 square feet to more than 4,000 square feet.²⁰⁵

In Russia, a mobile mosque would roam the streets of Moscow to facilitate Muslims living in the Russian capital to perform their five daily prayers, project sponsor Airat Kasimov said on 14 May 2015. The mobile mosque started operating by the third week of May, providing a free service requested by the faithful by an order submitted online or by phone, Kasimov told Russian news agency Interfax. The initiative, supported by crowdfunding, aimed to address the lack of mosques in the Russian capital. Currently there were only four mosques in Moscow where nearly two million Muslims live, about one-fifth of the population. The mosque was essentially a bus with two separate areas: one for ablutions and one for prayers, with space for up to seven people. Kasimov clarified that if the project was well received, a fleet of mobile mosques would be launched, some of which could service the streets and others stationed outside shopping malls. The number of Muslims living in the whole of Russia was estimated at around 20 million, although there were no official statistics to confirm the number.²⁰⁶



In the UK, a group of Muslims intending to build Britain's first female-led mosque were to consult with Islamic scholars and locals over a prayer space primarily for women. The idea behind the separate prayer space was the belief of the Muslim Women's Council (MWC) that when it came to places of worship, the space dedicated to women in mosques was quite insignificant. In the initial process, the organization was likely to discuss the various options for the women's mosque and the idea that it was to be managed by women only.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ See *ABC.net.au*'s entry "All Muslims should not be blamed for actions of select few, (Media opinion excerpted from Fatima Killeen, Canberra artist)", in: <http://mobile.abc.net.au/news/2016-04-30/muslims-should-not-be-blamed-for-actions-of-few-artist-says/7372778>, retrieved on 30.04.2016

²⁰⁵ See *The News9.com*'s entry "City of Edmond allows mosque to expand facilities", in: <http://www.news9.com/story/29095720/city-of-edmond-allows-mosque-to-expand-facilities>, retrieved on 19.05.2015

²⁰⁶ See *Mid-day News*' entry "Portable mosque roams Moscow streets to facilitate prayers", in: <http://www.mid-day.com/articles/portable-mosque-roams-moscow-streets-to-facilitate-prayers/16211172>, retrieved on 16.05.2015

²⁰⁷ See *Tribune.com.pk*'s entry "Muslim group to consult on plans for Britain's first women's mosque", in: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/885635/muslim-group-to-consult-on-plans-for-britains-first-womens-mosque/>, retrieved on 14.05.2015

In the US, a groundbreaking ceremony was held on the last week of May for a planned mosque that would become part of Omaha interfaith campus, including Christians, Jews and Muslims. More than a dozen local Muslim children



grabbed shovels and dug into the ground on 21 May to mark the forthcoming construction of the mosque, expected to open in late 2016 or early 2017. Plans for a Christian presence took shape last April when members of Countryside Community Church voted to relocate there. The church's pastor said they already had more than \$16 million in financial commitments toward construction. The first piece of the interfaith campus came when Temple Israel moved into its new synagogue there in 2013. The mosque would serve as an institute for Muslim prayer, learning and fellowship, and nearly all funding has been

raised to build it. The mosque project was estimated to be around \$6.2 million to \$6.5 million. A fourth building planned for the site would serve as a shared center and provide social, educational and conference space.²⁰⁸

In the US, after a Pflugerville mosque was vandalized, the surrounding community gathered in support at the Mosque on 21 November 2015. Few days before, members of the Islamic Center of Pflugerville found a torn apart Quran with a large amount of feces on it at the front entrance, blocking their way inside. That vandalism appalled members of the community, including non-Muslims. The community decided to show its support for the mosque, starting with a post on Facebook, a 'National Night Out' like event took on momentum that came to be called 'Pflugerville Supports our Muslim Neighbors.' Church leaders were thinking maybe 60 or 70 people would come, but just after 4:30 p.m. on that day there were around 200 people outside the mosque.²⁰⁹



In the US, a young boy emptied out his piggy bank, scrapping together \$20, and went to the mosque in person to give his donation to Faisal Naeem, a board member of the Islamic Center. *"We were talking in the car how someone smeared poop on their church and that was a really, really awful thing to do and we had a good conversation what churches are for and how everybody's churches are important,"* Swanson said. She wanted this incident to be a teaching moment for Jack. She added: *"I think it's really good to get kids involved and to let them know what the important stuff really is."* Naeem said Jack's donation meant a lot to him personally. *"It's 20 bucks, but coming from Jack collecting his pennies*

²⁰⁸ See *Independent.com's* entry "Groundbreaking ceremony held for planned Omaha mosque", in: http://www.theindependent.com/news/state/groundbreaking-ceremony-held-for-planned-omaha-mosque/article_b99a9891-90aa-5a7c-8497-e18d467605e2.html, retrieved on 23.05.2015

²⁰⁹ See *KeyeTV.com's* entry "Community supports vandalized Mosque", in: <http://keyetv.com/news/local/community-supports-vandalized-mosque>, retrieved on 23.11.2015

*it's worth 20 million bucks to me and to our community. This gives me hope because this means it's not one versus the other," Naeem said. Local officials said they were investigating the vandalism at the mosque as a hate crime.*²¹⁰

In the US, the FBI and police were monitoring a man suspected of making threats against a Richardson mosque. Richardson police had not elaborated on the threats, only saying the man made statements about disrupting the peace at a mosque on Abrams road. Police said he also made threatening statements against law enforcement.²¹¹

In the US, large crowds had reinforced the peaceful and united Toowoomba spirit with a show of solidarity at the Garden City Mosque on 9 October 2015. On a day which marked anti-mosque protests around the country, members of many religious faiths gathered to mark the unity of the city. Islamic Society of Toowoomba president, Professor Shahjahan Khan, said church leaders took the chance to address the crowds who were given a glimpse at the damage caused by two arson attacks on the mosque. He added: *"The participants went inside the burned mosque building and expressed their shock and horror by looking at the huge damage caused by the arson attack on the mosque early this year."*²¹²

In the US, the first mosque in Chapel Hill was nearing completion. Town leaders hoped this mosque would help improving community relations. Mayor Mark Kleinschmidt said: *"We've been working for a while now to try to make sure that people who are part of the Muslim community know that they're welcomed."* The mosque was located in the 100 block of Stateside Drive off of Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard.²¹³

In Australia, four people were arrested as hundreds of police worked to keep a lid on tensions as anti-mosque protesters and pro-diversity demonstrators held rival rallies in Bendigo. Opponents to plans of building a mosque in the regional Victorian city ran into counter-protests as they gathered for a rally on 9 October 2015 organized by the far-right United Patriots Front. More than 400 police officers kept the opposing groups - estimated to number about 700 people - apart in central Bendigo amid concerns of



²¹⁰ See *Edition.CNN.com*'s entry "Little boy donates his piggy bank to vandalized mosque", in: <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/11/19/us/boy-piggy-bank-mosque-vandalized/>, retrieved at 19.11.2015

²¹¹ See *Fox4 News.com*'s entry "FBI monitoring man suspected of threatening Richardson Mosque", in: <http://www.fox4news.com/news/31020099-story>, retrieved on 06.10.2015

²¹² See *Chronicle.com.au*'s entry "Toowoomba united in condemnation of anti-mosque rallies", in: <http://www.thechronicle.com.au/news/toowoomba-united-condemnation-anti-mosque-rallies/2802762/>, retrieved on 12.10.2015

²¹³ See *TWC News.com*' entry "First Mosque in Chapel Hill set to open", in: <http://www.twcnews.com/nc/triangle-sandhills/news/2015/10/13/first-mosque-in-chapel-hill-set-to-open.html>, retrieved on 14.10.2015

violence. Two of the four people arrested allegedly had knives, while a third had a flare. One person was arrested for a minor assault.²¹⁴

In Canada, a sum of \$100,000 was raised in 24 hours to help rebuild the damage from the mosque in the city of Peterborough in the northeast of Toronto that was set on fire a day after the attacks in Paris. The building was saved, but the fire caused \$80,000 in damage by an arson. The community fast reacted and that was from the broader community at large in the city of Peterborough. Every faith-based group offered space for Muslims to pray, hence the mosque congregants prayed at a local church on Friday the 20th, and were even joined by some out-of-town dignitaries. Many Muslims weren't feeling so settled after a wave of hate crimes targeting them. One week before in Toronto, two men attacked and robbed a Muslim woman on her way to pick up her son at a public elementary school. According to the Police reports, the men called the woman a 'terrorist' as they pulled on her hijab and punched and kicked her.²¹⁵

In Russia, President Vladimir Putin was joined by the Turkish and Palestinian leaders at the ceremonial opening of the Russian capital's new main mosque. It is estimated that 2 million Muslims lived in Moscow, which had seen an influx of people from the North Caucasus republics of southern Russia, Azerbaijan and the former Soviet states in Central Asia. The new mosque -- built on the site of a smaller, more than 100-year-old mosque destroyed in 2011 -- can accommodate 10,000 worshippers, but it was still one of only six mosques in the city. Calls from Muslim religious leaders to build more mosques had met with opposition from city officials and residents. Putin was joined at 23 September's ceremony by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.²¹⁶

3.6. *Positive Developments on Hijab*

In Egypt, a counter-movement to a call by presenter Sherif Choubachy for women who wear the Islamic head covering to remove it in Tahrir Square, had mobilized men and women. Dalia Attia, the founder of the campaign, had encouraged women to go to Tahrir Square with friends to take a selfie wearing hijab to prove that they love wearing it and they did not want to take it off. The idea had attracted support from Muslim and Christian women; some men had also indicated their support, and coined the slogan 'Wear a cap and support hijab,' with many saying they would participate in taking a selfie. Egyptian journalist Sherif Choubachy called for women who wear the Muslim veil to join in a protest in Tahrir Square to remove their veils in the first week of May, in an event like that of Hoda Shaarawi in 1923, in which she publicly removed her veil in Alexandria, Youm7 reported April 12. Choubachy said that hijab is against freedom and that "political Islam" is the reason of its outbreak.²¹⁷

²¹⁴ See Sky News.com.au's entry "Four arrested at anti-mosque rally", in: <http://www.skynews.com.au/news/top-stories/2015/10/11/four-arrested-at-anti-mosque-rally.html>, retrieved on 12/10/2015

²¹⁵ See pri.org's entry "A mosque was set ablaze; Funds to restore it were raised by an unknown organizer", in: <http://www.pri.org/stories/2015-11-25/small-canadian-mosque-was-set-ablaze-funds-restore-it-were-raised-unknown>, retrieved on 25.11.2015

²¹⁶ See CTV News.ca's entry "Putin joined by Erdogan, Abbas for Moscow mosque opening", in: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/world/putin-joined-by-erdogan-abbas-for-moscow-mosque-opening-1.2576837>, retrieved on 24.09.2015

²¹⁷ See The Cairo Post News' entry "Hijab Selfie counters calls to remove veil", in: <http://thecairopost.youm7.com/news/148787/news/hijab-selfie-counters-calls-to-remove-veil>, retrieved on 04.05.2015

In Luxembourg, people choosing to wear the veil as an expression of their faith may do so freely under Luxembourg law now and for the foreseeable future, the country's Justice Minister Felix Braz had confirmed. Luxembourg was a tiny European country, bordered by Belgium, France and Germany. Felix Braz Minister of Justice said that there currently

The Boston College Muslim Students Association Invites You to

Islamic Awareness Week **March 14-18**

Monday March 14 **JESUS IN ISLAM**
Lecturer: Dr. Zeki Saritoprak
Heights Room, 5pm

Tuesday March 15 **ISLAMIC ART NIGHT**
Professor Bloom, Calligraphy, Henna & Dinner
Stokes S195, 6pm

Wednesday March 16 **ASK A MUSLIM DAY**
O'Neill Plaza, 10am-3pm

Thursday March 17 **HIJAB BOOTH**
O'Neill Plaza, 10am-3pm

Friday March 18 **JUMU'AH PRAYER**
Multi-Faith Center, 1pm

exists no national law banning on wearing the full veil in public in Luxembourg nor were their plans to legislate on the matter. The decision came after Christian Social People's Party (CSV) pressurizes the government to ban the wearing of the veil in public places, as has been done in France and Belgium.²¹⁸

In the US, The first Islamic Awareness Week was from March 14-18, at Boston College featured an event in which women were invited to wear the Muslim hijab and learn more about the lives of Muslim women. The "Hijab Booth" had been a popular event worldwide used to encourage Western empathy for Muslim women. *"A lot of people want to stereotype and say that Islam oppresses women and makes them cover their hair, or something like that,"* Muslim Student Association (MSA) president Ahad Arshad said. Arshad mentioned that the hijab event helped non-Muslims understand why Muslim women choose to wear the head garment. He added: *"If you see it on campus, you know girls wearing hijabs and talking openly about it and how they've made that choice on their own, independently, it definitely makes it less alien."*²¹⁹

3.7. Positive Developments on Inter-Faiths

In the US, Christian pastors in York County joined together to publicly call on members of their faith to embrace Muslims as their brothers and sisters. The Rev. Sam McGregor, pastor at Allison Creek Presbyterian Church, said he had jump-started the local effort because of recent threats against Muslims in the United States that came to light during the trial of Robert Daggart, a failed congressional candidate from Tennessee who pleaded guilty for plotting to kill Muslims who live in a religious community in New York—The FBI uncovered and stopped Daggart's plan. A similar community, called Holy Islamville, had existed in York County for nearly 30 years. Members of the local community said they were fearful for their own safety after hearing of Daggart's violent plans in New York and learning that he tried to recruit people from South Carolina to help him. McGregor said: *"We have got to take a stand."* He and 23 other York County religious leaders submitted a letter to *The Herald* stating they were *"opposed to any acts of violence or threats of violence against anyone due to their religious affiliation."* The letter also stated: *"Any Christian who uses their faith as*



²¹⁸ See *Siasat.com*'s entry "Luxembourg not to ban Veil", in: <http://www.siasat.com/news/luxembourg-confirms-right-muslim-women-wear-niqab-867628/>, retrieved on 12.11.2015

²¹⁹ See *Jihad Watch.org*'s entry "Women try on hijabs at Boston College to show Islam doesn't oppress women", in: <http://www.jihadwatch.org/2016/03/women-try-on-hijabs-at-boston-college-to-show-islam-doesnt-oppress-women>, retrieved on 19.03.2016

a basis for bringing harm upon another has completely misunderstood what it means to lift up the Lordship of Jesus Christ.”²²⁰

In the US, More than 100 Muslims, Christians, Jews and Sikhs came to a local mosque on 3 May 2015 to form a symbolic, interfaith ring they said was necessary in the wake of local Islamic controversy and international violence.



Officials behind this ‘interfaith peace ring’ event at West Chester Township’s Islamic Center of Greater Cincinnati said they were inspired in part by the February incident in Scandinavia, when Dozens of Muslims and others in Oslo, Norway, formed a symbolic, protective ring around a synagogue in the wake of a deadly attack on a synagogue in Denmark. They were also prompted by the local uproar in April over a student that invited girls at the Warren County high school to wear the Muslim hijab or head scarf to experience a small part of the Islamic religion. Mason school officials canceled the event in response to parents and public complaints that it was an inappropriate injection of religion into the school. More than 100 participants then joined hands and held a moment of

silence for religious unity.²²¹

In India, Muslims in Bihar, in a stellar demonstration of communal harmony, had donated land to help build the world’s largest Hindu temple, which would have the capacity to seat a staggering 20,000 people. Kunal, a former Indian Police Service officer, said that Muslims had come forward to ensure that the temple comes up soon. The construction of the temple would commence in June at Janki Nagar near Kesaria in East Champaran district, about 150 km from here. He added that Mahavir Mandir Trust has obtained 200 acres of land. Earlier, some Muslims had helped build a Hindu temple dedicated to Goddess Durga in Gaya district, another temple was dedicated to God Shiva in Begusarai district and in Sitamarhi district.²²²



In the US, Catholic Church leaders and scholars were not the only ones praising the 50-year-old church document ‘*Nostra Aetate*’ (In Our Time), the Second Vatican Council’s declaration on relations with non-Christian religions. On 19-21 May, it also received appreciation from Muslim leader in the US who said ‘*Nostra Aetate*’ helps different faiths

²²⁰ See *Herald Online.com*’s entry “York County pastors call on Christians to love Muslims, ‘fear not’”, in: <http://www.heraldoonline.com/news/local/article21978831.html>, retrieved on 24.05.2015

²²¹ See *Cincinnati.com News*’ entry “Local Muslims host faiths to stand for peace”, In: <http://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/2015/05/03/interfaith-muslims-west-chester/26841019/>, retrieved on: 04.05.2015

²²² See *Economic Times News*’ entry “Bihar’s Muslims donate land for world’s largest Hindu temple”, in: http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2015-05-19/news/62368745_1_largest-hindu-temple-temple-complex-shiv-temple, retrieved on 20.05.2015

recognize common roots and build a new sense of direction. Sayyid Syeed, national director of the Islamic Society of North America's Office for Interfaith and Community Alliances, said the church document links Catholics, Muslims and Jews by urging them to promote the values in their sacred texts. Syeed also noted the time frame when the document was being put together, saying it occurred at the height of the civil rights movement in the US and when there was a concentrated effort to start Islamic centers and Islamic student groups on university campuses in the US. Syeed added: *"The Catholic Church acted as a big brother in its understanding of a religious minority."*²²³

In the UK, A retired Catholic Archbishop had made it his life's mission to teach students about the Quran. Michael Fitzgerald who was a former head of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue at the Vatican and a former Papal Swnuncio to Egypt, believed the Quran could inspire Christians in many ways and help to deepen their faith. *Christian Today* reports that Archbishop Fitzgerald, from Walsall in the West Midlands in the UK, had also been using his retirement to lead Christian retreats on the different names used for God in Islam. He compared them with the many names for God in the Bible. In a lecture at Notre Dame University in the US, Archbishop Fitzgerald emphasized the importance of interfaith dialogue and understanding. He said: *"Religion, relayed by inter-religious dialogue, can provide the right atmosphere in which conflicts can be involved. Efforts can be made towards greater respect for all individuals, and the goal of harmony and peace be brought nearer.....Christian-Muslim dialogue should lead to a common search for understanding, to a shared sympathy for those who were suffering and in need. A thirst for justice for all, forgiveness from wrong done, together with a readiness to recognize one's own wrongdoing... There is a constant need to educate people, conveying the true image of Islam, as many Muslims advocate, but also revealing the true image of Christianity."*²²⁴



a keynote address in May at the conference *Nostra Aetate*: 'Celebrating Fifty Years of the Catholic Church's Dialogue With Jews and Muslims', held at The Catholic University of America, Washington, and co-sponsored by the university's School of Theology and Religious Studies and the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious

In France, French Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, President of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue said: *"Catholics and Muslims do not know each other well enough, despite 50 years of Nostra Aetate."* He made his remarks in



²²³ See *Catholic Philly.com*'s entry "U.S. Islamic leader praises Vatican II tome on religious dialogue", in: <http://catholicphilly.com/2015/05/news/national-news/muslim-leader-praises-50-year-old-church-document-on-religious-dialogue/>, retrieved on 22.05.2015

²²⁴ See *Pulse.ng*'s entry "Meet Catholic Archbishop who teaches people about the Quran", in: <http://pulse.ng/religion/inter-religious-dialogue-meet-catholic-archbishop-who-teaches-people-about-the-quran-id3782241.html>, retrieved on 23.05.2015

Affairs. He added: *“For Christians entering into dialogue with Muslims, they need to understand that Islam is at the same time a religion, a political system and a civilisation.”*²²⁵

In India, Dalai Lama had urged Aung San Suu Kyi, Myanmar's pro-democracy icon and a fellow Nobel Peace Prize laureate, to speak out to protect her country's persecuted Rohingya Muslims amid a human trafficking crisis. The spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhists, told The Australian newspaper that the world could not ignore the plight of the more than 3,000 desperate migrants who had landed on the shores of Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand in those weeks, often abandoned by human traffickers or freed after their families paid ransoms. Suu Kyi became an international hero during her years of house arrest for speaking out against the generals who long ruled Myanmar. She entered politics after her 2010 release, when the junta handed over power to a nominally civilian government. In a predominantly Buddhist country where there was much animosity toward the Rohingya Muslims, she had remained silent about their persecution. She now said she never sought to be a human rights champion. Critics said that defending the Rohingya could cost her support if she run for president.²²⁶

In the US, on 25 November 2015, religious leaders condemned a wave of anti-Muslim discrimination sweeping across the country after terrorist attacks in Paris. Rutgers, a Presbyterian minister and Council of Religious Leaders executive



of Metropolitan Chicago, warned that by being complicit with actions of fear and hate, people were moving toward disastrous consequences. He said: *“We urge everyone in metropolitan Chicago to oppose discriminatory actions and behavior against all members of religious communities, and particularly, at this time in our history, against Muslims.”* The action was taken following a report released the day before by the national Council on American-Islamic Relations advocacy group logging instances of *“unprecedented backlash and discrimination targeting the nation’s Muslim community”*

since the Paris attacks.²²⁷

²²⁵ See *Catholic Herald.co.uk*'s entry "Tauran: Catholics and Muslims do not know each other", in: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2015/05/25/cardinal-tauran-catholics-and-muslims-do-not-know-each-other/>, retrieved on 26.05.2015

²²⁶ See *ABC News*' entry "Dalai Lama urges Aung San Suu Kyi to help Rohingya Muslims", in: <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/dalai-lama-urges-aung-san-suu-kyi-rohingya-31357457>, retrieved on 30.05.2015

²²⁷ See *Chicago Sun-Times.com*' entry "Interfaith leaders speak out against Islamophobia", in: <http://chicago.suntimes.com/news/7/71/1131531/religious-leaders-muslim-discrimination>, retrieved on 27.11.2015

In the US, Leaders of several faiths had signed a letter delivered to Utah Islamic leaders, expressing support to them in what they say was a time of fear and misunderstanding. The letter was penned by Rev. Patty Willis, pastor at Cottonwood Heights' South Valley Unitarian Universalist Society. There had been no recently reported anti-Muslim incidents in Utah, but there was a negative atmosphere, anxiety and uncertainty among Utah Muslims. Religious leaders to sign the letter include Page, Rev. Gage Church (Congregational United Church of Christ), Rev. Kim James (Ogden First United Methodist Church), Rev. Monica Hall (Trinity Presbyterian Church) and Rev. Gary Haddock (Community United Methodist Church).²²⁸



In the US, a group of senior citizens was trying to learn more about Islam and for many of them visited a mosque in Palo Alto, for the first time. In the wake of the Paris attacks, this trip took on a new meaning. It was an opportunity for these neighbors to converse, and share with others why opportunities to learn from one another, were so important. At the Anjuman-e-Jamali Mosque in Palo Alto, congregation leaders welcomed some of their neighbors for a visit. *"It is a religion of peace. Salaam, our greeting, means peace,"* Mosque secretary Zoaib Rangwala said. An in-depth conversation covering everything from Muslim culture and customs to the recent Paris attacks by ISIS. *"We do not associate with such people, with such organizations,"* Rangwala said. *"What happened is just so overwhelming, and so emotional, and you react to things emotionally,"* Palo Alto resident Janice Weinman said. The group senior citizens from the Maldow residences at the Oshman Family Jewish Community Center took advantage of the open forum.²²⁹

In the US, Over 80 people gathered around the seal on Fairfield Way to discuss Islamophobia on college campuses. The event was part of an Asian American Cultural Center (AACC) series named "Salaam." This event was the second of three events in the Salaam series and Roberto Valentine, the event organizer, said he believes the event was a *great success*. *"We needed to come together to educate and have a voice that is not usually heard be heard,"* Valentine said. Students and faculty shared personal anecdotes. Others spoke out to condemn ISIS and terrorism in general. Several people were moved to tears. *"The fact that I cried tonight – I do not cry – that showed me that this event was truly touching,"* said Salaam student leader. Speakers urged those around them to do more than post on social media. Zoya Dhakam, a Salaam student leader said this event motivated her.²³⁰

²²⁸ See *Standard.net's* entry "Utah faith leaders deliver message of support to Muslims", in: <http://www.standard.net/Faith/2015/11/28/utah-faith-leaders-deliver-message-support-muslims>, retrieved on 29.11.2015

²²⁹ See *ABC7 News.com's* entry "Group of seniors visit Palo Alto mosque to learn about customs", in: <http://abc7news.com/religion/group-of-seniors-visit-palo-alto-mosque-to-learn-about-customs/1089302/>, retrieved on 17.11.2015

²³⁰ See *Daily Campus.com's* entry "Students come together to condemn ISIS and Islamophobia", in: <http://dailycampus.com/stories/2015/11/18/students-come-together-to-condemn-isis-and-islamophobia>, retrieved on 19.11.2015

In the US, Vice President for Mission and Ministry Fr. Kevin O'Brien, S.J. penned a letter in support of Georgetown's Muslim community, emphasizing the university's commitment to its Muslim students in light of recent terror attacks in Paris, Beirut and Baghdad. The letter, as of press time, had been shared 169 times through the Georgetown University Muslim Life Facebook page. O'Brien acknowledged that many individuals within the United States and around the world had openly voiced hostility to Muslims and Islam following the attacks. O'Brien affirmed that anti-Muslim sentiment and Islamophobia had no place in the world, and that Georgetown — as a Jesuit university — was open and tolerant to all religions. O'Brien said that his inspiration for the letter came from watching media coverage and hearing public comments following the attacks. O'Brien said he wanted to make it clear that the Campus Ministry stood with its Muslim community.²³¹

In CAR, Pope Francis on 30 November called on Christians and Muslims to unite against violence exercised in the name of religion and to say no to hatred. The pope said during a visit to a mosque in Bangui, capital of the Central African Republic: "*Christians and Muslims are brothers and sisters.*" He also called on Christians, Muslims and followers of African traditional religions to work for an end to every act which, from whatever side, disfigures the face of God and whose ultimate aim was to defend particular interests by any and all means. The Pope and the Imam of the mosque observed a moment of silence in front of the mihrab, which indicates the direction of Mecca. ²³²

In Pakistan, Young Muslims had been protesting in Lahore in support of religious minorities. Pakistani NGO Barged organized a demonstration of over 500 young Muslims to campaign for the end of discrimination and prejudice against religious minorities. Christians made up 1.6 per cent of Pakistan's population and were frequently subject to violence and persecution. However, this group of Islamic youths had committed to stop calling Pakistani Christians by their usual name, "Isai," a derogatory word in Urdu. The term originated in the colonial era and referred to people who did humiliating or impure jobs and furthered the viewpoint that Christians were second-class citizens.²³³

In the US, A 100-person picnic set in motion a service project and had a common goal. "*All of our faiths are about positively impacting our community. It's nice to be doing that together,*" said the Rev. Gretchen Deeg of the United Church of Christ. The cleanup at the park happened on 7 November 2015 was part of an effort launched by a group of four women of Christian and Muslim faiths to build relationships between people of all religions in the Bismarck area. Rola Koleilat of the Muslim Community Center invited three other women to her house several months before to discuss the possibility.²³⁴

²³¹ See *The Hoya.com*'s entry "O'Brien Expresses Solidarity with Muslim Community", in: <http://www.thehoya.com/obrien-expresses-solidarity-with-muslim-community/>, retrieved on 26.11.2015

²³² See *DPA International.com*'s entry "Pope calls on Christians and Muslims to unite against violence", in: <http://www.dpa-international.com/news/international/pope-calls-on-christians-and-muslims-to-unite-against-violence-a-47436608.html>, retrieved on 30.11.2015

²³³ See *The Christian Today News*' entry "Teenage Muslims in Lahore gather to support persecuted Christians", in: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/teenage.muslims.in.lahore.gather.to.support.persecuted.christians/69734.htm>, retrieved on 06.11.2015

²³⁴ See *Bismarck Tribune.com*'s entry "Muslims, Christians hold events to build relationships", in: http://bismarcktribune.com/lifestyles/faith-and-values/religion/muslims-christians-hold-events-to-build-relationships/article_e9de2d85-8853-5d48-8a8b-579b8ad732b7.html, retrieved on 07.11.2015

In the US, On 5 November, Jewish and Catholic leaders gathered at St. Thomas University in Miami Gardens to celebrate the historic document *Notre Aestate* that paved the way for healthy dialogue between both religions. “For 2,000 years Christians looked at Jews as downtrodden, rejects, and *Notre Aestate* changed that concept,” said Rabbi Solomon Schiff, executive vice president emeritus of the Rabbinical Association of Greater Miami. The conference, a joint effort by St. Thomas University, the American Jewish Committee and the Archdiocese of Miami, included speeches from Archbishop Bernardito Auza.²³⁵



In France, French Muslim leaders gathered outside the Bataclan concert hall on to honour the 89 people who died there in the bloodiest attack by terrorists. Representatives of the French capital’s Jewish community stood at the barriers around the music venue where heavily armed gunmen went on a murderous rampage on Friday night 13 November 2015, they broke into a ragged rendition of La Marseillaise. The message and symbolism was perfectly clear: the four gunmen who stormed the Bataclan, cutting down concertgoers in a hail of bullets then picking survivors off one by one with cold-blooded precision, may have claimed to be killing on behalf of Islamic State, but their actions had nothing to do with Islam.²³⁶

In Canada, Karen Mock, former CEO of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, said her email inbox was often full of messages from Jewish people who “spread stereotypes and promote fear of Muslims and Arabs, and of Islam in general.” Jews knew the impact of prejudice and stereotyping probably more than any other people, Mock stressed, so, “recognizing and countering Islamophobia – the Muslim equivalent to anti-Semitism – should be a priority for our community.” Mock was one of several speakers who would be participating in an interfaith panel at Holy Blossom on 26 November about Jewish-Muslim relations. Titled “We Refuse to Be Enemies,” the event was being presented by Holy Blossom and the CJN.²³⁷

²³⁵ See *Miami Herald.com*’s entry “Christians, Jews share in interfaith dialogue”, in: <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/community/miami-dade/article43360014.html>, retrieved on 06.11.2015

²³⁶ See *The Guardian.com*’s entry “Muslim and Jewish leaders gather at Paris concert hall memorial”, in: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/15/muslim-and-jewish-leaders-gather-at-paris-concert-hall-memorial>, retrieved at 16.11.2015

²³⁷ See *CJ-News.com*’s entry “Holy Blossom panel to explore Jewish-Muslim relations”, in: <http://www.cjnews.com/news/canada/holy-blossom-panel-to-explore-jewish-muslim-relations>, retrieved at 19.11.2015

In the UK, Bishop of Durham had warned against Islamophobia in reaction to the Paris terrorist attacks. Paul Butler drew attention to the tragedy that occurred when people blamed refugees for the very actions from which they were



fleeing in their home nations. Bishop Butler said: *"The events in Paris last Friday night were deeply tragic. We stand with the people of Paris and France in prayer and a determination to stand firm for liberty for all people. We must also stand with the people of Baghdad where 43 died in similar attacks. These attacks should in no way be used to encourage antagonism towards refugees fleeing the very same terror in their homelands, nor encourage Islamophobia."*²³⁸

In the US, Former South Carolina Governor David Beasley closed a three day gathering focused on Islamophobia and Religious Freedom at Temple University by reminding the thirty plus leaders gathered that Jesus commanded his followers to love their neighbor. Beasley exhorted: *"Jesus never said, 'Love your neighbor... just not your Muslim ones.' Jesus never said, 'Love your neighbor, just not the Shi'ite.' Jesus never said, 'Love your neighbor, just not the Sunni.' Rather, he said, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' This is the most powerful message in the world. When this happens, the whole world will stand still out of awe."*²³⁹



In the US, on 23 October 2015, an evangelical pastor and an imam took turns talking about their friendship and mutual respect. Texas Pastor Bob Roberts and Virginia Imam Mohamed Magid joined dozens of other religious leaders in prayer at the Washington National Cathedral before signing a pledge to denounce religious bigotry and asking elected officials and presidential candidates to join them. Pastor Bob Roberts, of Northwood Church in Keller, Texas, said: *"I love Muslims as much as I love Christians."* The work of evangelicals and Muslims was a newer dimension in efforts to foster interreligious understanding.²⁴⁰

In the US, hundred of Hoosiers rallied in Bloomington on 24 October to raise awareness about Islamophobia, or hatred toward Muslims. The rally came after former Indiana University student Triceton Bickford, 19, was accused of attacking a Muslim woman at a Bloomington cafe because of her religion. The group marched down Kirkwood Ave. and gathered at the Monroe County Courthouse to hear several community leaders address the recent attack. Indiana University

²³⁸ See *The Christian Today News*' entry "Bishop of Durham warns against Islamophobia after Paris attacks", in: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/bishop.of.durham.warns.against.islamophobia.after.paris.attacks/70845.htm>, retrieved at 18.11.2015

²³⁹ See *The Huffington Post News*' entry "Evangelicals Reject Anti-Muslim Hatred", http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rev-mae-elise-cannon/evangelicals-reject-anti_b_8330088.html, retrieved on 20.10.2015

²⁴⁰ See *Religion News.com*' entry "Fighting perceptions, evangelicals and Muslims commit to oppose religious bigotry", in: <http://www.religionnews.com/2015/10/23/fighting-perceptions-evangelicals-muslims-commit-oppose-religious-bigotry/>, retrieved on 24.10.2015

Anthropology Professor, Nazif Shahrani said: *"We have failed in not teaching our students the very basic fact of being tolerant and being understanding. We don't think he is truly the person who should be blamed for everything. He is a product of his community. He is a product of this educational system."* Indiana University graduate students Amanda Lanzillo and Denisha Jashari organized the event. However, Bickford had pleaded not guilty all charges in the attack, while the FBI was investigating it as a possible hate crime.²⁴¹

In Canada, Churches and faith groups were calling on all Canadians, including the media and politicians, to take a stand against the rising bigotry and discrimination in the country against Muslims. Through a letter signed by Lana Robinson, a clerk at the Canadian Friends Service Committee, and Elaine Bishop, the presiding clerk at the Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), they said: *"Quakers are appalled at the bigotry and discrimination we see targeting the diverse members of the Muslim faith in Canada...We call on all Canadians to stand against this...We cannot help but think that deeply divisive and harmful political rhetoric is one of the drivers of this growing hostility. We are witnesses to scapegoating of Muslims, which distracts from the many significant issues this country faces."* The letter called for initiatives across Canada to foster understanding among citizens.²⁴²

In India, Setting an example of harmony amid the country's communal tension, several Durga Pujas in Tripura were being organised by the Muslim community. The big budget puja of the 'Blood Drop' club in the Sonamura sub-division of Sipahijala district was held under the guidance of a Muslim president of the puja committee. Basirudding Bhuyan, President of the Puja Committee, said: *"In this Hindu majority area, they have elected me as President of the Puja Committee for the past three consecutive years. From my childhood I have been involved with the Durga Puja because I have never felt that it is for the Hindus only. We organize the puja, eat and share the joy jointly."* Muslims constituted eight per cent of the total population in the state and they mostly live in this sub-division.²⁴³



In the US, Religious leaders from northwest Ohio came together on 8 October 2015 for Catholic-Muslim Dialogue at the Islamic Center of Greater Toledo in Perrysburg. The Center's Imam Talal Eid, gave a Muslim perspective, while the Rev. David Bruning, Pastor of St. Caspar Parish in Wauseon, gave a Catholic perspective. The panel, *'Muslim-Catholic relations after 50 years of dialogue: Where do we go from here?'* provided each participant a space to share his or her perspective.²⁴⁴

²⁴¹ See *Fox59.com*'s entry "Hundreds unite in Bloomington, promise more dialogue after Muslim woman is attacked", in: <http://fox59.com/2015/10/24/hundreds-unite-in-bloomington-promising-more-dialogue-after-muslim-woman-is-attacked/>, retrieved on 25.10.2015

²⁴² See *Onislam.net*'s entry "Canada Churches Decry Rising Islamophobia", in: <http://www.onislam.net/english/news/americas/495529-canadian-churches-decry-rising-islamophobia.html>, retrieved on 26.10.2015

²⁴³ See *India Express.com*'s entry "Tripura Muslims celebrate Durga Puja", in: <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/tripura-muslims-celebrate-durga-puja/#sthash.xZqC6kXR.dpuf>, retrieved on 23.10.2015

²⁴⁴ See *Toledo Blade.com*'s entry "Muslims, Catholics to gather for dialogue", in: <http://m.toledoblade.com/Religion/2015/10/06/Muslims-Catholics-nbsp-to-gather-nbsp-for-dialogue.html>, retrieved on 08.10.2015

In the US, an interfaith gathering of people committed to promote religious tolerance and inter-cultural dialogue hosted a comedy show in Deerfield on 24 October 2015 featuring three comedians of different faiths. The three performers at the show hosted by the Southeast Lake County Inter-Religious Council were Jewish comic Aaron Freeman, Muslim comic Arif Choudhury and Christian comic Ray Hanania.²⁴⁵

In the US, Julie Pophal studied more than 100 mainstream types of Christian entities in the world. She said: *“The rhetoric about Islam coming from Donald Trump is wrong. Islam does not hate the United States. ISIS hates the United States. There is a difference. Islam is a peaceful religion, much like Christianity. Both want justice for all. But obviously differences are in the cultures of justice. I am a Lutheran Christian. There are many tenets in the Lutheran faith, varied by customs, heritage and the new age of liberalism. But we remain faithful and connected in our love for Jesus and his saving grace. There are even some Christian cults, though we purists might not consider them a Christian cult. But they tend to be offshoots of Christianity with a lay person as their leader, still using the Bible as their pulpit. And so, we have the cult of Islam in today's world. ISIS is a cult that is perpetrating horrible evil in our world. But it is not Islam as a whole. We should not confuse the two. Islam is a peaceful religion. ISIS, the cult, is evil.”*²⁴⁶

In Russia, a children's competition of reciters of the Holy Quran was held for the first time. On 27 March 2016 at the Cathedral Mosque of Moscow held a Quran Festival. The organizers of this event were the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Russian Federation, the Council of Muftis of Russia and the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Moscow, with the support of the charitable foundation 'Zakat', and under the patronage of the President of the Festival, Mufti Sheikh Ravil Gainutdin. A hair of the Prophet Muhammad, which was stored in the mosque, was put on public display. Art expositions, exhibitions of Quranic calligraphy and a book fair were located in the halls of the mosque. Masterclasses in calligraphy and seminars were held. The day ended with a reading of the Holy Quran by professional reciters.²⁴⁷

In the US, In Cleveland more than 100 people gathered on 1 March 2016 in an interfaith event and discussed the growth of Islamophobia in America. The event, called *“Teatime for Peace,”* was held at the West Shore Unitarian Universalist Church and was co-hosted by the Cleveland chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-Cleveland) and area social justice groups. The goal of the event was to provide an opportunity for people of different faiths to engage in dialogue and get to know each other as a way to help dispel stereotypes about Muslims and Islam. The event was conceived to help challenge the rampant Islamophobia being promoted by anti-Muslim hate groups, agenda-driven media outlets and political figures during the current US presidential election cycle. The event included interreligious prayers for peace delivered by Holly



²⁴⁵ See Patch's entry "Muslim, Christian, Jew to Perform Comedy for Interfaith Group in Deerfield", in: <http://patch.com/illinois/deerfield/muslim-christian-jew-perform-comedy-interfaith-group-deerfield-0>, retrieved on 08.10.2015

²⁴⁶ See Host Madison.com's entry "Islam is peaceful, ISIS is evil - Julie Pophal", in: http://host.madison.com/wsj/opinion/mailbag/islam-is-peaceful-isis-is-evil---julie/article_3792c772-862d-5611-bacf-95a0e8fdbae0.html, retrieved on 27.03.2016

²⁴⁷ See Vestnikkavkaza.net's entry "Open day in Cathedral Mosque of Moscow", in: <http://vestnikkavkaza.net/photogallery/Open-day-in-Cathedral-Mosque-of-Moscow.html>, retrieved on 28.03.2016

Miller, intern minister of the West Shore Church and Isam Zaiem, Board President Emeritus of CAIR-Cleveland, as well as a brief backgrounder on Islamophobia in the media by Hala Sanyurah of the Islamic Society of Akron and Kent. The event also centered on one-on-one dialogue matchups over tea and treats so that people could get to know their Muslim neighbors beyond what was portrayed on their television screens.²⁴⁸

In the US, An event called “Know Islam, Know Peace” was held on 7 March 2016. Imam Mufti from the Islamic Foundation of Peoria said that the event aimed to address the belief that the religion motivates violent groups like ISIS.



Mufti said: “Religion is not what is motivating them to do what they are doing... The main message was our society is not built on alienation but is built on inclusiveness and should stay like that... They gave instructions of how to pray, how to wash yourself before prayer. It has nothing to do with implementing or imposing it on non-Muslims.”²⁴⁹

In the US, Muslim Students Association hosted at Yale from February 28 to March 5, the ‘Islam Awareness Week’ which was intended to help students learn about Islam through a series of events and campaigns that encouraged them to develop an understanding of the religion and challenge

Islamophobic conceptions perpetuated by the media. The organizers said the week’s events were especially relevant in light of hate crimes against Muslims as well as conversations on Yale’s campus about racial justice and equality. During the event, students at Yale had a chance to engage in a dialogue with their peers about the hard questions facing Muslim Americans nowadays. Mongi Dhaouadi, Executive Director of Connecticut’s Council on American-Islamic Relations said: “I am very hopeful that the young generation will be able to help overcome this wave of Islamophobia.”²⁵⁰

In the US, people from many faiths gathered on 18 March 2016, in the Mosque of the Islamic Society of Western Maryland near Hagerstown to pray for peace and to explore what they had in common at a time of divisiveness in the nation. Shahab Siddiqui, the society’s Director of Religious Affairs said: “We think we can work together a lot by getting together.... People of different faiths are getting together to show unity and solidarity.”²⁵¹

In the US, a Las Cruces church made an effort to increase understanding and foster dialogue between the local Christian and Islam communities. Peace Lutheran Church had launched an ongoing series of presentations called “Understanding Islam,” in collaboration with members of the Islamic Center of Las Cruces. The first presentation took place at Peace Lutheran Church on 16 February 2016 and focused on the fundamental beliefs and practices of Islam, as well as the Islamic view of Judaism and Christianity. More than 100 people participated in the discussion. More

²⁴⁸ See CAIR News’ entry “Cleveland hosts ‘Teatime for Peace’ to challenge Islamophobia, build interfaith relations”, in: <http://www.cair.com/press-center/press-releases/13422-cair-cleveland-co-hosts-teatime-for-peace-to-challenge-islamophobia-build-interfaith-relations.html>, retrieved on 02.03.2016

²⁴⁹ See 1470wmbd.com’s entry “Know Islam, know Peace”, in: <http://www.1470wmbd.com/know-islam-know-peace/>, retrieved on 08.03.2016

²⁵⁰ See Yale Daily News’ entry “Islam Awareness Week opens dialogue”, in: <http://yaledailynews.com/blog/2016/03/07/islam-awareness-week-opens-dialogue/>, retrieved on 08.03.2016

²⁵¹ See Herald Mail Media.com’s entry “People of different faiths gather at mosque near Hagerstown to pray for peace”, in: http://m.heraldmillmedia.com/news/local/people-of-different-faiths-gather-at-mosque-near-hagerstown-to/article_7215733e-ed65-11e5-8ee4-ebbee9c4464b.html?mode=jgm, retrieved on 20.03.2016

discussions, including an event on 22 March to discuss ISIS, freedom of religion and women's role in Islam were on set. Jared Carson, Pastor of Peace Lutheran, said: *"We had a very positive response, overwhelmingly positive."*²⁵²

In Germany, the Catholic Archbishop of Cologne had slammed an anti-Islam party that claimed that Islam is not compatible with the country's constitution. The right-wing party Alternative for Germany (AfD) had earlier pressed a ban on minarets and burqas. In the wake of the party's claim that Islam is not compatible with the German constitution, Archbishop Rainer Woelki posted a video online saying mosques were equal to churches. *"Anyone who denigrates Muslims as the AfD leadership should realize prayer rooms and mosques are equally protected by our constitution as our churches and chapels,"* said Woelki in the video. *"Whoever says 'yes' to church towers must also say 'yes' to minarets,"* he added.²⁵³

In the US, on 10 April 2016 the Noor Mosque in Amherst opened their doors as a way of building bridges and helping others understand the religion they follow. *"Islam is not a religion that you focus on yourself in the corner and practice what you are doing it's much broader than that,"* Imam Khalilullah told 7 Eyewitness News. The prayer leader was joined by several other speakers, addressing a packed room on what Islam stands for and what Muslims around the country face each and everyday. Leaders also made it a point to talk about how and why they were working to tackle the issue of Islamic extremists and emphasize that the actions of a few don't reflect the lifestyle of all. Those in attendance, many dressed in scarves as a sign of respect, asked questions about the religion and everyday life. Later sitting side by side with men and women of various faiths everyone broke bread with strangers turned friends.²⁵⁴

In the US, Muslim leaders joined with dozens of interfaith allies in calling on the Democratic and Republican national committees to formally commit to protecting religious minorities on the campaign trail. Previous campaigns targeted candidates, but Shoulder to Shoulder, a coalition of 32 religious denominations and organizations, including the Islamic Society of North America and the National Council of Churches was aiming for the party heads. *"When we have people whose bigoted, hateful, Islamophobic, racist rhetoric challenges the very principles of American society, when they seek the highest office of the land, we stand sister to sister, brother to brother, shoulder to shoulder, and we say no,"* said Rabbi Jonah Pesner of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism in a Washington press conference on 14 April. In letters to RNC Chairman Reince Priebus and DNC Chairwoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz, the group called on them to explicitly and unambiguously commit to combating discrimination against Muslims and reinforcing religious freedom in their party platforms.²⁵⁵

²⁵² See LC Sun News' entry "Understanding Islam: Las Cruces church creates dialogue", in: <http://www.lcsun-news.com/story/news/religion/2016/03/21/understanding-islam-las-cruces-church-creates-dialogue/82084806/>, retrieved on 22.03.2016

²⁵³ See The Christian Daily News' entry "Archbishop in Germany said 'mosques are equal to Churches'", in: <http://christiandaily.com/article/archbishop-in-germany-says-mosques-are-equal-to-churches/51725.htm>, retrieved on 29.04.2016

²⁵⁴ See WKBW.com's entry "Mosque works to build bridges among religions", in: <http://www.wkbw.com/news/mosque-works-to-build-bridges-among-religions>, retrieved on 12.04.2016

²⁵⁵ See Religion News.com's entry "Interfaith leaders urge political parties to reject Islamophobia", in: <http://www.religionnews.com/2016/04/14/interfaith-leaders-urge-political-parties-to-reject-islamophobia/>, retrieved on 15.04.2016

In the US, on 16 April 2016 more than two dozen Muslims and Christians came together at the city's Mason Square Library in Springfield to learn about their respective faiths and celebrate their common beliefs. Sponsored by the Al-Baqi Islamic Center for Human Excellence, sought to help build bridges between the two communities, specifically the African-American community, said Resident Imam Rasul Seifullah. *"We know alone we can't solve the problems, so you need to get as many people as possible with all their resources and focus that on stopping the problems that face us,"* he said in an interview. Seifullah stressed that such solidarity between the two faiths was important given the level of rhetoric and Islamophobia that had surfaced in recent months, including in the 2016 presidential campaign. Seifullah said the Muslim community needs to step up and address these concerns *"I believe that one of the first things we need to do is to get the people out there to get to know us as Muslims one-on-one, then they'll realize that we're no different than they are,"* he said. *"And when people throw stones at Muslims, they'll be able to say, well, I know some Muslims, they're not like that." That could be their rebut.*²⁵⁶

In the US, on 16 April 2016 clergy and teachers from six different faith backgrounds came together to promote peace with the Community Growth Center for an interfaith event titled The Universal Language of Peace. The panel of speaker included Dr. Yousef Syed, Islamic Association of Long Island, Chandrasehkar Vellur, Hindu Temple Society in Flushing, Sister Heather Ganz, Sisters of Saint Joseph, I.J Singh, The Sikh Coalition, David Hoffner, Dipamkara Buddhist Center and Rev. John Zenkewich, Unity Church Long Island. The event was held on the grounds of Hope House Ministries in Port Jefferson. The goal of the event was to bring community members together to hear the common threads that run through each of the different faiths. *"Our different religious beliefs were far more similar than they were different. Unfortunately, the focus in our society seems to be on what separates us, rather than on what unite us. Religion is something that should bring people together, not push people apart,"* said Michael Hoffner, Director of the Community Growth Center.²⁵⁷



²⁵⁶ See *Mass Live.com's* entry "Muslims, Christians celebrate common beliefs, heritage at interfaith event", in: http://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2016/04/muslims_christians_celebrate_c.html, retrieved on 17.04.2016

²⁵⁷ See *Long Island Exchange.com's* entry "Universal Language of Peace Interfaith Event", in: <https://www.longislandexchange.com/press-releases/universal-language-of-peace-interfaith-event/>, retrieved on 19.04.2016

4. MONITORED INSTITUTIONS IN CONNECTION WITH THE SUBJECT OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

There exist a huge number of institutions related to Islamophobia so that observing all of them is less feasible. There is however, a possibility to observe the most active institutions, particularly those who have most pertinence with the OIC's measures and undertakings in this area; and since Islamophobia issue is mostly alarming in Europe and the US, it seems to be beneficial to focus only on institutions operating in these two hot spots. However, in this report the Observatory will only present monitoring results on institutions operating in the US; since Europe comprises more than 50 countries hence it is less practical to mention names and elaborate institutions operating in this continent.

Scrutinizing those institutions, the Observatory made a classification based on their vision, mission, programs, activities, gestures, or simply on the constant attitudes and positions taken by their key figures²⁵⁸; hoping that such a classification could help the OIC in establishing the right position *vis-à-vis* the institutions which are grouped into 3 categories: 1) Potential Partner; 2) Potential Threats; 3) Potential Counterpart among Threats, and; 4) Potential Ally.

Potential Partners

Some organizations have been interested in the subject of Islamophobia for some time, and they have first-hand experiences with the evils of Islamophobia, or even having been victims to its prejudice. Furthermore, they have also engaged in numerous academic, political, and social activities introducing Islam and its many virtues along which they proved themselves to be part the solutions upon the issue; or having tried to put the issue of Islamophobia into the more-balanced perspectives. Such institutions could become the partners of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation or the Muslim World for combating Islamophobia.

Potential Threats

The spread of Islamophobia operates at institutional as well as at individual levels, targeting Islam, Muslims and Islamic attires through physical attacks and also through discourses and negative campaigns against the latter. Therefore, some of the monitored institutions have in fact been working to forge Islamophobia itself, implanting 'fear' against Islam throughout the nation and society, and eventually they have contributed to the creation of prejudice and intolerance within the society. For instance in the US they oppose Muslim integration into American society hence spreading ideas that Islam and Muslims are threatening their democratic values and civilizations. Particular in the US, these institutions operate based on structure generally termed as:

- Inner Core of Islamophobia: Groups whose primary purpose is to promote prejudice against or hatred of Islam and Muslims and who work regularly to demonstrate Islamophobic themes. This level represents the most active Islamophobic figures in the US, and those who run the most aggressive Islamophobic institutions. The top active name in these level are: Daniel Pipes, David Horowitz, David Yerushalmi, Frank Gaffney, Robert Spencer, Steven Emerson, and Pamela Geller; each of them usually stands behind an active Islamophobic Institution, and in ensemble they form the core of the Islamophobic network in the US.
- Outer Core of Islamophobia: Groups whose primary purpose does not appear to include promoting prejudice against or hatred of Islam and Muslims but whose works regularly demonstrates or supports Islamophobic themes. Most for them support the activities of the Inner Core Islamophobes.

²⁵⁸ The information on the institutions was gathered from multiple sources that cannot be mentioned one by one.

Potential Counterparts among Potential ‘Threats’

Despite the clear hostility of these institutions to Islam and Muslims in America, there is room to possibly work with some of them regarding the extent of the relationship between Islam and the host society. This would present a platform on which to clarify the true image of Islam and remove unfounded fears that Islam threatens Western values. The institutions under this category have potential to be considered for such a purpose.

Potential Allies

There is a number of academic and human rights institutions who are working to provide rational understanding among people towards a more-balanced perspective about Islam. These institutions facilitate individuals and groups to engage with the study of hate and hate crime in a manner which is providing thoroughly information on social issues, public opinion, and demographic trends while informing the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping the society. They conduct public opinion polling, demographic research, content analysis and social science research, as well as surveys and studies about Islam and Muslim in the US. Some of them focused on protecting the rights of refugees, supporting human rights defenders, and pressing for the government’s full participation in the international human rights system. They also have program and advocacy agenda which call on governments to adopt enhanced hate crimes laws. Few of them have tried to incorporate the importance of the liberal arts and humanities into a Islamic education curriculum, and trying to present a clear picture of Islam to the people. In the Observatory’s assessment, these institutions could be a potential ally with whom the Muslim World might collaborate; and in the longer term, such collaboration might lead towards possible partnership.

The list of the monitored institutions and the Observatory’s assessment on those institutions are presented as the following:

4.1. The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)

CAIR is a Muslim advocacy group founded in June 1994, headquartered on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. with regional offices nationwide. Through media relations, lobbying, and education, CAIR promotes Islamic perspectives to the American public and promotes social and political activism among Muslims in America. CAIR is considered as the main fighter of the Islamophobic Network in US, having a department specialized to monitor and combat Islamophobia in the American Society. This department provides detailed info about the Islamophobic network in US and its source of funding and activities.

Observing its vision, programs, and activities, the Observatory would consider CAIR as potential partner for the Muslim World in combatting Islamophobia.

4.2. Europe Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA)

ICNA was established in 1968, as a response to the growing need for a supportive Muslim community in North America. It is an offshoot of the Muslim Students’ Association (MSA), which was founded by immigrants from the Indian subcontinent, and its members are primarily of South Asian descent, primarily Pakistanis and Indians. Its headquarters are in Jamaica, New York, and it has offices in Detroit, Michigan, and Oakville, Ontario. ICNA has worked to establish

connections between Islam and the public, collaborating with numerous Muslim organizations to reach this end. ICNA also works closely with many national interfaith organizations for the betterment of society.

Observing its vision, programs, and activities, the Observatory would consider CAIR as potential partner for the Muslim World for combatting Islamophobia, particularly in the region of North America.

4.3. Middle East Forum (MEF)

MEF was founded and directed by Daniel Pipes in 1990. It is at the center of the Islamophobia Network According to its website; and it works “define and promote American interests in the Middle East and protect Western values from Middle Eastern threats.” The Middle East Forum is part of the inner core of the US Islamophobia network which is reported to have received more than \$12 million in funding from donors in the network since 2001, and in turn, it has donated funds to organizations featured in the Islamophobia network, including Zuhdi Jasser’s American-Islamic Forum for Democracy; Frank Gaffney’s Center for Security Policy; Robert Spencer’s Jihad Watch; and Steven Emerson’s Investigative Project on Terrorism.

Observing its gestures and activities, the Observatory would consider MEF as potential threat for the Muslim World’s efforts in combatting Islamophobia.

4.4. David Horowitz Freedom Center

David Horowitz Freedom Center is a well-funded key organization in amplifying the alleged threats of Muslim extremism in the US. Founded in 1988 by David Horowitz, the Freedom Center is one of the main organizations that “helped spread bigoted ideas into American life,” according to the Southern Poverty Law Center, which tracks hate groups in America. In 2012, the revenue for the David Horowitz Freedom Center was more than \$7.2 million. From 2009 to 2011, the David Horowitz Freedom Center operated its own blog, News Real, which, among other things, promoted the myth that Muslim extremists infiltrated an array of political organizations on both the left and the right. For instance, the blog repeated Frank Gaffney’s discredited and outlandish conspiracy theory that the Muslim Brotherhood infiltrated the Conservative Political Action Conference.

Observing its gestures and activities, the Observatory would consider David Horowitz Freedom Center as potential threat for the Muslim World’s efforts in combatting Islamophobia.

4.5. Jihad Watch

Directed by Robert Spencer, Jihad Watch is also a program of the David Horowitz Freedom Center. From 2010 to 2012, the Freedom Center contributed \$170,500 to Jihad Watch. Built on the fear of an Islamic crusade against the West, the center and Horowitz have been organizing Islamo-Fascism Awareness Week programs on hundreds of campuses across the country. They have an online guide for student organizations to host the week-long event and provide speakers.

Despite quite a number of balanced online news and publications, at this stage the Observatory would still consider Jihad Watch as potential threat for the Muslim World’s efforts in combatting Islamophobia.

4.6. Society of Americans for National Existence (SANE)

SANE is a think tank founded by David Yerushalmi, who is the driving force behind the anti-Sharia movement in the US. Yerushalmi’s most significant contribution to the Islamophobia network was as the author of the model “anti-Sharia”

legislation introduced in more than 30 states. Text from Yerushalmi's model anti-Sharia law made its way nearly verbatim into legislation in several state legislatures. Responsible for the "Mapping Shari'a in America: Knowing the Enemy" campaign, Yerushalmi's think tank presents Sharia as a pressing threat to American values and as a conspiracy to overthrow the government. It was reported that SANE has received \$477,288 in funding from donors in the Islamophobia network between 2008 and 2012.

Observing its gestures and activities, the Observatory would consider SANE as potential threat for the Muslim World's efforts in combatting Islamophobia.

4.7. Abstraction Fund

The Abstraction Fund is a tax-exempt private foundation established in 2006 which provides financial support to groups promoting anti-Islam bias. Nina Rosenwald, who serves as board president and treasurer, joined the fund in 2011. The daughter of William Rosenwald, she is an heir of the Sears Roebuck fortune. According to its 2013 tax filings, \$1,057,000 in grants and contributions went to U.S. Islamophobia Network groups. This represents 62% of the group's total 2013 financial gifts. In 2012, it was 82%. The recipient of the largest portion of this largess was Daniel Pipes' Middle East Forum.

Observing its gestures and activities, the Observatory would consider the Abstraction Fund as potential threat for the Muslim World's efforts in combatting Islamophobia.

4.8. Clarion Project

Clarion Project is a nonprofit organization based in New York City, founded by number of key players of the Islamophobia network including Frank Gaffney, Zuhdi Jasser, and Daniel Pipes. The Clarion Project - formerly the Clarion Fund - describes itself as an organization that seeks to "expose the dangers of Islamic extremism." To further their efforts, the Clarion Project has produced several anti-Muslim films — most notably, "Obsession: Radical Islam's War against the West," "Iranium," and "The Third Jihad." According to the organization's tax filings, Clarion Project's revenue in 2012 was \$1,374,578. Clarion Project is well known for receiving more than \$17 million from Donors Capital Fund in 2008. The \$17 million, provided by a single source helped pay for a DVD Clarion distributed called "Obsession: Radical Islam's War against the West," to more than 28 million swing-state voters before the 2008 presidential election. Donors Capital Fund continues to serve as the largest donor to Clarion.

Observing its gestures and activities, the Observatory would consider Clarion Project as potential threat for the Muslim World's efforts in combatting Islamophobia.

4.9. ACT for America

ACT for America was founded in 2007 by a Lebanese immigrant Brigitte Gabriel. ACT for America is a central component of the U.S. Islamophobia Network's inner core. According to a July 10, 2011 exposé of the group published in the Tennessean, "ACT members see themselves as warriors in a clash between Western civilization and Islam." It is reported to have 280,000 Members.

Observing its gestures and activities, the Observatory would consider ACT for America as potential threat for the Muslim World's efforts in combatting Islamophobia.

4.10. Allegheny Foundation

The Allegheny Foundation is a group of grantors known collectively as the Scaife Foundations. Another foundation in the group, the Sarah Scaife Foundation, has also offered significant financial support to groups dedicated to fostering Islamophobia. According to the foundation's 2013 annual report, it "concentrates its giving in the Western Pennsylvania area and confines most of its grant awards to programs for historic preservation, civic development and education." According to the foundation's tax filing, its officers awarded the David Horowitz Freedom Center, an inner core Islamophobic group \$100,000 in 2013, and \$150,000 in both 2012 and 2011.

Observing its gestures and activities, the Observatory would consider the Allegheny Foundation as potential threat for the Muslim World's efforts in combatting Islamophobia.

4.11. The American Public Policy Alliance (APPA)

The APPA is responsible for David Yerushalmi's 'American Laws for American Courts,' template of anti-Islam legislation that has been considered by lawmakers across the nation. While the organization has a professional-looking website, the address it lists in Washington, D.C. is actually a UPS store. Supporters of American Laws for American Courts (ALAC) generally claim they are not targeting Islam with their legislative activities. However, it is quite clear that APPA believes that Islamic religious principles, or Sharia, is one of two key threats to "constitutional protections and liberties," alleging that these religious principles will be "imposed as a separate legal system in America for Muslims (and eventually for non-Muslims)."

Observing its gestures and activities, the Observatory would consider the APPA as potential threat for the Muslim World's efforts in combatting Islamophobia.

4.12. Former Muslims United (FMU)

The FMU is an anti-Islam group founded by Nonie Darwish in September 2009, gathering a group of leading American apostates. FMU is a program of the American Freedom Defence Initiative to educate the American public and policymakers about the need for Muslims to repudiate the threat from authoritative Sharia to the religious freedom and safety of former Muslims. FMU is part of the inner core of the US Islamophobia network.

Observing its gestures and activities, the Observatory would consider the FMU as potential threat for the Muslim World's efforts in combatting Islamophobia.

4.13. Center for Security Policy (CSP)

Center for Security Policy was founded in 1988 by Frank Gaffney, the Center for Security Policy, or CSP, is a nonprofit conservative think tank and a main driver of the "creeping Sharia" conspiracy theory. In 2012, CSP's annual revenue was more than \$3.2 million. Since 2001, CSP has received more than \$7 million from donors and other organizations in the Islamophobia network, including \$300,000 from Daniel Pipes's Middle East Forum between 2008 and 2012. In addition to this funding, CSP has received \$37,660 from the Joyce and Donald Rumsfeld Foundation between 2007 and 2012.

Observing its gestures and activities, the Observatory would consider CSP as potential threat for the Muslim World's efforts in combatting Islamophobia.

4.14. The Counterterrorism & Security Education and Research Foundation (CTSERF)

The CTSERF is a relatively obscure organization led by Steven Emerson. Similar to Steven Emerson's Investigative Project on Terrorism, a review of tax filings shows that all of the grant money to CTSERF is transferred to Emerson's for-profit entity, the International Association of Counterterrorism and Security Professionals. In 2012, CTSERF's revenue was more than \$2 million. Since 2001, the organization has received more than five million dollars from donors in the Islamophobia network.

Observing its gestures and activities, the Observatory would consider the CTSERF as a potential threat for the Muslim World's efforts in combatting Islamophobia.

4.15. Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI)

MEMRI was co-founded in 1998 by Yigal Carmon and Meyrav Wurmser. MEMRI has an established reputation for distributing highly selective, distorted, and inaccurate translations of Arabic and Persian media. Through these selections the organization attempts to portray Muslims and Arabs as being inherently irrational and violent. The Middle East Media Research Institute is part of the inner core of the U.S Islamophobia network.

Observing its gestures and activities, the Observatory would consider MEMRI as potential threat for the Muslim World's efforts in combatting Islamophobia.

4.16. Stop Islamization of Nations (SION)

Stop Islamization of Nations was founded in January 2012 as an international derivative of Pamela Geller's domestic project, Stop Islamization of America, and drawing inspiration from the Denmark based Stop Islamization Europe. Stop Islamization of Nations is part of the inner core of the US Islamophobia network. Since 2014 this group is very active in launching negative campaign against Islam, including organizing derogatory cartoon of the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) and xenophobic advertising on public transports. In 2012, Pamela Geller's American Freedom Defense Initiative funded ads throughout the Metro system with a quote from the Quran next to a photo of the burning Twin Towers. In May 2014, she came back with another awful ad, claiming that "Islamic Jew-hatred" was in the Quran.

Observing its gestures and activities, the Observatory would consider the SION as potential threat for the Muslim World's efforts in combatting Islamophobia.

4.17. Forum for Middle East Understanding (FMEU)

Forum for Middle East Understanding is an inner core of the U.S. Islamophobia network. Founded by a former Muslim Walid Shoebat. The FMEU claims "to educate the public concerning the issues of the Middle East including culture, religion, politics and Terrorism." The Forum for Middle East Understanding is part of the inner core of the U.S. Islamophobia network. But it could be considered as potential counterpart because of its founder background; Walid Shoebat is ex-Muslim and former member in PLO.

Observing its vision, gestures and activities, the Observatory would consider the FMEU as potential counterpart among the potential threats for the Muslim World's efforts in combatting Islamophobia.

4.18. American-Islamic Forum for Democracy (AIFD)

Founded by Dr. M. Zuhdi Jasser, AIFD is the most prominent American Muslim organization directly confronting the ideologies of political Islam and openly countering the common belief that the Muslim faith is inextricably rooted to the

concept of the Islamic State (Islamism). AIFD looks to build the future of Islam through the concepts of liberty and freedom.

Observing its vision, gestures and activities, the Observatory would consider the AIFD as potential counterpart among the potential threats for the Muslim World's efforts in combatting Islamophobia.

4.19. International Network for Hate Studies (INHS)

The Network was set up in 2013 following a seminar entitled "Developments in Hate Crimes Research" at Cardiff University in April 2012. The INHS aims to provide an accessible forum through which individuals and groups can engage with the study of hate and hate crime in a manner which is both scholarly and accessible to all. Academics, students, advocates and those working in the public and NGO sector can contribute through posting on the Network's blog, and by attending conferences run by the Network.

Observing its vision, programs, and activities, the Observatory would consider INHS as a potential Ally for the Muslim World in combatting Islamophobia.

4.20. Center for American Progress (CAP)

The CAP is a progressive public policy research and advocacy organization. According to CAP, the center is "dedicated to improving the lives of Americans through progressive ideas and action." The Center presents a liberal viewpoint on economic issues. It has its headquarters in Washington, DC. CAP has issued the widely read report "Fear, Inc. The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America" on 2011 which uncovered the Islamophobic Organization network in USA. On Feb 2015 the center issued the famous report "Fear Inc., 2.0: The Islamophobia Network's Efforts to Manufacture Hate in America" this report provides details the consequences of some of the failed counterterrorism policies advocated for by the Islamophobia network. The center gets its funding from deferent institutions among them Embassy of United Arab Emirates and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Observing its vision, programs, and activities, the Observatory would consider CAP as a potential Ally for the Muslim World in combatting Islamophobia.

4.21. Islamophobia Research and Documentation Project (IRDP)

The IRDP is an initiative of the Center for Race & Gender, focuses on a systematic and empirical approach to the study of Islamophobia and its impact on the American Muslim community. Led by Dr Hatem Bazian, the IRDP highlights research and projects that explore the maintenance and extension of existing power paradigms by bringing together academics, thinkers, practitioners and researchers from around the globe who engage, question and challenge the existing disparities in economic, political, social and cultural relations, the center convened six annual conference about Islamophobia, the seventh conference will be titled: "Islamophobia: Has a tipping point been reached?" which will take place in University of California, Berkeley between April 22nd and 23rd, 2016. IRDP stands as main player in confronting the Islamophobic Network in US.

Observing its vision, programs, and activities, the Observatory would consider IRDP as a potential Ally for the Muslim World in combatting Islamophobia.

4.22. Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding (ACMCU)

The ACMCU is an academic Center founded in 1993 in Georgetown University, to build stronger bridges of understanding between the Muslim world and the West as well as between Islam and Christianity. The Center's mission

is to improve relations between the Muslim world and the West and enhance understanding of Muslims in the West. The geographic scope and coverage of the center includes the breadth of the Muslim world, from North Africa to Southeast Asia, as well as Europe and America. Since its foundation, the Center has become internationally recognized as a leader in the field of Muslim-Christian relations. The center is directed by Prof. John Esposito. In December 2005, received a \$20-million-dollar gift from HRH Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal, to support its activities. The Center was renamed the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding (ACMCU).

Observing its vision, programs, and activities, the Observatory would consider ACMCU as a potential Ally for the Muslim World in combatting Islamophobia.

4.23. American against Islamophobia Project

The American against Islamophobia Project is a social media project how run the IslamophobiaToday.com which is a one-stop Islamophobia news clearing house on the web. It publishes the most relevant Islamophobia and anti-Muslim news stories from major news desks and blogs, it publishes original material, as well as a weekly editorial.

Observing its vision, programs, and activities, the Observatory would consider the American against Islamophobia Project as a potential Ally for the Muslim World in combatting Islamophobia.

4.24. Zaytuna College

The Zaytuna College is a Muslim liberal arts college located in Berkeley, California. Zaytuna is the first accredited Muslim undergraduate college in the United States and was founded in 2008 by Hamza Yusuf, Zaid Shakir and Hatem Bazian. Zaytuna College seeks to incorporate the importance of the liberal arts and humanities into a traditional Islamic education curriculum, and present a clear and the really of Islam to the Americans, Zaytuna is key player in fighting the efforts of the Islamophobic network in US.

Observing its vision, programs, and activities, the Observatory would consider the Zaytuna College as a potential Ally for the Muslim World in combatting Islamophobia.

4.25. Jews against Islamophobia Coalition (JAI)

The JAI is a coalition of Jews Say No! and Jewish Voice for Peace-New York, challenges anti-Muslim bigotry and anti-Arab racism. They offer a Jewish voice that is part of larger community efforts to challenge Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism. They are committed to challenging Jewish institutions and organizations that promote Islamophobia through their words or action. They respond to other forms of Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism as they arise and are also proactive in speaking out about the issues, including the relationship between Islamophobia and Israel politics, and making the connections as they need to be made.

Observing its vision, programs, and activities, the Observatory would consider JAI as a potential Ally for the Muslim World in combatting Islamophobia.

4.26. Pew Research Center

Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan Fact Tank based in Washington, D.C. founded in 2004. It provides information on social issues, public opinion, and demographic trends and informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. It conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, content analysis and other data-driven social science research. Pew published many interesting surveys studies about Islam and Muslim in US, among them "Muslim Americans: No Signs of Growth in Alienation or Support for Extremism" in 2011 and "Muslims and

Islam: Key findings in the U.S. and around the world” in 2015, Pew could provide OIC and the other Muslim organizations with fresh authentic information about Islamophobia in US.

Observing its vision, programs, and activities, the Observatory would consider Pew Research Center as a potential Ally for the Muslim World in combatting Islamophobia.

4.27. Human Rights First (HRF)

The HRF is an independent nonprofit, nonpartisan human rights organization based in New York City and Washington, D.C. Since its founding in 1978, the organization has focused on protecting the rights of refugees, supporting human rights defenders around the world, and pressing for the U.S. government’s full participation in the international human rights system. In recent years, the organization has also turned its attention to the erosion of human rights in the U.S. in the post-9/11 period; to the rise in anti-Semitic, racist and anti-Muslim hate crimes and other forms of discrimination in US and Europe. Human Rights First has been working to strengthen the efforts of governments to track and prosecute such abuses against minorities. HRF led the effort to establish Special Representatives to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to confront with discrimination. Each year, Human Rights First examines anti-bias and nondiscrimination laws in all 56 OSCE countries; documents hate crime violence in its annual Hate Crime Survey, and assesses government responses in a related Report Card. The program’s advocacy agenda centers on calling on governments to adopt enhanced hate crimes laws, backed by strong monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.

Observing its vision, programs, and activities, the Observatory would consider HRF as a potential Ally for the Muslim World in combatting Islamophobia. The HRF could be notable partner to OIC in fighting Islamophobia in US and Europe as well.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Observing events, media news, discourses, public feelings, and incidents on Islamophobia occurring during the latest 16-months period, the Islamophobia Observatory draws some conclusions as pointed below:

- Islamophobia around the world continued to ascend and had reached the most significant level since 9/11. The negative trend was clearly reflected through intensive media campaigns and public discourses against Islam; through the growing intolerant attitudes against Muslims; through a significant number of incidents occurring sporadically against individuals, mosques, Islamic centers, and attires; as well as through wide-spread insults targeting the Holy Qur'an and sacred symbols of Islam.
- The United States is not anymore a very safe place to live for Muslims since more and more American non-Muslims feels anxious and fearful with Muslims' presence. The series of terrorist attacks hitting Paris and Brussels in 2015 and 2016 had made the Islamophobia situation even worse, for Muslims around the US faced immediate backlash, including vandalism to mosques and Islamic centers, hate-filled phone and online messages and threats of violence; while most of survey predict that such a negative trend will continue to deteriorate in the future, mainly because the existing fear of Islam and Muslims has been perpetuated by the on-going phenomenon of extremism and violent terrorism. At the current period towards election in the US, Islamophobic minded politicians continued to gain constant popularity among the voters, by exploiting issues such as extremism, terrorism, surveillance policy, and Syrian refugees.
- In Europe, Islamophobia was reaching an alarming level, particularly in the aftermath of the Paris and Brussel nightmare. People blamed the entire Muslim population, accusing Islam as violent religion that caused all the calamity brought by the terrorists. The mainstream society was pretty much pointing the finger at all Muslims for the existence of terror, forgetting the fact that many Muslims were among the victims, and that Islam always condemns such act of terror. Many of Europeans even express their support for *'the removal of Islam'* from their society, hence Muslims in Europe were becoming the victims of prejudice. Such a situation was getting even worse due to the current immigrant issue. Hundreds of thousands refugees from Syria have drawn renewed attention to the continent's Muslim population while many European countries, including France, Belgium, Germany, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, have been concerned about the growing Muslim communities in their countries, the circumstances that have led to calls for restrictions on immigration at governments, and contributed to the soaring Islamophobia at community and grassroots levels.
- Apart from the US and Europe, Islamophobia has been concerning in Myanmar, Australia, India, and Thailand. In Myanmar the conclusion was justified by the prolonging issue related to Rohingya Muslims, as well as by a series on incidents by which Buddhist mob attacked Myanmar Muslim community in some townships, destroyed mosque and school, and displacing members of Muslim community. In Australia, the conclusion was justified by the constant growth and popularity of far right ideologies as well as by a number of incident against mosques and Muslim individuals. In India, the conclusion was justified by the strong tendency of discrimination in the form of socioeconomic deprivation against Muslims communities and individuals, the situation which was somehow condoned and fueled by the current government. In Thailand the conclusion was justified by the presence of discriminatory Law against Muslims, the acute suspicion by the Buddhist majority as well as by the Thai Government, blacklisting policy targeting Muslim individuals, restriction on Muslims' movement and expression,

and discrimination in employment—all of these have contributed to the prolonging tension in southern provinces of the country.

- Phobia against veil, hijab, and burqa continued to be a serious contagion spreading across the globe. Since France in 2011 passed its first anti-veil law restricting women from wearing veils in public schools, the head coverings of observant Muslim women, the same policy has attracted more and more governments in different regions, and had become one of the most potent flash points in the countries' tense relations with their Muslim population. After France and Belgium's official adoption of the policy, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Sweden, Netherlands, Germany, Guinea, Central African Republic, and Malta were now starting to join the party by implementing, or towards implementing the similar policy.
- Discriminations against Muslims in employment continued to exist even more openly around the world, since a significant number of cases surmounted Muslim workers who were fired, alienated, and discriminated because of their religion or simply because of the dress they put on. The United States, France, New Zealand, Australia, and India are the hotspots of such discriminations in employment against Muslims.
- The growing Islamophobia was counter-balanced. Along with the alarming trend of Islamophobia, there were efforts in many countries around the world that promoted the positive image of Islam, supported harmony and tolerance, while countered anti-Islam sentiments and other Islamophobic activities, which in fact a very significant power towards combatting Islamophobia and incitement of hatred and violence towards Islam and Muslims. These positive efforts were reflected through balanced public policies, court decisions and trials against Islamophobes, positive views on Islam among non-Muslims, counter balances on far right ideology, friendly gestures on hijab and veil, and solidarity between faiths as well as dialogue among religions.
- The fast-growing of Islamophobia in certain part of the world was obviously not only pushed by incidents, events, discourses, media, issues, etc. but was also linked to the roles played by institutions working on Islamophobia-related subject. Some of these institutions have in fact been working to forge Islamophobia itself, implanting 'fear' against Islam throughout the nation and society, and eventually they have contributed to the creation of prejudice and intolerance within the society. Some other institutions, at the contrary, proved themselves to be part the solutions by engaging into numerous academic, political, and social activities introducing Islam and its many virtues along which, or having tried to put issues related to Islam at the more-balanced perspectives.

Based on the above-pointed conclusions, the Observatory envisages some tangible measures to reverse the growing Islamophobia that could be taken by Member States and by the OIC, either unilaterally or by cooperation with each other as well as in collaboration with other international entities. The said measures are listed as the following:

1. To hold workshops, seminars, and intellectual campaigns towards raising awareness on the danger of Islamophobia as well as towards promoting the positive images of Islam, particularly in places and countries been assessed as the 'hotspots' of Islamophobia.
2. To strengthen the existing mechanisms for inter-faith and interreligious dialogues, to help avoiding misperceptions and to promote better understanding and mutual respect.
3. To increase the role of religious and community leaders to curb tendencies of extremism by promoting the ideals of tolerance, moderation, mutual respect and peaceful co-existence.

4. To encourage inter-faith and inter-religion dialogues within the OIC Member States to raise awareness about religious interpretations and beliefs, and open space for further discussion about Islam and faith.
5. To initiate projects to counter Islamophobia through collaboration with of United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), and with non-OIC countries, especially the US and in European countries where the Islamophobia was found most concerning.
6. To start collaborating with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) who have been working actively in advocating anti-Islamophobia activities and in addressing the causes of Islamophobia at community and grassroots levels.
7. To perform regular visits to some western countries and meet with local Muslim communities with the view of listening their concerns or problems; to discuss on how to better addressing Islamophobia; and to recommend how the OIC could be a help.
8. To continue working with the media to promote the responsible-use of freedom of speech, while to implement policy in Member Countries towards holding whoever accountable for perpetuating hate speech and extremism.
9. To use a variety of communications channels to expand public debate and engagement on issues related to Islamophobia, especially among youth in the OIC Member States.
10. To speed up the implementation of the OIC Media Strategy in Countering Islamophobia, adopted at the 9th Islamic Conference of Information Ministers (ICIM), held in the Republic of Gabon, in 2012.
11. To expand the outreach programs covering the deprived immigrant communities, especially those in Europe and in the US.
12. To take measures against discrimination in employment, opportunities, and social integration in order to deter unemployed Muslim youth falling prey to extremist ideologies, which in a longer term may add insults to the current injuries of Islamophobia brought by terrorist groups.
13. To integrate Islamophobia along with peace education, human rights and multicultural values into school curricula in Member Countries.
14. To establish Islamophobia Centers in Member Countries while to strengthen the already-existing centers in some Member States, as well as in the OIC General Secretariat.
15. To improve the work performance of Islamophobia Observatory by allocating necessary resources to allow the Observatory establishing network with other hate speech monitoring and reporting mechanisms around the world.
16. To maximize the roles of OIC Offices abroad, especially those in Brussels and New York, by informally working with local Muslim communities for addressing the issue Islamophobia at community level.

ANNEXES

Islamophobic Incidents

I. Incidents Related to Mosques:

US: Vandals paint anti-Islamic messages on Louisville mosque – Red spray paint was used to write several anti-Islamic messages on the exterior of a building of worship. The vandalism was discovered on 16 September 2015 at the Louisville Islamic Center, located in the 4000 block of River Road. Curse words and a Star of David were among the



graffiti sprayed all over the Islamic Center. The mosque had been in Louisville for years, and this was the first time it was the target of vandalism.

In: <http://www.wave3.com/story/30050123/vandals-paint-anti-islamic-messages-on-louisville-mosque>, retrieved on 18.09.2015

US: Three admit to mosque cross-burning incident – The Orleans County Sheriff's Office said three people, all under the age of 21, had admitted to lighting a burning cross on the lawn of a local mosque. Deputies were called to the World Sufi Foundation Mosque on Fuller Road on 03 September. When they got there they found someone had apparently poured some type of accelerant on the front lawn and set it on fire. A similar, smaller cross was burned in the lawn near the southwest corner of the property. On the following day evening, the sheriff's office released a statement saying that three individuals responsible for the vandalism had been interviewed by deputies and would surrender themselves to authorities on 8 September. The incident was being treated as a bias crime.



<http://www.wgrz.com/story/news/2015/09/04/mosque-cross-carlton-orleans-world-sulfi-foundation-crime/71709076/>, retrieved on 05.09.2015

In: <http://www.wgrz.com/story/news/2015/09/04/mosque-cross-carlton-orleans-world-sulfi-foundation-crime/71709076/>

Italy: Venice officials shut down mosque-inside-church art exhibit — Authorities in Venice on 22 May closed a working mosque in an ex-church that was Iceland's contribution to the 56th Venice Biennale contemporary art fair on the grounds that was used as a place of worship. Swiss-Icelandic artist Christoph Buechel's exhibit inside a former Roman Catholic Church creating the first mosque ever in the historic center of Venice sparked controversy as the chairman of the Icelandic Art Center, which commissioned the project, complained that Venetian authorities had tried to prevent its realization rather than assist in making it possible, under the claim that the Icelandic Pavilion was not art. Iceland chose the deconsecrated Church of Santa Maria della Misericordia for the exhibit titled 'The Mosque in Venice', which for centuries served as a crossroads between East and West and was infused with Middle Eastern architectural influences. The project envisioned a working mosque for the seven months of the Biennale, which opened May 8 and comprises national pavilions as well as a curated main exhibit. After weeks of tensions, Venice city officials withdrew authorization for the installation citing violation of the terms, including a ban on using the pavilion as a place of worship as well as security concerns.

In: <http://www.timesunion.com/entertainment/article/Venice-officials-shut-down-mosque-inside-church-6281036.php>, retrieved on 24.05.2015

UK: Two teenagers held on suspicion of arson after London mosque fire – Two teenagers were arrested on suspicion of arson after a fire engulfed part of a south London mosque said to be the largest in western Europe. Seventy firefighters battled the blaze at the Baitul Futuh mosque in Morden in the afternoon of 26 September, which London fire brigade said had hit administrative buildings and not the main prayer room. One man was taken to hospital suffering from smoke inhalation. Two boys aged 14 and 16 were arrested on suspicion of arson, and both remain in custody at a south London police station. Pictures on social media showed a column of black smoke billowing up from the mosque. Half of the building's ground floor was on fire, along with a quarter of its first floor and roof. By mid-evening on that day, the fire had damaged 50% of the ground floor. Most of the damage occurred at the front of the building, while the prayer area of the mosque was unaffected.

In: <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/sep/27/teenagers-arrested-arson-south-london-mosque-fire-morden>, retrieved on 28.09.2015



US: Texas Mosque defaced with feces, torn pages of Quran—

When members of the Islamic Center of Pflugerville (ICP) in Texas went to open their mosque for morning prayer on 16 November 2015, they found feces splattered in front of the mosque with torn pages from the Quran. Pages of the Quran left at the mosque. Faisal Naeem, an ICP board member said: *"This is very unexpected and quite honestly quite shocking,"....."We've always thought of Austin being an oasis."* The Islamic Center of Pflugerville is located inside a strip center. The mosque had never been in the rented space for the previous three years and members said they hadn't had problems before. Pflugerville Police said they were investigating the incident as a hate crime. They received a call on Monday 17th November about criminal mischief.

In: <http://wdtn.com/2015/11/17/texas-mosque-defaced-with-feces-torn-pages-of-quran/>, retrieved at 17.11.2015

US: Armed protesters outside Texas Mosque — Around a dozen protesters gathered outside a mosque in Texas on 21 November, most of whom were carrying guns. One had a sign which expressed the desire to 'Stop the Islamization of America.' The event's organizer, David Wright, said that he wanted to do this to show that Syrian refugees shouldn't be allowed into the country.

In: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/cheats/2015/11/22/armed-protesters-outside-islamic-center.html>, retrieved on 25.11.2015

US: Pair arraigned in Burlington Mosque vandalism—Two men were arrested and arraigned in connection with vandalism at a local mosque on 3 November 2016. Burlington Police Chief Michael Kent announced at a press conference that police arrested Cameron Capella and Derrik Demone and charged them with malicious destruction of property worth more than \$250, tagging a building, following an act of vandalism at the Islamic Center of Burlington. A third party was also involved, Kent said, and that person's involvement was being investigated. *"This was a cowardly act by individuals who masked themselves,"* Kent said. He thanked the Islamic Center for its cooperation, as well as Burlington police detectives for their efforts, as well as the FBI and the Anti-Defamation League, who also assisted in the investigation.

In: http://www.lowellsun.com/breakingnews/ci_29061143/pair-arraigned-burlington-mosque-vandalism#ixzz3w7ab91LD, retrieved on 03.11.2015

US: Cold Lake Mosque vandalized for the second time— A mosque in east-central Alberta was once again cleaning up after being vandalized for the second time since October 2014. The words "Go Home" were scrawled on Cold Lake Mosque's door sometime between Friday 13 November's night and Saturday 14 November's morning, according to the



Edmonton Journal. *"Catch me if you can"* was scribbled inside a nearby CIBC ATM. *"This attempt to intimidate Muslims in our community will not be tolerated,"* wrote Fort McMurray-Cold Lake MP David Yurdiga in a Facebook statement. He added: *"The perpetrators of this crime didn't seem to understand that the Muslims in our community were just as at home as everyone else."* Police were reviewing video from nearby locations

and had asked the public to come forward with any information. Cold Lake RCMP had recently met with mosque representative Mahmoud El-Kadri shortly after the Paris attacks to reassure him Mounties would be ready if the mosque needed any assistance.

In: http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/11/30/cold-lake-mosque_n_8683138.html, retrieved on 29.11.2015

Luxembourg: Suspected Mamer Mosque aggressor arrested — Police arrested a man suspected of causing knife attack at the Islamic Cultural Centre in Mamer 7 November 2015. The suspect was a Croatian of Bosnian origin who arrived in Luxembourg three weeks before. He had no fixed address and had gone to the centre looking for accommodation. The attack took place on the same day when the perpetrator attacked another man with a knife before fleeing the scene. Police arrested the individual who was, according to a source, at an Internet cafe near the Islamic

Cultural Centre on boulevard d' Avranches, as he had been visiting the centre quite frequently. On the next day the investigating judge placed the man in custody. The suspect was charged with attempted murder and an investigation was underway.

In: <http://www.wort.lu/en/luxembourg/knife-attack-suspected-mamer-mosque-aggressor-arrested-5644aec40da165c55dc4d0af>, retrieved on 12.11.2015

UK: Firework attack on Rhyl Mosque—An Emergency services called to Islamic Cultural Centre on Water Street in Rhyl after firework posted through letterbox. Residents described the drama as the building was taped off and police and fire crews pulled up outside. North Wales Fire and Rescue Service said no fire was caused by the incident. It was believed that a lit firework was pushed through the letter box. One neighbour said: *"I could hear lots of sirens and when I looked out of my window, I saw lots of blue flashing lights."* "Police cars pulled up and officers put tape around the mosque.

In: <http://www.dailypost.co.uk/news/north-wales-news/firework-attack-on-rhyl-mosque-10432421>, retrieved on 14.11.2015

UK: Finsbury Park Mosque targeted in suspected arson attack— A mosque in north London was targeted in a suspected arson attack that police were treating as an Islamophobic hate crime. Officers were appealing for information after CCTV images showed a man trying to set Finsbury Park mosque on fire. A molotov cocktail was thrown but did not explode, according to a statement on the mosque's website. Scotland Yard confirmed the suspect tried to set alight a jerry could have filled with petrol before throwing it into the mosque's grounds. *"We hope the police find out who is behind this grave incident and catch the perpetrators,"* the mosque said in its statement. *"We would like to assure our community in Islington that such crime has no place within our society and we are determined more than ever to promote community cohesion and harmony."* The mosque's chairman, Mohammed Kozbar, told the BBC that he believed the mosque was saved only because it was raining. He said a gallon of fuel and burned papers were found outside the building. Police said they were called shortly after reports of a man acting suspiciously. They said that they had established that the man was in the area at about 8.30pm the previous evening. There were no reports of injuries.



In: <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/nov/29/north-london-mosque-targeted-in-suspected-arson-attack>, retrieved on 27.11.2015

US: After Paris ISIS threat, mosques in Canada and Florida fear Islamophobia — Amid growing concerns that terrorist attacks in Paris could spark a wave of Islamophobic retaliation, a Muslim congregation in Canada said a fire that burnt down its mosque appears to be a hate crime, and two Florida mosques reportedly received phone threats over the weekend. The fire at the Kwartha Muslim Religious Association's mosque in Peterborough, Ontario, broke out one day after Paris attack and caused up \$80,000 in damage; no one was inside at the time. Officials confirmed on the following day that the fire was deliberately set. The mosque is the only one in Peterborough, a city of 135,000, and association president Kenzu Abdella said the Muslim community traditionally had a good relationship with the rest of the city. But after learning the fire was intentional, he said he was certain the arson was a hate crime. *"I'm devastated,"* Abdella said. *"Children pray here."*

In: <http://www.ibtimes.com/after-paris-isis-threat-mosques-canada-florida-fear-islamophobia-2186334>, retrieved at 16.11.2015

UK: Deliberate fire at Bishopbriggs Centre used as mosque — Police were investigating a deliberate fire at a cultural centre that was used as a mosque by the Muslim community. Fire crews were called to Bishopbriggs Cultural Centre, in Auchinairn Road, on 17 November 2015. Firefighters extinguished a blaze in a lock-up area. Some damage was caused to the building but no-one was injured. Police Scotland said the fire was being treated as willful fire-raising and an investigation was under way. They had also appealed for witnesses. Bishopbriggs Cultural centre is listed as a mosque on the Glasgow Muslims webpage.

In: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-34843552>, retrieved at 17.11.2015

UK: Man tried to buy as many pig heads as possible to desecrate mosques — In the British city of Leeds, a man allegedly tried to buy a heap of pig heads and trotters with which to desecrate mosques. The incident was reported by a butcher in the city who reportedly called a local councilor and explained how a “smartly dressed” man had come into his store asking to buy as many of the pig parts as possible, when asked why, the butcher said the man replied he wished to target mosques.

In: <http://www.albawaba.com/loop/uk-man-tried-buy-many-pig-heads-possible-desecrate-mosques-774376>, retrieved on 30.11.2015

Canada: Police are treating fire at Canada mosque as hate crime, unclear if tied to Paris attacks — Police said they were treating a fire that was deliberately set at an Ontario mosque as a hate crime. Police were still searching for suspects in the Saturday night fire and say it was unclear if it was connected to the deadly terrorist attacks in Paris the previous day. But Police Chief Murray Rodd said that an injury to one of the city's ethnic communities is “an injury to us all.” The president of the Kawartha Muslim Religious Association, Kenzu Abdella, said the mosque was set ablaze at 11 p.m. Saturday, about a half hour after association members were in the building celebrating the birth of a baby. Abdella said no one was injured in the fire but the building has been rendered unusable. New Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said he was “deeply disturbed” by the fire and promised to protect the rights of worshippers at the mosque and catch those responsible for the fire.

In: <http://www.startribune.com/police-treating-fire-at-canada-mosque-as-a-hate-crime/350673941/>, retrieved at 16.11.2015

US: Email threatens Kentucky Mosque — The Islamic Center of Lexington received an email, threatening to kill everyone inside, according to the Council of American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). The threat said, “*I’m going to kill everyone I (sic) there you Muslim f**ks. Salabis is coming for you.*” The person who sent the email, left a name. But at the time, no arrests had been made.

In: <http://www.wtvq.com/2015/11/27/email-threatens-kentucky-mosque/>, retrieved on 28.11.2015

Ireland: Pig heads bearing anti-Islam slogan left at church — St Luke’s Church on Northumberland Street, owned by the Church of Ireland, was up for sale, had been empty since 2006 and there were rumours that members of the Muslim community had shown interest in buying the church to turn it into a mosque. Police received a report at on 24 October that two pig’s heads with racially offensive language written on them were left outside the property. A spokesperson from the Belfast Islamic Centre said that the racist attack was disgusting no matter what side of the community the perpetrator came from and there was no place for it in a civilized community.

In: <http://www.u.tv/News/2015/10/24/Pig-heads-bearing-anti-Islam-slogan-left-at-church-47584>, retrieved on 25/10/2015

Australia: Police search mosque in Parramatta shooting investigation — The Parramatta Mosque had been searched as investigations into early October's fatal shooting of a civilian police force employee continued. Farhad Jabar Khalil Mohammad, 15, shot and killed 17-year police force veteran Curtis Cheng outside the Parramatta police headquarters, and the police source said that Farhad attended a mosque shortly before the shooting.

In: <http://mobile.abc.net.au/news/2015-10-04/parramatta-shooting-police-search-mosque-in-shooting-probe/6825882>, retrieved 06.10.2015

Netherlands: Another pig's head found outside Zuid Holland Mosque — Another pig's head was found outside a mosque in the Netherlands. This one was found by the El Fath Mosque in Berkel en Rodenrijs, near Rotterdam. The pig's head was found by a local resident, who notified the mosque. The police launched a forensic investigation into the perpetrators and where the head came from. The mosque did not have cameras where the head was left. The mosque initially wanted to keep quiet about the pig's head, but eventually decided to come forward. *"After a few days of consultation, including with Rotterdam mosques, we decided not to write this off as an incident"*, Nouredine El Amiri of the mosque said to Media. *"This is a clear provocation. Sometimes our windows are broken or our plants damaged, but this is much more serious."* Mayor Pieter van de Stadt, of the municipality Lansingerland which covers Berkel en Rodenrijs, called the incident *"absolutely unacceptable"*.

In: <http://www.nltimes.nl/2016/03/21/another-pigs-head-found-outside-zuid-holland-mosque/>, retrieved on 22.03.2016

Spain: Far-right group attacks Madrid's main mosque — Members of the far-right 'Madrid Social Home' group attacked Madrid's main Mosque M-30 with firebombs on 24 March 2016. The local media didn't report any casualties after the terrorist attack. Besides setting fire at the mosque, the radicals hung a banner on the wall of the mosque, reading: *"Today Brussels, tomorrow Madrid?"* They also called as "Ramiro Ledesma" group was proud of the attack, posting it on Twitter and saying that it had launched a *"campaign against radical Islam."* The radicals claimed that all mosques, including the M-30, finance the Islamic State (IS). According to a report, after the Paris attacks in November, Spanish reporters interviewed dozens of Muslims pouring out of the M-30 Mosque following Friday prayer. They all condemned November's barbaric attack and they stressed that Spain is their home and they would never harm anyone. On 24 March 2016, immediately after the fatal terrorist attacks in Brussels, the Madrid mosque and Centre for Islamic Culture wrote in a statement saying: *"Without a doubt, what happened in Brussels on March 22nd is unacceptable, nor is it accepted within our logic or religion to commit such nefarious attacks... Muslims all around the world have condemned this terrible event that took the lives of innocent victims, including Muslims as well."*



In: <http://neurope.eu/article/abdeslam-will-not-fight-extradition-france/>, retrieved on 25.03.2016

UK: Alcohol bottles thrown at mosque while worshippers prayed in racist attack — The incident occurred at Totteridge mosque in High Wycombe, police had launched a race hate investigation after bottles of alcohol allegedly were thrown at a Mosque while worshippers were praying inside. It is reported that a male youth was seen chucking bottles of booze at the Totteridge Mosque in High Wycombe, Bucks, before speeding off in a car. Thames Valley police said the incident poses a serious threat to a cohesive and diverse society.

In: <http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/664061/alcohol-bottles-thrown-totteridge-mosque-high-wycombe-racist-attack>, retrieved on 27.04.2016

II. Political and Social Campaigns against Islam and Muslims

US: 'No Muslims' spray-painted on TTUHSC seal — Crews at the Texas Tech Health Sciences Center were busy on 14 May cleaning graffiti off of the school seal on 4th Street. Someone spray-painted a message on the seal either



the night before or early that morning. Workers had already cleaned most of the paint off by the time crews arrived, but those who saw it earlier said that it read 'No Muslims'. The Texas Tech Police Department said that the incident was under investigation. TTUHSC released the following statement on the same day read: *"It is a sad day at TTUHSC as we awoke to our beloved seal defaced with intolerant language. Our diverse university family is made up of students, researchers, educators and health care providers who make a positive impact throughout our world. Such harmful and offensive words truly go against the grain of who we are, as we are here to serve and heal*

all people. We will not tolerate such acts, and we are working closely with law enforcement. After authorities investigated the scene, our crew swiftly removed the vandalism."

In: <http://www.kcbd.com/story/29064408/no-muslims-spray-painted-on-ttuhsc-seal>, retrieved on 15.05.2015

UK: Far-right group Britain First announce Luton march after staging mosque invasions—A far right group which provoked anger after invading two Bury Park mosques had announced on mid-May that they

would hold a large scale demonstration through Luton. *Britain First*, formed four years back by ex-BNP members, would stage a protest through the town on June 27 to "demonstrate that Luton is an English town not a mini caliphate". *Britain First* deputy leader Jayda Fransen told the Luton News: "At the moment the plans that have been made are for a march through the town, then speeches will be given...This is the first one that we have held one in Luton so we are expecting a good turnout."



In: <http://www.lutontoday.co.uk/news/crime/far-right-group-britain-first-announce-luton-march-after-staging-mosque-invasions-1-6753462>, retrieved on 22.05.2015

UK: Football firms plan to stage anti-mosque protest in Dudley— Dudley braced itself for another anti-mosque protest on June 13 - the third in the space of four months. A group called All Football Fans/Firms March Against Islamisation (AFFFMAI) said the march through the town centre was to object to a replacement mosque being built on Hall Street. Chief Inspector Phil Dolby broke the news to concerned residents, religious leaders and traders who attended a public debrief at Dudley Council House on 19 May, to provide feedback about policing of the Britain First

march. Town traders said they felt persistent protesters were giving Dudley a bad name and remarked made during the Britain First protest on May 9, also weighed heavily on people's minds.

In: http://www.stourbridgenews.co.uk/news/12963933.Football_firms_plan_to_stage_anti_mosque_protest_in_Dudley/, retrieved on 22.05.2015

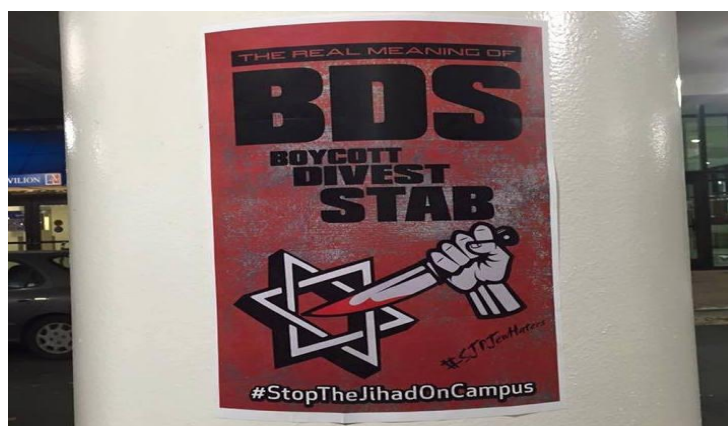
Netherlands: Dutch politician calls for Prophet Mohammed cartoon contest—The Dutch far-right politician sent a letter to the Dutch parliament on mid-May requesting that an exhibition of cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad be shown in the Dutch parliament. Ejder Kose, a lawyer and deputy chairman of the Center for Public Debate told Anadolu Agency that he hoped the parliament would refuse the request for both legal and political reasons. He said: "*Geert Wilders initiative is certainly a provocation*". Kose also pointed out that Wilders' initiative could be considered a hate crime and that it would be important to define the limits of freedom of expression.

In: <http://www.albawaba.com/news/dutch-politician-calls-prophet-mohammed-cartoon-contest-700074>, retrieved on 29.05.2015

France: Topless protesters crash French conference on role of women in Islam – Muslim leaders were left red-faced when two topless women seized the microphones at a conference on the role of women in Islam and shouted anti-Islamic slogans before they were dragged off stage kicking and screaming. The 25- and 31-year-old women took centre stage at the event held in Pontoise, north west of Paris, on the night of 12 September. A video of the protest showed two men in long white robes backing away from the podium as the bare-chested women took the stage, shouting at the audience with their arms raised in the air. As the men slinked away one of the women grabbed the microphone and addressed the crowd in French and Arabic as security rushed the stage. The protesters were then dragged away with one man appearing to kick one of the women as she lay on the ground. The activists were part of international women's movement Femen, which has staged topless protests around the world to protest a number of issues from prostitution to abortion. Both women had "Femen" written on their backs as well as the slogan "Nobody makes me submit".

In: <http://www.9news.com.au/world/2015/09/14/09/22/topless-protesters-crash-conference-on-role-of-women-in-islam>, retrieved on 14.09.2015

US: Islamophobic posters found on campus made Muslim students feel unsafe — The discovery of posters bearing Islamophobic messages on campus had raised concerns about the safety of Muslim students. The posters mentioned chapters of the Muslim Students Association and Students for Justice in Palestine. One depicts deceased al-Qaeda member Anwar al-Awlaki with a target over his face. The picture on the poster is surrounded by the words, "MSA Terrorist: Head of al-Qaeda in Yemen, President MSA Colorado State" and the hashtag "#StopTheJihadOnCampus." A 2010 New York Times article confirms that al-Awlaki attended Colorado State, and was the president of the MSA chapter there. Another poster, which bears the same hashtag, shows a bloody knife hovering over a Jewish star under the words, "The real meaning of BDS: Boycott, Divest, Stab." This phrase draws a reference to "*Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions*," a strategy used by Students for Justice

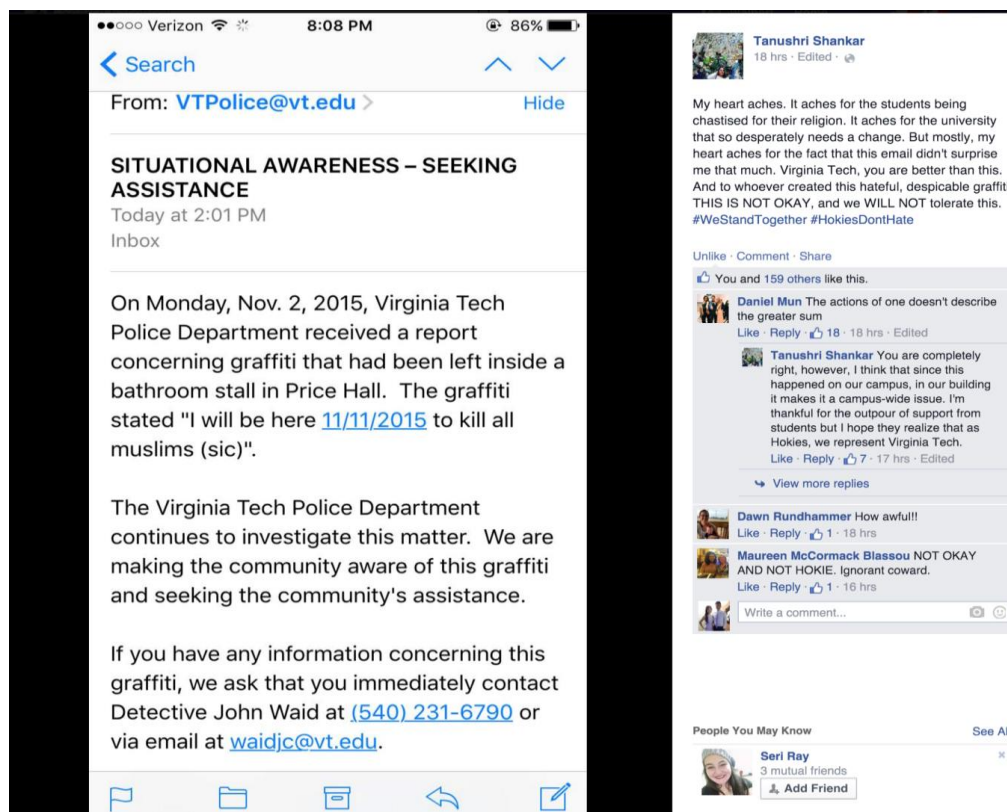


in Palestine chapters and other organizations to protest Israel's political treatment of the Palestinian territories. Students found two posters in the tunnel next to Bender Arena and four more on lampposts between Kogod and Katzen.

In: <http://www.theeagleonline.com/article/2015/11/islamophobic-posters-found-on-campus>, retrieved on 11.11.2015

US: Threat made to 'Kill All Muslims' at Virginia Tech'—

Police were investigating after a threat to "kill all Muslims" was found scrawled on the wall of a bathroom stall at Virginia Tech University. The graffiti, found in a bathroom at Price Hall, stated *"I will be here 11/11/2015 to kill all Muslims (sic),"* the Virginia Tech Police Department said. The Virginia Tech Police Department continued to investigate this matter. *"We are making the community aware of this graffiti and seeking the community's assistance,"* the department said. Obaid Rehman, president of the Muslim Student Association at Virginia Tech, said that students didn't know about the graffiti until the day when an email alert was sent to students, staff and faculty.



In: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/nov/6/threat-made-to-kill-all-muslims-at-virginia-tech/>, retrieved on 11.11.2015

US: Man is applauded for calling all Muslims Terrorists— A Virginia bigot called all Muslims terrorists in a raucous public meeting held to discuss the building of a new mosque – inciting applause and nods of approval from hateful crowd members. Civil engineer Samer Shalaby was presenting the building plans to residents of Spotsylvania, Va., when the maniac leapt to his feet and erupted in a despicable rant. *"Every one of you are terrorists,"* the man, who had not been identified, yelled while pointing his finger at Shallaby. *"I don't care what you say."* *"You can smile at me, you can say whatever you want, but every Muslim is a terrorist,"* he added. At least one other brute

interrupted Shalaby's presentation yelling the plans for the mosque were evil.

In: http://www.fredericksburg.com/news/local/overwhelming-support-follows-mosque-uproar/article_a5f17a7d-1ce4-5f9e-9786-8c4a8618b19e.html, retrieved on 20.11.2015

US: Anti-Muslim groups to organize rallies across US—Anti-Muslim conservative groups had planned at least 20 rallies during October at mosques and other sites across the United States. A Facebook group called Global Rally for Humanity had put out words for anti-Muslim demonstrations in “every country at every Mosque.” the page read: “Remember to do your homework and find a local mosque in your area so you can publish the location.” Some of the organizers encouraged demonstrators to show up armed, while others urged participants not to bring weapons.

In: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/news/164880/anti-muslim-groups-to-organize-rallies-across-us>, retrieved on 04.10.2015

Related: Anti-Muslim protests 'Global Rally for Humanity' planned in front of mosques, cities include Huntsville, Atlanta, Murfreesboro—An anti-Muslim group was calling for ‘Patriots’ to join together in a nationwide protest on October 9-10 October at mosques in cities including Huntsville, Atlanta, Dearborn, Michigan and Phoenix, Arizona. Calling the loosely organized effort ‘Global Rally for Humanity,’ the effort urged people to demonstrate in front of mosques and public facilities because humanity was attacked daily by radical Islam. The group also encouraged protests in every country at every Mosque.

In: http://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2015/10/anti-muslim_protests_global_ra.html, retrieved on 08.10.2015

Also Related: US anti-Islam rallies have low turnout—A series of planned anti-Islam rallies in 20 cities across the US failed to attract a strong turnout despite extensive promotion on social media. The Islamophobic events that took place on 9 October went largely unheeded, according to ABC News. The rallies were organized by Global Rally for Humanity, an organization closely affiliated with hate group and far-right movements in the US. The organizers called for protests at every mosque, Muslim establishment, or Islamic organization in the US.

In: <http://presstv.ir/Detail/2015/10/11/432911/US-antiIslam-rallies>, retrieved on 12.10.2015

US: American and European radical right's attacks on refugees fueled by anti-Muslim sentiment—Anti-



immigrant, anti-Muslim and white nationalist groups in the US had taken up the anti-refugee cause since September throughout October, mimicking the talking points of their European counterparts. The unifying message had framed the immigration crisis as a 'Muslim invasion', with many in Europe evoking the name of Charles Martel, the Frenchman who halted the advances of Muslims invading Europe in 732. Fueled by the Syrian refugee crisis, a fractured European resettlement agreement, and GOP presidential candidates continued to demonize Muslims on the campaign trail – and Muslims or those perceived to be Muslims were profiled or targeted for attack. Anti-Muslim sentiment in the US was in full swing.

In: <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2015/10/06/american-and-european-radical-right%E2%80%99s-attacks-refugees-fueled-anti-muslim-sentiment>

US: 'The Muslims are coming!' Court allows comic advert on New York subway—A federal judge had given a 'go-ahead' to light-hearted subway advertisements promoting a documentary about American Muslim comedians, saying a transportation agency improperly labeled them political in nature. The ads for the film *The Muslims Are Coming!* were rejected earlier in 2015 by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), which operates the subway system and the rest of the nation's largest mass transit network. The MTA, which had first approved the ads, later concluded that they violated its new ban on political ads.

In: <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/oct/08/the-muslims-are-coming-court-allows-comic-advert-on-new-york-subway>, retrieved on 09.10.2015

New Zealand: Anti-Islam sentiment surfaces in Remuera — On April 10 signs of anti-Islamic sentiment surfaced in Auckland, where a billboard outside a well-known Presbyterian Church had been defaced. It's a sinister new twist in the row about a poster put up by St Luke's in Remuera at Easter when the church was trying to make a point about values espoused by US Presidential Republican Party nominee Donald Trump. That billboard was stolen just before Easter and had only recently been replaced. On April 11, the church discovered the words "*Islam Hates Us*" pasted over the replacement. The original billboard showed Donald Trump saying "*I don't like losers*", with a crucified Jesus depicted in the background. In a statement, the church's parish council convener David McNabb said St Luke's had for many years run a program to encourage understanding between different world faiths. David McNabb stated that "*Through this program we have met a number of Muslim leaders and adherents, and had been enriched by their understandings. We know, from personal experience, that Islam does not hate us.*"

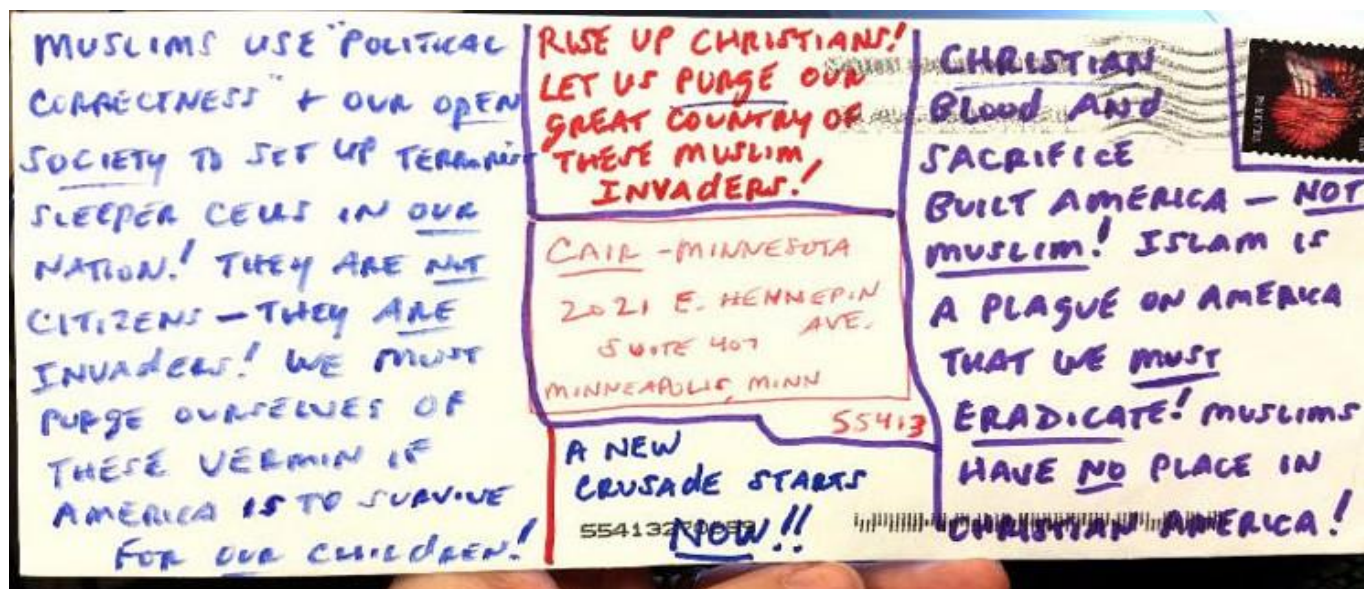
In: <http://www.odt.co.nz/news/national/379170/anti-islam-sentiment-surfaces-remuera>, retrieved on 11.04.2016

III. Intolerance against Islam and its Sacred Symbols

US: Islamophobes organized new Prophet Muhammad cartoon event — A group of anti-Muslim activists on 28 May in the State of Arizona organized a contest for cartoons depicting Prophet Muhammad in the city of Phoenix. The

plan came just three weeks after two gunmen attacked a similar contest in Texas. The event was held in front of the Islamic Community Center of Phoenix, just after an anti-Islam rally.

In: <http://www.turkishweekly.net/2015/05/28/news/us-islamophobes-plan-new-prophet-muhammad-cartoon-event/>, retrieved on 30.05.2015



US: Mystery letter to Civil Rights Group threatens eradication of Islam – Minnesota’s Council on American-Islamic Relations received a troubling missive in the mail on 10 September: an empty envelope completely covered with anti-Muslim threats. It was the latest in a steady trickle of hate mail, menacing calls, and death threats the civil rights organization had received since its founding, only standing out because of the strange intensity of its language.

In: <http://www.citypages.com/news/mystery-letter-to-civil-rights-group-threatens-eradication-of-islam-7641820>, retrieved on 11.09.2015

US: Viral video captures man tearing Koran at Ohio University – Wright State University had to respond after a videotaped expression of religious freedom went viral online. The video showed a man who was not enrolled at the university tearing up a Koran. As he screamed, “This is evil”, a growing crowd yelled back, “God is Love”. A Wright State spokesperson said the man was a student who traveled to campuses across the US to demonstrate. The incident



happened on 15 September 2015. University President David Hopkins said in a statement released to 2 NEWS on 23 September: “An individual not associated with our university ventured onto our campus and expressed himself in ways that many found disrespectful to various groups because of their religion, sexual orientation, gender, or status as a victim of sexual assault. His actions, in my opinion, were vile

and disgusting. We all understand that public universities are places where a free exchange of ideas promotes the intellectual development of students and informs civic activity and policy beyond campus.” This was the second incident on Wright State’s campus in few months involving the issue of freedom of speech.

In: <http://counton2.com/2015/09/23/viral-video-captures-man-tearing-koran-at-ohio-university/>, retrieved on 24.09.2015

US: Man sent notes threatening death to non-Muslims to Catholic Church— Cops arrested a 66-year-old man for leaving threatening notes at a Catholic church in the Bronx — one of which said *“Koran tells Muslims to cut off the head and fingertips of disbelievers,”* police sources said on 18 November. The letter found at St. Barnabas Church on East 241st Street in Woodlawn on Tuesday 17th November-also said, *“Koran is the direct word of Allah to Mohammed via the Angel Gabriel.”* It was the second hate note found at the church this week. Another folded missive was handed to Father Anthony Mizzi-Gili as he greeted parishioners outside the church, the sources said. It *“referenced Mohammed and the slaying of unbelievers,”* a source added. Basil Boland, of Yonkers, was then arrested around and charged with making terroristic threats and aggravated harassment.

In: <http://nypost.com/2015/11/18/man-sent-notes-threatening-death-to-non-muslims-to-catholic-church-police/> , retrieved at 18.11.2015

UK: Thugs smash up home and destroy Koran in suspected race hate attack—Thugs had smashed up a home in a suspected racist attack in which a copy of the Koran was torn up. The house in East Belfast, was ransacked by two men who used knives to shred beds. They also destroyed furniture, stole documents and daubed the word ‘heiron’ on a wall. One of the two Sudanese men who lived in the house came back and caught the pair in the act. He called a neighbor, a fellow Sudanese man, who managed to get pictures of the pair as they fled. But the attackers then came back with metal bars minutes later and attacked the men in a bid to get their phones and the pictures they had taken, it was claimed.

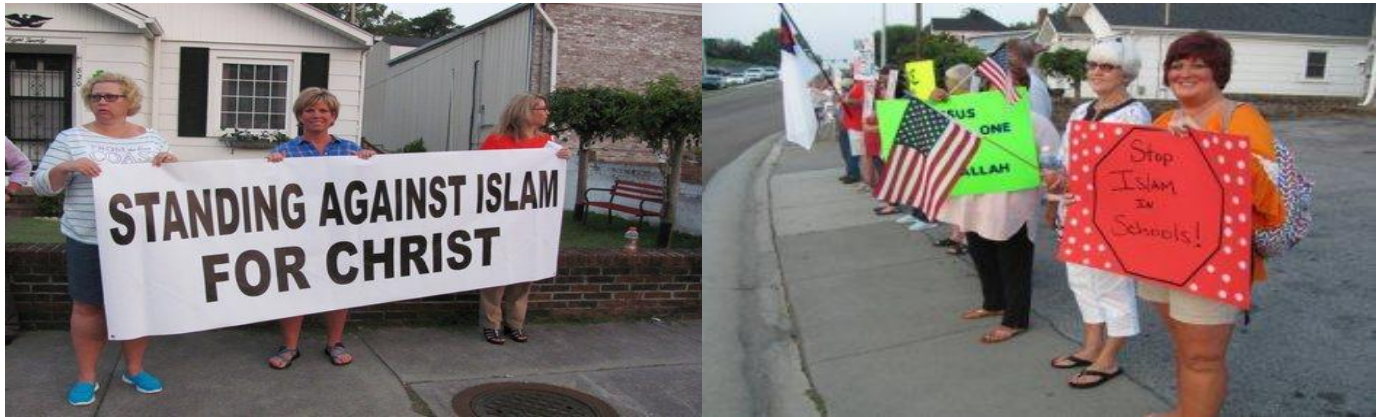
In: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/thugs-smash-up-home-destroy-6663661>, retrieved on 20.10.2015

IV. Discrimination against Muslim Individuals and Communities

Canada: Montreal Police arrest a man during arson attack on Muslim community centre — Police apprehended a 47-year-old man at a Muslim community centre in the Rosemont neighbourhood early morning of 20 May. Authorities confirmed that they were forced to use a stun gun after the man resisted arrest. He was caught trying to throw a Molotov cocktail through a window of the Assahaba Islamic Community Centre on the corner of Belanger and 23rd Avenue. Police said that the attempted attack was the fifth over the month. The man was caught because officers had been staking out the community centre after previous incidents. The man was described as a white Quebecer, with possible links to an extremist organization.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/montreal-police-arrest-man-during-arson-attack-on-muslim-community-centre/#more-31809>, retrieved on 21.05.2014

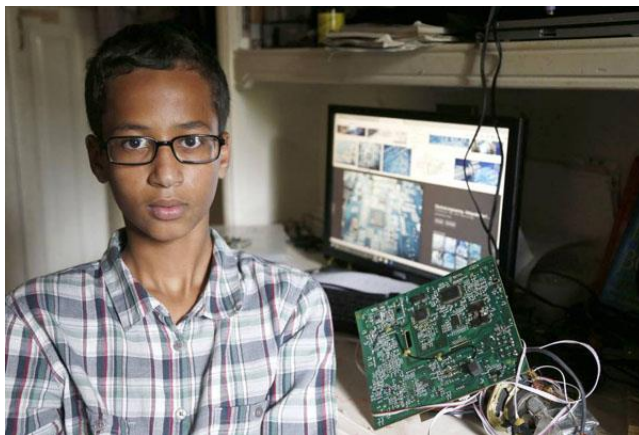
US: 100-plus gather at Bristol school protesting Islam course – More than 100 demonstrators stood outside a Bristol, Tenn., middle school on 4 September morning in protest of how Islam was taught to 7th graders throughout Tennessee according to state standards, known as Common Core. Participants stood in line on the sidewalk across from the school from 6:45-7:30 a.m., when school began. Many people had signs proclaiming support for Christianity



and warning of Islam being taught in schools. Patty Kinkead, organizer of the demonstration outside Vance Middle School in Bristol, said: *"This was the first phase and we hope it will start interest in other towns,"* adding that participants from Kingsport and Johnson City showed interest in organizing similar demonstrations in their towns. Kinkead was a member of a group called Tennessee against Common Core, which was active in 2014 in opposing Common Core standards in general but particularly the 7th grade unit on Islam, which Kinkead described as large and too in depth and too focused on theology. Asked if she thought Common Core would be changed or eliminated altogether, Kinkead was not hopeful that Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam would do that. *"So the hope is to start a grassroots movement to make him reconsider,"* she said.

In: <http://wjhl.com/2015/09/04/100-plus-gather-at-bristol-school-protesting-islam-course/>, retrieved on 05.09.2015

US: A 9th grader got arrested for taking a homemade clock to school – A ninth grader from Irving, Texas, was arrested at his school on 14 September after teachers thought his homemade clock looked like a bomb. Ahmed



Mohamed, 14, was taken to a juvenile detention center, suspended from school and could still face charges of making a hoax bomb. Ahmed, a robotics fan who reportedly liked to make his own radios, insisted he made a clock and brought the invention into school to show his engineering teacher. The clock — a circuit board with a power supply wired to a digital display — was confiscated during English class because the alarm kept beeping. Ahmed was later taken out of class by the principal and questioned by five police officers who demanded to know his intentions and why he brought the device into school. Ahmed was marched out of the school in handcuffs and taken to a juvenile detention center to take his fingerprints. But the high schooler said he never claimed the device was anything but a clock. Ahmed said: *"They thought, 'How could someone like this build something like this unless it's a threat?'"* His father Mohamed Elhassan Mohamed, who had emigrated to the U.S. from Sudan, believes his son's ethnicity may have been a factor. *"He just*

wants to invent good things for mankind,” he said. “But because his name is Mohamed and because of Sept. 11, I think my son got mistreated.”

In: <http://time.com/4035771/irving-teenager-arrested-homemade-clock-hoax-muslim-islamophobia-bomb/>, retrieved on 16.09.2015

US: Student abused over Islamic attire – A 16-year-old boy at Runcorn state high school in Brisbane was asked by teacher whether he was trying to imitate 9/11 attackers when he wore long Islamic gown over his sports uniform at a “free dress” event. When sent to school Principal Roger Atkins, the student was told that he was dressing inappropriately. Moreover, he was asked to return home to get his attire changed. The Queensland education department said it was “aware of a complaint arising from free dress day at Runcorn state high school...[and] As a consequence, the principal is working with the family, school community and cultural leaders to ensure all concerns are resolved. The school wants to ensure all students feel accepted and supported at school.”

In: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/todays-news/164265/student-abused-over-islamic-attire>, retrieved on 16.09.2015

Canada: Video threatening Muslims in Quebec surfaces — After an online threat against mosques in Montreal was made Monday 16 November, a video surfaced the next day that threatens Arabs and Muslims across Quebec. The video, which was posted on YouTube, showed a man in a Joker mask expressing his frustration with Muslims and Arabs in Quebec, adding that if the government wouldn’t do anything about them, he would. He added that he was not alone and that there was a group of people who would help him carry out his threat. While brandishing what appeared to be a pistol, the man threatened to kill one Muslim or Arab every week — starting next week. The video had been flagged to the Montreal police and the Sûreté du Québec.

In: <https://www.rt.com/news/322513-afd-germany-right-wing-rise/> retrieved at 18.11.2015

UK: Muslim woman assaulted, kicked off London Bus— London police were trying to find witnesses after supposed hate crime assault against a Muslim woman that happened on a bus. Officers spoke to the victim, a woman in her forties, who was injured as a result of allegedly being punched in the head and kicked off the number 63 bus at around 8PM by two young women. Commuter Antonia Bance was on the bus at the time, and told The Independent what she witnessed.

In: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/todays-news/165950/uk-police-appeal-for-witnesses-after-anti-muslim-hate-crime>, retrieved on 04.11.2015

US: Parents gather to question Islam being taught in Tennessee public schools – On 5 October, concerned parents



of Tennessee public schools gathered at a school board meeting in Cheatham County questioning about curriculum that include Islam, despite this had been standard given by the state. Jeff Bennett, director of communications for the Cheatham County School District said: "As a district, we do not plan to spend differing amounts of time on each standard... We follow the standards as they are." He added: "Students study the Islamic World in seventh grade, and in sixth grade, they learn about Christianity and Judaism." He also gave a fact sheet showing that all major religions including Buddhism and Hinduism were covered.

In: [http://wkm.com/2015/10/05/parents-gather-to-](http://wkm.com/2015/10/05/parents-gather-to-question-islam-being-taught-in-tenn-public-schools/)

[question-islam-being-taught-in-tenn-public-schools/](http://wkm.com/2015/10/05/parents-gather-to-question-islam-being-taught-in-tenn-public-schools/), retrieved on 06.10.2015

Related: Parents upset over Islamic history lessons—A Tennessee mother said her child was being brainwashed by a history lesson on the Islamic religion. However, state school officials said that was part of the curriculum. Jessica Mercier, the parent, stated she was not happy when she heard there was going to be a lesson on the Islamic religion in her daughter's 7th grade history class at Flintville Elementary School in Tennessee. She said: *"It's our responsibility to teach our children their religion and I understand that there is history with each religion, but teaching the pillars of Islam isn't religion. That's indoctrination."*

In: http://m.waaytv.com/appnews/parents-upset-over-islam-history-lessons/article_8709ba4c-6d64-11e5-a9c5-d33a705ff763.html, retrieved on 08.10.2015

UK: Man targeted in Islamophobic attack on London bus—A Turkish man had been targeted in an Islamophobic attack on a London bus in a second such video posted on the Internet in a week. The three-minute-long video appeared 18 October on the 5Pillars website where news and analyses related to Muslims in the UK were posted. It showed a black man verbally assaulting a Turkish man on a public bus. The assault said: *"Nobody understands you! Go back to Turkey and talk that s... That's why you are here! F... free benefits on a walker."* The man appeared to say, verbally attacking the Turkish man who was understood to have a walking aid with him. *"Good Muslim, innit? F... you!"*, the man shouted in the bus. The video further showed the man throwing the walker, seemingly belonging to the attacked man, out of the bus before leaving the bus with a buggy.

In: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/todays-news/165424/man-targeted-in-islamophobic-attack-on-london-bus>, retrieved on 20.10.2015

UK: Plans for 9,000-capacity mosque in east London rejected—Long-running plans to build a mosque in east [London](#) to hold services for as many as 9,000 worshippers had been rejected by the communities secretary, Greg Clark. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) dismissed appeals against the refusal of planning permission for the mosque in Newham, which went by various names, including the Riverine Centre, the Abbey Mills Mosque, [London](#) Markaz and Masjid-e-Ilyas. The Tablighi Jamaat sought permission to build the mosque on the 17-acre Abbey Mills site near the Olympic Park in Stratford, for about 18 years. The proposals included a huge dining hall and a library. The DCLG said: *"The decision was based on concerns that include local housing provision and conflict with the council's local plan for the borough. It took account of the evidence from all parties and is in line with the council's original determination and advice from the independent planning inspector on the main appeal."* Tablighi

Jamaat was also refused temporary permission to continue to use existing buildings on the site as a place of worship for the next two years, and must cease to do so within three months.

In: <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/oct/29/plans-for-9000-capacity-mosque-in-east-london-rejected>, retrieved on 30.10.2015

India: To protect Hindu girls, Muslims barred from Gujarat Garba event— A right-wing group on 5 October issued a Dictate barring entry of Muslims at Garba events during the Navratri Festival at Mandvi town in Gujarat's Kutch district to prevent 'Love Jihad' incidents. President of Hindu Yuva Sangthan, Raghuvirsinh Jadeja, who was also chief of Vishwa Hindu Parishad of the Mandvi tehsil unit, he said: *"Incidents of love jihad where Muslim boys lure and marry our Hindu girls happen at Garba, so our aim is to protect our girls."* He added that the organization would ensure that any person entering the Garba pandal had a 'Tilak' on his forehead, and 'Gaumutra' (cow-urine) would be sprayed on him.

In: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/to-protect-hindu-girls-muslims-barred-from-gujarat-garba-event/story-zrbdpVjsxxHIHGo3hhEfWI.html>, retrieved 06.10.2015

Germany: Three German universities close prayer rooms used by Muslims — Three German universities closed prayer rooms used by Muslims, leading to claims of discrimination. The Technical University of Berlin (TU Berlin), Technical University of Dortmund (TU Dortmund) and the University of Essen Duisburg had all closed prayer rooms. On 14 March 2016 TU Berlin closed its two separate prayer rooms for male and female students. University Christian Thomsen told local news site *Suddeutsche Zeitung* the decision boiled down to the fundamental question: *"Do we want religious facilities at our universities?"* They think higher education and religion should be kept separate. They also added: *"Previously Muslims didn't have much opportunity to practice their religion in Berlin. But now there are enough prayer rooms the students can use – perhaps not within walking distance, but a few stops away by bus. A prayer room at the university is no longer necessary."*

In: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/three-german-universities-close-prayer-rooms-used-by-muslims-a6930486.html>, retrieved on 15.03.2016

US: Islamophobia erupts at Idaho State University as 50 students' homes were vandalized — Approximately 50 Idaho State University students from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia had been victims of off-campus home burglaries, and there had been unverified incidents of physical abuse and harm targeted at the Muslim students. The incidents came as the University tried to boost enrollment by targeting Middle Eastern students, who now represent about 10% of the student body. The incidents became the main subject of discussion in the bucolic town of Pocatello. Mayor Brian Blad told the Idaho State Journal, that he had already spoken with a Saudi official to keep students from leaving, and would meet with both Saudi and Kuwaiti officials on April 18. Gulf News reported that Kuwait and Saudi Arabia had already both decided to suspend sending their students to the schools, and quoted the head of the schools' Saudi Students Club that the situation had only worsened.

In: <http://fusion.net/story/291793/islamophobia-erupts-at-idaho-state-university/>, retrieved on 16.04.2016

US: College student kicked off Southwest Airlines flight after being overheard speaking Arabic — Southwest Airlines ejected a college student from a plane after another passenger felt threatened when he spoke in Arabic before the flight. Khairuldeen Makhzoomi, a 26-year-old senior student at the University of California, Berkeley, who entered the US as an Iraqi refugee in 2010, was taken off a flight from Los Angeles International Airport to Oakland on April 6 after he called an uncle in Baghdad to tell him about an event he attended that included a speech by United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. An Arabic-speaking Southwest Airlines employee of Middle Eastern or South Asian descent came to the student seat and escorted him off the plane a few minutes after his call ended. The man introduced himself in Arabic and then switched to English to ask, “*Why were you speaking Arabic in the plane?*” Mr. Makhzoomi said he was afraid, and that the employee spoke to him like he was an animal. And the employee added that the student could not go back on the plane. Then Makhzoomi told him that “*This is what Islamophobia got this country into*”.



In: <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/17/us/student-speaking-arabic-removed-southwest-airlines-plane.html>, retrieved on 18.04.2016

US: Trickle down Islamophobia in Texas public schools — On 1 April 2016 a 12-year-old Fort Bend ISD student



told reporters his teacher called him a terrorist because he’s Muslim. Which, unfortunately, was not even all that surprising now, especially when considering the tenor of state and national politics or the fact that Islamophobia keeps popping up around Texas public schools. The family of Waleed Abushaaban, a seventh-grader at First Colony Middle School, urged Fort Bend ISD officials not only to fire the teacher who they say called their son a terrorist, but also to begin offering religious sensitivity training to teachers and students. Abushaaban said his class was watching a movie on March 31 afternoon, and when he started laughing, “*the teacher was like, ‘I wouldn’t be laughing if I was you...Because we all think you’re a terrorist.’*” Abushaaban said kids

in class began to taunt him, saying things like, “*You have bombs.*” While Fort Bend ISD officials called the incident an “*isolated event*”.

In: <http://www.houstonpress.com/news/trickle-down-islamophobia-in-texas-public-schools-8296073>, retrieved on 05.04.2016

V. Incidents Related to Hijab

Australia: Christian college in Brisbane rejects student teachers who wore hijab – The principal of a Christian College come under fire for transferring two student teachers after they turned up for work dressed in traditional Muslim

headwear. The two women, in their final year of a teaching degree, had started a work placement at Redlands College in 2014. In a newsletter addressed to the school's parents on 20 May, principal Mark Bensley outlined his reasons for dismissing the pair, explaining he had acted out of a duty of care, as he had *"...a duty of care to ensure that those teaching at the College are actively supporting the Christian principles, practices and beliefs of the College...I see the wearing of the hijab as openly acting in a manner that is contrary to or inconsistent with these principles, practices and beliefs."*

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/brisbane-christian-college-rejects-student-teachers-who-wore-hijab/#more-31963>, retrieved on 26.05.2014

France: Veiled Muslim woman attacked in southern France— The woman was leaving a metro station in the centre of the city when she was approached by a man who called her a terrorist, police said. The man, who was in his 20s,



then made a reference to the fact that she was wearing a hijab - a head covering worn by some Muslim women. He then punched her in the neck and sliced her chest with what is thought to have been a box cutter, before fleeing the scene. The woman escaped serious injury and was prescribed two days off work. Police said that other Islamophobic attacks had surfaced in the area after Islamic extremists killed 129 people in Paris on Friday 13

November, but did not go into detail.

In: <https://getpocket.com/a/read/1110956327>, retrieved at 19.11.2015

UK: Mother-of-four wearing veil suffers vile abuse in Tesco while shopping with children— A mother-of-four had spoken of the fear she felt after being abused in a supermarket for wearing a veil. Rahela Chowdhury, 32, were in a Tesco store with her children when she said she was approached by a man. She said: *"He started abusing me, asking me why I was wearing the full veil. "It was the first time anyone had shouted at me in this way. I was frozen and I didn't know what to do."* Mrs Chowdhury said she feared more for her children, two aged 12, one aged four and the other aged 11. She added: *"My youngest started crying uncontrollably."* The incident happened and only ended when a member of staff intervened, Mrs. Chowdhury said. Security officers then removed the offender. Her husband Khalil said: *"She has been out rarely since and is really fearful that it could happen again. It is very upsetting for her for someone to start shouting 'Why can't I see your face?'This was a very distressing incident for her and now I make sure I go out with her."*

In: [http://www.lancashiretelegraph.co.uk/news/14029181.FROZEN WITH FEAR Mother of four wearing veil suffers vile abuse in Tesco while shopping with children/?ref=rss](http://www.lancashiretelegraph.co.uk/news/14029181.FROZEN%20WITH%20FEAR%20Mother%20of%20four%20wearing%20veil%20suffers%20vile%20abuse%20in%20Tesco%20while%20shopping%20with%20children/?ref=rss), retrieved on 14.11.2015

France: Woman wearing a veil punched and slashed — Muslim woman was wounded with a box cutter in a race-hate attack following the Paris terrorist atrocities, France's interior minister has said. Bernard Cazeneuve condemned the assault and another attack on a Jewish teacher as *cowardly* and urged French citizens to remember the *values of the Republic*. The assaults came on the day French police raided an apartment block in a Paris suburb in the hunt for Islamic State (IS) extremists suspected of carrying out Friday's massacre in the capital, killing 129 people. The young woman, who was wearing a veil, was punched and slashed as she left a metro station in Marseille, in the south of France, by a person who made comments about her religious dress. She was taken to a nearby hospital. A second racially-motivated assault took place on the same day in the port city's 13th district when a teacher from a Jewish religious school was stabbed by a group who shouted anti-Semitic slurs and comments "*glorifying terrorism*". French media reported the gang of three men claimed to support IS and the man was stabbed in the leg.



In: http://www.asianimage.co.uk/news/14042464.Woman_wearing_a_veil_punched_and_slashed/ retrieved at 18.11.2015

UK: Pregnant Muslim woman branded Terrorist on London bus while passengers looked on — A pregnant Muslim woman was racially abused by a drunk man who branded her Terrorist in a 15 minute tirade on a London bus while passengers looked on without intervening, it had been claimed. The Turkish victim faced a barrage of abuse as she travelled on a 259 bus along Blackstock Road, Finsbury Park. It was only when her abuser threatened to punch her that a man stepped in to protect her, witnesses said. The bus driver, who remained in his cabin, stopped the bus and told passengers to get off once he was alerted to the abuse. He called police who arrived on the scene moments later. Charity worker Betta Elisa watched the events unfold as she travelled to work. The 40-year-old Sicilian, who lived in Tottenham, said she was surprised that no one stepped in to help the woman for at least 15 minutes, adding that one man only moved to restrain the abuser when he threatened to punch her. She said she was one of two women who stayed with the victim while her sister was called to collect her. She told the Standard: "*What surprised me even more is that no one went to comfort the victim*". She was stroking her belly because she was six months pregnant.

In: <http://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/pregnant-muslim-woman-branded-a-terrorist-on-london-bus-while-passengers-looked-on-a3125006.html>, retrieved on 29.11.2015

Canada: Muslim convert attacked while wearing Niqab in Toronto — Safira Merriman, 30, said in a Facebook post describing an incident that she was trying to enter Shoppers Drug Mart at Toronto's Fairview Mall when a man carrying a liquor-store bag blocked her path and then drove his elbow hard into her shoulder, in front of her two daughters, ages nine and four. The identity issue played out in Canadian election debates and in courtrooms was now being felt in the streets, shopping malls and on social media, as disparaging remarks and even outright assaults drew attention to a charged political environment.

In: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/muslim-convert-attacked-while-wearing-niqab-in-toronto/article26646425/>, retrieved 04.10.2015

UK: Woman launches racist rant on Moroccan women for their veil — A video of a black woman verbally attacking Muslim women with racist insults onboard a London bus had gone viral. According to *UK's Daily Mail*, on 13 October, a five-minute video showed a woman shouting racist offenses at Muslim women wearing a veil on the 206 bus in

Willesden. The woman who was traveling with an infant in a stroller, began screaming to the surprise of the other passengers and called the Muslims “sandbags” and “Isis b****es” among other insults. The attacker pointed her finger at the Muslim women’s faces shouting: *“Talk your f***ing language. Keep laughing. Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. With your bombs hiding underneath your clothes.”* She added: *“I don’t f***ing like you people because you’re f***ing rude. You come to England and you have no f***ing manners. Go back to your f***ing country where they are bombing every day, don’t come here where we are free,”* The Muslim women who were later found to be of Moroccan origin, stayed quiet and received the offensive remarks without fighting back.

In: <http://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2015/10/170588/london-bus-woman-launches-racist-rant-on-moroccan-women-for-their-veil/>, retrieved on 18.10.2015

US: Protesters decry Islam outside Phoenix mosque: 'They want to take over'— Demonstrators squared off outside a Phoenix mosque amid a heavy police presence on 10 October, during the highest-profile of a series of anti-Islam rallies planned to be staged nationwide. In Maryland, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, Oklahoma City, there was reported no one had shown up by 4pm, the time the protest organizers had scheduled. Meanwhile, a handful of protesters were outside the University of Central Oklahoma, where a conference about the life of the Prophet Mohammad and Islam was taking place. The Phoenix protest attracted more than 120 demonstrators and more than 30 law enforcement officials.

In: <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/oct/10/anti-islam-protest-phoenix-islamic-community-center>, retrieved on 12.10.2015

UK: Muslim woman has veil ripped off in Islamophobic attack in London — A Muslim student had her face veil ripped off in a racist attack outside a London university. The woman had joined members of an Islamic Society running a stall outside the Strand campus of King's College London (KCL) as part of Discover Islam awareness week on 4 March. The group, who were handing out literature, became involved in a 30-minute altercation when two men who approached the stall behaving in a threatening and abusive manner towards female Muslim students. The incident allegedly then resulted in one woman's niqab being violently pulled from her face. Hareem Ghani, a student and friend of the woman allegedly attacked, said: *“Two white men approached sisters on the stalls outside Strand and began to verbally assault them. This eventually escalated to physical threats of violence, and a fellow sister had her niqab (full-face veil) pulled off by one of the men.”* The incident comes as the latest crime stats showed a rise in the number of Islamophobic crimes in London.

In: <http://nation.com.pk/international/08-Mar-2016/muslim-woman-has-veil-ripped-off-in-islamophobic-attack-in-london>, retrieved on 09.03.2016

Canada: Islamophobia on a Calgary bus — In April 2016, Ala Buzreba was called “muslim terrorist” on the CTrain. Two weeks’ prior, her 16-year-old sister Sara, was called an “ISIS bitch.” Sara described the incident as *“He got really close to my face and started saying you ISIS shit, you ISIS bitch, and I didn’t move because I was scared, as he was leaving the train, he was behind me and yelled ‘Allahu Akbar’ and then he spit on me.”* Sara was really traumatized, Both Sara and Ala have reported the incidents to police. In the family, all five sisters had stories to share about being berated in public, easily picked out as Muslims with their colorful hijabs. One had even had donuts hurled at her on a bus. Ala said: *“I think it’s probably happening 100 times more than people are reporting it, all my friends who wear the hijab and have had similar incidents have never reported anything”.*

In: <http://m.thespec.com/news-story/6516418-he-spit-on-me-this-is-islamophobia-on-a-calgary-bus>, retrieved on 28.04.2016

UK: Muslim woman wearing face veil racially abused and called 'Batman' in shop — On 2 April 2016 Ahlam Saed who had gone into a corner shop in Ealing Common to buy some sweets was mocked by a man for her outfit in front of his two children. Saed who is 25 years old, filmed the moment she was shouted and sworn at simply because she wore a niqab. The video showed the man repeatedly asking Saed *“Why do you wear that?”*, referring to her veil. *“My kids can’t even see your face, who are you? Are you a man or woman?” the man says, adding “This is a Christian country. Christian, western world.”* Ahlam Saed said she filmed the abuse because she wanted to show the kinds of treatment

some Muslims were subjected to in the UK. *"My parents don't want me to wear it because they fear for my safety. But why should I take it off because of other people's opinions? It's my choice,"* Saed said, adding that she faced more abuse in recent months than ever before, it got worse since the Brussels and Paris attacks.

In: <http://m.deccanherald.com/articles.php?name=http://www.deccanherald.com/content/538559/muslim-woman-called-batman-wearing.html>, retrieved on 05.04.2016



WWW.OIC-OCI.ORG