



DIALOGUE & OUTREACH Department

OIC Islamophobia Observatory

Monthly Bulletin – NOVEMBER 2016

MANIFESTATIONS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA:

A. In the United States and Canada:

US: Vandal writes obscenity on Florida mosque's street signs— Detectives were searching for a vandal who wrote an obscenity on a Florida mosque's street signs. The Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office said that the vandal spray-painted the signs "Islam" "ISIS," outside the Alamin Islamic Center overnight. The Council on American-Islamic Relations said the mosque's surveillance cameras recorded a car entering the parking lot and an individual got out of the car and painted the signs. Two months earlier in September, Joseph Michael Schreiber intentionally set fire to the Islamic Center of Fort Pierce. Rabbi Barry Silver said members of his congregation joined worshippers at Al Amin on summer to break the fast of the last week of Ramadan. He said: "My congregates said when they came here it was one of the best experiences they ever had in a religious setting. They came here and they were welcomed like brothers and sisters with open arms."

WSVN.com News' entry, in: <http://wsvn.com/news/local/vandal-writes-obscenity-on-florida-mosques-street-signs/>, retrieved on 3.11.2016

US: Man arrested after Facebook threats to burn down mosques on Bonfire Night— Islamophobic remarks were posted by a man who created the profile 'Shuff Mohammad' who also posted comments about the prophet Muhammad. One comment read: "5th of November, remember, remember it's national burn a mosque night." Images of the various mosques indicated that the sites were based in the Stoke-on-Trent area. One image was of a masked man outside the City Central mosque, in Hanley, as well as photos of the Normacot mosque, an Islamic centre in Cobridge and a former school which had been converted into a community centre with prayer rooms. The offending posts were spotted by members of the public who alerted the police.

Express' News entry, in: <http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/729133/Man-arrested-Facebook-threats-burn-down-mosques-Bonfire-Night>, retrieved on 6.11.2016



US: Kansas GOP shamelessly fuels Islamophobia with campaign flier warning Muslim residents might be ISIS militants — The FBI exposed a plot to murder 120 Somali immigrants at an apartment complex in Kansas. Authorities said three white men attempted to start a religious war. One of the suspects said, "The only good Muslim is a dead Muslim," according to a federal complaint. Now, in the lead up to Election Day, the Kansas GOP had seemingly taken up the same mission, ginning up Islamophobia for political gain. The Republican Party of Kansas was under criticism for distributing mailers suggesting that Muslims in the state might be ISIS fighters. One of the fliers in support of Republican Joseph Scapa declared: "Have you met the new neighbors?" The flier emblazoned with an image of an Islamic State fighter holding a machine gun was

sent to homes in east Wichita's House District 88. Clay Barker, the state GOP's executive director, confirmed to the Eagle that similar mailings were sent across the state. A second flier sent to the 88th District in Kansas in support of Republican state Rep. Ken Corbet depicted explosions on the street with text saying "Terrorists to Kansas" and pictures of children asking, "What is ISIS? Will they hurt me?"

Salon News' entry, in: <http://www.salon.com/2016/11/04/kansas-gop-shamelessly-fuels-islamophobia-with-campaign-flier-warning-muslim-residents-might-be-isis-militants/>, retrieved on 6.11.2016

Canada: Ottawa mosque, church tagged overnight with racist graffiti

— An Ottawa mosque and a church with a black pastor had been vandalized with swastikas and hateful graffiti following similar attacks on Jewish institutions in the city. The overnight spray-painting incidents at the Ottawa Muslim Association mosque and the Parkdale United Church were condemned in the House of Commons. Liberal MP Ken Hardie said that many were concerned about what appeared to be a spike in the number and severity of incidents targeting Canadian minorities with messages of exclusion, fear and hate. Conservative MP Pierre Poilievre said the people of Ottawa stand united against the twin evils of racism and anti-Semitism. Two Ottawa synagogues and the home of a Jewish faith leader were also vandalized earlier within the week.

The Star News' entry, in: <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2016/11/18/ottawa-mosque-church-tagged-overnight-with-racist-graffiti.html>, retrieved on 19.11.2016



US: Muslim women wearing Hijabs assaulted just hours after Trump win— The first police reports started trickling in within 10 hours of Donald Trump's victory speech. A Muslim student at San Jose University told cops she was attacked from behind in a parking garage at San Jose State University. A man ran up and pulled at her hijab, choking her. Also in California, at San Diego State University, another Muslim student reported being followed by two men who made comments about Trump and the Muslims before robbing her. University police said the suspects confronted the woman, stole her purse and car keys before fleeing the scene. They came back for her car while she was off searching for help. It was the first full day of America under a President-elect Trump, and it reinforced fears that the Republican's upset victory would inspire a new wave of Islamophobia nationwide. One of Trump's most popular proposals within his base had been to ban all Muslims from entering the United States. He expressed an intention to secretly surveying mosques and Muslim leaders. He even suggested that American Muslims were actively harboring foreign terrorists. Trump's sweeping proposals had raised concerns of widespread discrimination that target an entire religious group.

NBC News' entry, in: <http://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2016-election/muslim-women-wearing-hijabs-assaulted-just-hours-after-trump-win-n681936>, retrieved on 11.11.2016

US: Hate Crimes Against Muslims Spiked 67 Percent—There were 5,850 hate crimes in the US since last year, according to recent data released by the FBI. The main reason for the increase was a massive 67 percent spike in crimes targeting Muslims. The numbers landed amid an apparent spike in attacks on ethnic and religious minorities in the wake of Donald Trump's election as president. This news came as no surprise to anti-extremism groups like the Council on American-Islamic Relations and the Anti-Defamation League, who had documented a rise in hate crimes for more than a year. According to the FBI data, nearly 60 percent of reported hate crimes were motivated by racial bias, with anti-black crimes leading, followed by anti-white crimes and crimes against Hispanics. More than 20 percent of hate crimes were motivated by religious bias. Anti-Semitic crimes were the most common, while crimes against Muslims followed behind. Incredibly, crimes against Muslims spiked 67 percent over 2014. Anti-gay crimes composed about 18 percent of all hate crimes, with gay men being the most likely target, while hate crimes based on gender identity composed less than 2 percent of all crimes. Intimidation and assault led among hate crimes against people, while vandalism and destruction were the most common crimes against property. Just over a third of reported hate crimes were violent crimes against people. The FBI had collected data on hate crimes since Congress passed the Hate Crime Statistics Act in 1990. The agency traditionally defined hate crimes as those committed because of a person's race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity, but the Obama administration had since

expanded the definition to include gender and gender identity and mental and physical disabilities. Yet despite the FBI's annual tally, it was still unclear how many hate crimes happen every year. The FBI generally reports between 5,000 and 7,000 hate crimes a year, according to an AP investigation of national hate crime data. However, in a 2013 report, the Department of Justice estimated the average annual total count at more like 260,000. That was more than 44 times more hate crimes than the FBI data suggests. The DOJ's report was based on anonymous responses to the National Crime Victimization Survey, which the Bureau of Justice Statistics conducts every year. Comparisons between earlier FBI hate-crime stats and other data sets from the federal government also revealed discrepancies. In 2013, for example, the FBI reported that there were 100 hate crimes on college campuses—but the Department of Education counted 781.

Motherjones.com News' entry, in: <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2016/11/heres-what-we-know-about-hate-crimes-us>, retrieved on 19.11.2016

US: Donald Trump's 'new national security adviser' thinks fear of Muslims is 'rational'— President-elect Donald Trump was said to have offered retired Lieutenant General Michael Flynn the post of National Security Adviser - who had claimed it was rational to fear Muslims. Despite having held senior military positions including that of Chief Intelligence Officer at the Pentagon under President Obama, many of his former colleagues had since criticized his opinions. A registered Democrat, Mr Flynn, 57, was asked in February 2016 to act as an adviser to the Trump campaign and had been considered as a potential running mate. The retired soldier caused widespread controversy after sharing a video on Twitter along with a comment stating: "*Fear of Muslims is rational: please forward this to others: the truth fears no questions...*" The video claimed the term Islamophobia was an oxymoron as phobia means an irrational fear and that fearing Muslims was a logical reaction. It then proceeded to list all perpetrators of terror attacks that were Muslim and how Islamic communities could not live alongside any other religious group. In an op-ed piece in the *New York Post*, Mr Flynn stated: "*I've been at war with Islam, or a component of Islam, for the last decade.*" Mr Flynn was sacked by President Obama in 2014 from his role as the director of US Defense Intelligence Agency following continued complaints over his leadership style. Mr Flynn claimed he was fired due to his uncompromising approach to the threat of radical Islam. He resigned from the military shortly after and set up a private intelligence consultancy firm. During the election, he criticized Hillary Clinton at Trump rallies over the emails controversy, led chants of "lock her up" and repeatedly called for her to stand down as a candidate.

MSN.com News' entry, in: <https://www.msn.com/en-ca/news/world/donald-trumps-new-national-security-adviser-thinks-fear-of-muslims-is-rational/ar-AAkrVWF>, retrieved on 19.11.2016

US: 'Darkness is good': Inflammatory Trump adviser Steven Bannon argues he, Darth Vader, and Satan are misunderstood— In an interview, Steve Bannon compared himself positively to both pop-culture villains and one of the least popular US political figures in recent history. Bannon, who was named President-elect Donald Trump's chief White House strategist, told that he benefited from left-wing media outlets that labeled him as evil in saying "*Darkness is good.*" He added: "*Dick Cheney, Darth Vader, Satan. That's power. It only helps us when they get it wrong. When they're blind to who we are and what we're doing.*" Bannon's appointment to a top political position in Trump's administration resulted in a swift backlash. Critics had assailed his stewardship of Breitbart News, whose coverage was viewed as anti-Semitic and racially charged. Both the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Anti-Defamation League had called for Trump to rescind Bannon's appointment. They drew attention to Bannon's self-professed commitment to providing a platform for the alt-right movement. During his tenure at Breitbart, Bannon oversaw the publication's transformation into a far-right, antiestablishment, white-nationalist outlet, which found more in common with European far-right parties than the US Republican Party on issues such as immigration and trade.

Business Insider News' entry, in: <http://www.businessinsider.com/steve-bannon-donald-trump-satan-darth-vader-2016-11>, retrieved on 20.11.2016

Canada: Canadian police investigating hate graffiti at mosque—Police were called after the words "Allah" and a swastika were painted on the association doors, and the numbers 666 which signified the devil. As well, a Christian church with a black reverend was spray-painted with "niggers" and the numbers 14 and 88. The number 14 was associated with white supremacists and 88 is code for 'Hail Hitler'. Statistics Canada

found race is the prime factor in hate crimes, while religion holds second place. The most targeted groups are blacks, Jews, homosexuals and Muslims.

The Muslim News' entry, in: <http://muslimnews.co.uk/news/islamophobia/canadian-police-investigating-hate-graffiti-mosque/>, retrieved on 20.11.2016

US: Trump's Election Leaves American Muslims Reeling and Scared— American Muslims were reeling following the election of Trump, whose campaign was rife with anti-Muslim rhetoric and proposals that included banning Muslims from entering the country and heightened surveillance of mosques across the nation. Among many of the 3.3 million Muslims living in the US, there was significant fear, along with some reports of harassment; one hijab-wearing student at San Diego State University said she was briefly choked by suspects who made remarks about Trump's victory. At New York, hundreds of people sat shoulder-to-shoulder on a grand staircase of a student center to express solidarity after the word "Trump!" was scrawled on the door of a Muslim prayer space at the school. Students spoke of friends who wore headscarves or other traditional clothing and were afraid to take public transportation home for fear of being harassed. Trump's policy plans remained a mystery, but his administration could radically reshape the Justice Department, which had been an ally under President Barack Obama in protecting Muslim civil rights. Trump could also repeal a key Obama program that prevents the deportation of some immigrants, including Muslims, living in the country illegally. Since the election, mosques and Muslim groups had organized community meetings and conference calling to focus on how to move forward.

ABC News' entry, in: <http://abcnews.go.com/>, seen on 23.11.2016

US: More than 700 Islamophobic, racist incidents reported in a week in US, report says— Following a divisive presidential election campaign, more than 700 Islamophobic and racist harassment or intimidation events were reported. The Southern Poverty Law Center had published research on hate crimes covering a week after Trump was elected as US president. The report also noted that there were numerous verbal harassment or intimidation cases targeting Muslims, politicians, Jews and some other ethnic and religious backgrounds. The US Justice Department had investigated whether recent reports of intimidation and harassment, including in schools and at churches, violate federal hate crime and other civil rights laws. Civil rights groups had signaled alarm over attacks they said had targeted minorities, including Muslim, black and Hispanic Americans, since Republican Donald Trump won the presidential election on 8 November. There had also been reports of harassment toward Trump supporters.

Daily Sabah News' entry, in: <http://www.dailysabah.com/americas/2016/11/21/more-than-700-islamophobic-racist-incidents-reported-in-a-week-in-us-report-says>, retrieved on 21.11.2016

US: Redmond mosque vandalized— A Redmond mosque was vandalized. The president of the Muslim Association of Puget Sound -- known as MAPS -- Mahmood Khadeer announced that the main granite sign in front of the mosque had been smashed.



Khadeer wrote that the mosque reported this incident and another that occurred during the weekend to local police. The mosque, located at 67th Ct. near Marymoor Park, was upping its own private security immediately and would be watched by armed guards around the clock. The Southern Poverty Law Center reported in November that it tracked 701 hate crimes between Election Day and 18 November. Though the top offense appeared to be anti-immigrant crimes, 51 anti-Muslim incidents were reported during that time.

SeattlePi News' entry, in: <http://www.seattlepi.com/local/crime/article/Redmond-mosque-vandalized-10630890.php>, retrieved on 22.11.2016

B. In Europe:

Greece: Greek archbishop calls for halt in Athens mosque construction— Ieronymos II, the Archbishop of Athens and all Greece, asked not to rush for the construction of a mosque in Athens, adding that he had serious concerns about the building of the edifice. Speaking on a nationwide broadcasting TV channel, Ieronymos II said that recent events changed his positive views regarding the construction of a mosque in Athens, referring to the recent refugee influx and sectarian conflicts across the Middle Eastern countries. He urged authorities to wait until the picture becomes clearer concerning the situation of Muslims in Athens before undertaking any construction, seeing whether the recent arrivals would permanently settle or move away. Ieronymos II also added that mosques could become recruiting centers for fundamentalist groups, while noting that Greece was becoming less Christian and Greek. The planned site of the first official mosque was stormed by radical groups wearing military attire shortly after the announcement of its construction. The attack was denounced by Greek political parties including Syriza and Pasok, as well as numerous human right activist groups. Athens remained as the only capital in Europe without an official mosque, even though it is the home of several hundred thousand Muslims.



Daily Sabah News' entry, in: <http://www.dailysabah.com/religion/2016/11/03/greek-archbishop-calls-for-halt-in-athens-mosque-construction>, retrieved on 4.11.2016

UK: Man dubbed himself 'holy crusader,' threatened to blow up mosque and said death will come to all Muslims,' court told— A man had been charged with sending offensive emails to an anti-hate crime organisation including threatening to blow up a mosque. John Nimmo from South Shields was accused of sending the messages to Faith Matters, a non-profit group that focuses on cohesion and countering extremism. The emails allegedly contained references to him being a 'holy crusader' while saying "death will come to all Muslims".

Sunderlands Echo News' entry, in: <http://www.sunderlandecho.com/news/crime/man-dubbed-himself-holy-crusader-threatened-to-blow-up-mosque-and-said-death-will-come-to-all-muslims-court-told-1-8166441>, retrieved on 7.11.2016

Sweden: Mosque, Turkish cultural center attacked in Stockholm— A group of unidentified attackers threw stones at a mosque and a Turkish cultural center in Stockholm. The incident took place one day after a Turkish union postponed the opening of its office in the Swedish city of Goteborg after receiving death threats from a group of pro-PKK people. No casualties were reported since nobody was inside the building when the attack took place. However, windows of the buildings were broken. Swedish authorities launched an investigation to nab the suspects.



Daily Sabah News' entry, in: <http://www.dailysabah.com/europe/2016/11/06/mosque-turkish-cultural-center-attacked-in-stockholm>, retrieved on 7.11.2016

UK: PKK sympathizers attack Turkish mosque in London — Sympathizers of PKK terror organization attacked a Turkish mosque in British capital London in November. The assailants hurled stones at the mosque run by Turkey's Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet – DIB), smashing all windows on one of the mosque's front walls. The group also wrote "PKK" on the mosque's wall, which was located in Hornsey area where a



sizeable Turkish community lived. This was the third attack by PKK sympathizers directed at London's Turkish community in a week. Few days before, two Turkish citizens were attacked by PKK supporters in London. Ceylan Nas, 25, and her fiance, 28-year-old Burak Taş, were appalled when their complaint was turned down by police. Ceylan said they were attacked by PKK sympathizers in the British capital, to which the police remained indifferent. The Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Center was also attacked by a group of PKK sympathizers on in the same week. Attacks against Turkish community centers, mosques and other

buildings in Europe had increased during the month, following the detention of pro-PKK Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) deputies, who refused to testify in ongoing terror probes. Despite having declared the PKK an official terrorist organization, Western countries' indifference towards the terrorist activities of the PKK in EU member-states was widely criticized.

Daily Sabah News' entry, in: <http://www.dailysabah.com/europe/2016/11/09/pkk-sympathizers-attack-turkish-mosque-in-london>, retrieved on 10.11.2016

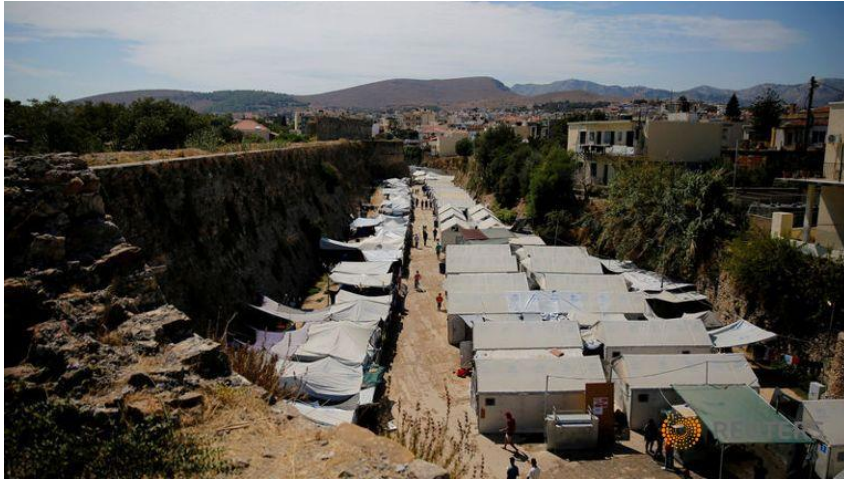
Netherlands: Dutch Far right Geert Wilders said Donald Trump's victory "patriotic spring"— Dutch far-right politician Geert Wilders stated that Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential election was a sign that the West was living through a "patriotic spring" that would boost support for populist parties in Europe like his own. Wilders, whose anti-immigration, anti-Muslim Freedom Party tops polls ahead of 2017's parliamentary elections, said mainstream politicians had lost the trust of voters in the West by ignoring the issues they cared most about. He said: "*Trump winning proved to me that people are fed up with politically correct politicians who are concerned and involved with issues that regard themselves but not those that are important to the public.*"

Mareeg.com News' entry, in <http://mareeg.com/dutch-far-right-geert-wilders-said-donald-trumps-victory-patriotic-spring/>, retrieved on 11.11.2016

Georgia: State lawmaker introduces bill to ban burqas — A Georgian state legislator, Rep. Jason Spencer, had introduced legislation that would ban burqas and traditional Muslim veils, that would also prevent women from posing for driver's license photos while wearing a veil. The measure also added burqas to a law that makes it a misdemeanor to wear a face covering in public or while driving. Spencer, who represents Woodbine in southeast Georgia, stated that his bill was meant to ease fears about Islamic terrorism. He said: "*This bill is simply a response to constituents that do have concerns of the rise of Islamic terrorism, and we in the State of Georgia do not want our laws used against us.*" The language about face coverings was previously added to a state statute meant to prevent Ku Klux Klan activity. Existing state law made it a misdemeanor to wear masks, hoods or face coverings intended to conceal one's identity. The law was initially passed to prohibit Klan members from gathering in public in white hoods. Several states prohibit women from wearing face coverings in license and identification photos, including Georgia. However, Spencer's bill would go farther in preventing women from wearing head coverings while driving or while walking down a public sidewalk. France and Belgium were the only two nations in the world that had banned burqas and similar coverings altogether. Local governments in Italy, Spain and Switzerland had also instituted bans.

The Hill News' entry, in: <http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/306537-georgia-state-lawmaker-introduces-bill-to-ban-burqas>, retrieved on 18.11.2016

Greek: Far-right group attacks refugee camp on Greek island of Chios— Dozens of people had been driven out of a refugee camp on the Greek island of Chios after two successive nights of attacks by a far-



right group. At least two people were wounded after attackers threw Molotov cocktails and rocks as big as boulders from elevated areas surrounding the Souda camp. Three tents were burned down and three others were hit by rocks. A 42-year-old Syrian man was assaulted, while a Nigerian boy was hit by a rock. Fearing a third attack, about 100 former occupants refused to re-enter the camp, instead taking shelter in a nearby car park. Mostafa al-Khatib, a Syrian refugee said: “We do not have any kind of protection....No one cares about us.”

Gabrielle Tan, an aid worker with Action From Switzerland, a grassroots organisation working on Chios, said those sheltering in the car park included families with babies and toddlers. Activists and camp occupants said the rocks appeared to have been thrown with the intention of killing people. The attacks followed a two-day visit to Chios and Lesbos, the adjoining Aegean island, by a team of MPs from the neo-fascist Golden Dawn and far-right parliamentarians from Belgium. The mayor of Chios said the attackers were thought to be affiliated with Greece’s main far-right party, Golden Dawn.

The Guardian News’ entry, in: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/18/far-right-group-attacks-refugee-camp-greek-island-chios>, retrieved on 19.11.2016

C. Rest of the World:

Myanmar: Myanmar’s plan to arm, train non-Muslims ‘recipe for disaster’: jurist group— The International Commission of Jurists said: “Myanmar’s plans to arm and train non-Muslim residents in the troubled north of Rakhine State was likely to aggravate an already dire human rights situation”. Soldiers flooded the Maungdaw area along Myanmar’s frontier with Bangladesh in Rakhine in response to coordinated attacks on three border posts on 9 October where nine police officers were killed. The government said a group of some 400 Rohingya Muslim militants attacked the posts, because of which soldiers and 33 suspected insurgents had been killed in the military operation since then. Security forces blocked access to aid workers and most journalists to the area, while Rohingya Muslims accused the army of executions, rapes and setting fire to homes of civilians, of which denied by the government and the military. Rakhine State police Chief Colonel Sein Lwin said that his force had started recruiting new regional police from among the ethnic Rakhine and other non-Muslim ethnic minorities in the area. Min Aung, a minister in the Rakhine State parliament and a member of Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi’s National League for Democracy, said the recruits would help protect residents from the militants behind the 9 October attacks. Initially, 100 recruits aged between 18 and 35 would undergo an accelerated 16-week training program, beginning in the state capital, Sittwe, this month, police said, adding they would be given weapons and other equipment like police. The ICJ said such force would lack the training and oversight to perform policing functions in accordance with human rights and professional policing standards.

One America News Network’ News entry, in: <http://www.oann.com/myanmars-plan-to-arm-train-non-muslims-recipe-for-disaster-jurist-group/>, retrieved on 6.11.2016

Related: Myanmar using Muslims as scapegoats—The Muslim population in Myanmar's eastern Rakhine State had been subject to extensive persecution and deportation by the government. In the latest aggression against the minority group, three villages inhabited by the Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine had been torched, as evidenced by high-definition satellite imagery provided by Human Rights Watch. Editor of *Veterans Today*, Kevin Barrett, is of the opinion that the government in Myanmar is trying to use the Muslim minority as a scapegoat, adding that *"it's part of a problem with the larger national identity in Myanmar."* Barrett stated: *"The people in Myanmar have that memories of the British colonialism and now as they've emerged as kind of new post-colonial identity, they look around for scapegoats to unite against some minorities like Rohingya Muslims in a bid to build up their self-esteem by saying that the Muslim population came into the country as a result of the British colonial system. Myanmar's authorities have developed this mythology of the Rohingya people as non-Myanmar people and used the propaganda to persecute and deport them from the East Asian state."*



PressTV News' entry, in: <http://www.presstv.us/Detail/2016/11/14/493504/Myanmar-Rohingya-Muslims-Persecution-Barrett-Dovere>, retrieved on 15.11.2016

Australia: Australia's far-right groups protest Syrian refugee housing — Hundreds of people rallied in the suburbs of Melbourne after a proposal to house refugees locally drew protest by far right anti-Islam groups and counter protests. Political debate around Australia's hardline policy toward asylum seekers was heating as the conservative government announcing plans to permanently ban asylum seekers who attempted to reach Australia by boat from permanently entering under any visa category. Anti-Islam groups rallied against a proposal to house 120 refugees from Syria and Iraq, at a housing facility for elderly citizens in the Melbourne suburb of Eltham. A heavy police presence separated the group from more than 100 people rallying in favor of the proposal. Previous protests between anti-immigration and pro-immigration groups had led to violent clashes. Australia's current policy was to send asylum seekers to Papua New Guinea and Nauru, where their status as refugees was confirmed or rejected. In 2015 the government announced a one-off intake of 12,000 refugees fleeing the conflict in Iraq and Syria, saying that ethnic minorities from those countries would be given priority.

Reuters News' entry, in: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-australian-protests-farright-idUSKBN13005X>, retrieved on 6.11.2016

Israel: Israeli ministers to ban use of speakers for Muslim call to prayer due to 'noise pollution'— Representatives of Israel's Knesset had given their approval to what was known as the 'muezzin bill' banning religious leaders from using loudspeakers or public address systems to summon worshippers for prayers. The Ministerial Committee for Legislation debated the bill in November before authorizing it for a parliamentary vote. It was likely to be passed, since it had the backing of the country's ruling coalition. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu expressed his support in his weekly cabinet meeting, saying that citizens of all religions had complained about excessive noise from muezzins, mosque officials who traditionally call worshippers to prayers from the building's minaret. While the bill was primarily targeted at curbing noise pollution, critics had noted the proposed law contained a clause which said that *"freedom of religion should not be harmful to quality of life nor used to convey religious or nationalist messages, and sometimes even words of incitement"*, which they say was targeted at Muslims.

The Independent News' entry, in: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-palestine-mosque-call-to-prayer-banned-bill-passes-a7416121.html>, retrieved on 15.11.2016

Related: Israeli bid to turn down mosque prayer calls blocked— Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had backed the controversial bill, which government watchdogs called a threat to religious freedom. This government-backed bill to limit the volume of calls to prayer at mosques was blocked by the country's ultra-Orthodox Jews. It had been due to get its first reading in parliament until Health Minister Yaakov Litzman, a

member of the ultra-Orthodox United Torah Judaism party, stepped in. Litzman appealed the bill, saying it could affect similarly loud Jewish prayers. The bill was adopted by a ministerial committee and was due to go through three readings in parliament before becoming law. The bill would now be put on hold until a ministerial committee holds a second vote. The bill was drafted in response to noise from mosques, but would in theory apply to all religious institutions including synagogues. The Minister said *"For thousands of years, the Jewish tradition has used various tools, including shofars (horn) and trumpets for Jewish holidays...Since the technology developed, loudspeakers have been used to announce the onset of the Sabbath, at the permitted volume level, and in compliance with every law."* He added that the proposed law constituted an interference with religious practice and the status quo between religious authorities and the state. In protest against the bill, Arab-Israeli lawmaker Talab Abu Arar chanted Adzan in parliament within the week, provoking furious protests from some Jewish members. Arab MPs opposed to the bill and pressured Litzman to use his power as a minister to block it, arguing a common right to religious practice for Jews and Muslims. Around 17.5 per cent of Israelis are Arab, the vast majority of them Muslim, but they complain of discrimination and are underrepresented in high-level jobs.

The Indian Express News' entry, in: <http://indianexpress.com/article/world/world-news/israeli-bid-to-turn-down-mosque-prayer-calls-blocked-4379115/>, retrieved on 18.11.2016

Australia: Far-right group to rally in Melbourne as Springvale fire tragedy fuels racism on social media—

Fears were growing that a far-right rally in Melbourne in November 2016 might become a flashpoint between rival groups as tensions rose in the wake of the Springvale Commonwealth Bank fire. One business near the site of the planned protests decided to remove tables and chairs and lock customers inside, fearing street furniture could be used as weapons if the protest turns ugly. It was believed the man alleged to have started the fire was who arrived from Myanmar in 2012 or 2013. Far-right groups had been quick to jump on social media and blamed the incident on Australia's refugee policy. The attack injured 27 people and six victims with serious burns were taken to the Alfred hospital following the blaze. Facebook posts on the page of The True Blue Crew, one of two organizations behind the rally, featured people calling on the government to ban refugees, especially Muslims. One man wrote: *"We need to stand together and prove to the government that the games up. No to refugees,"* Another said: *"close the borders"*. The Sunday rally at the steps of the Parliament House was originally planned by far-right groups to celebrate the election of incoming US President Donald Trump and show *"Americans we stand with them"*.

TheAge.com News' entry, in: <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/far-right-group-to-rally-in-melbourne-as-springvale-fire-tragedy-fuels-racism-on-social-media-20161119-gst16k.html>, retrieved on 21.11.2016

POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS:

A. In the United States and Canada:

Canada: Canada passed an anti-Islamophobia bill— Canada's Parliament approved a motion that condemned Islamophobia and recognized that extremists did not represent the faith in Canada or elsewhere. The motion, which was approved on 26 October, had previously been rejected by conservatives in the Canadian Parliament. It was reintroduced after a series of mosque attacks in Canada reiterated the need for pluralist legislation in the country, and following outcry from leaders in the Muslim community. Although it did not change legislation, the motion was a public and official condemnation of all kinds of Islamophobia and a political statement of support to the Muslim community.

Albawaba News' entry, in: <http://www.albawaba.com/loop/canada-passed-anti-islamophobia-bill-media-didn%E2%80%99t-notice-900490>, retrieved on 4.11.2016

US: Mayor of Minneapolis trashes Trump's 'Islamophobia', defends refugees in fiery Facebook post—

Betsy Hodges, the mayor of Minneapolis, had some choice words for Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump. In a fiery Facebook post, Hodges called out Trump's "Islamophobia" and "ignorance" towards Minnesota values. While acknowledging that Minnesota did face challenges, like poverty, and violence, and despair, Hodges wrote that the state responds to them with kindness, not hate; by pulling together more rather than less; by appreciating one another more rather than less; and by working harder, not by giving up on one another. Hodges wrote, addressing Trump: "Everything you've done in your life - from your business practices to your sexual assaults to your Islamophobia to your constant blaming of others for the problems you've created yourself - betrays your ignorance of those values." Besides defending her city's values, Hodges slammed Trump's rhetoric towards refugees and immigrants. "You say 'don't let them roam our communities' like you have already created the fascist state you are hoping to turn this country into," wrote Hodges about a dig Trump made towards Minneapolis' population of Somali and East African immigrants and refugees." She added: "It is a privilege and an honor to be mayor of the city with the largest Somali population in this country. Your ignorance, your hate, your fear just make me remember how lucky we are to have neighbors who are so great," wrote Hodges. Hodges' post came as polls showed Hillary Clinton and Trump in an increasingly tight race.



Business Insider News' entry, in: <http://www.businessinsider.com/mayor-of-minneapolis-trashes-trumps-islamophobia-defends-refugees-in-fiery-facebook-post-2016-11>, retrieved on 8.11.2016

US: Muslim ban statement 'removed' from Donald Trump's website—

A statement calling for a ban on Muslims entering the United States had been removed from Donald Trump's campaign website. The Trump team appeared to have removed the statement, in which Mr Trump said on December 7, 2015: "Donald J. Trump is calling for a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country's representatives can figure out what is going on." The page now redirects to the campaign homepage. Donald Trump's statement provoked widespread anger and claims of racism and xenophobia. President Barack Obama used Donald Trump's rhetoric about Muslims as an example of how "far right" the Republican party had become. He said "You think about it - when I ran against John McCain, John McCain and I had real differences, sharp differences, but John McCain didn't deny climate science. Donald Trump's unlikeliest supporters Play! John McCain didn't call for banning Muslims from the United States."

The Telegraph News' entry, in: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/11/10/muslim-ban-statement-removed-from-donald-trumps-website/>, retrieved on 11.11.2016

US: Virginia Republicans Visit Mosque to Address Concerns—

As Muslims worry about how the election of Donald Trump would affect them, Republican leaders visited a mosque in Sterling, Virginia. John Whitbeck, chairman of the Republican Party of Virginia, mentioned that he wanted to share a message of freedom. He said: "One of the things they need to hear from me is that the Virginia Republican party values religious liberty and we stand with them, and they're part of this community too." Many attendees of the mosque said they worry that Trump will ban Muslims from entering the country. During the campaign, Trump said that if elected he would enact a "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country's representatives can figure out what the hell is going on." Comstock and Whitbeck believed that Trump had changed his position on a Muslim ban.



Whitbeck also rejected any ban on Muslims entering the country while saying: "The Virginia Republican Party is the party of religious liberty. We don't support banning Muslims in the United States of America." Some attendees of the mosque said they still were nervous that Trump would exclude Muslims.

NBC Washington News' entry, in: <http://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/Virginia-Republicans-Visit-Mosque-to-Address-Concerns-400892091.html>, retrieved on 12.11.2016

US: Hundreds Protest Islamophobia at Austin Mosque— Organized by Muslim Solidarity ATX, the protesters held signs outside the Nueces Mosque reading "We love our Muslim Neighbors" as worshippers gathered for Friday prayers. Demonstrators also held signs reading "We stand with our Muslim neighbors," "Jews reject Trump" and "You make America great." The mosque's imam, Mohamed-Umer Esmail, addressed the crowd with a message after prayers. He said: "As long as we have wonderful people like you, America will always be great." The Islamic Center of Greater Austin estimates that more than 10,000 Muslims live in the city.

IQNA News' entry, in: <http://iqna.ir/en/news/3461466/hundreds-protest-islamophobia-at-austin-mosque>, retrieved on 20.11.2016

US: Students visit Apex Mosque to challenge misconceptions about Islam— Students visited the Apex Mosque to gain exposure to the Arabic and Islamic culture and gain better understanding of Muslim community in the area. The trip in November 2016 included a guided tour of the facility and services provided at the Apex Mosque, an exhibition of Arabic art and calligraphy, a showing of the video "Muslims in America" and a speech and prayer. The tour was organized and led by Khalid Shahu, an Arabic lecturer within the Department of Asian Studies at UNC.

WSVN.com News' entry, in: <http://www.dailytarheel.com/article/2016/11/students-visit-apex-mosque-to-challenge-misconceptions-about-islam>, retrieved on 21.11.2016

Canada: Canadian Muslims hold workshop on countering Islamophobia— A group of Muslim youth in Canada participated at a workshop learning about Islamophobia and using media to counter it. The event was organized by the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM) to help the youth push back against negative stereotypes. Co-president of Muslim and Arabs for a Secular Quebec Haroun Bouazzi was invited to speak at the workshop. He's been vocal in the media for several years addressing issues of Islamophobia. The NCCM is an independent, non-partisan and non-profit organization dedicated to protecting the human rights & civil liberties of Canadian Muslims (and by extension of all Canadians), promoting their public interests, building mutual understanding and challenging Islamophobia and other forms of xenophobia.

ABNA24 News' entry, in: <http://en.abna24.com/service/america/archive/2016/11/22/793528/story.html>, retrieved on 23.11.2016

US: San Jose residents to Muslims: you belong here— As hundreds of Muslims prayed inside the Evergreen Islamic Center, dozens of community members stood outside, holding signs that read, "Muslims make San Jose better," "Embrace diversity" and "Love trumps hate," in a grassroots show of solidarity. Members of the Bay Area chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, Pantsuit Nation of San Jose and People Acting in Community Together, among others, participated in the silent demonstration to offer support following a string of anti-Muslim attacks that had been reported nationwide since the November election. Evergreen became a target on Thanksgiving, when a hate-filled letter mailed to the Islamic center referred to Muslims as "vile and filthy people" and "Children of Satan." The letter the center received, which was also mailed to several mosques throughout California and in other states, warned that President-elect Donald Trump would do to Muslims, "what Hitler did to the Jews." Faisal Yazadi, board president of the Evergreen



Islamic Center, said the community's support is "what we need at this time." Yazadi said the center has received hundreds of supportive emails, flowers and cards from as far away as Australia since the anti-Muslim letter was received the week before.

The Mercury News' entry, in: <http://www.mercurynews.com/2016/12/02/san-jose-residents-to-muslims-you-belong-here/>, retrieved on 23.11.2016

B. In Europe:

UK: British Olympic Star Sanctioned over Islamophobia Allegations— The sport governing body for gymnastics in the UK had suspended four-time Olympic medalist Louis Smith for two months over a video in which he appeared mocking Islam. In the clip that became viral, Smith appeared with the retired gymnast Luke Carson shouting "Allahu Akbar" and mimicking a praying pose. Carson was punished by British Gymnastics and it would stay on his record for two years. British Gymnastics Chief Executive Jane Allen said: "It is regrettable that following a historic summer of achievement, the organization finds itself in this difficult position with two high-profile members in breach of our standards of conduct." Smith, who won pommel horse silver at Rio 2016, later said he was deeply sorry for his thoughtless actions. The 27-year-old athlete was well known in Britain as he won the BBC show Strictly Come Dancing in 2012. British Muslims were facing a rise in faith-based hate crimes, which analysts said would get much worse following the UK's exit from the European Union. The anti-Muslim hate monitoring group Tell MAMA said in its recent report that Islamophobic incidents in the UK increased by 326 percent since last year, rising from 146 to 437 cases.

TelesurTV News' entry, in: <http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/British-Olympic-Star-Sanctioned-Over-Islamophobia-Allegations-20161102-0009.html>, retrieved on 3.11.2016

UK: Two Polish men jailed for throwing bacon inside a mosque while yelling 'enjoy f***'**— Mateusz Pawlikowski and Piotr Czak-Zukowski approached one of the worshippers from the Al-Rahman Mosque, swore at him and threw a rasher of bacon towards him before throwing more rashers onto the floor of the prayer room.



The men, both Polish, left the mosque in Camden, North London and the police were called. They had both been drinking at an Oktoberfest event in Canary Wharf before they travelled to the mosque. DC Tracey McMath, from the Camden Community Safety Unit said: "The defendants showed a complete disregard for the faith and belief of others in this callous and highly offensive incident and I hope their convictions highlight that we will not tolerate hate crime in any of its

forms."

Express News' entry, in: <http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/728069/Polish-men-jailed-throwing-bacon-mosque>, retrieved on 3.11.2016

UK: Deputy Leader of far-right group found guilty of abusing woman in hijab— Far-right group Britain First's deputy leader was found guilty and fined after verbally abusing a woman wearing a hijab. Jayda Fransen came across Sumayyah Sharpe during a Britain First 'Christian patrol' in Luton. Ms Fransen said Muslim men were forcing her to wear a hijab because otherwise they would rape her. The Britain First member added: "that's why they are coming into my country raping women across the continent." The deputy leader was convicted of religiously aggravated harassment and fined just under £2,000. During an appearance at Luton and South Bedfordshire Magistrates' Court Ms Fransen said the words were not supposed to be offensive. District Judge Carolyn Mellanby called Ms Fransen's words offensive, insulting, and abusive, adding that the group had chosen Ms Sharpe as an easy target after embarking on a quest for trouble. The incident happened after Ms Sharpe refused to take a newspaper with a headline that read: "World War Three has begun - Islam against the world."

UK: RE teacher who posted Islamophobic comments on social media, attended far-right marches and accessed porn on school laptop is banned from classrooms — A secondary school teacher who attended a march organised by the far-right group Britain First and posted Islamophobic comments on social media had been struck off. Nicholas Hall, who taught religious studies at Soar Valley College, a comprehensive school in Leicester, admitted to posting the messages, which said Islam was 'sick' and 'a plague'. The 53-year-old also accepted that he had attended a Britain First march on one or more occasions, and admitted to a series of other matters including that he accessed pornography on a school laptop, allowed 12- and 13-year-old pupils to watch an 18-certificate film, worked as a security guard while on sick leave, and failed to take appropriate action when a student made a comment about taking drugs. A professional conduct panel ordered that Hall be banned indefinitely from teaching in any school, sixth-form college or other children's establishment in England, and said that he would not be entitled to apply for restoration of his eligibility to teach.

Mail Online News' entry, in: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3908020/RE-teacher-Nicholas-Hall-posted-Islamophobic-comments-social-media-attended-far-right-marches-accessed-porn-school-laptop-banned-classrooms.html>, retrieved on 6.11.2016

Northern Ireland: Distribution of anti-Muslim leaflets in Co Antrim criticized— Ulster Awake, Far right organization in the Northern Ireland, was criticized for distributing anti-Muslim and anti-immigration leaflets in Co Antrim. Dozens of leaflets criticizing Muslims and the "insanity of mass immigration" were left on car windscreens in Lisburn in November. The material claimed that immigration was being used as a weapon to destroy the nation states of Europe. Lisburn city's Deputy Mayor Stephen Martin condemned the action in saying: *"Everyone is entitled to express their point of view but when a group pretends to defend us all by spreading outright lies intended to divide communities, it needs condemned in the strongest possible terms."*

RTE News' entry, in: <https://www.rte.ie/news/2016/1106/829600-antimuslim-leaflets-antrim/>, retrieved on 7.11.2016

C. Rest of the World:

Turkey: Turkey launches website to report Islamophobia in games— Turkey had started a mechanism to report Islamophobic content in digital games at www.oyunlardaislamofobi.com. Turkish Minister of Youth and Sports highlighted the dangers of Islamophobic content in digital games in saying *"Digital games are now being used as a tool to spread Islamophobia by the West. Therefore, we have stepped in and taken action to save our children and youngsters from this trap in digital games. We have started awareness about this issue as a first step. We have prepared a brochure in this context."* The minister also emphasized that this issue must be seriously tackled around the world, including by global bodies such as the United Nations.

ABNA24 News' entry, in: <http://en.abna24.com/service/middle-east-west-asia/archive/2016/11/05/789984/story.html>, retrieved on 6.11.2016

Related: Turkey's 'counter-strike' against Islamophobia in video games — In January 2008, a video



game titled 'Muslim Massacre' was released as a free download on the internet. The objective of the game was to "wipe out the Muslim race" and was played through the perspective of an American hero. The game created a storm and though it received wide condemnation, it was not banned. 'Muslim Massacre' was not the first instance of a video game depicting Muslims as villains. Many others had been developed, especially after the 1991 Gulf War, and had largely gone unnoticed. A new initiative by Turkey aimed at putting the spotlight on a trend in

the gaming industry which trivialized the destruction of Islam's holiest sites and depicts Muslims as villains. Popular video games such as Call of Duty and Counter-Strike, released globally, had regularly portrayed Muslim characters as villains. Use of Arabic words, Islamic phrases such as 'Allah o Akbar' and cities in Muslim countries were associated with the 'bad guys'. Initially, the Games Islamophobia website carried names of only 12 games such as 'Muslim Massacre' and 'Minaret Attack.' The latter allowed players to blow up parts of mosques. The Turkish government's move was specifically aimed at spreading the word about Islamophobic content and receiving public feedback.

TRT World News' entry, in: <http://www.trtworld.com/life/turkeys-counter-strike-against-islamophobia-in-video-games-225921>, retrieved on 11.11.2016

Vatican: Bishop says peace, justice and education key to dialogue with Islam— Bishop Miguel Ayuso Guixot, secretary of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, said that there was a roadmap for dialogue with Islam: peace, justice and education. He explained: “On a theological level, differences still remain, and they are known. Beyond any theological difference, however, we take each other’s hand to build together the common good.” Ayuso discussed how the dialogue with Islamic institutions was progressing. He gave special mention to the restoration of relations between the Holy See and the Al-Azhar mosque in Cairo, which, along with its companion university, was the most prominent institution of Sunni Islam. Al-Azhar had broken relations with the Holy See back in 2011, when the Grand Imam Ahmed el-Tayeb labeled Pope Benedict XVI’s reaction to Christmas attacks on Alexandria churches as “interference” in Egyptian internal affairs. This year the Holy See managed to restoring dialogue with this institution. Ayuso made a first visit to Al-Azhar in February 2016 and met with the Mosque’s deputy imam, Abbas Shuman. Then the Grand Imam el Tayeb came to visit Pope Francis in the Vatican on 23 May when they decried Islamic extremist attacks against both Christians and Muslims.



Cruxnow.com News' entry, in: <https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2016/11/09/bishop-says-peace-justice-education-key-dialogue-islam/>, retrieved on 10.11.2016

SITUATION OF MUSLIMS

US: US Muslims fear wearing hijab under Trump presidency— The idea of Donald Trump being elected as President of the US still hard to bear among many American voters, and some religious groups, particularly the Muslim community, were already dreading his upcoming term. According to The Independent report, some Muslim groups were already experiencing tremendous levels of fear, with some saying they had been warned not to wear their traditional hijabs in public. The Republican President elect had been vocal with his criticism of minority and religious groups throughout his campaign and even pledged a “total and complete shutdown of Muslims” from entering the United States.

Inquirer News' entry, in: <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/843111/us-muslims-express-fear-to-wear-hijab-after-donald-trumps-victory>, retrieved on 11.11.2016

ON BURQAH AND VEIL RELATED ISSUES:

Italy: Muslim woman fined €30,000 for not removing burqa in Italy— Muslim woman in Italy had been fined €30,000 for wearing a *niqab* inside a town hall. The 40-year-old Italian citizen wore the full-body veil during a youth parliament meeting in Pordenone, northeast Italy. According to reports, the woman refused to remove the *niqab* despite the town's mayor repeatedly asking her to do so. She was asked to remove the veil so that authorities could identify her as she watched her son participate in the event. The woman was reportedly made to leave the meeting by a police officer, soon after which she returned. A tribunal initially sentenced the woman to four months' detention and a fine worth €600, however, the penalty was later converted to €30,600 fine but no jail time. With over 1.6 million Muslims, Italy is home to the fourth largest Muslim population in Europe, yet it has only eight mosques.



Pakistan Today News' entry, in: <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/blog/2016/11/12/muslim-woman-fined-e30000-for-not-removing-burqa-in-italy/>, retrieved on 13.11.2016

Netherlands: Dutch parliament approves partial face veil ban— The Dutch parliament had overwhelmingly voted to ban face veils in some public places, a law the government said was essential for security, but which opponents said pandered to anti-Muslim sentiment. The law, passed by the lower house but still requiring the senate's approval, banned veils and other items that hide the face such as ski masks and helmets in places including government buildings, public transport, schools and hospitals. The motion to ban all clothing which completely covers the face from government buildings was approved by 132 members in the 150-seat house, including Prime Minister Mark Rutte's ruling Liberal-Labour coalition. Violating the Dutch law would incur a fine of €405. Full and partial face veils divide opinion in Europe. France and Belgium have completely banned wearing veils in public and some other European countries had local or regional restrictions.

Aljazeera News' entry, in: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/11/dutch-parliament-approves-partial-face-veil-ban-161129182036899.html>, retrieved on 30.11.2016

ON DIALOGUE AMONG CIVILIZATIONS:

Italy: Interfaith Delegation from Arab Countries Holds 'Historic' Meeting with Italian Jewish Leaders— An interfaith delegation from Bahrain and other Arab countries met with Italian Jewish leaders at Rome's main synagogue. Led by the Tunis-born French Imam Hassen Chalghoumi, who was known for his opposition to extremism, the group included Muslims as well as representatives of the Eastern and Orthodox Churches, Buddhists and Sikhs. Most came from Bahrain but others were from Egypt and Lebanon. In Rome, the delegation met with various faith communities. Rome Chief Rabbi Riccardo Di Segni called their visit to the synagogue a great act of courage. He said that the great challenge today "*is not the conflict between religions, but to find an interfaith accord among the moderates of different religions, against the extremists. We have to work together for this and I hope that from this event will be born many other avenues of collaboration.*" During the meeting, the group held a minute of prayerful silence to recall victims of terrorism and, in particular, the people killed in terror attacks at the Bataclan music venue and other places in Paris one year before.

Forward News' entry, in: <http://forward.com/news/breaking-news/354306/interfaith-delegation-from-arab-countries-holds-historic-meeting-with-italy/>, retrieved on 14.11.2016

India: 'Inter-faith dialogues can bridge religious intolerance'— Rev. Dr. Jayakumar Ramachandran, founder of Academy for Church Planting & Leadership and General Secretary & Director of Indian Institute of Inter-Cultural Society, said religious intolerance was significantly increasing in the contemporary India as never before despite the land having given birth to four religions and enshrined both secularism and freedom

of speech in its Constitution. He mentioned this while presenting paper on “*Better way forward for peacemaking and prevailing in the context of multi-religious context in India: a missiological perspective,*” on the national seminar at Clark Theological College (CTC), Aolijen, Mokokchung. Rev. Dr. Ramachandran maintained that harmony in the country was devastated by various issues significantly by conflicts between religions, thereby putting up a challenge for people of diverse religions for peace to prevail. In this regard, he opined that interfaith dialogues could build effective bridges of cooperation between religious and philosophical traditions when religion is fuelling communal violence and a repulsive atmosphere. He also observed that religion had a key role in the power play of Indian politics. He pointed out that religious beliefs and political power were being intentionally interwoven by fanatic communities adding religions are used for enhancing vote banks by exploiting religious sentiments for political gains. In this connection, he said when the Constitutional provision of secularism and religious freedom were loosely worded, legislation and judiciary must play the key roles in interpreting them. The national seminar on ‘Peacemaking and Dialogue: Religious approaches in the quest for an interfaith relation,’ was organised by the Clark Centre for Peace Research at CTC on 18 and 19 November 2016. The seminar was attended by leaders and theologians from Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Christian and Catholic denominations.

Eastern Mirror News’ entry, in: <http://www.businessinsider.com/steve-bannon-donald-trump-satan-darth-vader-2016-11>, retrieved on 20.11.2016

US: Indian American philanthropist Frank Islam receives interfaith award—Indian American entrepreneur and philanthropist Frank Islam received the third Interfaith Leadership Award in November for his support of



interfaith dialogue, and contributions to the arts and higher education around the world. The award, instituted by the InterFaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington, was presented to the Potomac, MD, resident by Maryland state Sen. Jamie Raskin, who was elected to Congress from the state’s 8th Congressional district. The award ceremony, attended by dozens of leaders of various faiths, was held at the historic Metropolitan AME Church here. It was part of the 37th Annual Interfaith Concert, a celebration of religious and cultural unity through the arts. Referring to the recent presidential election campaign, marked by bitter and divisive rhetoric

against racial and ethnic minorities, Sen. Raskin said: “Americans of all faiths and background need to come together and redouble our efforts to reject hate and bigotry in all forms. We must continue to fight for a fairer and stronger America. We are stronger together. And, together, we can help shape a better future.” Messages from Sen. Ben Cardin, D-MD, and Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett were read out at the event, saying: “Frank Islam has been a staunch supporter of causes that promote diversity, religious freedom, and interfaith dialogue and cooperation.”

The American Bazaar News’ entry, in: <https://www.americanbazaaronline.com/2016/11/21/indian-american-philanthropist-frank-islam-receives-interfaith-award419668/>, retrieved on 22.11.2016

Compiled by:
Dr. Dodik Ariyanto
Dialogue & Outreach Department
Email: dariyanto@oic-oci.org