



Original: English

TENTH OIC OBSERVATORY
REPORT ON
ISLAMOPHOBIA

October 2016 – May 2017

PRESENTED TO THE
44TH COUNCIL OF FOREIGN MINISTERS

Abidjan, Republic of Côte d'Ivoire

10-11 July 2017

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FOREWORD BY THE OIC SECRETARY GENERAL

It is a pleasure for me to submit the 10th Annual Report of Islamophobia prepared by the Islamophobia Observatory, through which the OIC keeps monitoring anti- Muslim discourses, policies, and incidents, together with its various manifestations that have seriously disrupted the broad segment of Muslims' life across the world.

Through this Islamophobia report submitted to the Council of Foreign Ministers of the OIC Member States, the OIC also wishes to raise global awareness on the obvious danger of Islamophobia as well as on discriminatory policies and practices against Muslims.

The 10th Report of the Islamophobia Observatory being released today vindicates our position that the growing trend of Islamophobia has not subsided in any tangible way. Muslims have been terrorized and discriminated. Islamic sacred symbols have been insulted. People with Islamic attires were targeted with hatred. Women with hijabs were abused on streets and public spaces. Certain governments outlawed Islamic attires or applied restrictive access for Muslims to have prayer facilities. Right-wing Politicians and media spread evil images of Islam. Acts of radical and extreme groups in the name of Islam have provided xenophobes with excuses to further their agenda. Their statements and acts have not only been irresponsible, but also conducive to the radical narratives of violent groups and terrorists, jeopardizing the positive image of Islam and boosting Islamophobia across the globe.

Islamophobia commands specific measures to be taken at legal, cultural, religious, academic, political, and humanitarian areas, and I am pleased to state here that, through efforts, strategy, and programs, the OIC has been trying to tackle this issue constantly. As mandated by the Member States the OIC has been active on combating this phenomenon at political, diplomatic, operational fronts in order to raise awareness among the international community of the threats that the Islamophobia poses to global peace and security. The OIC seizes every opportunity to open doors for dialogue with other cultures and civilizations. Through sustained positive dialogue aimed at creating mutual understanding, the OIC has been addressing the issue since long. In my capacity as Secretary General I have also been raising this issue of utmost importance during my interaction with the political, economic, religious and academic elite around the globe.

I personally believe that Member States, together with the international community, need to take more serious actions to address the contemporary challenge of Islamophobia, including by enforcing laws which clearly stand for prohibition of any advocacy of religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence. Within this context, I wish to recall to all Member States that the OIC sponsored UN-HRC Resolution 16/18 has provided for 8 (eight) Points of Action that could be implemented to foster an environment of religious tolerance, peace and respect. It has garnered wide support from stakeholders among the international communities, and now is becoming the most relevant framework for addressing the whole package of issues relevant to Islamophobia. By implementing these 'Points of Action' in term maximum, I believe that the Muslim World would demonstrate to the rest of the world, its collective



respect for religious beliefs, symbols, personalities and scriptures which, eventually, build on global trust to tackle the issue of Islamophobia and other similar issues such as Christianophobia, anti-Semitism, Xenophobia, etc. In this connection, the US position as reflected during the recently concluded US-Muslim World Summit held in Riyadh, KSA encourages us to work with the new US administration to continue exerting our efforts towards the implementation of the provisions of the Resolution 16/18.

Finally, I wish to reiterate that under the terms of its Charter and in implementation of its Summit and Ministerial resolutions, the OIC has been striving to support righteousness, justice, tolerance, moderation and peace, and combating terrorism and extremism, while confronting Islamophobia. Through the submission of this report, I also wish to encourage the distinguished Member States to provide further efforts in supporting the Islamophobia Observatory and other relevant institutions, since it is obvious that without support and guidance from Member States and without allocation of proper funds, whatever efforts the OIC is currently deploying will eventually have little impact. Therefore, needless to say that constant support from the Member States is essential to help the organisation to fulfill its endeavor towards banishing hatred and racism while spreading love, justice, peace and tolerance among all humankind.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 10th Annual Report of the OIC Islamophobia Observatory covers the period from October 2016 to May 2017. The Report contains 4 (four) main chapters and an Annex.

Chapter 1 on '*Islamophobia, Intolerance, and Discriminations against Muslims*' describes the increasing trend of Islamophobia under the reviewed 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 an evil religion 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, particularly in the West. These negative stereotyping eventually ended up into the dread or hatred of Islam that includes multiple forms of discrimination against Muslims around the world, reflected through the exclusion of Muslims from economic, social, and public life. At the reviewed time period, this negative trend was assessed to have been boosted mostly by 3 (three) factors, namely: *The victory of Donald Trump, Immigrant issue in Europe, and the rise of Populism and Far-Rights in Europe*. On this Chapter, the OIC Permanent Observer Missions in New York, Brussels, and Geneva have helped the Observatory to elaborates these four factors focusing on their contribution towards the growing Islamophobia in the US and in Europe.

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 grew strong in the United States and quite concerning in 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 the US and 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) Myanmar; b) Australia; c) The occupied territory of Palestine, and d) China. These locations were chosen based on the Observatory's assessment on the level severity, or due to the potential growing of Islamophobia in the areas. They are 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, 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 concrete actions to renounce 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

These days, there was a rising tide of Islamophobia and hate speech, particularly in the framework of political campaigns in the Western countries. At the same time, there are reports and news indicating a serious surge in hate crimes and attacks against individuals perceived to be Muslims, mosques and community centers, particularly in Europe and in the US. Discrimination and intolerance against Muslims has been increasing day by day. Populist politicians were trying to unleash hatred towards Muslims by taking advantage of the negative sentiments and concerns caused by the large movement of refugees and migrants. They are all fuelling fear and anger. What most alarming is that Islamophobia and its articulation is becoming politically and popularly acceptable for the public opinion and media. Worse still, in certain country it is being institutionalized, and even formalized as government's policy.

Islamophobia is a phenomenon related to notions of fear, hate, and anger; of which one sequentially following another. Within such a cycle, 'fear' was the initial reason of Islamophobia, and in this case the fear was against Islam and anything associable with this religion 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'. All those things made the Islamophobes to 'hate' the all above-mentioned hence Islamophobia also constitutes racism and discriminations against Muslim individuals in their daily life, in media, in workplace, in political sphere, etc. It means that initially Islamophobia rests in the mind of people but it may then reflect into xenophobic attitudes of hatred and intolerance. Obviously, such a mixture could explode into 'anger', and as the consequence Islamophobia often manifests into violent acts like 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.

Islamophobia is usually growing fertile in non-Muslim societies, or in countries where Muslims are amongst the minority groups. It grows solid in places where Muslims were demographically less, like those in the US, Italy, Spain, Germany, Netherlands, Denmark, UK, Norway, Sweden, Belgium, Russia, Myanmar, China, India, Australia, etc.. 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, Islamophobia was an excess to the existing political issues. In China, Islamophobia seems to be imposed by 'local' government. In many cases in the West, Islamophobia often have strong connections with the issue of immigrant. 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 by the growing number of Muslim immigrants, etc.

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 at this report with the expectation that Stakeholders would have a picture on the trend of Islamophobia around the world during the reviewed period; and hopefully this report could be used as materials for making policies and decisions on relevant issues.

1. 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-form discrimination against Muslims, manifested into the exclusion of Muslims around the world from economic, social, and public life. Within this context, the Observatory noticed that the negative trend was mostly boosted by 4 (four) factors which have multiplied Islamophobia level particularly in Europe and in the US, namely: *The victory of Donald Trump, immigrant issue in Europe, and the rise of Populism and Far-Rights in Europe.*

1.1. The Victory of Donald Trump and the Rise of Anti-Islam Sentiment, Racism and Intolerance against Minorities in the United States¹

During his campaign, Donald Trump described the United States a country under siege from refugees and immigrants, Mexicans, and Muslims and said that "Islam hates us," and accused American Muslims of protecting terrorists. Later on, he openly campaigned for a total ban on Muslims entering the US and has since issued executive orders aimed at limiting the movement of nationals of certain Majority-Muslim countries to the US. Although, it was lately noticed that the US President has refrained from using anti-Muslim rhetoric which could optimistically be construed as a policy change, we have not yet seen concrete actions by Trump administration to address Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred. This narrative has influenced many and negatively impacted social cohesion and tolerance among fellow citizens in the US.

Islamophobia has been on the rise long before Donald Trump. Muslims were targets of negative stereotyping and prejudice in all its forms and manifestations for quite some time. Since 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001, the phenomenon of Islamophobia has increased drastically. Since then, surveillance and religious profiling of Muslims have already created an environment of mistrust between the law enforcement and American Muslims. With the rise of ISIS, fear of Islam further increased. However, after Mr. Trump's approval of those stereotypes and Islamophobic behaviors and rhetoric, Muslims were exposed to serious threats and increased discrimination. Although political rhetoric is not the only factor that contributes to the incidents and anti-Muslim hatred and discrimination, it gives it strong boost and expansion. It encourages the protagonists of Islamophobia and far right groups in the US to reenergize themselves and implement their strategies and plans in more vigorous and aggressive fashion.

Retired Lt. General Michael Flynn, President Donald Trump's former national security adviser and an anti-Muslim conspiracy theorist, said that Islam isn't a religion. Similarly, Republican New Hampshire State Rep. Ken Weyler wrote in testimony submitted to the state House, saying that "*Islam is an ideology posing as a religion. Islam is intolerant and deceitful, and its adherents are ordered to overthrow our way of life and to replace it with 'Sharia' law.*"

¹ Excerpted from report and analysis provided by the Permanent Observer Mission of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to the United Nations, New York.

In the same context, anti-immigration and anti-Muslim propaganda by some media outlets has inspired some groups to build on the ignorance of people regarding Muslims and link Islam and Muslims to terrorism. Leading Islamophobic figures like Pamela Geller, lawyer David Yerushalmi, Daniel Pipes of the Middle East Forum, commentator Steven Emerson, Robert Spencer and Frank Gaffney play a major role in the anti-Islamic lobby - which under Trump has translated into White House policy. Daniel Pipes admits that he *"will have a larger role in the Trump administration than we did in the Obama administration ... we are more connected to it, we know more people, have better relations with them."*

California State University-San Bernardino's Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism in its recent report² confirms the negative role played by the political rhetoric and suggests, *"There's very compelling evidence that political rhetoric may well play a role in directing behavior in the aftermath of a terrorist attack."* The report from the non-partisan center examined the incidence of hate crimes in the aftermath of two reactions to terrorism from political leaders. First, George W. Bush's speech following the 9/11 attacks declaring: "Islam is peace" and "the face of terror is not the true faith of Islam," and the second, Trump calling for a ban on Muslims entering the U.S. after the San Bernardino terror attack. The report found a steep rise in hate crimes following Trump's remarks and a significant drop in hate crimes after Bush's speech, relative to the number of hate crimes immediately following the initial terror attacks.

Substantiating the fact that Islamophobia has been in rise since Mr. Trump's anti-Muslim rhetoric, Abdullah Elshamy in his article published on 3 May 2017 on Al Jazeera World entitled, "Islamophobia in the USA"³ uncovers a network of Islamophobic writers, campaigners, funders and politicians who combined to bring about the conditions in which Donald Trump would be elected president in November 2016. The article quotes prominent American Muslim Edward Mitchell IV of the Council on American-Islamic Relations saying, *"So it's one thing to read anti-Muslim rhetoric on the internet or to see it on Fox News. It's another thing to hear it from the president of the United States and so normal mainstream Muslims are being squeezed between these two opposing forces ... We are essentially defending ourselves in a two-front information war."*

In an article entitled, "6 Rules of Islamophobia in America"⁴ dated 23 January 2017 the Huffington Post writer Christopher Mathias uncovers about findings of its Islamophobia Project tracking anti-Muslim violence, vandalism, discrimination, public policy and political speech throughout 2016. The project discovered that Trump supporters attacked, harassed, or plotted to kill Muslims at least 13 times during the election cycle, proving a potential link between Trump's rhetoric and the actions of supporters. We documented apparent surges in anti-Muslim incidents during Muslim holidays. The project documented nearly 400 stories of Muslims in America being attacked, threatened, scapegoated, and profiled, seeing their places of worship vandalized and their faith denigrated.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), released a report titled "The Empowerment of Hate,"⁵ on 9 May 2017 showing a 57 percent increase in anti-Muslim incidents in 2016 over the previous year. CAIR's new report, also notes that from 2014 to 2016, anti-Muslim bias incidents jumped 65 percent. *"It is time for the Trump administration to seriously address the growing anti-minority sentiment in our nation, prompted at least in part by his toxic campaign rhetoric, the appointment of Islamophobes to policy-making posts and the introduction of Islamophobic policies such as*

² <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/09/trump-muslims-islamophobia-hate-crime/500840/>

³ <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/aljazeeraaworld/2017/05/islamophobia-usa-170501131435789.html>

⁴ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/islamophobia-america_us_587cf491e4b0e58057ff98e0

⁵ <https://www.cair.com/press-center/14322-new-cair-report-shows-more-than-50-percent-spike-in-anti-muslim-incidents.html>

the 'Muslim ban,'" said Corey Saylor, director of CAIR's Department to Monitor and Combat Islamophobia, co-author of the report.

The most frequent types of incidents documented by CAIR in 2016 involved harassment, the FBI, employment issues, hate crimes, and denials of religious accommodations:

- Harassment, a non-violent or non-threatening bias incident accounted for 18 percent of the total number of incidents.
- Incidents during which the complainant was questioned by FBI employees or otherwise appeared to be inappropriately targeted by that agency comprised 15 percent of cases, making this the second largest category.
- Employment issues - including denial of work, being passed over for promotion, or harassment by a supervisor or other senior staff - was the third largest category, accounting for 13 percent of the total.
- Hate crimes placed fourth, accounting for 12 percent of the cases CAIR documented.
- The most prevalent trigger of an anti-Muslim bias incidents in 2016 was the victim's ethnicity or national origin, accounting for 35 percent of the total. Sixteen percent of incidents occurred as a result of women wearing a headscarf. Other Muslim-related activities - events such as rallies, community picnics, or a day at the state capitol visiting legislators organized primarily for Muslims - constituted an additional 11 percent.

There is little doubt that if anti-Muslim rhetoric and activities in the US are left unchecked, hate mongers and extremist groups in the west as in the Muslim world grow stronger and pose serious danger to the peace and security.

1.2. Immigrant Issue and the Growing Resistance in Europe⁶

Against the backdrop of growing anti-Muslim populist sentiments whipped up by the far-right groups for political gains, Europe continued to be affected by strong anti-immigrant and anti-refugee backlash and negative attitudes towards Muslims. The anti-immigration and anti-Muslims rhetoric had also entered electoral agenda where rightist populist parties were scape-goating migrants and refugees particularly the Muslims for every-ill in the society. The flawed claim of the rightist elements equating terrorism with Islam also contributed to deepening of Islamophobia across Europe and gradually institutionalising it. This had negative consequences for both the Muslim minority communities already living in Europe, some residing for generations and already citizens, as well as for the new migrants and refugees coming from Muslim countries. What is notable was that such resistance was coming from the EU members with the smallest Muslim communities, namely Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Obviously, the far-right parties in several of the EU countries were setting the tone of the migration debate, focusing on Muslim migrants, capitalising on the falsely perceived link between immigration and security. Most of the recent terrorist attacks in the EU countries were carried out by European citizens, but the constant association of and an immediate reaction to a terrorist attack by an immigrant resonated strongly in Europe. On the other hand, those who blamed

⁶ Excerpted from report and analysis provided by the Permanent Observer Mission of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to the European Union, Brussels.

immigrants for crimes and terrorism had created social and political climate that hampered the integration of migrants already in Europe. Furthermore, negative attitudes against Europe's Muslim minorities and new immigrants or refugees coming from Muslim countries would also contributed to their alienation from their host societies, and in the process might even radicalise a number of them. Meanwhile, European countries highlighted security and employment issues to justify restrictions on the reception of refugees and the granting of asylum applications. Yet Southern countries like Jordan, Lebanon, Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, continued to receive the highest proportion of refugees due to conflicts in the Middle East, alike Afghanistan and Bangladesh who hosted a high number of the Rohingyas from Myanmar, this fact mostly remained unaccounted for in the European migration debate. Similarly, the contribution of migrants to the growth of the economies of Europe, which were increasingly in need of labour in a context of demographic decline was not well reflected or shared with the society. In contrast what the populists in particular eager to highlight was that migrants were taking up the jobs and that the Muslims in particular were creating security threats. Thereby the ultra-right parties were supplanting xenophobic fanaticism with nationalism thus arguing against immigration particularly against Muslim immigration on security and economic grounds.

In a hearing session in the European Parliament on 2 May organised by European Network Against Racism (ENAR), it was raised that in several EU member states, governments had clearly stated that Muslim migrants were unwelcome. What to be noted was that the term "refugee" was deliberately avoided in such discourse in order to evade criticism for violating international protection responsibility as underlined in the principle "non-refoulement". It was also stated that Denmark and Hungary had launched official adverts either at home or abroad to make it as obvious as possible that certain migrants were not welcome. One could make the right guess that Muslims would tend to fall in the "unwelcome" category.

Mainstream and social media were also instrumental in projecting refugees as threats by influencing anti-migrant public opinion and overall climate of suspicion against Muslim migrants through dissemination of fake news about the religion or migrant status of the perpetrator of a terrorist act. What most alarming was that the new counter-terrorism and security measures invariably affected the migrants disproportionately, especially if they happen to be Muslims. Religious and racial profiling was clearly evident in almost all the EU member states, especially on suspicion of radicalisation. In addition to the rising numbers of recorded racially motivated crimes, it was difficult to get clear statistics on discrimination of migrants and refugees which often gets unrecorded as such. Furthermore, in Europe as in many other countries, the migrants and refugees by law were not entitled to certain rights and privilege that were provided to the citizens. The access to the migrants to labour market was also difficult, especially for those who are from countries outside Europe. Finding themselves mostly in informal market, especially if their migration status is irregular, they were subjected to discrimination and exploitation.

Although the voters both in the Netherlands and France have rejected the right-wing anti-immigrant anti-Muslim populists parties of Greet Wilders and Marie Le Pen, and it is hoped that German elections in September would have similar pattern, it nonetheless remains evident that anti-migrants/refugees sentiments will continue. Notably, however, one cannot remain complacent at the defeat of the populist anti-immigration anti Muslim parties in the elections. If anything, they have succeeded is to further polarise the society by the narrative of "us" against "them". The ultimate risk of the society's continued fragmentation with increasingly fearful publics, mostly driven by discontent over the immigrant issue and growing anti-Muslim rhetoric and hatred, will still be real in Europe.

With member-states seeking tighter controls of external borders and in the face of hardening national resistance from many, there seems to be little that the EU as an institution could offer except in maintaining a holistic approach to managing migration/refugee crisis. The Valletta Summit of January 2017 took a series of measures aimed at curbing the flow of African migrants via Libya. It has already embarked on new migration partnership targeting the socio-economic development in countries of origin/transit mainly in Africa, including Egypt and Libya to address the central

Mediterranean migration routes. It has opened up discussions with Lebanon and Jordan in line with the EU-Turkey agreement of March 2016. The EU Agenda on Migration which aims at relocation of migrants within its membership in order to alleviate pressure from Italy and Greece has largely remained unimplemented, mainly due to rejection of principle of “solidarity and fair sharing” from certain states including Austria, Denmark, Hungary and Poland.

Muslims living in the European area will continue in 2017 to suffer the perverse effects of the migratory flow with the resurgence of the campaign of denigration of the extreme right which makes the phenomenon of immigration their weapon to gain popular support particularly in Austria, the Netherlands, France, Germany and Italy. A survey published by a Think Tank in London shows that 55% of Europeans are against immigration from Muslim majority countries. Such negativities is also due to the fear or misconception held by many Europeans that Muslim population is rising steadfastly and by 2050 it will be dominant .

Studies and reality highlight the need to combat the stereotypes that develop Islamophobia through the intensification of awareness campaigns and the promotion of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue. On a positive note, in many countries however, there were also citizens-driven initiative such as the ‘refugees welcome’ marches and counter-protests. There are important initiatives by the civil society and think-tanks to hold events on inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogues that can promote tolerance for diversities and inclusivity of migrants. One would only hope that sooner than later good sense would prevail on European policy makers that a rapidly aging and demographically declining Europe has much to benefit from inflow of immigrants and that tolerance towards Muslim minorities. European policy makers are beginning to realise that rise of xenophobia and anti-Muslim hatred not only triggers off a vicious cycle of hatred and intolerance among diverse communities but also affects the entire socio-economic fabric including the rise of home grown radicalism. There are few mentionable steps taken by the EU in the right direction including it appointment of an EU Coordinator in charge of the fight against anti Muslim hatred and signing of code of conduct by the European Commission and IT Companies in May last year to combat spread of illegal hate speech online in Europe. The European Commission has setup a High level Group on Racism, Xenophobia and other forms of intolerance. The European Parliament (EP) Anti-Racism and Diversity Intergroup (ARDI) also tries to promote racial equality non-discrimination (including discriminations based on religion and nationality) in the work of the EP.

1.3. The Rise of Populism and Far-Rights in Europe⁷

In recent years, right-wing populist parties have gained popularity and electoral successes throughout Europe. Several new right-wing populist actors have begun to change the European political landscape and many EU countries continue to face a number of internal destabilizing political trends. In several European countries, including Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Switzerland, right-wing parties participate in the governments. The United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), the French Front National, the Alternative for Germany (AfD), the Austrian Freedom Party (FPO) and the Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV) are enjoying record popularity. The UK's decision to leave the EU and Donald Trump's victory have further contributed to the rise of populism and far-right parties in Europe who gained significant results in the recent elections throughout the continent.

According to the analyses, the rising populism and recent success of right-wing parties cannot be explained only because of the immigration and the persistent financial crisis. Switzerland, Austria, Norway and Denmark are some of

⁷ Excerpted from report and analysis provided by the Permanent Observer Mission of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to the United Nations, Geneva.

the richest countries in the world, but have some of the most successful right-wing populist parties in Europe. The Swiss People's party (the Schweizerische Volkspartei, SVP) has been continually present in the national government coalition. The financial crisis of 2008 certainly played a role in the reemergence of neo-Nazi, fascist organizations such as the Golden Dawn party in Greece and the Jobbik in Hungary but in many countries, voters expressed their concerns about a variety of socio-political challenges. Their national causes including fear of losing jobs, national autonomy, old traditions and values, disappointment with mainstream policies, government accountability, economic inequality and strong skepticism towards the European Union have been combined with stereotypes and prejudices about immigrants and xenophobic, anti-immigrant and anti-Islamic overtones.

Besides politicians, influential people from academia and journalists are fueling anti-Islam rhetoric and are challenging now the very notion of Islamophobia by saying that it is not a rejection of Islam but a tool designed to discourage people from criticizing Islam.

Despite the fact that the national populist and right-wing parties have been on rise due to austerity measures and immigration, it is noted that they have different objectives and programs. According to Professor Ruth Wodak, multivariate analyses demonstrate that some right-wing parties gain support via an ambivalent relationship with fascist and Nazi pasts (Austria, Hungary, Italy, Romania and France). Others focus primarily on a perceived threat from Islam (the Netherlands, Denmark, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland). Some restrict their propaganda to a perceived threat to their national identities from ethnic minorities (Hungary, Greece, Italy and the United Kingdom). Still others endorse a fundamentalist Christian conservative-reactionary agenda (Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine and Russia).

During the period from November 2016 to May 2017, the presidential elections in Austria and France and the general elections in the Netherlands have seen the rise of far-right candidates who failed to take power but gained significant results.

In Austria, voters rejected Norbert Hofer of the Freedom Party of Austria (FPO) during the second round of presidential elections on 4 December 2016. Alexander Van der Bellen, a retired economics professor backed by the Green party, was elected President of the country. The Austrian presidency is largely ceremonial but the President may exercise his prerogative to dissolve the government. Hofer warned he would not hesitate to dissolve the government if it did not act against immigration.

In the first round of the elections held in May 2016, the Austrian interior ministry confirmed that Hofer's final score was 49.7%, against 50.3% for Van der Bellen. During the campaign, Norbert Hofer, far-right refugee-blocking candidate, called for a complete end to immigration and said that "Islam has no place in Austria". Hofer was responsible for drafting the new Freedom Party manifesto focusing on country's "identity" and "ethnic culture", which is specific for native Austrians and not for immigrants or their children. He stated that carrying guns is a "natural consequence" of immigration.

Speaking at the FPO annual New Year meeting in Salzburg in January 2017, Hofer compared Nazism to extreme Islamist beliefs and stated that anyone who found European democratic rules unacceptable "are free to return to their Muslim country". In the same meeting, Heinz-Christian Strache, president of the party, criticized Islam as fascist and called for an "efficient" law banning "political Islam". He stated that this ban would apply to all foreign sponsorship of Islamic institutions and organizations in Austria.

In the Netherlands, general elections were held on 15 March 2017 to elect 150 members of the House of Representatives. The anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant Party for Freedom (PVV) of Geert Wilders won 19 seats, which marked the most significant rise of its popularity among Dutch voters seen so far. During the campaign, Wilders had

been running on his party's manifesto "The Netherlands Ours Again" calling for the "de-Islamisation" of the country, ending all immigration from Muslim countries, closing down mosques and Islamic schools, asylum centers, banning on the Qur'an and imprisoning radical Muslims who have committed no crimes on a "preventative" basis.

In France, the second round of the Presidential elections, held on 7 May 2017, opposed Emmanuel Macron, independent centrist, and Marine Le Pen, far-right National Front candidate. Macron defeated Le Pen by 66.1% to 33.9%. The popularity of Marine Le Pen and her far-right National Front party has grown in the recent years particularly after a series of terrorist attacks that have shaken the country. Since Marine Le Pen took over the party in 2011 from her father Jean-Marie Le Pen, she has tried to distance the party from its reputation for racism and xenophobia. However, during the speech formally launching her presidential campaign on 5 February 2017 in Lyon, Marine Le Pen said: "We do not want to live under the rule or threat of Islamic fundamentalism. They are looking to impose on us gender discrimination in public places, full body veils, prayer rooms in the workplace, prayers in the streets, and huge mosques or the submission of women".

In Germany, federal elections will be held on 24 September 2017 to elect the members of the Bundestag. Since 2013, the anti-immigrant party Alternative for Germany (AfD) of Frauke Petry adopted an anti-Islam sentiment and gained media attention for its anti-immigrant statements. Members of the party supported an election manifesto in 2016 claiming that Islam is not compatible with the German constitution and calling for a ban on minarets and the burqa.

2. MANIFESTATIONS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

2.1. Islamophobia in the USA and Canada

2.1.1. Polls and Reports

The confirmation of Donald Trump's Presidency has left Muslims living in the US with deep concerns. Since very early Mr. Trump has been standing on the opposite stance against Islam and Muslims, a position clearly shown along his political campaign. Trump declared that "Islam hates Americans" hence he proposed to America for banning Muslims from entering the country and heightened surveillance of mosques across the nation, giving disaffected bigoted voters exactly what they wanted. He embraced the hateful language of Quran-burning rallies and anti-mosque protests. As the result, within a week following the election, massive Islamophobic and racist harassments or intimidations were reported, which was a clear indicator that American Muslims were reeled and scared by Trump's election. Interestingly, such a growing xenophobia was not only targeting Muslims but also Jews and some other ethnic and religious minorities i.e. Black and Hispanic Americans.

According to FBI's data, there were 5,850 hate crimes in the US since last 2016, and nearly 60 percent of recently reported hate crimes in the US 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 if compared to those in 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 national hate crime data. However, in a 2013 report, the Department of Justice (DOJ) 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 781.⁸

Among the most concerning Islamophobia in the US was the violent acts targeting mosques and Islamic centers which spread high across the US since Mr. Trump confirmed victory. On 7 January, the Islamic Center of Lake Travis in Austin caught on fire. A week later, on 14 January, the Islamic Center of Eastside in Bellevue, Washington, burned. Two weeks after that, on 27 January, several hours after President Donald Trump signed an executive order banning immigrants

⁸ See: Motherjones.com News' entry "Hate Crimes Against Muslims Spiked 67 Percent", in: <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2016/11/heres-what-we-know-about-hate-crimes-us>, retrieved on 19.11.2016

from seven Muslim-majority countries, a fire destroyed the Islamic Center of Victoria in Texas. Then, on 24 February, a blaze broke out at the front entrance of the Daarus Salaam Mosque near Tampa. US Authorities had ruled that three of the four fires were caused by arson. The mosque fires came amid increased fear about hate crimes against minority religious groups. In recent weeks, scores of bomb threats were called into Jewish community centers and schools around the country and graveyards in Jewish cemeteries in three states were vandalized. On 25 February, somebody threw a rock through a window of the Masjid Abu Bakr mosque in Denver. In Redmond, Washington, vandals destroyed the Muslim Association of Puget Sound mosque's entrance sign on two occasions within two months of the election. Two days after the inauguration, a woman shattered the windows of the Davis Islamic Center in California, and left strips of raw bacon on a door handle. In the last week of February, a white man shot two Indian men at a Kansas bar after making racial slurs, questioning their immigration status, and shouting, "*Get out of my country.*" In Bellevue, Washington, six days before Mr Trump's inauguration, surveillance cameras caught a man walking toward the Islamic Center of Eastside while carrying a backpack and a gallon jug, and less than a minute later, the mosque was on fire. Hours after President Donald Trump signed the controversial executive order banning immigration from seven Muslim-majority countries, someone intentionally set fire to the Islamic Center of Victoria in Texas. The blaze caused more than \$500,000 in damage, and completely destroyed the mosque, shaking the Muslim American community in south Texas. The fire at the Daarus Salaam Mosque in Thonotosassa, Florida was at least the third time in seven months that a mosque in the Tampa area had been set on fire, following incidents at the Islamic Education Center in July and the Masjid Omar mosque in August.⁹



There was clear indicators that Trump's election has left American Muslims reeling and scared. American Muslims has been living with anxiety 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.¹⁰ The same fear was even evident among the

⁹ See: BuzzFeed News' entry "Four Mosques Have Burned In Seven Weeks — Leaving Many Muslims and Advocates Stunned", in: https://www.buzzfeed.com/albertsamaha/four-mosques-burn-as-2017-begins?utm_term=.dfzWdaKVd#.clK4Xq1KX, retrieved on 2.3.2017

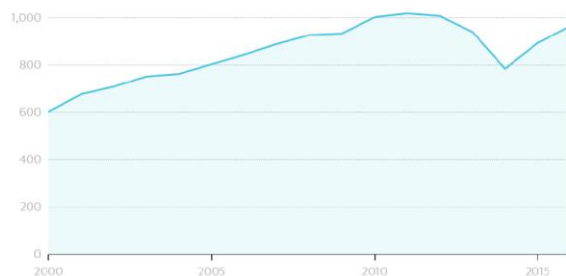
¹⁰ See: ABC News' entry "Trump's Election Leaves American Muslims Reeling and Scared", in: <http://abcnews.go.com/>, seen on 23.11.2016

security officers who comes to be Muslims, which found its proof when a group of NYPD Muslim officers requested meeting with Trump after spike in racist attacks. The group of police officers, including one who was the victim of an alleged hate crime earlier in December, requested a meeting with President-elect Donald Trump for “guidance on how they will be protected” in the wake of such crimes. In a letter to Trump, Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams wrote of the heightened tensions following the long and arduous national elections which manifested into a disturbing and dangerous pattern of hate crimes in big cities and small towns across America. According to the New York City Police Department (NYPD), there had been 115 percent spike in hate crimes targeting Jewish, LGBTQ and Muslim communities since 8 November. He requested a meeting between Trump and representatives of the 900 Muslim-American officers belonging to the NYPD, the largest Muslim force in the country.¹¹

Following the divisive presidential election campaign, more than 700 Islamophobic and racist harassment or intimidation incidents 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, violated federal hate crime and other civil rights laws. Civil rights groups had signaled alarm over attacks they said had targeted minorities since Republican Donald Trump won the presidential election on 8 November. There had also been reports of harassment toward Trump supporters.¹²

A report by the Southern Poverty Law Center mentioned that anti-Muslim hate groups nearly triple in US since 2016, from 34 to more than 100. The center credited the “*incendiary rhetoric*” of Donald Trump’s presidential campaign with fueling the rise in anti-Muslim hate, along with anger over terror attacks like the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando in

Hate groups, 2000-2016



Source: Southern Poverty Law Center | Graphics: Jan Diehm/The Guardian

June 2016. Several senior White House officials, including Steve Bannon, Steven Miller, and Kellyanne Conway, were mentioned as “*serious anti-Muslim ideologues*”. Mark Potok, the main author of the report, said: “*It’s hardly like the departure of Michael Flynn is going to mitigate the really serious onslaught directed at American Muslims.*” The new report found there were now more than 900 active hate groups across the US – from Ku Klux Klan chapters to neo-Nazi hubs to racist black separatist organizations – an uptick of less than 3% since 2015, according to the group’s annual count. This was slightly lower than the group’s all-time high count of 1,018 hate groups in 2011. Trump’s meteoric rise in the

past year electrified many of these racists and far-right extremists, the report concluded. At the same time, Trump’s campaign might have also drained energy from independent extremist rallies and gatherings, as far-right supporters chose instead to attend mainstream Trump rallies. The number of ‘in-person’ extremist events declined in 2016, still according to the report.¹³

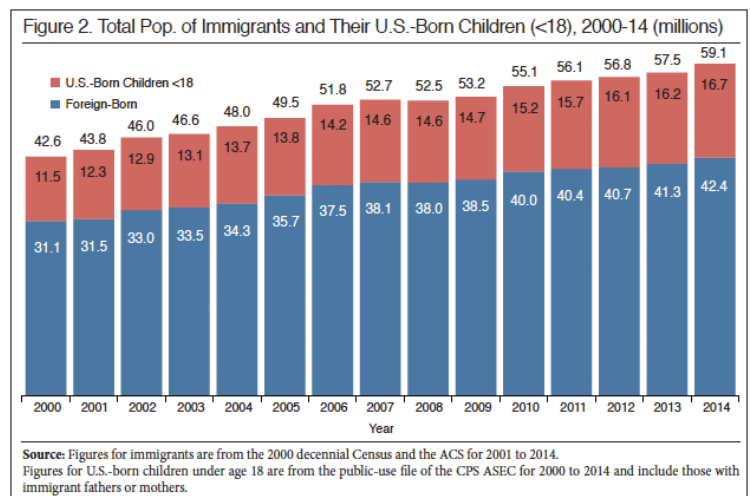
¹¹ See: IBTimes News’ entry “Hate Crimes Against Muslims: NYPD Officers Request Meeting With Trump After Spike In Racist Attacks”, in: <http://www.ibtimes.com/hate-crimes-against-muslims-nypd-officers-request-meeting-trump-after-spike-racist-2458557>, retrieved on 13.12.2016

¹² See: Daily Sabah News’ entry “More than 700 Islamophobic, racist incidents reported in a week in US, report says”, 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

¹³ See: The Guardian News’ entry “Anti-Muslim hate groups nearly triple in US since last year, report finds”, in: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/feb/15/anti-muslim-hate-groups-increase-far-right-neo-nazis>, retrieved on 16.2.2017

Therefore, it was not a surprise when another report said that Muslims had faced the most discrimination in the US. A Pew Research Center survey released in December 2016 found that 82% of Americans believed Muslims face discrimination in the United States. A majority (57%) believed they face a lot of unjust or prejudicial treatment, which was a 12% increase from 2013. The survey revealed that Americans believed Muslims face discrimination the most, with blacks (76%), gays and lesbians (76%), Hispanics (70%) and women (60%) following behind. The survey also said a lot fewer Americans think Jews (44%) and evangelical Christians (42%) face a lot or some discrimination. About 39% of Americans said whites face some form of discrimination in the US. The findings also said that about 49% of Americans believed that Islam was no more likely than other faiths to promote violence. The percentage varied from different education levels. Americans with postgraduate (64%) or college degrees (57%) believed that Islam was not more violent than other religions, while 43% of high school graduates and 49% Americans with some college education believed that to be the case. The survey was conducted several weeks after Donald Trump's victory.¹⁴

It was believed that the harsh approach of Trump *vis-à-vis* Muslims was mainly driven by the immigrants issue in the US. According to a report, the number of immigrants in the country has now reached at 42.4 million, meaning that there were now more immigrants in America than ever before, fueled by a massive flood from Muslim nations, and the growing numbers were substantially impacting public services like public schools, according to a weighty new analysis of Census Bureau data. There were 10.9 million students from immigrant households in public schools, accounting for 23 percent of all public school students, according to the Center for Immigration Studies. While the doors remained open on the US-Mexico border, the biggest percentage increase in immigration were all from largely Muslim nations. According to the Director of the center publishing the report: *"The sending countries with the largest percentage increases in immigrants living in the United States from 2010 to 2014 were Saudi Arabia (up 93 percent), Bangladesh (up 37 percent), Iraq (up 36 percent), Egypt (up 25 percent), and Pakistan, India, and Ethiopia (each up 24 percent)."*¹⁵



Despite the severity of Islamophobia in the US since he entered the White House, President Trump did not speak up. Mosques had been vandalized and even set on fire, prominent Muslim civil rights leaders had been threatened with physical assault, and Muslim university students had been targeted with racist fliers and propaganda, but Trump and his administration had very little to say that would reassure America's 3.3 million Muslims that their leaders, institutions, and sacred spaces were safe. Corey Saylor, a member at the Council on American-Islamic Relations, said that her organization was waiting on Trump to speak out, after a significant rise in anti-Muslim incidents over the past year. Trump's inability to understand the fears and concerns of American Muslims was apparent even before he won the election. During a presidential debate, when an American Muslim asked him directly how he would combat

¹⁴ See: Mic News' entry "Americans believe Muslims face the most discrimination in the US, new survey says", in: <https://mic.com/articles/161737/americans-believe-muslims-face-the-most-discrimination-in-the-us-new-survey-says#.6aboqkEhc>, retrieved on 10.12.2016

¹⁵ See: Washington Examiner News' entry "Record 42.4M immigrants, 23% of school kids, Muslims biggest jump", in: <http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/census-record-42.4m-immigrants-23-of-school-kids-muslims-biggest-jump/article/2603543>, retrieved on 5.10.2016

Islamophobia, he turned the question into an opportunity to rant about radical Islamic terrorism. American Muslims saw that attitude reappear in the White House, when a reporter asked White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer about the rise in anti-Muslim hate groups during a press conference, but Spicer dodged the question, speaking instead about radical Islamic terrorism. Like his boss, he ignored the fact that Islamophobic groups were fueling hatred and even calling for violence against American citizens. Reports of anti-Muslim harassment spiked immediately after the election, with some leaders claiming that Trump's rhetoric had emboldened hate groups. At the same time, anti-Semitism had also been on the rise. The Anti-Defamation League recorded a troubling rise in hate speech against Jewish journalists online. After the election, several schools and universities reported anti-Semitic vandalism on their campuses. Since January 2017, at least 69 bomb threats had been called into 55 Jewish Community Centers across the country, caused fear and aggravation in the Jewish community.¹⁶

Instead of trying to address the issue, Trump's reign made clear that Islam was the Public Enemy Number One. Among the most notorious instances was the issuance of a racist, Islamophobic and a state-sponsored provocation which flew in the face of America's self-proclaimed values of freedom and equality. The policy was called as '*Executive Order Protecting The Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into The United States*', that suspend entry for nationals of certain Muslim countries.

Anger and dismay rippled across the world as politicians, community leaders and even a sports star reacted to the entry ban US President Donald Trump imposed on refugees and citizens of the seven Muslim-majority nations. Condemnation mixed with concern about families with traveling members who could be prevented from returning to the United States they call home. Olympic long-distance running champion Mo Farah — born in Somalia, citizen and knight of Britain, US resident and currently training in Ethiopia — wondered how he would tell his children that "*daddy might not be able to come home.*" The ban, Farah said in a statement on his Facebook page, "*comes from a place of ignorance and prejudice*" and "*seems to have made me an alien.*" Etihad Airways, the United Arab Emirates' national airline, said some of its passengers were affected by the new policies and like other major airlines, was working closely with American officials on the matter. Leaders of Britain and Germany joined other American allies in criticizing Trump's entry ban, even as some far-right politicians expressed hope the move would inspire similar measures in Europe. British Prime Minister Theresa May did not agree with Trump's order and would challenge the US government if it had an adverse effect on British nationals. A petition on the British Parliament's website attracted hundreds of thousands of signatures backing its call for Trump, who had been invited to meet Queen Elizabeth II, to be barred based on misogyny and vulgarity. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who had drawn fire for her government's welcoming refugee policies, also regretted the ban. The European Union's foreign policy chief, Federica Mogherini, also was sharp in her criticism of Trump's move. The order Trump included a 90-day ban on travel to the US by citizens of Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia and Yemen, and a 120-day suspension of the US refugee program.¹⁷

¹⁶See: The Huffington Post News' entry "Anti-Muslim Hate Crimes are Spiking in the US Donald Trump Won't Speak Up", in: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-islamophobia-anti-Semitism_us_58b08debe4b0780bac2938b4, retrieved on 28.2.2017

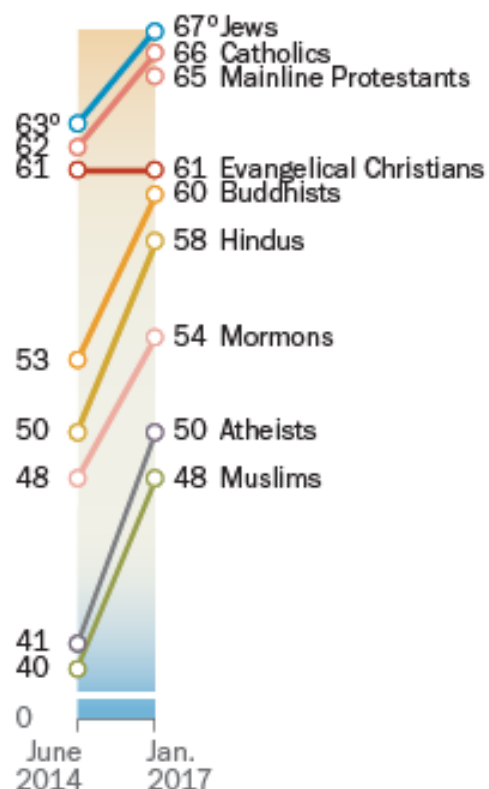
¹⁷ See: Yahoo News' entry "President Trump's Immigration Ban Fuels Anger around the World", in: <https://www.yahoo.com/celebrity/president-trump-immigration-ban-fuels-231539752.html>, retrieved on 31.1.2017

The good thing to note was that, amidst the escalating hatred and violence following Donald Trump's inauguration, more Americans saw Muslims and Jews positively. As President Donald Trump ascended to the White House on a campaign supported by people with anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic views, the American population overall had an increasingly positive views towards Muslims and Jews. A study by the Pew Research Center found that Americans had warmer feelings towards nearly all religious groups than they did three years before. In June 2014, US adults rated Muslims a 40 on a 0-100 "feeling thermometer." In 2017, Muslims were rated 48. In 2014 Jews rated 63 and now rate 67, which is the highest rating of any religious group. All religious groups measured were now thought of as neutral or warmly, based on Pew's feeling thermometer. Although Muslims remained the lowest-ranked group, they moved from 'cool' to 'neutral'. Better feelings overall towards religious groups was consistent across political party affiliation, gender and age. For some age differences remained: Young adults saw Muslims much more positively than people aged 30 and over. Those aged 18-29 rank Muslims a 58 on the thermometer, while the ranking diminishes successively for the older participants. Jews were thought of most positively of any religious group of those aged 30-49 and those aged 50-64. The youngest Americans ranked Buddhists the highest at 66, while the oldest Americans ranked mainline protestants the highest, at 75. There were also differences between Republicans and Democrats. Republicans viewed evangelical Christians the warmest, and view Muslims the coolest. Democrats viewed Jews the warmest, and Mormons the coolest. Republicans also rank more religious groups warmer than Democrats, with evangelical Christians, Catholics, Jews and Mainline Protestants all ranked higher than the warmest rating given by Democrats, Jews. Trump had caused concern among Muslims for talk of a 'Muslim ban' and for signing and executive order that restricted legal immigration from seven Muslim-majority countries. That order was currently suspended and being reviewed by the courts. Jews had also been rattled by Trump's placement of Stephen Bannon in the White House as a presidential adviser, and the administration's statement on Holocaust Memorial Day that failed to mention Jews at all. Evangelical Christians heavily supported Trump in the election, with 81 percent casting votes for the Republican. Each religion was most likely to view their own group most positively.¹⁸

Various studies showing the similar increase of favorable views on Muslims in the US— despite acts of terrorism in San Bernardino, California, and Orlando. Jews (67) and Catholics (66) continued to receive the warmest

Americans feeling warmer toward variety of religious groups

Mean thermometer ratings



Note: Based on respondents who received version of "feeling thermometer" question that used slider; see topline for more detail. In June 2014, respondents were not asked to rate mainline Protestants. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 9-23, 2017.

"Americans Express Increasingly Warm Feelings Toward Religious Groups"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

¹⁸ See: Bradenton Herald News' entry "Amid Trump rise, more Americans see Muslims and Jews positively", in: <http://www.bradenton.com/news/nation-world/national/article133107654.html>, retrieved on 17.2.2017

ratings, the survey showed. Evangelical Christians were the only group whose rating has stayed steady at 61 since 2014. Buddhists and Hindus also gained favor and were rated 60 and 58, respectively, while mainline Protestants, who were not rated in 2014, notched a 65 in the new survey. Members of the Utah-based Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints earned their highest mark (66) from Jewish adherents and their lowest (40) from atheists. People on both sides of the political spectrum see Mormons more favorably than they did in 2014, but left-leaning Americans view them as the most unfavorable religious group, while right-leaning participants consider Muslims the least favorable. Younger respondents, below age 30, rated their coolest feelings toward Mormons (54) and their warmest were aimed at Buddhists (66). Participants older than 65 expressed a more polarized view, putting Muslims and atheists at 44, while mainline Protestants registered at 75. They put Mormons at 59.¹⁹

2.1.2. Islamophobic Discourses and Campaigns

- “5th of November, it is national burn a mosque 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: 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.²⁰

- “The only good Muslim is a dead Muslim” -

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. 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?*”²¹

¹⁹ See: Mic.com News’ entry “Muslims, Mormons viewed more favorably in America today than in 2014, survey finds”, in: <https://mic.com/articles/168857/people-want-south-carolina-schools-to-stop-using-textbooks-that-teach-islam-to-students#w8jWz4OzQ>, retrieved on 17.2.2017

²⁰ See: Express’ News entry “Man arrested after Facebook threats to burn down mosques on Bonfire Night”, in: <http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/729133/Man-arrested-Facebook-threats-burn-down-mosques-Bonfire-Night>, retrieved on 6.11.2016

²¹ See: Salon News’ entry “Kansas GOP shamelessly fuels Islamophobia with campaign flier warning Muslim residents might be ISIS militants”, 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

- “FK Allah” -**

A vandal scrawled “F**K Allah” on a bench inside the Fort Hamilton Parkway F and G station on the border between Windsor Terrace and Kensington, shocking local leaders who said it was the first Islamophobic graffiti they had seen in the area in more than a year and that they blamed Donald Trump’s victory for emboldening bigots to once again blight the area with their hate. Kensington had been attacked with both anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic graffiti for several years since 2013, especially along Ocean Parkway, where mailboxes and storefronts could frequently be found debased with swastikas and messages defaming Allah. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority was not aware of the vandalism until contacted, and the agency dispatched a cleanup crew in response.²²

- “Koran is bullsh*t hatred cover to cover” -

A number of libraries across the US had seen an increased number of anti-Muslim acts of vandalism and hate speech in the wake of the election of Republican candidate Donald Trump. A survey by the American Libraries Association (ALA) found that copies of the Koran and books about Islam had been defaced with swastikas and other hate speech at a number of libraries. In Oregon and Illinois, libraries were reporting defaced books and hateful graffiti. An Illinois vandal defaced seven books and adding swastikas and comments about the prophet Muhammad in a copy of *The Koran for Dummies*, copies of the Qur’an, textbooks and conservative commentator Glenn Beck’s *It’s All About Islam*. Some other recent hate incidents in libraries: A student at the University of New Mexico was studying in the school’s library when she was approached by a man who tried to remove her hijab. Administrators at Reed College in Portland, Ore., discovered hateful, threatening messages and swastikas on the walls of the college’s library. Anti-Semitic graffiti was scrawled on the window of a library branch in Toronto.²³

- “If the Mosque Comes the Mayor Go’s” -

Plans to build a Muslim community center and mosque in New Jersey were delayed again by local officials. It had been more than a year since the first tense zoning board meeting in Bayonne, where residents for and against the mosque clashed. At the time, anti-mosque protesters held signs that read “*If the Mosque Comes the Mayor Go’s*,” while others just read “Trump.” Counter-protesters held “No to RACISM” and “Anti-Muslim Bigotry” signs. After that meeting there was a series of delays. During a ten-minute break of the meeting, a member of the audience using a crowded bathroom loudly asked, “Does anybody want a pork-chop?” and called Muslims “Hajis.” He added: “*Ain’t no one taking my Bayonne*.” Audience members against the mosque, one after the other, grilled the engineers hired by Muslims for Bayonne to conduct studies on the proposed building site and traffic impact for the zoning board.²⁴

²² See: Brooklyn Daily News’ entry “Islamophobic graffiti scrawled in subway station near Kensington”, in: <http://www.brooklyndaily.com/stories/2016/50/dtg-anti-muslim-graffiti-fort-hamilton-parkway-2016-12-09-bk.html>, retrieved on 7.12.2016

²³ See: Raw Story News’ entry “Bullsh*t hatred cover to cover: Vandals deface Korans and books about Islam in libraries across US”, in: <http://www.rawstory.com/2016/12/bullsht-hatred-cover-to-cover-vandals-deface-korans-and-books-about-islam-in-libraries-across-us/>, retrieved on 13.12.2016

²⁴ See: BuzzFeed News’ entry “Muslims Trying To Get A New Mosque are Asked, ‘Anybody Want A Pork Chop?’” in: https://www.buzzfeed.com/talalansari/muslims-keep-waiting-for-bayonne-mosque?utm_term=.pvz2YEINY#.idDm48BG4, retrieved on 25.1.2017

- “Imagine a Muslim-free America” -

Louisiana police were investigating an anti-Muslim flier pasted onto a sign in front of a mosque. Bossier City spokesman Mark Natale said that the letter-sized flier reads “*Imagine a Muslim-free America*,” while the second flier reading “*What made America great: Blood and Soil*.” Mr. Natale added that both fliers carried the name American Vanguard, which identified itself on its website as a white nationalist group. The Council on American-Islamic Relations was asking authorities to investigate the placement of the fliers as a hate crime.²⁵

- “The Quran is a hate-filled holy book” and “The Islamization of Europe is underway” -

Bill Maher had devoted himself to mainstreaming the toxic narrative of Islamophobia. With a captive audience of millions, the support of a major cable network and a steady stream of celebrity guests, including no shortage of self-styled progressives, Maher had largely succeeded in his goal. According to Maher, “*Islam is the motherlode of bad ideas*,” the Quran is a “*hate-filled holy book*” and “*the Islamization of Europe*” was underway. He said: “*Their cultures are not like ours*,” justifying the exclusion of Syrian refugees from the West. “*They are worse!*” he said of Muslims, branding Islam as “*the only religion that acts like the Mafia*.” Maher claims Muslims “*bring that desert stuff*” to the West, and that “*if Muslim men could get laid more, we wouldn’t have this problem*.” Ironically, Maher was a top supporter of Israel’s violence against occupied Palestinians, particularly in the besieged Gaza Strip. He personally offered himself as an asset to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s government. Maher had handpicked guests who amplify his toxic views of Muslims, including his longtime friend Ann Coulter, who had taunted Muslim American students, “*Take a camel!*” and once exclaimed, “*Raghead talks tough, raghead pays the price*.” Maher marketed his hosting of Milo Yiannopoulos, the most prominent face of the neo-Nazi “alt-right,” as a defense of the free exchange of ideas.²⁶

2.1.3. 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 was still ongoing while being predicted to worse under Trump’s administration, as indicated by his statements. When asked on the campaign trail whether he thought the United States should create a database of Muslims in the country, Donald Trump said: “*Oh, I would certainly implement that — absolutely*.” Following the terrorist attacks in Berlin, Mr Trump said he still planned to ban Muslims from entering the US and to build a Muslim registry. Trump renewed his calls to carry out sweeping discriminatory acts against Muslims from overseas and the American Muslim population of around 3.3 million people. He said at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida: “*You know my plans all along and I’ve been proven to be right. 100 per cent correct. What’s happening is disgraceful*.” Mr Trump was speaking the day after a man hijacked a lorry, killed the driver and ploughed into a Christmas market, killing at least 12 people and injuring 48. He was also referring to the Russian ambassador to

²⁵ See: Toronto Sun News’ entry “Police investigate anti-Muslim flier at Louisiana mosque”, in: <http://www.torontosun.com/2017/02/15/police-investigate-anti-muslim-flier-at-louisiana-mosque>, retrieved on 16.2.2017

²⁶ See: Salon News’ entry “Bill Maher’s outrageous statements about Islam and Muslims are beyond the pale”, in: http://www.salon.com/2017/02/23/bill-maher-bigtime-bigot-his-outrageous-statements-about-islam-and-muslims-are-beyond-the-pale_partner/, retrieved on 24.2.2017

Turkey who was killed in Ankara. The president-elect had been seen to backtrack on his hard-line anti-Muslim stance when his December 2015 statement pledging to temporarily suspend Muslim immigration disappeared from his website the day of the election. He said at the time: *"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."* He then changed his policy to only suspend immigration from countries that had been compromised by terrorism, rather than discriminating against the religion which was adhered by more than 1.6 billion people. Mr Trump said in a June 2016 speech. *"When I am elected, I will suspend immigration from areas of the world when there is a proven history of terrorism against the United States, Europe or our allies, until we understand how to end these threats."* Mr. Trump first called to ban Muslims shortly after the terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015. With every Daesh-related assault, Mr. Trump tweeted that he would be tough, smart and vigilant. A week after the election, Kansas secretary of state and Trump adviser Kris Kobach revealed the team were looking at ways to implement a registry. Mr Trump has never clarified exactly how he would plan to execute the controversial policies. Since his election, the Council on American-Islamic Relations had reported at least 900 hate crimes against Muslims across the country, from mosques being vandalized and set on fire, to Muslims being beaten, shot and stabbed on the street.²⁷

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. For instance Rep. Peter King was encouraging Donald Trump to create a federal Muslim surveillance program. He said in refer to former New York City Police Department Commissioner Ray Kelly: *"I suggested a program similar to what Commissioner Kelly did here in New York."* For over half a decade after the 9/11 terror attacks, Kelly oversaw a surveillance program that targeted New York and New Jersey Muslims because of their faith. Officers in the since-disbanded Demographics Unit infiltrated Muslim student groups, kept track of Muslims who changed their last names, eavesdropped on conversations between Muslims, spied on Muslim-owned businesses, recorded imam's sermons, and put undercover officers and informants inside mosques. King said that this program was *"very aggressive and forward-leaning when it came to trying to estimate where terror would be coming from."* Kelly's surveillance program, King added, *"which unfortunately the civil liberties union and The New York Times didn't like ... were very effective in stopping terrorism and they really should be a model for the country."* During his presidential campaign, Trump called for the creation of a national database of Muslims, the profiling of Muslims and the surveillance of mosques, and after the terror attack in Orlando, Florida, Trump lashed out at New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio for disbanding the NYPD unit that monitored Muslims.²⁸

Reactions rose to such a plan to build a database of Muslims met some resistance. In December 2016, hundreds of members of the technology industry weighed in on whether they would help build such a database, and the answer was 'Absolutely not'. Around 590 software engineers, designers, business executives and data processing personnel from US firms such as Google, Twitter, Microsoft, Mozilla and Palantir Technologies had signed a pledge *"choosing to stand in solidarity with Muslim Americans, immigrants, and all people whose lives and livelihoods are threatened by the incoming administration's proposed data collection policies."* As part of the pledge, the individuals promised, among other things, to: *"Refuse to participate in the creation of databases that would allow the government to target individuals based on race, religion or national origin; Advocate within their organizations to minimize data collection that would facilitate ethnic or religious targeting; Responsibly destroy high-risk data sets and backups; Resign from their organization if ordered to build such a database."* It was still unclear whether the incoming government would lean on

²⁷ See: Independent News' entry "Donald Trump still wants to ban Muslims from US and build 'registry' despite backtracking after election", in: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/donald-trump-muslim-ban-registry-berlin-attack-twitter-you-know-my-plans-immigration-racism-a7489611.html>, retrieved on 23.12.2016

²⁸ See: The Huffington Post News' entry "Rep. Peter King Urges Donald Trump to Create a Federal Muslim Surveillance Program", in: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/peter-king-muslim-surveillance-trump_us_5852fdcae4b0b3ddfd8bc377, retrieved on 16.12.2016

the tech sector to build such databases, or if it would even make good on its promise to bar Muslims from entering the country. In the weeks following Trump's victory, the president-elect's team backtracked on his earlier statements, saying that he had never advocated for any registry or system that tracks individuals based on their religion. However, Trump's website was still calling for a "*total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States*" — a proposal that, if implemented, could rely on such a database. The US government had been known to pressure the technology industry for help — whether it was asking Microsoft to help the National Security Agency circumvent encryption on Outlook.com Web chats or the FBI demanding that Apple help unlock the iPhone of one of the shooters in the San Bernardino terrorist attack — Microsoft complied; Apple refused. Whether such a pledge would have material effect on the creation of a Muslim database was still unknown, since the signatories represented only a tiny fraction of the number of people who work for big tech firms. Google alone was having nearly 60,000 employees and most tech executives stayed mum on the topic.²⁹

A parallel positive development arose when New York City's police department agreed to a new settlement in a lawsuit accusing it of illegally targeting Muslims for surveillance, after a federal judge rejected an earlier deal. The new settlement gave additional powers to a civilian representative charged with reviewing the department's counter-terrorism efforts. Arthur Eisenberg, legal director for New York Civil Liberties Union, said in a statement that the settlement was "*even more protective of religious and political freedoms*" than the version announced in January 2016. The civil liberties organization represents Muslim individuals and organizations who sued New York City in 2013 in Brooklyn federal court claiming they were targeted by police surveillance. In an order made public last October, US District Judge Charles Haight in Manhattan rejected the original settlement, which also called for a civilian representative. Haight said that deal did not go far enough in ensuring that the police department adhere to court-approved regulations, called the Handschu guidelines, that limited how it could monitor political and religious activity. The new deal gave the civilian representative the power to report on violations of the guidelines to the court at any time, and required the mayor to get court approval before removing the representative. The earlier version allowed the mayor to eliminate the position after five years. In addition, the civilian representative could now also review how investigations were conducted, not just how they were started or extended.³⁰ It was expected that this development would further resist Trump's intention to apply the controversial program.

2.1.4. The Rise of Far-Rights

In the United States, 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.³¹ Trump had made banning Muslims from the country a central focus of his campaign—which at one point included U.S. citizens living abroad. He had also called for

²⁹ See: Los Angeles Times News' entry "Tech workers pledge to never build a database of Muslims", in: <http://www.latimes.com/business/technology/la-fi-tn-tech-oppose-muslim-database-20161214-story.html>, retrieved on 15.12.2016

³⁰ See: Reuters News' entry "New York City reaches new deal over police surveillance of Muslims", in: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-new-york-police-muslims-settlement-idUSKBN16D2FC>, retrieved on 6.3.2017

³¹ See: Inquirer News' entry "US Muslims fear wearing hijab under Trump presidency", in: <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/843111/us-muslims-express-fear-to-wear-hijab-after-donald-trumps-victory>, retrieved on 11.11.2016

killing Muslims with bullets dipped in pig blood to combat terrorism, registering all Muslims in a federal database, and putting all mosques in the country under surveillance. He had repeatedly said that Muslims knew of attacks before they happen and were failing to report them, thus allowing them to take place. During a Republican debate in March 2016, he said that "*Islam hates us*," and after being asked whether he meant the world's entire Muslim population, he said, "*I mean a lot of them*."

Donald Trump is a Far-Right anti-Islam icon, and in fact, in his daily life he was surrounded by Far-Right Anti-Islam people. For instance, Trump got inauguration sermon from a figure who called Islam 'evil'. A Texas pastor with a controversial penchant for bashing Muslims, Mormons, Catholics and homosexuals delivered a private sermon for Donald Trump and his family shortly before he was officially inaugurated as the 45th President of the United States. Rev. Robert Jeffress, who led the First Baptist Church in Dallas and fervently stumped for Trump on the campaign trail, announced on Twitter that he was "*Honored to deliver sermon when God chooses a leader for Trump/Pence private family service*." Trump exclaimed as he welcomed Jeffress on stage at a September rally in Dallas when he said: "*I love this guy!*" Robert Jeffress was the leader of a 12,000-member megachurch, who was infamous for slamming Islam and Mormonism as deriving from the pit of hell, accusing President Obama of paving the way for the Antichrist and peddling false figures about HIV prevalence among homosexuals, whom he had said lead miserable and filthy lives. He had also suggested that the Catholic Church was being led astray by Satan and that Islam was an evil religion that promotes pedophilia.³²



Another instance, Donald Trump's had elected a National Security adviser thinks fear of Muslims was 'rational'. When a President-elect, Trump offered to retired Lieutenant General Michael Flynn the post of National Security Adviser - who had claimed it was rational to fear Muslims (Note: later on Flynn was disbanded from his post). 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 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

³² See: Daily News' entry "Trump to get inauguration sermon from Rev. who calls Islam 'evil'", in: <http://thehill.com/homenews/315454-steinem-we-will-all-register-as-muslims-if-there-is-a-registry>, retrieved on 21.1.2017

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.³³



Kellyanne Conway is a further instance of Trump's among closest figures. As a campaign manager, Kellyanne Conway used to tout Trump's 'five point plan to defeat Islam', a major world religion with 1.6 billion followers. Conway made the comments on MSNBC, as part of a point to complain about how the media covers Trump. She said, "He's giving plans. He gave a... five point plan to defeat Islam." Conway might have been trying to say "radical Islam," but the comments were still frightening coming from the head of a campaign that had repeatedly demonized Islam and Muslims.³⁴

The worst was Steven Bannon (Note: later on Steven bannon was also banned from his post). The inflammatory Trump adviser argued that he, Darth Vader, and Satan were 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.³⁵

Before Bannon was kicked out from his post, the Observatory was very much concerned by Trump's decision to give this racist figure a significant power at the White House. The reason was because he would have a permanent seat at White House National Security Council meetings, solidifying his role as one of the most powerful members of the president's inner circle. In an executive memorandum signed in January, Trump elevated Bannon while downgrading the status of the Director of National Intelligence and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the Security Council's principals committee. The Director and Chairman now would only be present at meetings where issues pertaining to their responsibilities and expertise were discussed, as the memorandum said. Bannon, credited in large part with

³³ See: MSN.com News' entry "Donald Trump's 'new national security adviser' thinks fear of Muslims is 'rational'", 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

³⁴ See: Think Progress News' entry "Trump's campaign manager touts his 'five point plan to defeat Islam'", in: <https://thinkprogress.org/conway-trump-defeat-islam-36e37c212358#.i4o3r4qmy>, retrieved on 20.10.2016

³⁵ See: Business Insider News' entry "Darkness is good": Inflammatory Trump adviser Steven Bannon argues he, Darth Vader, and Satan are misunderstood", in: <http://www.businessinsider.com/steve-bannon-donald-trump-satan-darth-vader-2016-11>, retrieved on 20.11.2016

successfully orchestrating Trump's election victory, led the Breitbart News website – described as a haven for the so-called 'alt-right' movement, which included various neo-fascists and white supremacists. The site ignited controversy during the presidential campaign because of its alignment with open white nationalists and anti-Semites. Unnamed Republican officials told the media that Bannon and Trump's policy advisor Stephen Miller were the driving force behind the president's order to stop accepting Syrian refugees and prohibiting immigration from seven Muslim-majority countries, including the one on green card holders entering the United States.³⁶

The consequence was quite predictable: Mr. Trump might bring about more difficulties for Muslims to exercise their faith freely while the Muslim identity and symbols would tend to trigger suspicion under his administration. Trump's government might also bring about extreme vetting of Muslim immigrants, and very likely, to stop the entry of refugees from war-torn states i.e. Syria. Therefore, even if a fully-fledged Muslim ban was not enacted, but sweeping, strident policies impairing legal admission of Muslim immigrants would be the law. Most alarmingly, the US government might embrace a new culture of which the government authorizes discrimination and violence against Muslim Americans. In another word, if the president of the US is the very archetype of Islamophobia, then assailing Muslims, torching mosques, and attacking anybody who looks Muslim is fair game. Islamophobia was no longer campaign messaging or strategy, but might now come formal, as a government's policy. Worse, the government's stance on this issue would provide more incentives to the existing Anti-Islam sentiments at the community level. It would deteriorate Islamophobia which has been alarming in the US.

Such a concern was not without reasons and proofs as negative sentiments at the community level went along with Trump's Islamophobic rhetoric. For instance, a letter threatening and denigrating Muslims was mailed to an Islamic Center of New Haven facility in West Haven. The letter was addressed to "*The children of Satan*," used vile language to describe Muslims and invoked the name of President-elect Donald Trump. The language in the letter was really disturbing, while the similar letters were sent to mosques in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, California and Georgia. The letter read: "*You Muslims are vile and filthy people. Your mothers are whores and your fathers are dogs. You are evil. You worship the devil. But your day of reckoning has arrived. There's a new sheriff in town — President Donald Trump. He's going to cleanse America and make it shine again. And he's going to start with you Muslims. He's going to do to you Muslims what Hitler did to the Jews. You Muslims would be wise to pack your bags and get out of Dodge. This is a great time for patriotic Americans. Long live President Trump and God bless the USA.*"³⁷ In South Carolina, people wanted schools to stop using textbooks that teach Islam to students. This state had become a battleground as certain people wanted to wipe Islam from children's textbooks. The Department of Education in South Carolina had received numerous complaints about social studies curriculum for sixth graders, which included lessons on the basic fundamentals of Islam. Earlier in February, a student's parent at Alston Middle School complained to a local television station that their child's class was assigned a worksheet about the Five Pillars of Islam. Islam had been a part of South Carolina's sixth grade social studies standards for six years, according to Brown, and Islam was mentioned far less than Christianity in the textbooks.³⁸

³⁶ See: TelesurTV News' entry "Very Dangerous: Trump Gives Racist Steve Bannon More Power", in: <http://www.telesur.tv/english/news/Very-Dangerous-Trump-Gives-Racist-Steve-Bannon-More-Power-20170129-0037.html>, retrieved on 30.1.2017

³⁷ See: The Hartford Courant News' entry "Letter Threatening, Denigrating Muslims Mailed To Connecticut Mosque", in: <http://www.courant.com/breaking-news/hc-mosque-threat-letter-1208-20161207-story.html>, retrieved on 9.12.2016

³⁸ See: Mic.com News' entry "People want South Carolina schools to stop using textbooks that teach Islam to students", in: <https://mic.com/articles/168857/people-want-south-carolina-schools-to-stop-using-textbooks-that-teach-islam-to-students#w8jWz4OzQ>, retrieved on 17.2.2017

Trump's anti-Islam ideology also gained ground in **Canada** as Muslim Students Association was targeted by far-right group in Quebec that claimed to be concerned about the rise of radical Islam. Such a conclusion found a proof when the student association held an event in November 2016 in Montreal English-language CEGEP, where students were invited to try wearing a hijab. Although the student association holds similar activities every semester as part of Islamic Awareness Day, this time they received dozen of complaints, including emails, phone messages and Facebook messages. The CEGEP's administration reached out to the MSA following the outcry and encouraged members of the group to call security if ever they feel threatened.³⁹ In February 2017, More than a dozen people gathered outside a mosque in the heart of downtown Toronto with loudspeakers and banners in hand, shouting slogans about banning Islam as Muslims gathered to pray inside. The protest happened during Friday prayer outside Masjid Toronto on Dundas Street West near University Avenue. A member of the mosque said that it was the first time he had seen such a strong backlash against his religion.⁴⁰ Canada had made international headlines due to the incident in January 2017, when a violent Far Right supporter ransacked into a mosque in Quebec City and fatally shot several Muslims. The incident was followed by a spike in Islamophobic hate crimes in the province, as was reported by city Police Department. Alexandre Bissonnette, the accused in the mosque shootings, was not affiliated with any political group, but he was reportedly an admirer of Donald Trump and Marine Le Pen. His classmates said that he held anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant views — ideas that aligned with the ideology of Quebec's far right fringe.⁴¹



³⁹ See: CBC Canada News' entry "Dawson's Muslim Students Association targeted by far-right group", in: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-far-right-dawson-college-la-meute-1.3902425>, retrieved on 21.12.2016

⁴⁰ See: CBC News' entry "Protesters outside Masjid Toronto call for ban on Islam as Muslims pray inside", in: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/anti-muslim-protest-masjid-toronto-1.3988906>, retrieved on 18.2.2017

⁴¹ See: CBC News' entry "Quebec's growing far right fringe faces scrutiny after the mosque attack", in: <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/day6/episode-323-quebec-s-far-right-super-bowl-prop-bets-pornonomics-steve-bannon-s-political-power-and-more-1.3960621/quebec-s-growing-far-right-fringe-faces-scrutiny-after-the-mosque-attack-1.3960645>, retrieved on 4.2.2017

2.2. Islamophobia in Europe

2.2.1. Polls and Reports

Trump's election has also bolstered anti-Islam sentiments elsewhere in the world, particularly in countries across Europe, where significant reordering of the political landscape was underway. This situation was quite predictable, as countries in this region have been struggling with serious debt issues and high level of unemployment since the economic crisis hit in 2008. Such a circumstances in turn led to domestic debates about hot issues such as immigrants, non-European foreigners, assimilation and integration, national identity etc., which was worsened by the surge of refugees fleeing the Syrian civil war and periodic terrorist attacks. These ingredients, altogether, has been creating the necessary environment for right-wing parties and figures to prosper, in parallel with the European Union's policies of integration of which been blamed for the situation. As the consequences, anti-EU, anti-immigration and anti-Muslim platforms have gained a fertile ground, soaring Islamophobia highly across Europe. A Poll had revealed that the majority of Europeans wanted a ban on immigration from Muslim-majority countries. An average of 55 per cent of people across the 10 European countries surveyed wanted to stop all future immigration from mainly Muslim countries. The Chatham House study, conducted before US President Donald Trump signed an executive order banning immigration to the US from seven predominantly Muslim countries, found majorities in all but two of the ten states opposed immigration from mainly Muslim countries. Only 20 per cent disagreed, while 25 per cent said they did not know. A ban was supported by 71 per cent of people in Poland, 65 per cent in Austria, 53 per cent in Germany and 51 per cent in Italy. In the UK, 47 per cent supported a ban. In no country did more than 32 per cent disagree with a ban. Of those surveyed, opposition to Muslim immigration was especially intense among older people, while those under 30 were less opposed. There was also a contrast between those with secondary level qualifications, of which 59 per cent opposed Muslim immigration, and degree holders, of which less than half supported halting immigration. A Pew survey of 10 European countries in 2016 found majorities in five countries had an unfavourable view of Muslims living in their country. Of those, 72 per cent of Hungarians had a negative view of Muslims, followed by 69 per cent of Italians, 66 per cent of Poles, 65 per cent of Greeks and 50 per cent of Spaniards. In the UK, only 28 per cent said they had an unfavourable view of Muslims, while in Germany and France 29 per cent said the same.⁴²

In Germany, Figures derived from a response by the Germany's Interior Ministry to a parliamentary question in February 2017 revealed 3,533 attacks on refugee shelters and individual refugees since 2016 in the country, indicating a massive increase in right-wing violence directed against a vulnerable group of people who had experienced war, persecution and poverty. In 2015, when many refugees from Syria and other war zones came to Germany, there was an outpouring of solidarity in the population. Since then, the right-wing sections of society have been mobilized against them with various threatening scenarios. Of the 3,533 registered attacks, those on refugee shelters account for 988. These included attacks (66 arson attacks and four involving explosives), propaganda offences (211 cases), property damage (371 cases) and other assaults. While compared to the previous year—the highpoint of the refugee influx, when 1,031 attacks on refugee homes took place—this number had decreased, violence in every other category was on a sharp rise. There were 2,545 registered cases of violence involving direct attacks on refugees outside their accommodations. In total, 560 people were injured, including 43 children. Added to this are 217 attacks on aid organizations and their volunteers.⁴³

⁴² See: Red Ice TV News' entry "Most Europeans Want Immigration Ban from Muslim-Majority Countries, Poll Reveals", in: <https://redice.tv/news/most-europeans-want-immigration-ban-from-muslim-majority-countries-poll-reveals>, retrieved on 9.2.2017

⁴³ See: WSWS.org News' entry "Massive increase in attacks on refugees in Germany", in: <http://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2017/03/07/refu-m07.html>, retrieved on 8.3.2017

In France, at the period before ‘Emanuel Macron’ came to the stage (and later on declared victorious), the anti-Islam National Front leader Marine Le Pen was becoming the most popular right-wing politician in France, as she had stronger poll figures than former president Nicholas Sarkozy, who hoped to run against his socialist rival Francois Hollande. An



opinion poll for France 2 television said almost three quarters of conservative voters want Le Pen to have more influence and power, with half of the population viewing her favorably. Only one-third of voters have a similar view of Sarkozy, with Hollande languishing on 27 per cent. Most French voters believed either Sarkozy or Hollande would make a bad president. Former French Prime Minister Alain Juppe had support of 72 per cent of people who believed he should be given more power. It was likely that he and

Sarkozy would battle for the Republican nomination for election.⁴⁴ It was good to note that Le Pen lose the battle and stayed out of power, since a majority of French voters saw presidential candidate Marine Le Pen's National Front party as a threat to democracy, a Kantar Sofres-Onepoint poll released showed. According to the survey, 58 percent of respondents believed the anti-immigrant and eurosceptic party represented a danger to democracy, up from 47 percent recorded in 2013. Only 19 percent of them said they were in favor of Le Pen presidency for the next five years, with a minority endorsing her proposals to abandon euro and give employment priority to French citizens over legal migrants. However, a third of people approved its idea mainly in relation with security, the poll figures showed. With the conservative contender Francois Fillon's bid in turmoil due to a scandal over his wife's job, and centrist Emmanuel Macron's policy untested, most polls saw Le Pen was very likely to top the first round on April 23, but consistently predicted her losing in the run-off. Le Pen who campaigned for nationalism and anti-establishment platform, pledged to slash migration, sent homes all illegal migrants and imposed taxes on job contacts of foreigners. She also vowed to renegotiate the European Union treaty, restored internal borders and local currency upon her election. In 2012, Le Pen came third in the presidential race, but enjoyed an unexpected high vote in the first round. About 17.9 percent of 44.6 million French casted their ballots for an anti-immigration policy and abandon of euro.⁴⁵

In the UK, a poll suggested that people had less trust to Islam and its followers. According to the report, Britons were more likely to think that terrorism was inspired by religious views than for any other reason, such as poverty or mental illness. In an online poll by YouGov examining the causes of terrorism, in which respondents were asked to pick one or two from a list of possible causes for terror acts, 33 per cent of those polled opted for “religious views”. The next most commonly chosen response was “don’t know”, which nine per cent of respondents chose, followed by “social or political conditions”, chosen by just five per cent of respondents. The results stayed broadly consistent across all British regions,

⁴⁴ See: Dailymail.co.uk News’ entry “National Front leader Marine Le Pen is the most popular right-wing politician in France”, in: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3820001/National-leader-Marine-Le-Pen-popular-right-wing-politician-France-survey-finds.html>, retrieved on 4.10.2016

⁴⁵ See: Famagusta Gazette News’ entry “Majority of French see Le Pen's far-right party threat to democracy: poll”, in: <http://famagusta-gazette.com/majority-of-french-see-le-pens-far-right-party-threat-to-democracy-poll-p38906-69.htm>, retrieved on 9.3.2017

with those in London least likely to ascribe terrorism to religious views (27 per cent), and those in the Midlands most likely to do so (37 per cent). Meanwhile, young people were half as likely as the elderly to ascribe terrorism to religion, with 20 per cent of 18-24-year-olds choosing that option against 41 per cent of those aged over 60. Young people were more likely to be unsure of the causes, with 13 per cent of 18-24-year-olds, and 15 per cent of 25-39-year-olds saying they didn't know why people engaged in terrorist acts. The poll surveyed 4,812 British adults on 22 December with the results weighted to be representative of the British population. In a follow-up question, respondents were asked whether "terrorist acts that are carried out by Muslims do or do not tell us anything about the nature of Islam?" Overall respondents believed that they did not, with 50 per cent saying no, against 33 per cent who said they did think Islamic terrorism said something about the nature of Islam. The poll was taken just days after an Islamic terrorist drove a truck into shoppers at Berlin's main Christmas market, killing twelve people.⁴⁶

In the Netherlands, ahead of last 15 of March election, the rise of xenophobia, racism, anti-Muslim propaganda had reached worrisome levels. Geert Wilders and his far-right, anti-Islam, xenophobic Party for Freedom (PVV) had been riding high on a wave of populism and looked on course to win. Wilders' party the PVV, which vowed to bar Muslim immigrants, close mosques and ban sales of the Koran, referring to Dutch citizens of Moroccan led the polls. Wilders himself raised public's ire when he referred to Dutch citizens of Moroccan origins as "Scum" in February. The latest weekly poll, released by the Dutch Polling Indicator, predicted that the PVV would win 25 seats, just one seat more than Prime Minister Mark Rutte's ruling People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD). Over the last months and years, the Netherlands had experienced a surge in racist, anti-Semitic, anti-Islam hate attacks which caused serious concerns among its population.⁴⁷ Also, as far right reaps votes, immigrants face tougher times in Netherlands. Polls were suggesting the far-right ticket would double its vote in the March 15 election, riding perceptions that many years of Muslim immigration threaten to erode Dutch national identity. Despite statistics showing there were fewer foreigners in the Netherlands than commonly believed, many voters feel Muslim immigrants were failing to integrate and running down a once-generous health and welfare system. Even if firebrand nationalist leader Geert Wilders did not enter the next ruling coalition given the refusal of establishment parties to work with him, he had managed to push the mainstream political agenda to the anti-immigrant right. In the northern coastal town of Groningen, dozens of mainly Muslim men and women - Africans, Arabs and some Iranians - were awaiting decisions on appeals of government rejections of their asylum applications, a process that had dragged on for years during which the Netherlands began to crack down hard on economic migrants.⁴⁸

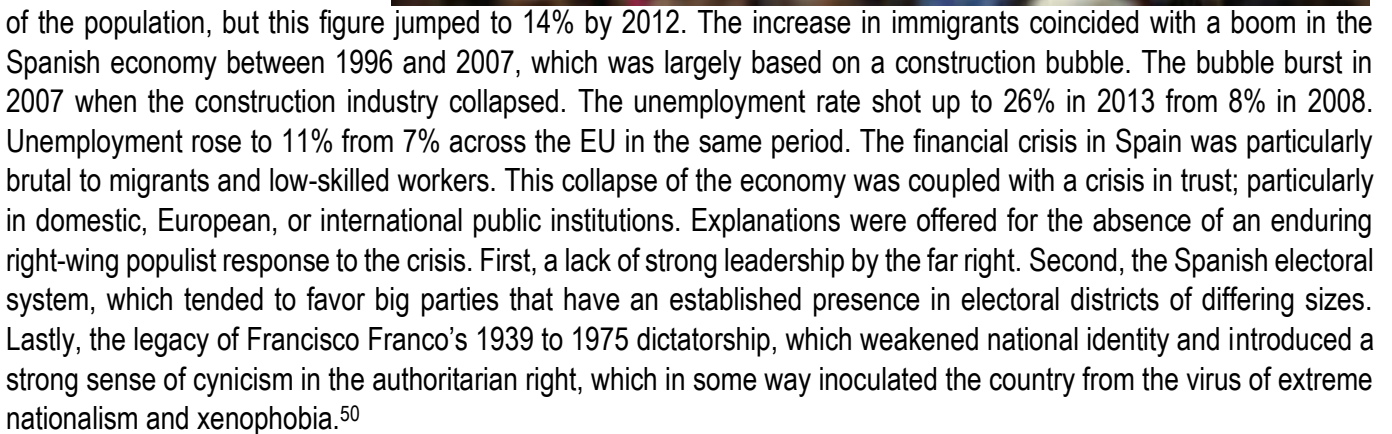
It was however so relieving when the Dutch Electoral Council had announced the official results of the parliamentary elections, which turned out to be very close to the preliminary polling predictions and confirmed the victory of the Netherlands' ruling People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD). The VVD, the party of Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, secured an electoral victory by gaining 33 seats in the Dutch parliament's lower house out of 150 and becoming the largest parliamentary faction, according to the data presented by the Dutch Electoral Council. Its closest rival, Geert Wilders' far-right populist Party for Freedom (PVV) came second by securing 20 seats in the House of Representatives. The Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA), a center-right Christian Democratic party, shared third place with the social-liberal Democrats 66 party, with both parties gaining 19 seats each. Meanwhile, the Green Left and the Dutch Socialist Party each won 14 seats. The Dutch Labor Party, which had been the second biggest faction in the

⁴⁶ See: Breitbart News' entry "Most Brits Think Terrorism Is Inspired by 'Religious Views'", in: <http://www.breitbart.com/london/2016/12/23/brits-mostly-think-terrorism-inspired-religious-views/>, retrieved on 24.12.2016

⁴⁷ See: Daily Sabah News' entry "Rise of racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia worries in Netherlands", in: <https://www.dailysabah.com/europe/2017/03/11/rise-of-racism-xenophobia-islamophobia-worries-in-netherlands>, retrieved on 12.3.2017

⁴⁸ See: Reuters News' entry "As far right reaps votes, immigrants face tougher times in Netherlands", in: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-4296230/As-far-right-reaps-votes-immigrants-face-tougher-times-Netherlands.html>, retrieved on 10.3.2017

Particular on the issue of refugee, the only 'European Exception' was found in **Spain**, where right-wing populist parties had failed to flourish. In February 2017, around 160,000 Spanish protestors took to the streets in Barcelona to call on the government to take in more refugees. Demonstrators criticized the government for falling short of a 2015 pledge to allow more than 17,000 refugees into Spain within two years. The huge demonstration was a striking reminder of what was dubbed as the 'Spanish Exception'. Following Britain's decision to leave the European Union (EU) in 2016, there had been growing anxiety that right-wing populism would gain more ground, but such a populist wave had yet to make much of a splash in Spain, where right-wing populist parties had failed to obtain more than 1% of the vote in national elections in recent years. In 1998, immigrants accounted for 3%



⁵⁰ See: Quartz News' entry "Why right-wing populist parties have failed to flourish in Spain", in: <https://qz.com/914763/why-right-wing-populist-parties-have-failed-to-flourish-in-spain/>, retrieved on 20.2.2017

2.2.2. Islamophobic Discourses and Campaigns

- “Islamic immigration is conquering the West” -

Geert Wilders issued a provocative warning to those living in the Western world that their safety, values and way of life would come to an imminent end if national leaders continued to accept millions of Muslims immigrants. He insisted that Islamization was not an isolated event in his country, in Europe, the Western world, or the world. He said *“Maassluis is just one of the many Dutch towns and neighborhoods terrorized by Moroccan or Turkish youth gangs. Others are Schilderswijk, Oosterwei, Kanaleneiland, Zaandam, Helmond. Not surprisingly, a poll shows that 43 percent of the Dutch people want fewer Moroccan immigrants in our country.”* Pointing to the recent global wave of terrorism at the hands of jihadists, Wilders argued that world leaders must stop ignoring the obvious threat and take aggressive steps to prevent isolated terrorist cells from springing up in migrant Muslim communities in dozens of nations. He said: *“2016’s Black Summer of Jihad, with terror attacks all over the free world, teaches us that the enemies of freedom are already among us. The ruling elites all over the Western world have accepted millions of people into our countries without demanding that they assimilate.”*⁵¹

- “Islam is like Gangrene” -

Mr Le Maire, the Republican and former Agriculture Minister, called on all disillusioned Socialists to vote for him in the first and most decisive round of the French elections, to be held on November 20 and 27. He told French magazine that political Islam had been gnawing away at France’s secular values for years; and Islamic institutions were being run from afar by powerful religious leaders based in more radical Muslim nations, including Saudi Arabia and Qatar. He said: *“Political Islam is like gangrene. It’s an infection which has caused France’s liberal traditions to slowly rot away. There is an urgent need to regain control and to reorganize the way in which Islamic institutions based in this country are run. The French Council of the Muslim Faith (CFCM) and has helped give Salafi-jihadist leaders and militants a voice. The council must become more transparent and secular if it is to succeed in helping Muslims integrate into French society.”*⁵²

- “France has a problem with Islam” -

President Francois Hollande stated that France had ‘a problem with Islam’ and there were too many immigrants arriving in the country who shouldn’t be there. Hollande said: *“It’s true that there’s a problem with Islam. No one doubts it. It’s not that Islam poses a problem in the sense that it is a dangerous religion, but in as far as it wants to affirm itself as a religion of the Republic.”* Hollande added: *“I think there are too many arrivals of immigration that shouldn’t be there.”* Immigration and national identity had been key themes in campaigning for 2017 presidential election. A string of attacks in France in the past two years, coupled with the Europe-wide migrant crisis, had stoked anti-immigration sentiment. A

⁵¹ See: Onenewsnow.com News’ entry “Islamic immigration is conquering the West”, in: <http://www.onenewsnow.com/national-security/2016/10/02/wilders-islamic-immigration-is-conquering-the-west>, retrieved on 3.10.2016

⁵² See: Sunday Express News’ entry “Islam is like ‘gangrene’ and wearing burka is ‘serious crime’, says presidential candidate”, in: <http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/719641/Islam-like-gangrene-wearing-burka-serious-crime-says-presidential-candidate-Bruno-Le-Maire>, retrieved on 11.10.2016

heated debate about Muslim integration in staunchly secular France came to a head over the summer when about 30 towns banned the body-concealing 'Burkini' swimsuit. France's highest administrative court later ruled that such a ban was a serious violation of basic freedoms. The deeply unpopular Hollande had not yet declared whether he intended to stand for re-election. But his arch-rival Nicolas Sarkozy, bidding for the Centre-right nomination, was campaigning heavily on populist anti-immigration themes. The French government's policies - particularly in the wake of the 2015 Paris attacks and the subsequent declaration of a state of emergency - had come under harsh criticism from rights groups for having of Muslims through detainment and harassment.⁵³

- "Construction of Mosques needs to be stopped" -

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.⁵⁴

- "Muslims...kill them all" -

The capital city of London was hit by a violent Islamophobic act as a knifeman shouted "*I want to kill a Muslim*" before stabbing another man on a suburban train. He reportedly shouted "*go back to Syria*" and "*Muslims...kill them all*" before stabbing his victim. Eyewitnesses said the attacker was a black man and threatened a woman wearing a headscarf with a knife before the violent attack. Tell Mama, a British group that monitors anti-Muslim incidents, said that more than 100 mosques and Islamic organizations in the last three and a half years had been the targets of anti-Muslim attacks across the country. In a separate development, the killing of UK deputy Jo Cox by a nationalist terrorist indicated growing violent white supremacy trends, violence from far-right extremism and neo-Nazi groups across the country. In a shock referendum result, Britain voted on June 23 to leave the 28-nation European Union. Pro-Brexit supporters campaigned heavily on immigration and the need to regain control on Britain's borders, in a referendum battle fought against the backdrop of Europe's worst migrant crisis since World War II. In response to increasing violence against Muslims and refugees across the country, the British government planned to ban an extreme right wing group, National Action under the Terrorism Act 2000 — the first time a right-wing organization had been banned under the legislation. There had been a surge in hate crimes across Britain in the wake of June's referendum, which saw Britons vote to exit

⁵³ See: Aljazeera News' entry "Hollande: France has a problem with Islam", in: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/hollande-france-problem-islam-161013073501962.html>, retrieved on 14.10.2016

⁵⁴ See: Daily Sabah News' entry "Greek archbishop calls for halt in Athens mosque construction", in: <http://www.dailysabah.com/religion/2016/11/03/greek-archbishop-calls-for-halt-in-athens-mosque-construction>, retrieved on 4.11.2016

the EU with immigration as one of the key issues. At its peak, there was a 58 percent increase in hate crimes and police recorded more than 14,000 such crimes in the period running from a week before the vote to mid-August.⁵⁵

- “Mohammed was a perverted killer. Allah is the devil.” -

Tunbridge Wells mosque had been left reeling from the vile and abhorrent card, which was received just days before Christmas. An anonymous poster sent the card, but wrote a hateful message instead of good cheer. It said: “Mohammed was a perverted killer. Allah is the devil. No true God will condone rape and murder. Jesus Christ will overcome.” Kent Police said they were looking into the incident. A spokesman said: *“Kent Police is aware of an offensive card being sent to a mosque in Tunbridge Well. The incident has not been directly reported, but officers are conducting enquiries and will offer support to the mosque.”*⁵⁶

- “In 10 years we will all be Muslims” -

Monsignor Carlo Liberati, Archbishop Emeritus of Pompeii warned that the Christianity was in full decline and Islam would soon become the main religion in Europe, and *“In 10 years we will all be Muslims because of our stupidity.”* Speaking to Italian Catholic journal La Fede Quotidiana on 14 January the archbishop said: *“We have a weak Christian faith. The Church nowadays does not work well and seminaries are empty. Parishes are the only thing still standing. We need a true Christian life. All this paves the way to Islam. In addition to this, they have children and we do not. We are in full decline.”* The archbishop added that the problem was not just Muslim immigration. The number of Eastern Europeans arriving over the past few years had also hit the quality of life for native Italians. He also criticized the Catholic Church for giving money to migrants.⁵⁷

- “Muslims are Parasites. I will hunt them down step by step” -

A woman had sparked outrage after filming herself urinating on the Koran before setting it on fire. In the incendiary footage the woman was seen standing in front of a Slovak national flag as she declared war on Muslim ‘parasites’. The woman, who was believed to have shot the video in a forest in Finland, could be seen tearing out pages from the holy book before pulling down her trousers and urinating on it. She then poured lighter fluid on it and set it on fire. Speaking to the camera, she threatened to hunt down Muslims ‘step by step’. She said: *“I do not care about the criminal*

⁵⁵ See: Daily Sabah Europe News’ entry “Man shouting ‘I want to kill all Muslims’ shows rising Islamophobia in UK”, in: <http://www.dailysabah.com/europe/2016/12/14/man-shouting-i-want-to-kill-all-muslims-shows-rising-islamophobia-in-uk>, retrieved on 15.12.2016

⁵⁶ See: The Sun News’ entry “Tunbridge Wells Mosque receives Christmas card stating ‘Allah is the devil’”, in: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2461380/tunbridge-wells-mosque-racist-christmas-card-allah-devil/>, retrieved on 23.12.2016

⁵⁷ See: The Guardian News’ entry “Italian archbishop: In 10 years we will all be Muslims”, in: <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/jan/17/malcolm-turnbull-says-australia-must-put-safety-first-when-asked-about-burqa-ban>, retrieved on 18.1.2017

complaints. *It will not stop me. I have a message for everybody, including the police – nobody will stop me.*" The video had been passed to police in Slovakia who were investigating it.⁵⁸

- *"Let us stop this policy of Islamization, otherwise Europeans will come to an abrupt end"* -

Heinz Christian Strache, the head of Austria's far-right Freedom Party called on a total ban on Islam. He told an audience in Salzburg that he wanted to see a ban of Muslim symbols, something like the Austrian law that bans Nazi symbols. He also warned that Islam posed an existential threat to Europe. He said: *"Let us put an end to this policy of Islamization,otherwise Europeans will come to an abrupt end."*⁵⁹

- *"Islam is more dangerous than Nazism"* -

Far-right Dutch politician Geert Wilders had sparked outrage once again with his comments about Muslims and the Islamic religion. In a television interview, Wilders described Islam *"as an ideology that is possibly more dangerous than Nazism."* He argued for the closure of mosques, drawing a comparison with Nazi temples, and told Dutch broadcaster Rick Nieman that *"Islam does not belong in The Netherlands."* Wilders backtracked on his previous promise to criminalize owning a Quran, but suggested the religious text should be banned from bookstores, and should be viewed in the same light as Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. *"The Quran is far more anti-Semitic than Mein Kampf,"* he said. *"It is full of calls inciting violence."* He told viewers: *"We will close the borders and we will stop sending all our money abroad — to Africa, to Brussels, to Greece – and give that to the Dutch people living in our country."* Despite his opponents' pledges that they would not work with the PVV, Wilders said he was confident that he would be able to form a coalition. Prime Minister Mark Rutte said on Twitter on 13 February that there was 'zero per cent' of a collaboration with the far-right leader. His credibility had been questioned by critics who point out that he recently tried to woo PVV voters with a letter telling immigrants who do not respect Dutch customs to leave.⁶⁰

- *"Islam and freedom are not compatible"* -

Geert Wilders said that Islam was a threat to European values and is incompatible with freedom. Wilders told: *"Dutch values are based on Christianity, on Judaism, on humanism. Islam and freedom are not compatible. You see it in almost every country where it dominates. There is a total lack of freedom, civil society, rule of law, middle class; journalists, gays, apostates — they are all in trouble in those places. And we import it."* The leader of the one-man Freedom Party (PVV) recently reiterated his controversial statements on Moroccan immigrants to the Netherlands, calling them

⁵⁸ See: Metro.co.uk News' entry "Woman films herself urinating on Koran before setting it on fire", in: <http://metro.co.uk/2017/02/16/woman-films-herself-urinating-on-koran-before-setting-it-on-fire-6451744/>, retrieved on 17.2.2017

⁵⁹ See: SOFREP News' entry "Austria's far-right party wants to 'ban' Islam", in: <https://sofrep.com/72495/austrias-far-right-party-wants-ban-islam/>, retrieved on 17.1.2017

⁶⁰ See: International Business Times News' entry "Dutch politician Geert Wilders claims Islam is more dangerous than Nazism", in: <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/dutch-politician-geert-wilders-claims-islam-more-dangerous-nazism-1606492>, retrieved on 15.2.2017

'Moroccan scum' as quoted saying: "Once again not all are scum but there is a lot of Moroccan scum in Holland who makes the streets unsafe, mostly young people."⁶¹

- "I would prefer not to have the Koran in the Netherlands insofar as we have banned Mein Kampf" -

After calling the Moroccan community 'scum' in February and expressing his wish to close all of Netherlands' mosques if he ever became Prime Minister, Wilders now wanted to ban the Quran in the Netherlands. He said as quoted: "*I would prefer not to have the Koran in the Netherlands insofar as we have banned 'Mein Kampf'. This may seem highly symbolic but it would have an important effect. If our country had a tougher immigration policy than other countries, then immigrants would go to other countries.*"⁶²

Note from the Islamophobia Observatory regarding Geert Wilders:

Geert Wilders is a deeply divisive figure, a Dutch politician who was originally a member of the ruling People's Party for Freedom and Democracy, before founding the Party for Freedom in 2006 – a party defined by its opposition to Islam and immigration. Wilders always spreads hatred and negative campaign against Islam and Muslims. Below are some of the most provocative statements by Wilders which was monitored by the Observatory:

"*I rather would have not Koran at all as we in Holland at least have outlawed Mein Kampf as well.*" – during Interview with Euronews, 2017.

"*Islam is something we can't afford any more in the Netherlands. I want the fascist Koran banned. We need to stop the Islamisation of the Netherlands. That means no more mosques, no more Islamic schools, no more imams... Not all Muslims are terrorists, but almost all terrorists are Muslims.*" – Interview with the Guardian, 2008.

"*My allies are not Le Pen or Jorg Haider ... We'll never join up with the fascists and Mussolinis of Italy. I'm very afraid of being linked with the wrong rightist fascist groups.*" – Interview with the Guardian, 2008.

"*I have a panic room in my house, where I am supposed to take refuge if one of the adherents of the "religion of peace" makes it past my permanent security detail and into my home. In fact, it's not really my home at all—I live in a government safe house, heavily protected and bulletproof.*" – In his book 'Marked for Death: Islam's War Against the West and Me', 2012.

"*There are many moderate Muslims, but that does not change the fact that the political ideology of Islam is not moderate—it is a totalitarian cult with global ambitions.*" In his book 'Marked for Death: Islam's War Against the West and Me', 2012.

⁶¹ See: Independent.co.uk News' entry "Geert Wilders: Far-right Dutch PM front runner says Islam and freedom are not compatible" Politician, in: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/geert-wilders-dutch-pm-frontrunner-far-right-islamophobic-freedom-a7593466.html>, retrieved on 23.2.2017

⁶² See: Morocco World News' entry "Wilders Wants to Ban Quran in the Netherlands", in: <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2017/03/210321/wilders-wants-ban-quran-netherlands/>, retrieved on 8.3.2017

"The Koran on the table before you, is a handbook for terrorists. Blood drips from its pages. It calls for perpetual war against non-believers. That Koran before you is the hunting permit for millions of Muslims. A license to kill." –Speech by Wilders during parliamentary debate in the Netherlands, 2014.

"We have imported a monster and this monster is called Islam." – In Times magazine, 2016.

"The Moroccan scum in Holland ... once again not all are scum ... but there is a lot of Moroccan scum in Holland who make the streets unsafe, mostly young people ... and that should change." –when Wilders was addressing supporters in Spijkenisse, near Rotterdam, 2017.

"The instability we're seeing in England at the moment is only temporary. In the long run, the British will profit, just like we'd profit from leaving the EU." – Interview with *Speigel Online* on Brexit and a potential Nexit, 2016.

"There is a reason for hope. There is light at the end of the tunnel. Better times will come. The wind started to shift last year. It brought us the victory of – and from here, congratulations to – Donald Trump, the president of the United States." – Speech by Geert Wilders at the 'Europe of Nations and Freedom' Conference, 2017.

"Almost the entire Establishment, the elite universities, the churches, the media, politicians, put our hard-earned liberties at risk. Day after day, for years, we are experiencing the decay of our cherished values. The equality of men and women, freedom of opinion and speech, tolerance of homosexuality—all this is in retreat." – Speech by Geert Wilders at the "Europe of Nations and Freed Conference, 2017.

2.2.4. The Continued Rise of Far-Rights

Chapter 1 has elaborated on the rise of far-right and populism—characterized by strident nationalism, anti-immigrant sentiment, economic resentments and a deep suspicion of international alliances and trade pacts — that had been building across Europe for years, particularly in its more disadvantaged corners. Now this European populist movements burst into full and furious view, driven by complex factors that vary widely from one country to the other — united by a broad sense of grievance against the political establishment and all it represents. It came at the time when elections took place in Austria, Netherlands, and France, and set to take place in Germany, continental Europe's main political and economic powers.⁶³ This section will look in more detail at the continued rise of Far Rights in Europe while seeing its connection with what was happening in the US.

Right-wing parties continued to gain increased support particularly in France, Germany, Austria, Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Hungary and Italy. In Austria, although Norbert Hofer of the Freedom Party lost a rerun of the presidential election to a Greens-backed independent candidate Alexander Van der Bellen, but his party secured nearly half of the vote. In Denmark a little bit earlier, the Danish People's Party came in second rank parliamentary elections. In Netherlands, the far-right Party for Freedom (PVV) whose leader Geert Wilders was recently found guilty of inciting racial discrimination, was expected to come in first or second in elections due in March 2017. The anti-immigrant

⁶³ See: The Star Democrat News' entry "Europe's populist right feels galvanized after Trump's win", in: http://www.stardem.com/news/national/article_eb3e3516-904f-59b3-ab98-7d77af3db067.html, retrieved on 4.12.2016

Alternative for Germany, led by Frauke Petry, which secured 2 million votes in 2013 elections, was expected to win seats in parliament in 2017. Despite these Far-right parties were not in a position to win a true electoral majority in any European countries, they would however decisively shape political debates and forces other parties to mainstream some of their ideas. This concern found evidence for instance in Germany as Angela Merkel, who had defended her policy of accepting more than 1 million refugees in 2015, she recently called for a ban on the full veil or the niqab – a move that could be taken as a response to pressure from the right. Overall, it seemed that the dominance of Far Right would be irresistible, for the political trend in key European countries was moving firm towards opposing Islam. In France for instance, the National Front Leader Marine Le Pen was becoming the most popular politician in France despite now she is out of executive power after finally Emanuel Macron came to victory. The similar circumstances were also evident in Netherlands, Austria, and Germany.

Particularly in Europe, Trump's election had bolstered right-wing forces. Soon after Trump's inauguration, the far-right groups consolidated among themselves in cheering up Donald Trump's victory in the US. Geert Wilders joined Marine

Le Pen and several other populist party leaders in what described as an 'unprecedented' meeting of European right-wing groups in Koblenz, Germany in January. Wilders told his audience: *"Yesterday a free America, today Koblenz, and tomorrow a new Europe."* Wilders was the second speaker behind Le Pen and was introduced as *'the man who has given up his own freedom.'* The loudest applause came when Wilders told his audience: *"Europe needs AfD leader Frauke, not Angela."* The meeting was organised by Germany's Alternative für Deutschland



(AfD) party, under the slogan 'Freedom for Europe'. As well as Le Pen and Petry, the meeting was attended by members of Italy's Northern League, Belgium's Vlaams Blok and Austria's FPÖ. All the parties were members of the 'Europe of Nations and Freedoms alliance' in the European parliament.⁶⁴ They condemned the European Union and demanded a return of large measures of political control from Brussels, with the clear intention of banning further migrant movement. They had been inspired by Brexit and heartened by the overtly nationalist, 'America First' policy of President Trump. However, the British UK Independence party and some of the racist Alternatif für Deutschland activists stayed away from the Koblenz gathering, while the meeting itself was characterized by hatred and xenophobia.⁶⁵ 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

⁶⁴ See: Dutch News' entry "Wilders joins far-right parties in attack on EU, Islam and the press", in <http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2017/01/wilders-joins-far-right-parties-in-attack-on-eu-islam-and-the-press/>, retrieved on 22.1.2017

⁶⁵ See: Saudi Gazette News' entry "Ugly, dangerous forces gather in Europe", in: <http://saudigazette.com.sa/opinion/editorial/ugly-dangerous-forces-gather-europe/>, retrieved on 25.1.2017

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."*⁶⁶

Later on, these far-right groups hailed the spirit and the letter of President Trump executive order targeting Muslim immigration to the United States. The executive order banned nationals from seven Muslim countries from visiting the



United States: Iran, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya, Sudan and Somalia; which applied to people with Green cards, asylum seekers, and dual nationals. The Dutch far-right politician Geert Wilders was one of the first Europeans politicians to welcome the act. He evoked the precedent of Arab states barring Israeli citizens and asked why the left did not protest. A similar argument was put forward by Nigel Farage, who welcomed Donald Trump's Muslim ban, telling that Trump was *"voted in on this ticket"* and was therefore entitled to take this course of action. Although Farage failed to establish a link between refugees and migrants from these countries and terrorism, he insisted

the US President had the right to deliver on his promise. Marine Le Pen echoed Farage's argument, suggesting in democracy majority rules absolutely, with little tolerance for minorities.⁶⁷

Marine Le Pen also applauded US President Donald Trump's controversial travel ban and said a backlash to the measure was in bad faith. She said: *"It is a temporary measure. It targets six or seven countries, countries that of course are responsible for terrorist threats. So I think Donald Trump and his intelligence services wanted to set up criteria and conditions to avoid having potential terrorists enter the United States, where they might commit attacks, the same way that France was the victim of attacks."* When asked whether she would impose a similar ban in France, she avoided answering directly, saying only that France had to be very vigilant and to secure its borders. Le Pen said the flurry of executive orders signed in Trump's first days in office, which included cutting funds to aid programs to erecting a wall along the US-Mexican border, did not surprise her. Le Pen saw Trump's rise and Britain's vote to leave the European Union as a boon to her presidential campaign, which she had fought on an anti-immigration platform. She called for a stop to the flow of immigrants coming into France, but said she was not interested in mirroring Trump's wall to protect French borders.⁶⁸ A party leader said France could implement a travel ban similar to the one in the United States if far-right National Front candidate Marine Le Pen was elected president. Steeve Briois, the National Front party's vice

⁶⁶ See: Mareeg.com News' entry "Dutch Far right Geert Wilders said Donald Trump's victory 'patriotic spring'", in <http://mareeg.com/dutch-far-right-geert-wilders-said-donald-trumps-victory-patriotic-spring/>, retrieved on 11.11.2016

⁶⁷ See: NewEurope.eu News' entry "Europe's far-right welcomes Trump's Muslim immigration ban", in: <https://www.neweurope.eu/article/europes-far-right-welcomes-trumps-muslim-immigration-ban/>, retrieved on 31.1.2017

⁶⁸ See: KPAX.com News' entry "France's far-right leader Le Pen applauds Trump's travel ban", in: <http://www.kpax.com/story/34399549/frances-far-right-leader-le-pen-applauds-trumps-travel-ban>, retrieved on 2.2.2017

president and a member of Le Pen's campaign, told that they would certainly be open to copying Trump's ban in France. Briois, who also was the mayor of Henin-Beaumont said: *"We are no longer in the world of the Care Bears. We are in a horrible world, so sometimes you have to take measures of authority, even if it shocks. It is true that the United States are a target for jihadists so if Trump wishes to protect himself by barring entry on his territory for people from those countries, that is his right."* Le Pen herself had not spoken publicly about the travel ban, but since the beginning of her campaign she had maintained that she wanted to pull France out of the European Union, reinforced the country's borders and cracked down on immigration. During Trump's transition period, Le Pen was spotted at Trump Tower in New York, although she did not say whether she met with the then-president-elect while there.⁶⁹

For the year of 2017, the Observatory was very much concerned by the potential dominance of Far Rights and Populism in Europe, and the Netherlands, France, and Germany were of particular attention. The Dutch polls in March 2017 was the first of three big elections in 2017 involving founding European Union (EU) members. The French presidential election took place in April and May. In September, German Chancellor Angela Merkel would be seeking a fourth term. All three elections were critical for the future of the EU, as the rise of right-wing populism and nationalism might threaten some of the key bedrocks of the European project. All eyes were on the Freedom Party's Geert Wilders as he got a chance to test his electoral popularity in an era of massive political upsets. Mr Wilders was anti-Islam, anti-immigration and anti-EU, and for long stages of the campaign had been ahead in the polls. The international media liked to portray him as the Dutch Donald Trump, despite a number of key differences between the two. Unlike Mr Trump, who until 2016 had never stood for public office, Mr Wilders had been in the Dutch Parliament for nearly 20 years. Before that he was a local councilor and a parliamentary staffer. He started the Freedom Party in 2004 after leaving the Centre-right VVD party. In 2010, he won 24 seats in the Dutch Parliament after securing 15 per cent of the vote. While Mr Trump had his contentious travel ban on those from six predominantly Muslim countries, Mr Wilders wanted to go a lot further than that. He was vowing to de-Islamize the Netherlands by shutting mosques and Islamic schools, banning the Koran and having zero asylum seekers and no immigrants anymore from Islamic countries. Mr Trump had made jobs and the economy a centerpiece of his agenda. However, Mr Wilders tended to focus on issues of national identity. Much of his one-page election manifesto was about his anti-Islam and anti-EU policies. In that platform he did not even mention jobs. The first paragraph of his manifesto states: *"Millions of Dutch citizens have simply had enough of the Islamisation of our country. Enough of mass immigration and asylum, terror, violence and insecurity."*⁷⁰

If only Wilders would have been elected as Prime Minister, same ideology was about to be brought to the Netherlands through Geert Wilders' victory, and the concern was not without reason. The party led by Geert Wilders was predicted to beat Prime Minister Mark Rutte's ruling conservative liberals if elections were held a bit earlier. The Freedom Party (PVV) could count on 29 seats out of the 150-seat chamber, according to a reliable poll center, making it the largest party in the Netherlands. In the space of one month the popularity of the PVV has surged with an increase of six seats. The data suggested Eurosceptic Mr Wilders could become the Netherlands' next prime minister, potentially spelling the end of Dutch membership of the European Union. Frustrations had grown with the current coalition government and an ongoing court trial involving Mr Wilders had boosted his support. Mr Wilders, who was riding a wave of populist

⁶⁹ See: Pittsburgh Post-Gazette News' entry "France's far-right party says it could replicate Trump's ban if Le Pen is elected", in: <http://www.post-gazette.com/news/world/2017/02/01/France-s-far-right-party-says-it-could-replicate-Trump-s-ban-if-Le-Pen-is-elected/stories/201702010161>, retrieved on 2.2.2017

⁷⁰ See: ABC.net.au News' entry "Geert Wilders, Dutch right-wing politician, pledges to 'de-Islamise' the Netherlands ahead of election", in: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-03-13/geert-wilders-pledges-to-de-islamise-the-netherlands/8348206>, retrieved on 14.3.2017

sentiment sweeping the crumbling bloc, had called for mosques and Islamic schools to be closed. His manifesto called for a ban on the Koran and declared he wants “no more immigrants from Islamic countries”.⁷¹ Geert Wilders wanted to ‘de-Islamise’ the Netherlands and ban the Quran after comparing the holy book to *Mein Kampf*. In a television interview, the anti-Islam founder of Holland’s Party of Freedom also compared mosques to Nazi temples. The controversial politician had already proclaimed that Europe was about to enter a ‘Patriotic Spring’ in which populist parties would triumph in the Netherlands and France following Brexit and the election of Donald Trump as US president. In the interview, Wilders repeated remarks he had made frequently in the past, comparing the Quran to Hitler’s autobiography ‘*Mein Kampf*’.⁷² He again sparked outrage in February 2017 during his campaign for the legislative elections by attacking the Moroccan community in the Netherlands, calling them “Scum,” and voicing his desire to “*cleanse*” the country from “*the Moroccan trash*” and “*return it to the Dutch people.*” Wilders spoke before the press at the small town of Spijkenisse in the south of Rotterdam, saying: “*The Moroccan scum in Holland ... once again not all are scum ... but there is a lot of Moroccan scum in Holland who make the streets unsafe, mostly young people ... and that should change.....If you want to regain your country, if you want to make the Netherlands for the people of the Netherlands, your own home again, then you can only vote for the Freedom party. Please, make the Netherlands ours again.*” This was not the first time Wilders expressed such comments against the Dutch Moroccan community. The populist leader was convicted in December 2016 of inciting discrimination and insulting Moroccans, before and after local elections in 2014. Wilders’ statements against Islam had won him ‘The best protected man in the Netherlands’ title, owing to the large amount of security he traveled with after receiving several death threats for his discriminatory opinions.⁷³



Worse still, Geert Wilders stated that Islam was a totalitarian ideology, not a religion, and therefore he called a Dutch constitutional commitment to freedom of religion shouldn’t apply to it. The politician and leader of the Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV) said that although Islam had many of the trappings of religion, it shared more in common with totalitarian ideologies such as communism and fascism and should be treated as such. Quoting his detailed statement: “*Not only is the Quran more full of anti-Semitism than Mein Kampf – another terrible book – ever was, but one token of proof of totalitarianism is that you are not allowed to leave. That’s the proof of totalitarianism. Islam as an ideology does not allow freedom. Look at almost all the countries in the world where Islam is dominant – you see a total lack of civil society, of rule of law, of freedom for journalists, women, Christians, or even somebody who wants to leave Islam, an apostate. You are allowed to leave Christianity or Judaism and become an atheist or the follower of another religion;*

⁷¹ See: Express News’ entry “EU set for another hammerblow: Geert Wilders’ Freedom Party soars ahead in polls”, in: <http://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/741449/geert-wilders-freedom-party-election-polls-ahead-eu>, retrieved on 9.12.2016

⁷² See: Sbynews.blogspot.com News’ entry “Geert Wilders promises to ‘de-Islamise’ the Netherlands”, in: <http://sbynews.blogspot.com/2017/02/geert-wilders-promises-to-de-islamise.html>, retrieved on 15.2.2017

⁷³ See: Morocco World News’ entry “Populist Leader Geert Wilders Calls Moroccan Immigrants ‘Scum’”, in: <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2017/02/208744/netherlands-populist-leader-geert-wilders-calls-moroccan-immigrants-scum/>, retrieved on 20.2.2017

you are not allowed to leave fascism, you are not allowed to leave Communism. And still today in Holland, in Germany, in the Arab world, the penalty is death if you want to leave Islam. That kind of thinking, that kind of violence within an ideology is something that we should not import." Conceding that his view was a minority view, and that the Netherlands' constitution was unlikely to change should his party be victorious in upcoming elections, he clarified that his objection was to Islam as a body of ideas, not to Muslim people.⁷⁴

Despite too early, he already mentioned some ridiculous nightmare he would bring to Muslims. He said he would ban Turkey's entire Cabinet from visiting the Netherlands to prevent ministers campaigning in Netherlands for a referendum on changing Turkey's constitution. Wilders told foreign journalists saying that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was an 'Islamofascist leader'. Wilders also accused the Dutch government of weakness in not banning Turkey's Foreign Minister from holding a rally in Rotterdam in support of the constitutional change. Dutch media reported that Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu was planning a campaign rally in Rotterdam, which had a large migrant Turkish community. Prime Minister Mark Rutte had called such a rally "*undesirable*" and said his government would not cooperate. The Dutch comments followed a diplomatic spat the week before between Germany and Turkey over referendum rallies.⁷⁵ Geert Wilders threatened to strip the country's 400,000 ethnic Turks of their dual citizenship, describing them as a "*fifth column*". His call came amid an escalating confrontation between Western Europe and Turkey, which already inflamed March's Dutch elections and could overshadow the coming French presidential poll. At the weekend, the Dutch government prevented two Turkish ministers from campaigning in the country. President Erdogan hit back by accusing the Dutch government of acting like Nazis and warning that the Netherlands could face harsh sanctions.⁷⁶

Luckily, Mark Rutte emerged victorious in a bruising battle with Geert Wilders, the racist figure who relentlessly battled against Islam, Muslims and anything he thinks the European Union failed to earn. The victory of Mark Rutte signifies a setback of populism after its boosts in Britain and the United States, but Geert Wilders and his anti-Islam ideology have become more popular than ever. His Party for Freedom (PVV) comes to the second largest in the Dutch Parliament after election (with 20 seats) after Rutte's People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (33 seats). However, the Observatory sees the truth as not that simple. Wilders is out of power, but his influence is everywhere. His ideas about the threat posed by Islam, long on the fringes of debate, were gaining traction in the continent. He has shown how populists can transform political norms, even when they lose. The actual fact is even worse, as the Far Right Parties would likely to bring about direct influence to the Dutch government which eventually would establish a stronger base for anti-Islam ideology in the country. The election has put pressures on whoever wins to move closer to Geert Wilders' agenda. The Dutch House of Representatives has 150 members. Their lower house is elected by a system of proportional representation, meaning that the seats are split between an array of major and minor parties. The next Prime Minister most probably have to form a coalition with a range of parties, while all major parties have ruled out striking a power-sharing agreement with Mr Wilders, even if he does not win the vote. It means that Mark Rutte will have to lead a coalition in a parliament whose center has been hollowed out. The center-left Labour Party saw a total

⁷⁴ See: BlueWhite News' entry "Geert Wilders: Islam Is Not a Religion, It's a Totalitarian Ideology", in: <https://bwi.forums.rivals.com/threads/geert-wilders-islam-is-not-a-religion-it%E2%80%99s-a-totalitarian-ideology.168323/>, retrieved on 1.3.2017

⁷⁵ See: BayNews9.com News' entry "Dutch populist Wilders: Ban Turkish Cabinet visits", in: http://www.baynews9.com/content/news/baynews9/news/article.html/content/news/articles/ap/2017/03/05/Dutch_populist_Wilders_Ban_Turkish_Cabinet_visits.html, retrieved on 7.3.2017

⁷⁶ See: The Times News' entry, in: <https://www.thelocal.it/20170308/italian-region-bans-veiled-women-from-entering-hospitals>, retrieved on 13.3.2017

collapse in its support, winning just nine seats compared with 29 at the previous time. Meanwhile, a sizable minority of Dutch voters backed parties further to the left, including the environmentalist GreenLeft party and the progressive liberal D66 party. That could mean that Mark Rutte, despite his unwillingness to cooperate with Wilders, is now having less choice otherwise to form a government cobbled together from parties whose only uniting principle is "Never Wilders."

Another potential nightmare was about to happen **in France** since Far-right Marine Le Pen was ahead in the polls as campaigning heated up before the first round of the French Presidential election on 23 April 2017. Despite fears of yet another populist victory and the future of the European Union under very real threat, her poll lead was increasing by the



day, as she was polling at 26 percent. The presidential campaign of former French Prime Minister François Fillon was in tatters after France's financial prosecutor said a probe into 'fake work' allegations remained open. The scandal over hundreds of thousands of euros of taxpayers' cash paid to his wife for work she might or might not have done had cost Fillon his shot at the Elysee Palace. Centrist Emmanuel Macron was set to benefit from Fillon's fall from grace moving to 23 percent in the pre-election polls. Emmanuel Macron was a French anti-Trump, but he was making the running. The vote would go to a second round on 7 May 2017 in a run-off between the two leading candidates from the first vote.⁷⁷

If only Le Pen would have been elected as President, the same 'ultranationalist' ideology was about to be brought to France, just like the case of Geert Wilders in the Netherlands. Marine Le Pen unveiled her platform envisioning a thriving nation "made in France," with its citizens first in line for state services and the state unshackled by the rules-laden European Union. According to Le Pen's vision, the French would guard their own borders, spend francs instead of euros and defend themselves under the National Front leader's plans. Immigration, especially by Muslims, would be contained. In Le Pen's mind, a policy of "national priority" would give French citizens preference for public housing and other services over EU citizens and immigrants, and lower the profile of France's large Muslim population. Le Pen hoped the British decision to exit the European Union and the election of US President Donald Trump could provide a morale boost for right-wing, populist voters. She said as quoted: *"France is a Christian land coming from Roman law and Greek philosophy. We have the right to expect that cultures imported by those newly arrived bow and fade away in the face of our patrimony."* Le Pen had headed the National Front since 2011 and came in third in the presidential vote in 2012. She believed in what she called "economic patriotism" and "intelligent protectionism." Her plan included reserving public bids for French companies if their offers were reasonable and adding a tax for foreign workers. Le Pen denounced what she called the "ultra-liberal economic model" of globalization, open borders and "massive immigration," notably of Muslims. In her view, immigrants took jobs from the French, raised the country's terrorism risk and stole away France's very identity. Among Le Pen's commitments: No more membership in NATO's integrated command. No more

⁷⁷ See: Yahoo News' entry "French fears as far-right Le Pen leads presidential polls", in: <https://uk.news.yahoo.com/french-fears-far-le-pen-173138956.html>, retrieved on 17.2.2017

euro currency, European Union or open borders, and no more second chances for foreigners under surveillance as suspected potential terrorists expelled.⁷⁸

During the observed period, in addition to the Netherlands, France, and Germany, some countries in Europe were also closely observed as they were showing a strong indicator of Islamophobia shown by Far Right institutions and figures, i.e. those in the UK, Switzerland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Norway.

In the UK, around 300 people took part in a rally in favor of Islamophobia in the British capital. Organized by anti-Islam groups Britain First and the English Defense League, the separate rallies, dubbed as a “*march against terrorism*,” were castigated by the supporters as attempts to boost Islamophobia. Out of 1.6 million Facebook followers of Britain First, more than 2,700 had voiced interest in partaking in the demo. Around the same number of people also took part in a counter-rally, organized by Unite Against Fascism (UAF). The Metropolitan police arrested 14 people after clashes broke out between the rival mobs.⁷⁹



Of the same spirit, hundreds turn out to protest against plans for Islamic centre in Trafford suburb. The protesters carried banners that said: ‘*No more mosques*’, while others held placards calling for protection to greenbelt land. A protester said: “*If something has to be built on there why not something for everyone, not just for Muslims.*” Following the protest, a spokesperson for the Altrincham and Hale Muslim Association clarified: “*The Muslim community in the Altrincham and Hale area has grown substantially over the past decade, and our existing facilities are no longer fit for purpose.*”⁸⁰

⁷⁸ See: The Big Story News’ entry French far-right candidate Le Pen’s plan: ‘Made in France’, in: <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/platform-french-far-right-candidate-made-france>, retrieved on 5.2.2017

⁷⁹ See: PressTV News’ entry “PressTV-Islamophobic event draws no more than 300”, in: <http://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2017/04/02/516407/Islamophobic-event-draws-no-more-than-300>, retrieved on 2.4.2017

⁸⁰ See: Manchester Evening News’ entry “Hundreds turn out to protest against plans for Islamic centre in Trafford suburb”, in: <http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/hundreds-turn-out-protest-against-12063895>, retrieved on 23.10.2016

As **Switzerland** prepared for a controversial immigration referendum in February 2017, the Swiss Federal Railways was under pressure to remove political ads featuring a woman in a burqa, to which critics had called 'offensive propaganda'. The 12 February Referendum would naturalize as many as 25,000 third-generation immigrants under the age of 25, provided they spoke one of the four official languages of the country, respected Swiss law, and met other criteria. The far-right Swiss People's Party (SVP), which ordered up the ad campaign, opposed the referendum, saying broader naturalization would have "*damaging consequences to Swiss culture and identity.*" The SVP's anti-referendum ads depicted a woman in a burqa—a symbol of lack of integration' as was said by one prominent SVP politician—with



the campaign's slogan: "*Uncontrolled naturalization? No to facilitated naturalization.*" The railway was under pressure because the SVP had run the ads in train stations where thousands of passengers saw them daily. On Facebook, critics described the burqa ad as racist, hateful, and propaganda. The ads were created by Goal AG, an agency known for its controversial ads about Muslim assimilation and immigration. In 2009, as Switzerland considered whether to deport immigrants who had committed serious crimes, Goal AG created a poster showing a white sheep booting a black sheep off a Swiss flag.⁸¹

Over the course of 2016, the government of **Slovakia** made it quite clear what it considers Islam's place in this country to be. In March, far-right and populist parties emerged as winners of the parliamentary election. A neo-Nazi party won seats in Parliament for the first time and the Slovak Prime Minister, Robert Fico, warned of the dangers of Muslims ahead of the election. In May, Fico gave an interview in which he said that Islam has no place in Slovakia. In July, Slovakia took over the presidency of the EU Council, a change about which other European officials were apparently unenthusiastic given that Europe was in the throes of a refugee crisis and Slovakia sought to fight a refugee distribution scheme, saying it did not want to take any more refugees. In November, Slovakia presented a plan to the EU to allow countries to spend more money or otherwise do more to enforce external borders or deporting people, instead of taking in their share of migrants. Also, Slovakia suggested EU member states should agree to emergency measures on a voluntary basis in response to peak refugee arrivals. Slovakia, like all other Visegrad countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia), had refused to take in refugees and migrants from Italy and Greece despite a record

⁸¹ See: Heatstreet News' entry "Swiss Up in Arms Over Ad by Far-Right Party Featuring Woman in Burqa", in: <http://heatst.com/culture-wars/swiss-up-in-arms-over-ad-by-far-right-party-featuring-woman-in-burqa/>, retrieved on 14.1.2017

number of asylum seekers reached Italy by boat during 2016. In December, Slovakia's government had approved a law that would ban Islam from becoming a state religion. The legislation stated that a religion must have at least 50,000 followers to qualify for state subsidy. The law was proposed by the Slovak National Party and was approved by a two-thirds majority. The party itself was quoted saying that they must do everything possible so that no mosque is built in the future.⁸²



In Hungary, Laszlo Toroczkai, the Mayor of Asotthalom, a remote village of around 4,000 on Hungary's southern border with Serbia, said that while he would like to attract more inhabitants to the village, he did not want to attract Muslim—citing his desire to “*preserve traditions*”. Toroczkai, who was elected in 2013 and was also vice-president of Hungary's far-right party Jobbik, told that the village authorities wanted to welcome new Western European residents, claiming that the flow of refugees could lead to the “*disappearance of Europe*”. He said: “*We primarily welcome people from Western Europe, people who wouldn't like to live in a multicultural society. We wouldn't like to attract Muslim people in the village, even though we already have a few Muslim residents in Asotthalom. It's very important for the village to preserve its traditions. Europe is small. It can't take in billions of people from Africa and South Asia, where there's a population boom. This would soon lead to the disappearance of Europe. We can see large numbers of Muslim communities in Western communities that haven't been able to integrate, and we don't want the same thing to happen here.*”⁸³

In Norway, the Integration Minister, Sylvi Listhaug, wrote in a post that was liked by 20,000 people saying: “*I think those who come to Norway need to adapt to our society. Here we eat pork, drink alcohol and show our face. You must abide by the values, laws and regulations that are in Norway when you come here.*” Omar Gilani Syed, a criminologist who worked with integrating refugees, asked whether Listhaug could continue to be responsible for integration in the country while making such statements. He said: “*If she does not understand the complexity and does not have the expertise to deal with these social issues in a good way, it's time to ask: should Listhaug reconsider her position?*” Zaineb Al-Samarai, a politician from Norway's Labour Party, accused Listhaug of deliberately seeking to divide Muslim immigrants from the rest of Norwegian society. She said: “*I do not believe that Norwegian culture is so weak that it's going to lay down and die if someone chooses to wear a hijab as their national costume. Norwegian culture is not as weak or in danger as you believe. And Norwegian culture is about a lot more than pork and headgear.*”⁸⁴

⁸² See: Foreign Policy News' entry “Once Again, Slovakia Makes Life Harder for Muslims”, in <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/12/02/once-again-slovakia-makes-life-harder-for-muslims/>, retrieved on 3.12.2016

⁸³ See: Independent.co.uk News' entry “Hungarian Mayor seeks to ban Muslims and gay people from his village”, in: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/muslims-gay-people-not-welcome-hungary-mayor-asotthalom-laszlo-toroczkai-lgbt-rights-islamophobia-a7566916.html>, retrieved on 8.2.2017

⁸⁴ See: The Local News' entry “Muslims call for Norway minister to resign after pork post”, in: <https://www.thelocal.no/20161020/muslims-call-for-norway-minister-to-resign-after-pork-post>, retrieved on 21.10.2016

2.3. Islamophobia in the Rest of the World

2.3.1. Myanmar

The Observatory understands that the root cause of Rohingya issue is political and 'human right' rather 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 being part of the vicious circle of Rohingya issue.

Under the reviewed period, the Rohingya Muslims was even becoming constant headlines of world Media due to the harsh approach applied by the Burmese Security Forces following the incident on 9 October where 9 (nine) police officers were killed. In response, the Myanmar Government launched aggression against the Muslim minority group. Three villages inhabited by the Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine had been torched with hundreds of victims were reported, due to which the UN Human Right Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) sent a special fact-finding mission to Myanmar. A complete report of the mission was released on 3 February 2017, confirming the massive human right abuse undertaken by Myanmar Government on Rohingya people. The military operation was reported by the UN to have sent around 34,000 members of the Rohingya Muslim minority fleeing into neighboring Bangladesh. Residents and rights groups accused security forces of abuses during the operation including summary executions and rape, which the government of Aung San Suu Kyi denied. Myanmar itself was reported defied a call by Muslim governments to stop atrocities against Rohingya Muslims, slamming instead Malaysia for hosting a meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). At an extraordinary OIC meeting in Kuala Lumpur, the Malaysian premier called on Myanmar to end its crackdown on Rohingya Muslims and stop the unspeakable cruelty against them. Myanmar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said one day after that it was regrettable that Malaysia had called the emergency meeting to discuss the plight of the Rohingya. The ministry accused Malaysia of exploiting the crisis to promote a certain political agenda and disregarding alleged efforts of the Myanmar government to tackle the crisis.⁸⁵

Meanwhile, the measures undertaken by Myanmar Government to address the recent circumstances related to Rohingya people was truly Islamophobic, and likely to aggravate the already poor situation. As was reported, the Myanmar Government set up a plan to arm and train non-Muslim residents in the troubled north of Rakhine State. Soldiers flooded the Maungdaw area along Myanmar's frontier with Bangladesh. 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. Along with these, the Rakhine State police

⁸⁵ See: ABNA News' entry "Myanmar refuses to obey OIC's demand to end violence against Muslims", in <http://en.abna24.com/service/east-asia/archive/2017/01/21/806303/story.html>, retrieved on 22.1.2017

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.⁸⁶ An Islamophobic incident was also reported when Buddhist hardliners attacked Myanmar Muslims who were celebrating Prophet Mohammed's birthday in Yangon, as Islamophobic tensions boiled over amid the military campaign in northern Rakhine state. Dozens of people led by a handful of maroon-robed monks, marched to the YMCA in Myanmar's commercial capital to shut down a service marking the Prophet Mohammed's birthday. Witnesses said the monks barged into the ceremony shortly after it started demanding it be shut down. Police were called, but did not intervene to stop the hardliners. Islamophobic sentiment had been on the rise in Myanmar since deadly communal violence erupted between Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims in western Rakhine state in 2012. In recent years Buddhist hardliners had sought to restrict Muslim worship, destroying mosques and trying to ban ceremonies such as the ritual slaughter of cattle during the festival of Eid al-Adha.⁸⁷

2.3.2. Australia

Far Right groups were quite active in Australia during the reviewed period, and the major issue was around the Muslim refugees in the country that heats the debates as the conservative government announced plans to permanently ban asylum seekers who attempted to reach Australia by boat. In Melbourne for instance, 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.⁸⁸ 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 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"*.⁸⁹ The Australian government announced in 2015 its policy

⁸⁶ See: One America News Network' News entry "Myanmar's plan to arm, train non-Muslims 'recipe for disaster': jurist group", in: <http://www.oann.com/myanmars-plan-to-arm-train-non-muslims-recipe-for-disaster-jurist-group/>, retrieved on 6.11.2016

⁸⁷ See: Daily Sabah News' entry "Buddhist hardliners attack Myanmar Muslims celebrating Prophet Mohammed's birthday", in: <https://www.dailysabah.com/islamophobia/2017/01/08/buddhist-hardliners-attack-myanmar-muslims-celebrating-prophet-mohammeds-birthday>, retrieved on 9.1.2017

⁸⁸ See: Reuters News' entry "Australia's far-right groups protest Syrian refugee housing", in: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-australian-protests-farright-idUSKBN13005X>, retrieved on 6.11.2016

⁸⁹ See: TheAge.com News' entry "Far-right group to rally in Melbourne as Springvale fire tragedy fuels racism on social media", 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

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.

Another heating-up issue was related to Burqa and Niqab, as certain politicians started to open the discourse at public. The Australian 'One Nation' leader Pauline Hanson stated her party would move to ban the burqa nationally after indicating a ban would be put in place in Queensland if it won the state election there. She told that the party would forge ahead with a proposal to ban the burqa in public areas, including schools and government buildings in Queensland. Following Senator Hanson's comments, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull told reporters: *"we don't see a lot of burqas in Australia ... we have a very open society, we've got a very easy-going society, we don't tell people what to wear."* One Nation had more than 30 candidates seeking election in Queensland and according to an opinion poll was enjoying around sixteen percent support in the state.⁹⁰ Senator Jacqui Lambie had also introduced legislation banning Muslim women from wearing the burqa in public. Senator Lambie insisted full face coverings make Australians fearful and the right to feel safe must outweigh the right for expression of religious freedom. She said that a nationwide ban on all identity-concealing garments was needed for national security reasons, unless the wearer had a reasonable and lawful excuse. She told parliament: *"While some small groups of people may make an argument that their right to express their religious feelings or views by wearing identity concealing garments is being limited, the security and the safety of the community must always come first."* The private senators' bill, introduced in the Senate in February, linked the ban to the national terrorism threat level, kicking in when the terror threat. The bill bans people from wearing full face coverings in commonwealth jurisdictions such as airports, as well as the ACT and Northern Territory. It also made it illegal to force another person or child to wear a full face covering, that would result in six months' jail while forcing a child to wear one would attract 12 months jail.

2.3.3. The Occupied Territory of Palestine

A significant wave of Islamophobia came from Israel as representatives of Israel's Knesset had given their approval to what was known as the 'Muezzin Bill' for 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 2016 before authorizing it for a parliamentary vote. It was likely to be passed, since it had the solid backing of the country's ruling coalition. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu expressed his support during 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, the proposed law contained a clause which is harmful to the freedom of religion. The Observatory believes that the law was targeted at Muslims.⁹¹ This government-backed bill 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*

⁹⁰ See: SkyNews News' entry "Hanson to move ahead with burqa ban plan", in: <http://www.skynews.com.au/news/top-stories/2017/01/17/hanson-to-move-ahead-with-burqa-ban-plan.html>, retrieved on 18.1.2017

⁹¹ See: The Independent News' entry "Israeli ministers to ban use of speakers for Muslim call to prayer due to 'noise pollution'", 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

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 were underrepresented in high-level jobs.⁹²

2.3.4. China

Quite recently, authorities in China's Xinjiang region were applying policy of prohibiting parents from giving children some Islamic names in the latest effort to dilute the influence of religion on life in the ethnic Uighur minority heartland. According to a list distributed by overseas Uighur activists, "Muhammad," "Jihad" and "Islam" were among at least 29 names now banned in the heavily Muslim region. An official at a county-level public security office in Kashgar, a hub in southern Xinjiang with strong Islamic influences, said some names were banned because they had a "religious background." It was unclear how widespread the ban was, or whether it was tightly enforced. The naming restrictions were part of a broader government effort to secularize Xinjiang, which was home to roughly 10 million Uighurs. Top officials had publicly said that radical Islamic thought had infiltrated the region from Central Asia, protracting a bloody, years long insurgency and claimed hundreds of lives. Government-linked scholars and high-ranking officials, including Chinese President Xi Jinping, had urged local governments to better assimilate their Muslim minorities into the majority Han Chinese culture. Aside from the prohibition on Islamic names, local Xinjiang officials had, at the earlier times, strongly discouraged or prohibited Islamic veils, while government-linked figures had called for bans of mosques with domes or other Middle Eastern architectural styles.⁹³ A little bit earlier, the China's province had put a ban on 'Beards' which was blamed by some human rights groups as repressive policy. These restrictions had been approved by the Xinjiang lawmakers and being posted on the official website. The rules had further demanded all the workers to dissuade those who fully cover their bodies, including veiling their faces. As the consequence, these people would be restricted from entering public places otherwise being reported to the Police.⁹⁴

⁹² See: The Indian Express News' entry "Israeli bid to turn down mosque prayer calls blocked", in: <http://indianexpress.com/article/world/world-news/israeli-bid-to-turn-down-mosque-prayer-calls-blocked-4379115/>, retrieved on 18.11.2016

⁹³ See: ABC News entry "China bans list of Islamic names in restive Xinjiang region", in: <http://abcnews.go.com/search?searchtext=China%20bans%20list%20of%20Islamic%20names%20in%20restive%20Xinjiang%20region>, retrieved on 28.4.2017

⁹⁴ See: India Times News entry "China Puts A Ban On 'Long Beards' And Veils In Public, Adding To The List Of Most Ridiculous Rules", in: <http://www.indiatimes.com/news/world/china-puts-a-ban-on-long-beards-and-veils-in-public-adding-to-the-list-of-most-ridiculous-rules-275238.html>, retrieved on 10.4.2017

2.4. Other Islamophobic Trends

2.4.1. Islamophobic Gestures and Policies against Veil, Hijab, and Burqa⁹⁵

Massive 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.⁹⁶ 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. Therefore, 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. In 2016 several French coastal towns implemented a Burkini ban, a swimming suit for Muslim women, after government officials said that it raised concerns around security. The ban led to hundreds of protests taking place throughout France and Europe, with campaigners citing that it infringed on their human rights.⁹⁷

What was happening in France in 2010 was actually part of a long story of resentment in Europe against this particular dress, which had even started since 2003; and the following timeline might help to better understand the story:⁹⁸

24 September 2003—Germany's federal constitutional court rules in favor of an Afghan-born teacher who wants to wear an Islamic scarf at school, but the court also said that states can change their laws locally if they want to. The result is that half of Germany's regions go on to ban teachers from wearing headscarves.



⁹⁵ Acknowledgement is given to the OIC Liaison Office at the UNESCO, Paris, who has helped enriching this section.

⁹⁶ See: The New York Times News entry "Parliament Moves France Closer to a Ban on Facial Veils, in: http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/14/world/europe/14burqa.html?_r=0

⁹⁷ See: Sputnik International News' entry "Europe's Burqa Ban Boom Proves Unpopular in US despite Trump Rhetoric", in: <https://sputniknews.com/society/201701171049689305-brits-germany-ban-burqa/>, retrieved on 18.1.2017

⁹⁸ See: The Guardian News' entry "Headscarves and Muslim veil ban debate: a timeline", in: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/14/headscarves-and-muslim-veil-ban-debate-timeline>, retrieved on 15.3.2017

3 February 2004—France's national assembly begins debating a bill to ban religious symbols, including Muslim headscarves, Jewish skullcaps and large Christian crosses, from schools.

11 April 2011—under a decree by the then French Prime Minister Francois Fillon, women were banned from wearing the niqab in any public place. Under the first ban, face veils are outlawed virtually anywhere outside women's homes, except when worshipping in a religious place or travelling as a passenger in a car.

31 March 2010—a committee in Belgium votes to implement the first European ban against wearing the burqa and niqab in public, but French government imposes first the ban, as a law banning the full-face veil does not come into effect in Belgium until July 2011—three months after the French ban.

1 July 2014—The European court of human rights upholds France's burqa ban. The judges said preservation of a certain idea of "living together" is the "legitimate aim" of the French authorities.

22 May 2015—The Dutch cabinet approves a partial ban on face-covering Islamic veils on public transport and in public areas. The ban does not apply to wearing the burqa or the niqab on the street, except when there are specific security reasons.

18 January 2016—the former UK Prime Minister David Cameron said he would back institutions with 'sensible rules' over Muslims wearing full-face veils, but ruled out a full public ban.

18 August 2016—France's Prime Minister, Manuel Valls, defended municipal bans on body covering burkini swimwear designed for Muslim women after mayors imposed burkini bans in several seaside towns including Cannes, Villeneuve-Loubet and Sisc on the island of Corsica.

6 December 2016—The German chancellor, Angela Merkel, endorses a partial ban on the burqa and the niqab.

30 January 2017—Austria's ruling coalition agrees to prohibit full-face veils such as the burqa and the niqab in courts and schools. It also pledged to investigate banning headscarves for women employed in public services, in a move designed to hold the ruling coalition together by placating the anti-immigration Freedom party.

14 March 2017—in its first decision on the headscarf issue the European court of justice rules that employers can bar staff from wearing visible religious symbols.

At the time this Report was made, at least 12 (twelve) European countries have partially or fully banned veil, headscarf, hijab, niqab, and burqa i.e. France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Denmark, Bulgaria, Latvia, Estonia, and Albania. More were on the way with intensive debates are ongoing in some countries. At this stage, the trend of outlawing veil, headscarf, hijab, niqab, and burqa deserves a particular attention, especially after the decision taken on the 14th of March by the European Court of Justice (ECJ), which ruled that employers/companies could ban staff from wearing these particular clothes. On this new development, the Observatory sees a pattern towards a complete ban of Muslim headscarf in Europe in the coming future which, somehow, beyond 'security' consideration. A country followed by another, made the ban part of their national law, despite the clear manifestation of social discrimination behind such a policy. The ECJ's recent decision is therefore seen by the Observatory as just another step towards those ends.

Meanwhile, the result of observation over the recent situation in countries is being reported as the following:

In Bulgaria, the Government had outlawed the burqa and was imposing a hefty fine on those who broke the new rules. Women who flout the law would face a penalty of up to €770 and had their social security benefits temporarily suspended. The punishment was far bigger than in other countries, including France. Anyone caught wearing the burqa or niqab is fined €150. However Belgium, which introduced a similar ban shortly after France, goes even further – anyone caught wearing the veil risks being jailed for up to seven days and fined €1,378.⁹⁹

In Norway, the right-wing government announced plans to ban the full-face Islamic veil from classrooms and university lecture halls. Education Minister Torbjorn Roe Isaksen, quoted saying that the government was seeking national regulations prohibiting the full-face veil in schools and universities. Muslim women were rarely seen wearing such veils in Norway, let alone in schools. But the issue had come up recently in political debates, with less than a year to go before parliamentary elections. Several political parties including the opposition Labor Party had expressed support for such a ban. The Minister however stressed that the ban would not apply to Islamic headscarves that leave the face exposed such as the hijab. He told parliament *"I want a young Christian girl who wears a cross to be able to show it. I want a Jewish boy who wears a Kippa to be able to show it. And I do not want a ban on the hijab."* The Norwegian plan came as several European countries had moved to ban the face-covering niqab and full-body burqa. Bulgaria banned women from wearing the full veil in public recently, and Switzerland's lower house narrowly approved a draft bill on a nationwide ban not long before that. In August Germany's interior minister came out in favor of a partial ban. France and Belgium have both banned the burqa and niqab in public, while French beach resorts sparked international controversy with local bans on the full-body Burkini Islamic swimsuit.¹⁰⁰

In Germany, Interior Ministry has submitted a proposal stated that the face veil hinders the possibility to get to know and evaluate someone's personality. The bill called on state officials to not wear clothing that makes open communication impossible or more difficult, including women employed as public officials. It further stipulated that women who wear the veil show their faces during passport control, court rulings, and at polling stations. German Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere came in favor of a partial ban on the burqa in August amid a fierce national debate on integration.¹⁰¹ Not only the German Minister, Angela Merkel herself was suddenly running as a conservative ahead of 2017 general election as she was now talking tough on mass-migration and calling for a ban on the Burqa. Merkel addressed her party's convention held in the city of Essen in saying: "The full-face veil is not acceptable in our country. It should be banned, wherever it is legally possible." While referring to the European Migrant Crisis, she also said: "A situation like the one in the late summer of 2015 cannot, should not and must not be repeated. That was and is our, and my, declared political aim." The moderate shift to the right was intended to mollify the conservative wing of the party that had grown increasingly worried about Merkel's welcoming stance toward refugees from Syria and other crisis regions, which saw nearly 900,000 migrants arrived in Germany in 2015.¹⁰² Just weeks before, the New York Times called German Chancellor Angela Merkel "the last defender of Western freedom." However, Merkel made clear what this amounts to. At the CDU party congress in Essen, she delivered an extraordinarily right-wing speech full of xenophobic attacks and demands for the strengthening of the police and military. Previously, Merkel's refusal to impose a firm upper limit for the acceptance of refugees, as the Christian Social Union (CSU) had urged, was portrayed as a "welcoming culture" toward refugees. In the interests of German big business, which had profited from the freedom of

⁹⁹ See: Emirates Women News' entry "Bulgaria is the latest country to ban the Burqa", in: <http://emirateswoman.com/bulgaria-is-the-latest-country-to-ban-the-burqa/>, retrieved on 5.10.2016

¹⁰⁰ See: Ynetnews.com News' entry "Norway seeks ban on burqas in the classroom", in: <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0.7340.L-4864123.00.html>, retrieved on 9.10.2016

¹⁰¹ See: i24news.tv News' entry "Germany proposes ban on full-face veils for public officials", in: <http://www.i24news.tv/en/news/international/europe/128295-161022-germany-proposes-ban-on-full-face-veils-for-public-officials>, retrieved on 23.10.2016

¹⁰² See: Legal Insurrection News' entry "With Election in Sight, Merkel Calls for Burqa Ban", in: <http://legalinsurrection.com/2016/12/with-election-in-sight-merkel-calls-for-burqa-ban/>, retrieved on 9.12.2016

movement within Europe, Merkel opposed the reinforcement of national borders and worked for a so-called “European solution” to the refugee crisis. The substance of this “solution” was the closure of Europe’s external borders. Merkel began her speech with a clear concession to her right-wing critics. She noted that Germany would never again accept several hundred thousand refugees in a matter of months, saying, “A situation like that in the late summer of 2015 cannot, should not and will not be repeated. While Merkel warned repeatedly about the danger posed by the growth of the AfD, her xenophobic policies and the reactionary content of the resolution would result in a strengthening of the right-wing radicals.”¹⁰³

Also in Germany, Bavaria had announced to ban the full-face veil in schools, universities, government workplaces and polling stations. The move came seven months before a federal election where immigration would be a prominent issue and the Bavarian conservatives that govern the region, the sister party to Chancellor Angela Merkel, were worried about losing votes to the anti-immigrant Alternative for Germany (AfD). Supporting the policy, Bavarian Interior Minister Joachim Herrmann said: “*Communication happens not only via language but also via looks, facial expressions and gestures.*” In December 2016, Chancellor Angela Merkel called for a ban on full-face Muslim veils “*wherever legally possible*”. The gesture was shown after more than a million, mainly Muslim, migrants arrived in Germany over the last two years and amid widespread security fears after several terrorist attacks. France and Belgium had banned the burqa and the region of Lombardy in northern Italy had also banned it in hospitals and public offices belonging to the regional government.¹⁰⁴

In addition, Germany’s populist anti-establishment Alternative for Germany (AfD) party had called for tighter borders, a ban on the Islamic headscarf, and promised to examine whether the country could ditch the euro currency. The party, which was polling around 10 per cent and looked set to pick up its first ever seats in the German parliament this year, had been highly critical of Chancellor Angela Merkel’s handling of the migrant crisis, and had attacked the country’s elite. The party’s election campaign programme, released in March, also stressed that Islam was “*not part of Germany*” and demands the “*immediate closure of borders to end the chaotic mass immigration*”. It called for an official inquiry into Mrs Merkel’s decision to open the country’s borders at the height of the migrant crisis in 2015, a decision that brought well over a million migrants into the country. Germany was expected to go to the polls in September 2017, with Angela Merkel’s Christian Democratic Union party currently neck-and-neck in the polls with the left wing Social Democrats. The Social Democrats had seen a revival in their fortunes after selecting former European Parliament President Martin Schulz as their candidate for Chancellor.¹⁰⁵

In Georgia, 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

¹⁰³ See: WSWS News’ entry “German chancellor demands stricter asylum laws and ban on burqa”, in: <http://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2016/12/08/merk-d08.html>, retrieved on 9.12.2016

¹⁰⁴ See: Reuters News’ entry “Bavaria pushes ahead with burqa ban as elections loom”, in: <http://www.reuters.com/article/religion-burqa-germany-bavaria-idUSKBN161090>, retrieved on 23.2.2017

¹⁰⁵ See: Breitbart News’ entry “Germany’s AfD Promises Tighter Borders, Ban on Islamic Veil”, in: <http://www.breitbart.com/london/2017/03/11/germanys-afd-promises-tighter-borders-ban-islamic-veil/>, retrieved on 12.3.2017

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.¹⁰⁶

In the Netherlands, 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.¹⁰⁷

In the UK, a Muslim woman was forced to the ground in a busy shopping area in London and dragged along by her hijab by two teenaged men in what authorities said was a hate crime. The British woman was in her 20s walking alone in Chingford, east London, when she was accosted by her attackers. The London Ambulance Service attended and treated the victim for her injuries at the scene. It was reported that two unknown males approached the victim from the side, pulled off her headscarf and then pushed her to the floor. The suspects were described as two white males, aged 17 to 19, wearing all black clothing. Scotland Yard was now appealing for information on the incident. There had been a rise in hate crime allegations across the UK following the EU referendum. Figures released by the UK National Police Chief's Council showed reported incidents rose to 58 per cent in the week following the vote for Brexit on June 23 and levels had remained high throughout the year.¹⁰⁸



In Italy, a Muslim woman 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

¹⁰⁶ See: The Hill News' entry "State lawmaker introduces bill to ban burqas", in: <http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/306537-georgia-state-lawmaker-introduces-bill-to-ban-burqas>, retrieved on 18.11.2016

¹⁰⁷ See: Aljazeera News' entry "Dutch parliament approves partial face veil ban", in: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/11/dutch-parliament-approves-partial-face-veil-ban-161129182036899.html>, retrieved on 30.11.2016

¹⁰⁸ See: NDTV News' entry "Muslim Woman Dragged by Her Hijab in Busy London Shopping Area", in: <http://www.ndtv.com/world-news/muslim-woman-dragged-by-her-hijab-in-busy-london-shopping-area-1638976>, retrieved on 18.12.2016

mosques.¹⁰⁹ A discourse to ban women in face veils from entering hospitals has become a hot debate in certain region in the country. Giovanni Toti, regional president of the Forza Italia party, described the burqa as *"the worst symbol of the oppression of women"*. He defended the ban against accusations that he mentioned as discriminatory and possibly anti-constitutional. *"Those who live in Italy need to grasp and respect at least the minimum rules of equality between men and women,"* said Toti, who proposed the measure together with Liguria's health councillor, Sonia Viale of the far-right Northern League party. The party's national leader, Matteo Salvini, was quick to praise the region for a concrete initiative to protect women's freedom in the midst of what he called a *"flood of useless chatter that accompanies Women's Day"*. Face coverings have been banned in public institutions in the neighboring region of Lombardy since January 2016. However, in order to abide by the Italian Constitution, which guaranteed freedom of religion, neither region made specific reference to Islamic veils in the text of their law. In the past, both Liguria and Lombardy had attempted to pass planning regulations dubbed 'anti-mosque' laws, which restricted the construction of new places of worship, however these were thrown out for being anti-constitutional.¹¹⁰

In Switzerland, the Swiss parliament's upper house had rejected a bill which called upon the country to outlaw the Muslim face veil. The draft bill was passed by the lower house in September 2016, and after debate the senate opposed it. The bill was proposed by the hardline Swiss People's Party (SVP), represented by MP Walter Wobmann who called for a federal ban on veils and other face coverings in public places across Switzerland's 26 cantons. The Senate, however, decided that it was the responsibility of individual cantons and not the federal government to decide if a ban on face veil was necessary. The senate also went on to say such a ban was not necessary as very few people in Switzerland did not use the face veil while such a policy might also hurt the country's tourism. Speaking during the debate, Socialist Anita Fetz agreed with the commission, saying it was not a widespread issue in Switzerland. She said: *"Even among tourists, cases are rare. I've seen perhaps two to three tourists entirely veiled in Basel in my whole life."* Wobmann had launched a petition to take the issue of the burqa ban to a referendum where the decision would be left up to the people. It needed 100,000 signatures by September.¹¹¹

In Australia, a judge had denied to hear evidence from the wife of an Islamic extremist after she refused to remove the veil of her burqa despite being offered alternative options. Moutia Elzahed, one of the two women married to convicted criminal and Islamic extremist Hamdi Alqudsi, was suing the police alleging they punched her and called her a 'bitch' during the Operation Apple by terrorism raids at her Revesby home in south-west of the Sydney on 18 September, 2014. Elzahed refused to take off her burqa and she failed to turn up to the fourth day on November 30 of the hearing. Her lawyer Clive Evatt said, for religious reasons, his client could not show her face to any man. Judge Balla gave Elzahed a choice; she could have the court closed while she gave evidence or she could give evidence via video link. Evatt declined both options on his client's behalf because the mostly male lawyers on both sides would still be in court and would see her face.¹¹²

In Morocco, the government seemed to follow France, Germany, and Belgium to call for the burqa ban. News media in Morocco had reported that the ban of burqas, which was due to take effect soon, also prohibited import and marketing

¹⁰⁹ See: Pakistan Today News' entry "Muslim woman fined €30,000 for not removing burqa in Italy", 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

¹¹⁰ See: The Local News' entry "Italian region bans women in face veils from entering hospitals", in: <https://www.thelocal.it/20170308/italian-region-bans-veiled-women-from-entering-hospitals>, retrieved on 9.3.2017

¹¹¹ See: Pakistan Today News' entry "Swiss parliament rejects bill proposing country-wide burqa ban", in: <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/03/10/swiss-parliament-rejects-bill-proposing-country-wide-burqa-ban/>, retrieved on 11.3.2017

¹¹² See: OutlookIndia.com News' entry "Judge denies to hear Muslim woman's evidence until she takes off veil", in: <http://www.outlookindia.com/newswire/story/judge-denies-to-hear-muslim-womans-evidence-until-she-takes-off-veil/961719>, retrieved on 03.12.2016

of the garment in all cities and towns, allegedly for security purposes. Although burqas, as opposed to the hijab, were not worn popularly in Morocco, it was however worn more in the north of Morocco known as conservative region.¹¹³

2.4.2. Discrimination against Muslims in Employment

During the reviewed period, the Observatory noted that discriminations against Muslims remains to exist, as Muslim Workers were fired, alienated, and discriminated because of their religion or simply because of the dress they put on. Regarding this issue, the Observatory was most concerned by the prospect of the anti-Muslim working discrimination in the US. After the 9/11, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) saw a 250% increase in cases of religion-based discrimination against Muslims, where Muslims continued to make up a disproportionate amount of the commission's religion-based discrimination charges, hovering over 20%. When still in office, President Obama used to speak out against Muslim discrimination on several occasions. In July 2016 for instance, President Obama called discriminatory policies against Muslims an insult to the *"values that already make our nation great,"* a statement which led the EEOC to further take on the issue of discrimination against Muslims in the workplace. In September 2016, the commission adopted its strategic enforcement plan for 2017 to 2021, including to put the issue of anti-Muslim discrimination at the list of its priorities. However, it is now quite clear how the anti-Muslim workplace discrimination would evolve under President Trump's administration. The new President appointed Commissioner Victoria Lipnic as the acting chair of the EEOC shortly after taking office, who soon voted against the strategic enforcement plan, while trying to move the commission towards a conservative direction. Furthermore, there was no indication that Trump's administration is going to make 'discrimination against Muslims in the workplace' as a priority, since the Trump Company had a history of criticizing Islam as an entire population. The President himself had previously called for a *"total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States,"* a promise many people believed he began working towards in implementing his recent controversial immigration ban.¹¹⁴

In term of incident, a small wave came from India since a Mumbai teacher was forced to quit her job because of the dress she was wearing. Khan Shabina Nazneen, a teacher in Vivek English High School in Kasaiwada, Kurla, because she was asked to remove her hijab and burqa on the campus by the headmistress. Nazneen, who had been working as an ICT teacher in the secondary section for the past two years and nine months, said she was being targeted by a new headmistress who had joined the school in June. She said: *"Since the new headmistress joined, she has asked me to remove my hijab and burqa on several occasions, saying it was against the decorum of the school. When I pointed out that I had the right to wear my traditional attire, I was told I had to abide by the rule. I was told that other Muslim teachers did not wear the hijab and I must follow suit."* Nazneen added she resigned after an incident on December 5, when she was asked to remove her burqa before singing the national anthem. The principal of the school, however, denied such discrimination.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ See: Raw Story News' entry "Morocco plans to ban Burqas", in: <http://www.rawstory.com/2017/01/michelle-obama-to-muslims-immigrants-this-country-belongs-to-you/>, retrieved on 7.1.2017

¹¹⁴ See: Onlabor News' entry "Workplace Discrimination against Muslims", in: <https://onlabor.org/2017/02/15/workplace-discrimination-against-muslims/>, retrieved on 16.2.2017

¹¹⁵ See: The Indian Express News' entry "Mumbai teacher 'barred from wearing burqa, hijab in school' quits", in: <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/mumbai-teacher-barred-from-wearing-burqa-hijab-in-school-quits-4419662/>, retrieved on 12.12.2016

2. 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 Canada, the Canadian 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.¹¹⁶

In the UK, 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 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.¹¹⁷

In Turkey, the government had started a mechanism to report Islamophobic content in digital games at www.oyunlardaislamofobi.com. Turkish Ministry of Youth and Sports concerned by the dangers of Islamophobic content in digital games, as the Minister was quoted 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



¹¹⁶ See: Albawaba News' entry "Canada passed an anti-Islamophobia bill", in: <http://www.albawaba.com/loop/canada-passed-anti-islamophobia-bill-media-didn%E2%80%99t-notice-900490>, retrieved on 4.11.2016

¹¹⁷ See: Mail Online News' entry "RE teacher who posted Islamophobic comments on social media, attended far-right marches and accessed porn on school laptop is banned from classrooms", 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

global bodies such as the United Nations.¹¹⁸ 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.¹¹⁹

In the US, at MacDill Air Force Base, in Tampa, FL President Barack Obama warned against the stigmatization of "good patriotic Muslims" and that it would feed the "terrorist narrative." Obama said: *"We are fighting terrorists who claim to fight on behalf of Islam, but they do not speak for over a billion Muslims around the world. They do not speak for American Muslims, including many who wear the uniform of the United States of America's military. If we stigmatize good patriotic Muslims, that just feeds the terrorist narrative. It fuels the same false grievances that they use to motivate people to kill. If we act like this is a war between the United States and Islam, we're not just going to lose more Americans to terrorist attacks, but we'll also lose sight of the very principles we claim to defend. So let me final words to you as your commander in chief, be a reminder of what it is you are fighting for, what it is that we are fighting for. The United States of America is not a country that imposes religious tests as a price for freedom. We are a country that was founded so that people could practice their faiths as they choose. The United States of America is not a place where some citizens have to withstand greater scrutiny or carry a special ID card or prove that they're not an enemy from within."*¹²⁰

In the UK, a special plot for Muslims to bury copies of the Koran at a city cemetery had been approved. The area was being set aside at Handsworth cemetery in Birmingham to allow people to respectfully dispose of old, worn out and damaged copies of the holy book. Birmingham City Council had given an assurance that the Korans would only be interred on pieces of land where people did not normally walk. Handsworth had plots for Christian and Muslim burials but an area for the holy text was a first and had delighted the city's mosques.¹²¹

In the US, the University of Kansas had created a women's-only lunchroom especially for Muslim students who wear the hijab, or the more extreme face-covering garb such as the burqa and the nijab. It was the Muslim Student Association leaders who said Muslim women needed a 'safe space' on campus to eat their lunches. After all, it was not easy to eat while wearing the burqa or nijab, traditional Islamic veils that cover the mouth. The room, open on weekdays from noon to 1pm in the public university's Office of Multicultural Affairs, was available to all female students that allowed

¹¹⁸ See: ABNA24 News' entry "Turkey launches website to report Islamophobia in games", in: <http://en.abna24.com/service/middle-east-west-asia/archive/2016/11/05/789984/story.html>, retrieved on 6.11.2016

¹¹⁹ See: TRT World News' entry "Turkey's 'counter-strike' against Islamophobia in video games", in: <http://www.trtworld.com/life/turkeys-counter-strike-against-islamophobia-in-video-games-225921>, retrieved on 11.11.2016

¹²⁰ See: Breitbart News' entry "Obama: If We Make Terrorism a War between the U.S. and Islam, We Will Lose More Lives", in: <http://www.breitbart.com/video/2016/12/06/obama-if-we-make-terrorism-a-war-between-the-u-s-and-islam-we-will-lose-more-lives/>, retrieved on 7.12.2016

¹²¹ See: Mail Online News' entry "Row over plans to bury copies of the Koran at a Birmingham cemetery so Muslims can dispose of their worn out texts", in: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4147880/Plans-bury-copies-Koran-Birmingham-cemetery.html>, retrieved on 24.1.2017

them to eat in a segregated, private area. Abdoulie Njai, the KU Student Senate director of diversity and inclusion, said: *"It is mainly used by Muslim women because it allows them a space to remove hijabs and eat."*¹²²

In the US, a Christian university in Texas had created a prayer room for its Muslim students. The Methodist-affiliated McMurry University dedicated the space in one of the school's residential dorms for its Muslim students' daily prayers. Before its creation, Muslim students met for prayer in a nearby hotel.¹²³

In the US, a federal appeals court in February 2017 declined its urgent request to restore the controversial executive order restricting refugees and travel by immigrants from a number of Muslim-majority countries. Following a high-stakes court hearing in February, the US Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit decided to keep President Donald Trump's order from being enforced, meaning that one of his signature policy initiatives would remain in limbo as the litigation proceeded before the federal judge in Seattle who temporarily blocked the order's implementation. In a tweet prior to a law enforcement conference, Trump appeared to prejudge the 9th Circuit's outcome and called into question the motivations of the judges who considered his travel ban. Amid an avalanche of lawsuits across the country, two states sued in federal court, claiming that the travel restrictions violated, among other things, their residents' constitutional rights to religious freedom and equal protection of the laws. Once Robart put the ban on hold, signaling that the states might have a strong case on the merits, the administration quickly appealed.¹²⁴

In Canada, an anti-Islamophobia motion had unanimously passed the Ontario legislature. The motion called on the legislature to stand against all forms of hatred, hostility, prejudice, racism and intolerance, rebuke a growing tide of anti-Muslim rhetoric and sentiments and condemn all forms of Islamophobia. Liberal backbencher Nathalie Des Rosiers introduced the motion in December 2016 in response to anti-Muslim incidents in her Ottawa-Vanier riding, but it took on extra urgency after six men were shot to death at a mosque in Quebec. Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown supported the motion, saying Ontario's legislature *"unequivocally opposes Islamophobia."* The Tories' support means the Ontario motion had not generated the political debate seen over a similar item in the House of Commons. A number of federal Conservatives, including several leadership contenders, argued the Ottawa motion singled out one religious group over others and could potentially curtail freedom of speech because it did not define the term Islamophobia.¹²⁵

3.2. Court Decisions against Islamophobes:

In the US, Vincent Casella was arrested for defacing a light pole at the corner of Gramatan Avenue and West Grand Street in Fleetwood, Mount Vernon. He used a blue marker to write the phrase "F*** ISLAM" on the pole, hence police stopped him. Casella told officers that he was unhappy with the way the country was headed, and that too many

¹²² See: WND News' entry "Major US university creates 'safe space' for Muslims in burqas", in: <http://www.wnd.com/2017/01/major-u-s-university-creates-safe-space-for-muslims-in-burgas/>, retrieved on 20.1.2017

¹²³ See: WND News' entry "Christian university opens prayer room for Muslims", in: <http://www.wnd.com/2017/02/christian-university-opens-prayer-room-for-muslims/>, retrieved on 17.2.2017

¹²⁴ See: The Huffington Post News' entry "Appeals Court Deals New Blow to Donald Trump's Travel Ban Targeting Muslims", in: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-muslim-ban-appeals-ruling_us_589b49cfe4b09bd304bf279e, retrieved on 11.2.2017

¹²⁵ See: Newstalk1290 News' entry "Anti-Islamophobia motion passes Ontario legislature", in: <http://www.iheartradio.ca/newstalk-1290-cjbc/anti-islamophobia-motion-passes-ontario-legislature-1.2424514>, retrieved on 25.2.2017

terrorists were being allowed in. He was charged with third-degree criminal mischief as a hate crime, a felony, and unlawfully making graffiti, a misdemeanor.¹²⁶

In the US, 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*".¹²⁷

In the US, a police chief in Alabama faced scrutiny after a Muslim rights organization called him out for his Facebook activity. The civil rights group released a statement about Chief Barry Pendergraft's Facebook posts regarding bacon grease covered bullets. Pendergraft posted a video of himself loading the bullets with the text, "*100 more bacon grease covered bullets in the box! This relaxes me so!!*" Few days later he uploaded a picture of a box filled with the ammunition. He posted, "*Happiness is a couple thousand rounds in the ammo box! Bacon grease dipped of course!!*" CAIR Executive Director Khaula Hadeed said the chief's posts supported a false belief that Muslims could not go to heaven if they were shot by the bullets. He stated: "*We call on state and federal authorities to investigate whether the evident anti-Muslim bigotry expressed by Chief Pendergraft is acceptable for someone in his position, who is obligated to provide all citizens, regardless of faith or ethnicity, equal and fair treatment.*"¹²⁸



In the US, three Kansas men were facing domestic terrorism charges after allegedly planning to bomb an apartment complex that was home to more than 100 Somali refugees. The men were arrested with a stockpile of firearms and ammunition while officials said they planned to carry out the attack on the complex which also a mosque the day after the election to wake people up. One of the men reportedly saying, "*The only good Muslim is a dead Muslim.*" The foiled plot highlighted a troubling trend in the US since the rate of attacks on mosques was increasing.¹²⁹

In the US, Mr. Trump's supporter, Joseph Schreiber, was arrested for allegedly torching a Florida mosque attended by the Orlando nightclub shooter and was being charged with a hate crime. The mosque was once attended by Omar Mateen, who killed 49 people in the June massacre, as well as Moner Mohammad Abu Salha, an American who killed several Syrian government soldiers in a 2014 suicide bombing in Jabal al-Arbreen after joining the Taliban. Much of

¹²⁶ See: Lohud.com News' entry "Man faces hate crime for anti-Islam graffiti", in: <http://www.lohud.com/story/news/crime/2016/10/06/anti-islam-graffiti/91656588/>, retrieved on 7.10.2016

¹²⁷ See: Sunderlands Echo News' entry "Man dubbed himself 'holy crusader,' threatened to blow up mosque and said 'death will come to all Muslims,' court told", 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 7.10.2016

¹²⁸ See: The Arab American News' entry "Police chief under fire by Muslims for "bacon grease bullets" Facebook posts", in: http://www.arabamericannews.com/news/news/id_13042/Police-chief-under-fire-by-Muslims-for-bacon-grease-bullets-Facebook-posts.html, retrieved on 11.10.2016

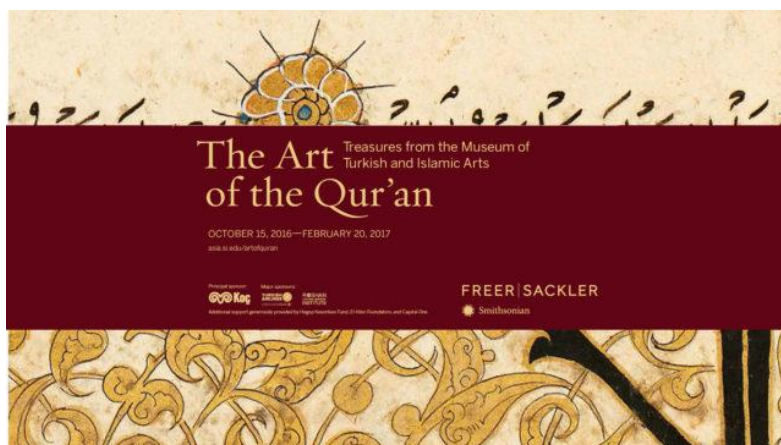
¹²⁹ See: Newsy News' entry "Kansas bomb plot highlights growing danger to American mosques", in: <http://www.kjrh.com/newsy/kansas-bomb-plot-highlights-growing-danger-to-american-mosques>, retrieved on 18.10.2016

the mosque was gutted by the September 11 fire. Congregants have since held prayer services in a part of the mosque that wasn't destroyed by fire as the imam said the public had donated about \$80,000 to help rebuild the facility. In a statement released, the St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office said: "*Schreiber is known to law enforcement and as such qualifies as a prison release re-offender that would impose a 30-year minimum mandatory sentence. He also qualifies as a habitual felony offender and could ultimately be sentenced to life in prison.*"¹³⁰

In the Netherlands, a Dutch court in The Hague ruled that Party for Freedom (PVV) leader Geert Wilders would be tried for inciting hatred based on a speech he made in 2014, during which the Dutch politician asked the crowd whether they want fewer or lesser Moroccans in the Netherlands, to which the crowd replied, "*Fewer! Fewer! Fewer!*" More than 6,400 complaints were filed against Wilders due to the incident, and the trial should have begun in 2014 but was suspended. A judge ruled that the trial could proceed again, in which he would be tried on the "*suspicion of insulting a group of people based on race and inciting discrimination and hatred.*" Wilders was tried previously for calling for the ban of the Quran and comparing it to Hitler's Mein Kampf. He won the case in 2011 when a court ruled that the justice system should allow for the free expression of political ideas even those which were deemed repulsive. His accusers were now arguing that the speech he made in 2014 did not deserve the same protection because it was directed against an ethnic group rather than a religion. Media reported that PVV had been ahead in most opinion polls and was predicted to take 35 of the 150 available seats in the Dutch parliament, and Wilders promised to remove Holland from the European Union if he would be elected.¹³¹

In the US, a man was arrested in connection with a deliberate fire at a mosque in the wake of the Paris terrorist attacks. The blaze was set at Bishopbriggs Cultural Centre in Auchinairn Road in the East Dunbartonshire town in November last year. No-one was injured but thousands of pounds of damage was caused to the building. Police said that a 41-year-old man had been arrested in connection with the incident.¹³²

In the US, Freer Sackler, a museum of Asian art, organized series of events began on October 22 and run through 22 February 2017, exhibiting Qurans and Quranic manuscripts written between the 7th and 17th centuries. The manuscripts, whose dazzling designs reminisce about the Islamic civilization's artistic merit, were owned by Muslim leaders and were entrusted to Freer Sackler Museum by the Turkish and Islamic Art Museum in Istanbul. The exhibition, dubbed the Art of the Qur'an, hosted numerous activities, including Quranic recitations, presentations and talks by the exhibition curators, discovery tours around the Islamic Calligraphy Art, artistic performances.¹³³



¹³⁰ See: World Inside News' entry "Man Accused of Torching Orlando Shooter's Mosque Charged with Hate Crime", in: <http://www.insideedition.com/headlines/19225-man-accused-of-torching-orlando-shooters-mosque-is-charged-with-hate-crime>, retrieved on 14.10.2016

¹³¹ See: The Christian Time News' entry "Dutch politician Geert Wilders to go on trial for inciting hatred", in: <http://christiantimes.com/article/dutch-politician-geert-wilders-to-go-on-trial-for-inciting-hatred/64621.htm>, retrieved on 18.10.2016

¹³² See: Clyde.com News' entry "Man arrested over deliberate fire at Bishopbriggs mosque", in: <http://www.clyde1.com/localnews/man-arrested-over-deliberate-fire-at-bishopbriggs-mosque/>, retrieved on 21.10.2016

¹³³ See: Morocco World News' entry "Quran Exposition opens in Washington DC", in: <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2016/10/199572/quran-exposition-opens-washington-dc/>, retrieved on 23.10.2016

In the UK, 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.¹³⁴

In the UK, two Polish men had been jailed for throwing bacon inside a mosque while yelling ‘enjoy f*****’. The punishment was given due to an incident when Mateusz Pawlikowski and Piotr Czak-Zukowski approached one of the worshippers from the Al-Rahman Mosque in North London, swore at him and threw a rasher of bacon towards him before throwing more rashers onto the floor of the prayer room. The men left the mosque in Camden 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.”¹³⁵

In the UK, 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.*”¹³⁶

In the US, a man was arrested on suspicion of committing an anti-Muslim hate crime and another was being sought by authorities in connection with the weekend stabbing of a worshiper near a Southern California mosque. Coming amid

¹³⁴ See: TelesurTV News’ entry “British Olympic Star Sanctioned over Islamophobia Allegations”, in: <http://www.telesur.tv/net/english/news/British-Olympic-Star-Sanctioned-Over-Islamophobia-Allegations-20161102-0009.html>, retrieved on 3.11.2016

¹³⁵ See: Express News’ entry “Two Polish men jailed for throwing bacon inside a mosque while yelling ‘enjoy f*****’”, in: <http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/728069/Polish-men-jailed-throwing-bacon-mosque>, retrieved on 3.11.2016

¹³⁶ See: ITV News’ entry “Deputy Leader of far-right group found guilty of abusing woman in hijab”, in: <http://www.itv.com/news/2016-11-03/deputy-leader-of-britain-first-found-guilty-of-abusing-woman-in-hijab/>, retrieved on 4.11.2016

a surge in harassment and intimidation of Muslims reported by the FBI, the incident occurred outside the Masjid Al-Rasool mosque in the town of Simi Valley, about 40 miles northwest of Los Angeles. The confrontation began as a verbal altercation that escalated into a physical fight between the two suspects and the victim, who had attended prayer services at the mosque that evening. Officers responding to the incident found the victim suffering from non-life-threatening stab wounds, but the two suspects had fled. One, identified as 29-year-old John Matteson, was later located and taken into custody. He was booked into the Ventura County jail on felony charged of committing a hate crime and making criminal threats, as well as a misdemeanor charge of disturbing the peace. The hate-crime allegation against him was based on derogatory statements he was accused of making about the mosque, as well as the proximity of the incident to the mosque and the fact that the victim was a worshiper there. The second man, also in his late 20s, was still at large and Police provided no further details about the circumstances of the stabbing. Civil rights groups had voiced alarm at what they said a spike in attacks targeting Muslims, Hispanics, blacks and other minorities since the 8 November presidential election victory of Republican Donald Trump.¹³⁷

In the US, a self-proclaimed white supremacist convicted on charges he planned to use a 'death ray' to kill Muslims and Barack Obama was sentenced to 30 years in prison. Glendon Scott Crawford, 52, a Navy veteran and a member of the Ku Klux Klan, was found guilty in August 2015 of conspiring with another man to build a radiation dispersal device, dubbed a 'death ray' by tabloids. Crawford was the first person being convicted under a law barring attempts to acquire or use a radiological dispersal device, which combined conventional explosives, such as dynamite, with radioactive material. US district judge Gary Sharpe imposed the sentence at a hearing in Albany. He was convicted on three counts, including conspiring to use a weapon of mass destruction. Crawford's co-conspirator, Eric Feight, pleaded guilty in connection with the case and was sentenced to eight years and one month in prison. US prosecutors had sought life in prison for Crawford. He faced a mandatory minimum of 25 years. After his release, he would be supervised for life. Authorities said Crawford, who worked at General Electric Co., carried out extensive research on radiation dispersal devices, learning what level of emission was required to kill humans and conducting reconnaissance on potential targets, including a local mosque. In conversations recorded without his knowledge by a confidential law enforcement source, Crawford spoke often of his hatred of Muslims and said he would go after Obama in the White House with the device.¹³⁸

In the US, Bernhard Laufer who stabbed a caretaker at a mosque in Queens had been sentenced to 20 years in prison. He was sentenced after being convicted of attempted murder as a hate crime and other hate charges in the 2012 attack at the Masjid Al-Saaliheen Mosque on Kissena Boulevard. Prosecutors said Laufer had repeatedly called the mosque and threatened to kill all Muslims before stabbing the victim as he opened the mosque for morning prayer. Laufer had previously been sentenced to six months house arrest and mental treatment for sending an email threatening to kill an employee of the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR).¹³⁹

In Finland, a member of Finland's True Finns party had been sentenced to pay a fine for the crime of agitating against an ethnic group in a blog post. True Finns local chapter leader Terhi Kiemunki had rejected the ruling that a blog post she wrote was defamatory, and said despite the €450 fine she was the true victim of the case and had been miscast and been unfairly convicted due to public interest in the case. The case came to the attention of Finnish police after Ms. Kiemunki reported herself to them for investigation, as she had grown tired of accusations online that her writings were

¹³⁷ See: Reuters News' entry "California man accused of hate crime in stabbing near mosque", in: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-california-mosque-stabbing-idUSKBN14126T>, retrieved on 13.12.2016

¹³⁸ See: The Guardian News' entry "White supremacist gets 30 years prison for his plot to kill Muslims and Obama", in: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/dec/19/death-ray-plot-muslims-obama-glendon-scott-crawford-new-york>, retrieved on 20.12.2016

¹³⁹ See: NBC New York News' entry "Man Gets 20 Years for Hate Stabbing at Queens Mosque", in: <http://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/Man-Gets-20-Years-for-Hate-Stabbing-at-Queens-Mosque-406708565.html>, retrieved on 16.12.2016

slanderous. Following her sentencing about the blog post, she said: *"In these times, specifically in the recent past and today, all of the perpetrators of terrorist acts have turned out to be Muslim."*¹⁴⁰

In France, Robert Menard, an ally of France's anti-immigrant National Front party, would face a charge in a Paris court of incitement to hatred or discrimination. He would be tried over comments that included a claim the number of Muslim



students in his city was a 'problem'. He was saying in September 5 *"In a class in the city centre in my town, 91 percent of the children are Muslims. Obviously, this is a problem. There are limits to tolerance."* Also in September he tweeted his regret at witnessing *"the great replacement"*, using a term by xenophobic writer Renaud Camus to describe the country's white, Christian population being overtaken by foreign-born Muslims. Menard prompted outrage in October by putting up anti-migrant posters and calling for a local referendum ahead of the arrival of asylum-

seekers in his town. Under the headline *"That's It, They're Coming"*, was an image of a crowd of migrants, all of them men, outside the cathedral in Beziers. It was reminiscent of a controversial poster created by leading Brexit campaigner Nigel Farage, former head of Britain's anti-immigration UK Independence Party (UKIP), showing a vast queue of migrants under the slogan *"Breaking Point"*.¹⁴¹

In Finland, Former Chairman of the Finns Youth League and a deputy member of the Oulu City Council, who was also the former Vice Chairman of the Right-wing, Eurosceptic Finns Party Congress, Sebastian Tynkkynen, had been fined €300 for Facebook postings criticizing Islam. A judge ruled that the postings incited hatred against Muslims. Mr. Tynkkynen came to mainstream attention as in 2016, in response to terrorist attacks in Paris and Nice, he posted on his Facebook page calling for Muslims to be removed from Finland. He wrote: *"The fewer Muslims in Finland, the better. The less we see of Muslims, it is safer. We have to get rid of Islam before it is too late. Muslims get out of this country! Coming from the Middle East and Africa, Muslims should not be allowed in."* He was finally found guilty and faced a potential prison sentence of up to two years but instead was fined €300.¹⁴²

In the US, a federal jury convicted a Tennessee man of planning to attack a mosque in New York. A 65-year-old Robert Doggart was found guilty of solicitation to commit a civil rights violation, solicitation to commit arson of a building and making a threat in interstate commerce. Prosecutors said Doggart stockpiled weapons and communicated with others about plans to attack a Muslim community called Islamberg. An FBI agent showed jurors an M-4 rifle seized from Doggart's home and prosecutors played a series of conversations Doggart had with a confidential informant in March 2015. Doggart's attorneys argued that he never had a consistent plan in place, he was entrapped by a confidential informant and he only wanted to conduct reconnaissance on Islamberg. Attorneys for Islamberg said Doggart was not charged with terrorism because the federal government did not have a law punishing domestic terrorists. The attorneys

¹⁴⁰ See: Breitbart News' entry "Populist MP fined for linking terrorism and Islam", in: <http://www.breitbart.com/london/2016/12/02/populist-mp-fined-e450-linking-terrorism-islam/>, retrieved on 3.12.2016

¹⁴¹ See: RFI News' entry "Far-right French mayor to be tried over Muslim comments", in: <http://en.rfi.fr/france/20161222-far-right-french-mayor-be-tried-over-muslim-comments>, retrieved on 23.12.2016

¹⁴² See: The Great Middle East News' entry "Finland LGBTI politician avoids jail but is fined for inciting Islamophobia", in: <http://en.thegreatmiddleeast.com/2017/01/bisexual-politician-all-terrorists-are-muslim-could-be-jailed-now-photo/>, retrieved on 14.1.2017

said prosecutors used non-terrorism charges for Doggart's case because current statutes were largely aimed at foreign radical groups.¹⁴³

In the US, a thug received the right punishment while an Islamic Center was given a significant support. In January 2017, the Islamic Center of Davis in Northern California was found vandalized with broken doors and windows, bike tires slashed, and bacon left on door handles. In February a suspect in the hate crime was arrested: Lauren Kirk-Coehlo who was now also facing charges of vandalism with a hate crime and vandalism of a church. Kirk-Coehlo's bail was increased from \$40,000 to \$1,000,000 after one arresting officer claimed that she made references to killing people in court documents. Community members and students from the University of California Davis (ICD) chipped in and started an online fundraiser raising \$22,166 that helped cover costs of repairs to the house of worship. The ICD said in a statement *"We will continue to work on the Masjid to make it as safe as possible, and we would like to urge our community to remain positive in light of the recent events. We have a lot of support here in this community. At the same time, we urge everyone to remain safe."*¹⁴⁴

In the US, a Minnesota man who mailed a bomb threat to a mosque under construction in his Minneapolis neighborhood in 2015 had been sentenced to one year in federal prison. US District Judge Wilhelmina Wright sentenced Daniel George Fisher based on his guilty plea in 2016 to obstructing the Tawfiq Islamic Center's free exercise of religion by threat of force. Fisher confessed to sending the letter after the FBI traced fingerprints he left on the note last year. Fisher told agents he wanted the staff at the Islamic center, which primarily serves the Twin Cities' large Oromo population, to think that anyone could have sent the note, which threatened to *"blow up your building with all you immigrants in it."* US Attorney Andrew Luger, whose staff prosecuted the case, said, *"My office takes very seriously any threat of violence against an individual or their place of worship based on race, religion or cultural practices. We will continue to work closely with the FBI to prosecute these types of crimes, which threaten religious freedoms and violate fundamental civil rights."* The FBI's Minneapolis division investigated the case, and the Justice Department's civil rights division joined the prosecution.¹⁴⁵

In France, a far-right French mayor appeared in court on charges of inciting hatred for his remarks in 2016, in which he said that there were too many Muslim children at the schools in his city, and implied that the ethnic French population was being replaced. His statement in an interview on the French news channel LCI in September was quoted saying: *"In a class in the city center of in my town, 91 percent of the children are Muslims. Obviously, this is a problem."* In the same month on the first day of school, Menard also wrote a tweet, saying: *"These classes represent the most striking proof of the #GreatReplacement in progress. Just look at old class photos."* Robert Menard, mayor of the southern town of Béziers and an ally of Marine Le Pen's anti-immigration and Eurosceptic National Front party, appeared before Paris Criminal Court in March for the launch of his trial for incitement of hatred, in relation to two statements he made in 2016. If found guilty, Menard faced a €1,800 fine and a prison term if he refused to pay up.¹⁴⁶

In the US, a former army medic accused of breaking glass doors and throwing a Bible into a Colorado mosque had been charged with felony criminal mischief. It was reported that 35-year-old Joseph Scott Giaquinto was also charged

¹⁴³ See: CBS News' entry "Tennessee man convicted of plotting to attack New York mosque", in: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/tennessee-man-convicted-of-planning-to-attack-new-york-mosque/>, retrieved on 17.2.2017

¹⁴⁴ See: The Daily Meal News' entry "Hate Crime suspect arrested after vandalizing a mosque with Bacon", in: <http://www.thedailymeal.com/news/eat-hate-crime-suspect-arrested-after-vandalizing-mosque-bacon/021717>, retrieved on 17.2.2017

¹⁴⁵ See: Star Tribune News' entry "Man who threatened to blow up Minneapolis mosque gets year in prison", in: <http://www.startribune.com/one-year-federal-prison-sentence-for-man-who-threatened-to-blow-up-minneapolis-mosque-in-2015/415708014/>, retrieved on 11.3.2017

¹⁴⁶ See: The News Minutes News' entry "French mayor faces €1,800 fine after bringing up 'problem' of Muslim schoolchildren", in: <http://www.thenewsminute.com/article/hyd-school-allegedly-forces-muslim-students-remove-burqa-during-exam-despite-govt-rules>, retrieved on 19.3.2017

with a misdemeanor hate crime. Giaquinto was free on bond and was due in Larimer County court in March. He could face up to 18 months in prison if convicted of the felony charge. Giaquinto was arrested hours after police released surveillance video of a man kicking a door at the Islamic Center in Fort Collins.¹⁴⁷

3.3. Positive Views on Islam

In Australia, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and Opposition Leader Bill Shorten rose face the Parliament to back a bipartisan motion calling for a respectful and unified Australia. It highlighted Indigenous people, refugees and Muslims,



reaffirming commitment to equal rights, a non-discriminatory immigration policy, reconciliation, multiculturalism and denouncing racism. Mr Turnbull said: *"Australia is an immigration nation. Today, almost half of us have a parent born overseas and more than a quarter of Australians were born overseas themselves. Australia and the world faces the threat of terrorism perpetrated and promoted by extremists who claim to be fighting and killing for Islam. Now the object of these terrorists is to divide Islam by*

*driving a wedge of violence between Muslims, between Sunni and Shia and to turn Muslims against the West and the West against Muslims. The resolution of this conflict within Islam will ultimately depend on Muslims, but in the meantime the Islamist terrorists have succeeded in raising levels of anxiety about Muslim immigration, about the role of Islam itself within Australia."*¹⁴⁸

In Russia, President Putin emphasized that there was no link between Islam, Terror. Speaking at his annual year-end press conference, Putin said he would prefer not to link Islam with terrorism. He said: *"I would prefer Islam not to be mentioned in vain alongside terrorism. You are right here,"* when asked if the phrase Daesh should be banned from use by the media. Following the assassination of a Russian ambassador in Turkey, Putin's comments only strengthen previous statements on Islam and terror. In May, at an event devoted to discussing Islam and Russia, Putin said Russia would always be a reliable ally to the Islamic World. He said at the time: *"I would like to confirm that in Russia, the Islamic world will always find a reliable ally, prepared to cooperate in resolving pressing problems. We support the position of Muslim countries to strengthen values such as justice and the rule of law in international relations."*¹⁴⁹

In the UK, Prince Charles encouraged his people not just to think of Jesus but also to remember Prophet Muhammad. In a recorded message on 19 December at St. James's Palace, Britain's Prince Charles admonished his subjects to consider the millions of people around the world suffering from religious persecution. He also said that at a time of year when people normally think of Jesus, they should spend time remembering Muhammad. The Prince of Wales began

¹⁴⁷ See: SFGate News' entry "Former Army medic charged in Colorado mosque vandalism case", in: <http://www.sfgate.com/news/crime/article/Former-Army-medic-charged-in-Colorado-mosque-11043651.php>, retrieved on 2.4.2017

¹⁴⁸ See: SMH News' entry "As Donald Trump questioned Muslims, Turnbull and Shorten did something remarkable", in: <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/as-donald-trump-questioned-muslims-turnbull-and-shorten-did-something-remarkable-20161010-gryqxy.html>, retrieved on 10.10.2016

¹⁴⁹ See: Yahoo News' entry "Putin: No Link between Islam, Terror", in: <https://www.yahoo.com/news/putin-no-between-islam-terror-152643531.html>, retrieved on 24.12.2016

his pre-Christmas address by giving voice to the persecution of religious minorities around the world. He said for such people *"Religious freedom is a stark choice between life and death. Normally at Christmas, we think of the Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. I wonder, though, if this year we might remember how the story of the nativity unfolds, with the fleeing of the holy family to escape violent persecution. And we might also remember that when the prophet Muhammad migrated from Mecca to Medina he was seeking the freedom for himself and his followers to worship..... Whichever religious path we follow, the destination is the same – to value and respect the other person, accepting their right to live out their peaceful response to the love of God."*¹⁵⁰

In the US, Michelle Obama said to Muslims immigrants that 'this country belongs to you'. In her final speech as first lady, Michelle Obama singled out young immigrants and Muslims, many of whom expressed apprehension about President-elect Donald Trump. She said during the speech: *"Do not ever let anyone make you feel like you don't matter, or like you don't have a place in our American story — because you do. Know that this country belongs to you, to all of you. From every background and walk of life. If you or your parents are immigrants, know that you are part of a proud American tradition ... that has made us the greatest country on Earth. Whether you are Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Sikh ... I want our young people to continue to learn and practice those values with pride."*¹⁵¹

In the US, American Actor best known for his role in Star Trek, George Takei, call Americans to stand up for Muslims in the US. Takei was 5 years old when he and his family were taken from their Los Angeles home at gunpoint to an

internment camp. He recalled gazing out the front window with his brother as their parents packed their belongings in another room, and spotting two soldiers marching up the driveway with rifles in tow. Four years later, when the war ended, the terrors of internment continued to haunt Takei and his family, as they had been left impoverished and were forced to find a home in downtown Los Angeles' notoriously crime-ridden Skid Row. As an adult, Takei became determined to prevent anything like the internment of



Japanese-Americans during World War II from happening in the United States again. His story became the subject of the musical 'Allegiance', which would soon be making its way from Broadway to movie theaters. So when he first heard then-presidential candidate Trump called for a ban on Muslims to the United States, he said: *"It was chilling. That was what happened to us. Overnight after Pearl Harbor, we were characterized as the enemy. We were looked at with fear and suspicion and outright hatred."* By suggesting that Muslims were all potential terrorists, Takei argued, Trump had done the same thing with an entire faith group. Recently, Takei created an online petition calling for people to stand up in support of Muslim Americans in the face of President-elect Trump, who appeared to be standing by his plans to

¹⁵⁰ See: PJ Media News' entry "Prince Charles: 'Normally at Christmas' We Think of Jesus; This Year Remember Muhammad", in: <https://pjmedia.com/faith/2016/12/26/prince-charles-normally-at-christmas-we-think-of-jesus-this-year-remember-muhammed/>, retrieved on 27.12.2016

¹⁵¹ See: Raw Story News' entry "Michelle Obama to Muslims, immigrants: 'This country belongs to you'", in: <http://www.rawstory.com/2017/01/michelle-obama-to-muslims-immigrants-this-country-belongs-to-you/>, retrieved on 7.1.2017

impose a temporary ban on immigrants from certain Muslim countries and to create some sort of database of Muslims. The petition had garnered more than 100,000 signatures.¹⁵²

In Germany, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said that Islam was not the source of terrorism and urged the involvement of Muslim states in the fight against the issue. Merkel, who had been critical of US President Donald Trump's attempt to impose a temporary travel ban on people from seven Muslim-majority countries, was speaking on a Munich Security Conference, with US Vice President Mike Pence in the audience. Merkel also said Europe's ties with Russia remained challenging, but it was important to work with Russia in the fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant and similar groups. She stressed the need to preserve and strengthen multilateral structures such as the EU, NATO and the UN during an address that came as concern grew about the Trump administration's approach to international affairs and fears that it might have little interest in working in multilateral forums.¹⁵³



In the US, The head of the United Nations stated that Islamophobia in parts of the world was fueling terrorism, on a visit to Saudi Arabia, as anti-immigrant sentiment rises in some countries. The UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres made the comment to reporters after talks with Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz, Crown Prince and Interior Minister Mohammed Bin Nayef and Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman. At a joint news conference with Saudi Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir, Guterres was quoted saying: *"One of the things that fuel terrorism is the expression in some parts of the world of Islamophobic feelings and Islamophobic policies and Islamophobic hate speeches."* Antonio Guterres faced an uphill battle to win over the Trump administration and the rising tide of Islamophobia in Europe.¹⁵⁴

In the US, City Mayor Ed Murray declared that Sanctuary city Seattle was open to all, including to Muslims. At the venue where Mr. Murray was speaking, welcoming signs hung on the fence went all around the corner lot: *"We love our Muslim neighbours."* *"Thank you for enriching our community."* *"You are loved and welcome."* *"Our family is so happy you are here, at home."* The signs were seen at the venue that Mayor Ed Murray for his annual speech. Citing racist and xenophobic precedents to the current Islamophobic climate in the country, from the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 to the Japanese internment during the second World War, Murray said: *"We are here because we are a welcoming city. We stand in solidarity with our Muslim neighbours."* Murray was critical of Trump, explaining that the next four years will be a battle for the soul of America. While Seattle was seen as one of the more liberal cities in the US, it had not been totally immune to the hostile national climate. Two mosques had recently been vandalized in the Seattle area. The Muslim Association of Puget Sound in Redmond was attacked twice, the first time in late November 2016, and the second time in December 2016, immediately after the repairs from the first incident were completed. No

¹⁵² See: Yahoo News' entry "George Takei: We must stand up for Muslims in the US", in: <https://www.yahoo.com/news/george-takei-we-must-stand-up-for-muslims-in-the-u-s-143210654.html>, retrieved on 14.1.2017

¹⁵³ See: AlJazeera News' entry "Merkel: Islam is not the source of terrorism", in: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/02/merkel-islam-source-terrorism-170218081154919.html>, retrieved on 19.2.2017

¹⁵⁴ See: MEMO News' entry "Islamophobia is fueling terrorism says UN chief", in: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170213-islamaphobia-is-fuelling-terrorism-says-un-chief/>, retrieved on 16.2.2017

suspects were arrested, even as police investigated both attacks as hate crimes. In January 2017, the Islamic Center of the Eastside, also known as 'Bellevue Masjid', was engulfed in forty-foot flames that badly damaged the building in confirmed arson.¹⁵⁵

In Canada, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said that Canadians had a right to know if a Parliamentary motion to condemn Islamophobia made politicians and fellow citizens uncomfortable, so that “*we can deal with it as a society.*” Speaking in the House of Commons in March 2017 during the ‘Daughters of the Vote’ event in support of International Women’s Day, he was responding to a Muslim delegate who encouraged Canadian leaders to condemn Islamophobia. In relation to M-103, Trudeau said that sometimes, it was useful for some people to disagree, something in Trudeau’s words: “To point out to the rest of us that there’s still a lot of work to do.”¹⁵⁶

3.4. Counter-balances on Far Rights

In Germany, a government minister promoted ‘German Islam’ as means to integrate refugees into liberal EU society. Wolfgang Schaeuble wrote in an editorial in German newspaper Welt am Sonntag. The Minister urged his countrymen to understand what was important to them and how they wanted to live in a society which needs to integrate millions of refugees. He wrote: “*Without a doubt, the growing number of Muslims in our country today is a challenge for the open-mindedness of mainstream society. We should not, in this more tense situation, allow an atmosphere to emerge in which well-integrated people in Germany feel alien.*” At the same time, the Minister rejected xenophobic attacks against refugee camps and widespread anti-migrant feelings in Germany. Schaeuble wrote that despite a presence of xenophobia the majority of Germans would say: “*Yes, we want you [migrants] to be among to us.*” The Minister acknowledged that while many Muslims were completely non-religious, yet ‘German Islam’ was a possibility in citing the 10-year-old work of the German Islam Conference, which seeks to erase cultural and religious divides within German society. According to revised statistics, 890,000 asylum seekers arrived in Germany in 2015, while previous estimations put the number at 1.1 million.¹⁵⁷

In Australia, Thousands of Australians took part in a rally in a gesture to show they welcomed refugees and immigrants to the country, amid growing criticism against the alleged treatment of refugees by Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull’s government. Over 20,000 people took part in the rally, including eminent political leaders, in around 25 cities across the country, in an attempt to encourage the government to take an empathetic approach towards accepting refugees and those seeking asylum.¹⁵⁸



¹⁵⁵ See: Middleeasteye.net News’ entry “Sanctuary city Seattle is ‘open to all,’ declares mayor Murray at mosque”, in: <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/mayor-seattle-delivers-annual-city-speech-mosque-we-remain-open-all-961637838>, retrieved on 22.2.2017

¹⁵⁶ See: National NewsWatch News’ entry “Trudeau: We have a problem with Islamophobia in Canada”, in: <http://www.nationalnewswatch.com/2017/03/08/trudeau-we-have-a-problem-with-islamophobia-in-canada/#.WNzRIG-GOM8>, retrieved on 9.3.2017

¹⁵⁷ See: RT.com News’ entry “Merkel ally promotes ‘German Islam’ as means to integrate refugees into liberal EU society”, in: <https://www.rt.com/news/361400-german-islam-refugee-integration/>, retrieved on 4.10.2016

¹⁵⁸ See: International Business Times News’ entry “Thousands demonstrate in Australia to welcome refugees and stand against far-right sentiment”, in: <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/thousands-demonstrate-australia-welcome-refugees-stand-against-far-right-sentiment-1587738>, retrieved on 23.10.2016

In the US, the City Mayor of Minneapolis trashes Trump's 'Islamophobia' while defending refugees in fiery Facebook post. Betsy Hodges, the mayor, 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.¹⁵⁹



In the US, the 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."¹⁶⁰

In the US, Virginia Republicans visited Mosque in Sterling, Virginia, to address concerns as Muslims worry about how the election of Donald Trump would affect them. 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*

¹⁵⁹ See: Business Insider News' entry "Mayor of Minneapolis trashes Trump's 'Islamophobia', defends refugees in fiery Facebook post", in: <http://www.businessinsider.com/mayor-of-minneapolis-trashes-trumps-islamophobia-defends-refugees-in-fiery-facebook-post-2016-11>, retrieved on 8.11.2016

¹⁶⁰ See: The Telegraph News' entry "Muslim ban statement 'removed' from Donald Trump's website", in: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/11/10/muslim-ban-statement-removed-from-donald-trumps-website/>, retrieved on 11.11.2016

United States of America." Some attendees of the mosque said they still were nervous that Trump would exclude Muslims.¹⁶¹

In the US, 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.¹⁶²

In Canada, a group of Muslim youth 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 had been vocal in the media for several years addressing issues of Islamophobia. The NCCM was an independent, non-partisan and non-profit organization dedicated to protecting the human rights & civil liberties of Canadian Muslims, promoting their public interests, building mutual understanding and challenging Islamophobia and other forms of xenophobia.¹⁶³



In Northern Ireland, 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."¹⁶⁴

In the US, supports were given to Muslims 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,

¹⁶¹ See: NBC Washington News' entry "Virginia Republicans Visit Mosque to Address Concerns", in: <http://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/Virginia-Republicans-Visit-Mosque-to-Address-Concerns-400892091.html>, retrieved on 12.11.2016

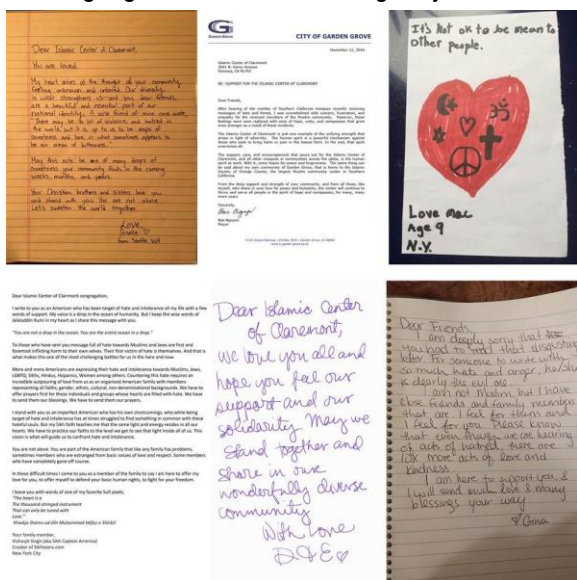
¹⁶² See: WSVN.com News' entry "Students visit Apex Mosque to challenge misconceptions about Islam", in: <http://www.dailytarheel.com/article/2016/11/students-visit-apex-mosque-to-challenge-misconceptions-about-islam>, retrieved on 21.11.2016

¹⁶³ See: ABNA24 News' entry "Canadian Muslims hold workshop on countering Islamophobia", in: <http://en.abna24.com/service/america/archive/2016/11/22/793528/story.html>, retrieved on 23.11.2016

¹⁶⁴ See: RTE News' entry "Distribution of anti-Muslim leaflets in Co Antrim criticized", in: <https://www.rte.ie/news/2016/1106/829600-antimuslim-leaflets-antrim/>, retrieved on 7.11.2016

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.¹⁶⁵

In the US, Dozens of Demonstrators Gather at Houston Mosque to Support Muslims. In a show of solidarity with the Muslim community, dozens of non-Muslims showed up outside the Islamic Society of Greater Houston mosque, bearing signs that read, “We’re glad you’re here” and “We



are all

Americans.” The demonstrators greeted Muslims as they entered the mosque for Friday afternoon prayers, then shook hands and hugged them as they left, while one demonstrator’s young daughter handed out flowers. Many of the attendees told the Houston Press they had decided to come to show love and support amid national apprehensive rhetoric directed at Muslims, rooted in fear of difference and spread by politicians including the president-elect, Donald Trump. Stephanie Koithan who organized the demonstration said: “There’s been a climate of fearmongering and hateful rhetoric in the past couple years in America, and we have to ask ourselves what’s going on to create this climate of fear and hatred.” Koithan was not an organizer on behalf of any group, but

simply a regular citizen who felt like there was something she could do as she kept reading news stories about hate crimes against Muslims across the United States.¹⁶⁶

In the US, Muslim residents living in the Norwood neighborhood were standing up to Islamophobia. Members of the area’s Muslim community took part in weekly meetings about how to better their community. Signs line windows in the neighborhood saying: “Standing with Muslims Against Islamophobia and Racism.” Community members said the signs and meetings gave them hope that one day they would no longer have to live in fear.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ See: The Mercury News’ entry “San Jose residents to Muslims: you belong here”, in: <http://www.mercurynews.com/2016/12/02/san-jose-residents-to-muslims-you-belong-here/>, retrieved on 23.11.2016

See: Houston Press News’ entry “Dozens of Demonstrators Gather at Houston Mosque to Support Muslims”, in: <http://www.houstonpress.com/news/dozens-of-demonstrators-gather-at-houston-mosque-to-support-muslims-8996802>, retrieved on 6.12.2016¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁷ News12 The Bronx News’ entry “Norwood neighborhood residents stand up to Islamophobia”, in: <http://bronx.news12.com/news/norwood-neighborhood-residents-stand-up-to-islamophobia-1.12719560>, retrieved on 8.12.2016

In the US, students collected Love Letters to counter Islamophobia. Following threatening messages received by several mosques in California, a group of college students countered anti-Muslim sentiment through love letters. In just a few weeks, the students said they had collected nearly 200 letters of solidarity and support for the Muslim-American community from across Southern California, as well as from places as distant as New York, Mexico, Canada, Morocco, and South Korea. The letters came from individuals, organizations like the Center for Inquiry and the Methodist Federation of Social Action, and elected officials, including Mayor Bao Nguyen of Garden Grove, California. They said: *"Our goal is simple: To show that community across difference and disagreement can stand and work together against injustice and ignorance in our nation. When we show the power and beauty that is the diversity of the American fabric, we don't merely talk about it, we show it in every way we can. This letter campaign serves as a foundation stone to promote education and service between communities that may not understand each other, to live up to our motto: E pluribus unum."* The students hoped to collect 500 letters and deliver them to the Islamic Center of Claremont — one of the mosques that received the original message. The Islamic Center of Claremont is expected to create a display out of the messages.¹⁶⁸

In Canada, an event was held on Parliament Hill in December to celebrate the tabling of an e-petition to denounce Islamophobia, and the subsequent introduction of a motion to move that conversation forward into a parliamentary study into its root causes. The event, held in the Sir John A. Macdonald building, was attended by members of the Muslim community, as well as a number of MPs. The event was hosted by Liberal MPs Frank Baylis and Iqra Khalid. Baylis presented the e-petition to parliament, which was started by his constituent Samer Majzoub, with the focus on the language of 'always together'. Baylis told the crowd: *"Everywhere we went, we were always welcomed with open arms. Ever place we went, people said yes, we will help. That openness that we say really impacted us because you don't have to look far today to see that there are people who are looking to get ahead by demonizing people."* In the 120 days that e-petitions were allowed to gather signatures, Baylis said that it gained so much momentum that it was signing up to 2,000 signatures per day, and he now claimed the most-signed e-petition by a significant margin. Baylis also said that they not only reached out to the Muslim community, but also the Sikh community, the Jewish community and Christian churches. Other speakers included Conservative senator Salma Ataullahjan, NDP MP Rachel Blaney and Green Party leader Elizabeth May.¹⁶⁹



In the US, Feminist icon Gloria Steinem in January 2017 said that if the new US Government began a registry of Muslims, then *"we will all register as Muslims."* Steinem said during a speech at the Women's March in Washington, *"If you force Muslims to register, we will all register as Muslims. So don't try to divide us. Do not try to divide us."* President

¹⁶⁸ See: NBC News' entry "Students Collect Love Letters to Counter Islamophobia", in: <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/students-collect-love-letters-counter-islamophobia-n700321>, retrieved on 28.12.2016

¹⁶⁹ See: iPolitics News' entry "MPs, Muslims gather on Hill for anti-Islamophobia event", in: <https://ipolitics.ca/2016/12/06/mps-muslims-gather-on-hill-for-anti-islamophobia-event/>, retrieved on 7.12.2016

Trump during his presidential campaign called for a temporary ban on Muslims coming into the US, stoking fears that he would create a registry of Muslims.¹⁷⁰

In the US, demonstrators show support for Muslims in response to travel ban. Faith groups, immigrant rights leaders and community activists all took part in a Day of Action in response to President Trump's new travel ban, similarly rallies held in Bridgeview and Chicago. Events across the country were organized to offer support to Muslim Community in which there was big concern the president's immigration ban could permanently divide Muslim families. As a midday prayer let out at the Bridgeview Mosque Foundation, visitors showed their support with signs, words and the act for being there. Oscar Chacon, Alianza Americas, said: *"We will be here every time that is necessary for us to stand together, to defend each other and to struggle together to set the record straight. We Jews stand shoulder to shoulder with our Muslim brothers and sisters."* Rabbi Michael David, Jewish Voice for Peace, said: *"If Muslims cannot worship in peace, we cannot either."* They formed a human chain in front of the Mosque.¹⁷¹

In the UK, Londoners were joining others across the country on the National Day of Action against Islamophobia in February 2017. The rallies were held in solidarity with six Muslims massacred in Quebec City, and in opposition to Trump's travel ban on Muslims and refugees. Organizers wanted the federal government to rescind the Safe Third Country Agreement and Designated Country of Origin list. In less than a week, over 150 organizations had endorsed the National Day of Action against Islamophobia and White Supremacy. Civil society across the country, from national unions that represented teachers, postal workers and other professions to student associations and environmental groups, had united in the city.¹⁷²

In the US, New Yorkers rally to say 'Today I am a Muslim, too'. Thousands of people representing myriad backgrounds and faiths, converged on Times Square in February 2017, heeding a music mogul's calls to let Muslims know their fellow Americans stood by them. The demonstrators, many of them hoisting placards featuring a woman in an American flag hijab with the caption *"We the people are greater than fear"*, gathered at one of the world's most famous public places to denounced what they saw as threats and pressure aimed at Muslim communities. The rally, dubbed *"Today I am a Muslim Too"* was billed on social media as *"a day of solidarity with Muslim brothers and sisters in reaction to the vicious attacks by President Donald Trump."* The list of speakers and attendees were extensive, coming from rabbis, imams, a Sikh, a Buddhist, Episcopalian and Presbyterian reverends, Mennonite, Seventh Day Adventist minister, Hindu, Baptist pastor, local politicians and civil



¹⁷⁰ See: The Hill News' entry "Steinem: If Trump creates Muslim registry, we'll all register", in: <http://thehill.com/homenews/315454-steinem-we-will-all-register-as-muslims-if-there-is-a-registry>, retrieved on 22.1.2017

¹⁷¹ See: ABC News' entry "Demonstrators show support for Muslims in response to travel ban", in: <http://abc7chicago.com/news/demonstrators-show-support-for-muslims-in-response-to-travel-ban/1736671/>, retrieved on 4.2.2017

¹⁷² See: Newstalk 1290 CJBK News' entry "National Day of Action against Islamophobia being held in London", in: <http://www.iheartradio.ca/newstalk-1290-cjbk/news/national-day-of-action-against-islamophobia-being-held-in-london-1.2378720>, retrieved on 5.2.2017

rights advocates. Actor Susan Sarandon and New York Mayor Bill de Blasio also spoke, and former first daughter Chelsea Clinton tweeted that the rally marked her 2-year-old's first protest. Trump had made numerous disparaging remarks about Muslims and an appeals court recently put a halt to his executive order that temporarily barred all refugees and travelers from seven predominantly Muslim countries from entering the country. Trump had vowed to issue a new order tailored to the court's decision.¹⁷³

In the US, in response to the recent Executive Order barring entry to citizens of seven predominantly Muslim countries, Cornell's Department of Near Eastern Studies held a teach-in in the Groos Family Atrium. Deborah Starr, associate professor of Near Eastern studies said: *"We are committed to combatting Islamophobia through education. This is an extension of our educational mission and our ethical obligation to our students, colleagues, friends, and family members affected by the ban."* Starr noted that the Executive Order would have a harmful impact on tens of thousands of innocent people, including dozens of graduate and undergraduate students, staff, and faculty at Cornell. The Near Eastern studies department was partnering with the Clarke Institute for Law and Development in the Middle East and North Africa, Comparative Muslim Societies, the Jewish Studies Program, and the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Initiative to create this public learning opportunity about Islam and the cultures and histories of the people and countries targeted by the ban.¹⁷⁴

In the Netherlands, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte ruled out any chance of working with Geert Wilders, as the far-right MP insisted he could not be ignored if he wins the March general election. Rutte said in a Tweet on his private account: *"Zero percent. Geert. ZERO percent. That. Will not. Happen."* Tensions were heating up as campaigning began in earnest for the March 15 vote –the first in a series of elections including in France and Germany which could shake up Europe's political landscape. Wilders and his Freedom Party (PVV) had been riding high for months, with opinion polls predicting he could emerge as the largest party but without enough MPs to form a majority in the 150-seat parliament. Rutte already said he would not form a coalition with his bouffant-haired adversary, but Wilders said he did not believe the pragmatic Rutte, despite what he might be saying now. Rutte was bidding for a third term as Prime Minister.¹⁷⁵

In Canada, thousands of people turned out in Toronto in February to protest Against Islamophobia and White Supremacy at the US Consulate. In part of the National Days of Action occurring in 42 Canadian cities, and endorsed by 140 organizations nationwide, demonstrators called on the Canadian government to: *"Publicly condemn President Trump's Muslim Ban; Open the Canada-USA border and grant permanent status to asylum seekers; End racist, anti-refugee, anti-Black, Islamophobic exclusion of migrants"*



¹⁷³ See: CNN News' entry "New Yorkers rally to say 'Today I am a Muslim, too'", in: <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/02/19/us/today-i-am-muslim-too-rally-new-york/>, retrieved on 21.2.2017

¹⁷⁴ See: Cornell University News' entry "Teach-In at Cornell: Combatting Islamophobia through education", in: <http://pma.cornell.edu/news/teach-cornell-combatting-islamophobia-through-education>, retrieved on 13.2.2017

¹⁷⁵ See: Yahoo News' entry "'Zero' chance I will work with you: Dutch PM to Wilders", in: <https://au.news.yahoo.com/world/a/34396637/zero-chance-i-will-work-with-you-dutch-pm-to-wilders/#page1>, retrieved on 13.2.2017

and refugees; Rescind all federal legislation that attacks racialized Black and Brown Muslims and refugees.” Jewish Holocaust survivor and activist for social justice and liberation Suzanne Weiss spoke out at the crowd against racism.¹⁷⁶

In the US, another 100 companies had reportedly pulled their advertising from the far-right news site Breitbart, as the momentum built behind a grassroots campaign calling on advertisers to boycott the site. Audi, Visa, T Mobile and Lufthansa had joined the growing list of companies to withdraw, according to Sleeping Giants, the group behind the campaign, which claimed that at least 1,250 advertisers no longer wish to be associated with it. Campaigners had successfully encouraged Twitter users to name and shame companies who advertise on the site by posting screenshots of Breitbart ads. As advertising was often purchased through third-party agencies, companies might be completely unaware that their ads would end up on the Breitbart site. Breitbart declared war on Kellogg’s last year, after the cereal company announced that it would be blacklisting sites that “*aren’t aligned with our values*”. Responding to the statement, editors urged Breitbart readers to boycott all Kellogg’s products. Breitbart was already in trouble with advertisers adding that the case of Milo Yiannopoulos made the battle much more difficult. It was added that the association with Mr Trump’s senior adviser Steve Bannon, its former executive chair, was also hurting the company. Mr Bannon had previously described Breitbart as “*the platform for the alt-right*”. In an effort to combat dwindling ad revenue, Breitbart appeared to be attempting to re-brand as a more moderate platform.¹⁷⁷

In the US, hundreds of residents from Winston-Salem joined prayer services at three mosques in the Triad area in February 2017. The outpouring of support for the Muslim community was a reaction to violent, anti-Islamic speech that emerged from a meeting between far-right conservative activists held in Kernersville, North Carolina.¹⁷⁸

In the US, a new Institute of Arab and Islamic Art, set up by Qatar’s Sheikh Mohammed Rashid Al-Thani, would open in downtown Manhattan. The timing was not accidental, as Al-Thani was trying to humanise Islam and broaden perceptions of it in the US. He hoped the institute would not only showcase the breadth of art and culture from the Arab and Islamic worlds, but also challenge certain stereotypes and misconceptions that hinder cross-cultural understanding. There was another expectation that looking at Islamic art would allow non-Muslim Americans to feel the inner beauty of beliefs and traditions.¹⁷⁹

In the Netherlands, Wilders admits defeat to Mark Rutte. Despite being declared the winner by Wilders, Mr Rutte’s VVD was expected to lose 10 seats – a fall from 41 to 31 seats, exit polls had suggested. The biggest losers of the night appeared to be social-democratic Labour party (PvdA), who were expected to slump from 38 to 9 seats in the 150 seat parliament. Wilders did slam his rival Rutte, who said that the wrong kind of populists had been defeated in the

¹⁷⁶ See: DailyHive.com News’ entry “Toronto rallies Against Islamophobia & White Supremacy”, in: <http://dailyhive.com/toronto/toronto-rallies-against-islamophobia-white-supremacy-2017>, retrieved on 7.2.2017

¹⁷⁷ See: Independent.co.uk News’ entry “Another 100 companies pull advertising from Breitbart”, in: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/breitbart-advertising-deals-companies-advertising-withdraw-pull-steve-bannon-alt-right-campaign-a7599156.html>, retrieved on 25.2.2017

¹⁷⁸ See: Blue Ridge Public Radio News’ entry “North Carolinians Join Prayers at Triad Mosques to Oppose Islamophobia”, in: <http://bpr.org/post/north-carolinians-join-prayers-triad-mosques-oppose-islamophobia>, retrieved on 1.3.2017

¹⁷⁹ See: The Guardian News’ entry “The beauty of art can counter Islamophobia – but it won’t be easy”, in: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/jonathanjonesblog/2017/mar/08/new-york-institute-arab-islamic-art-islamophobia>, retrieved on 9.3.2017

general election. The Freedom party leader responded: *"I don't know what he means. He is implying there are good and bad populists. I don't see myself as a populist but he is suggesting I am a bad populist and some kind of Nazi."*¹⁸⁰

In the UK, as many as 30,000 people had joined a march against racism in London during which campaigners voiced their opposition to the wave of populism they said elected Donald Trump, saw Britain vote to leave the EU and fueled the rise of far-right politics around Europe. The former Guantánamo Bay prisoner Moazzam Begg, one of the speakers at the Saturday protest, said Trump was one of the bad dudes who should be sent to the internment camp in Cuba. Speaking from a stage in Parliament Square, Begg referenced a speech by the US president in which he said he would be sending more inmates to the controversial facility. Begg joined the Labour MP for Tottenham, David Lammy, in slamming a small group of counter-protesters. Suspected to be from the far-right political group the English Defence League (EDL), the group were spotted near crowds of anti-racism marchers on their way from Regent Street to Parliament Square. Anti-racism supporters carrying signs with colorful slogans including "Migrants make our NHS" and "Black Lives Matter" led a peaceful but spirited march through the fashionable thoroughfares of Regent Street and Haymarket, banging drums and singing songs.¹⁸¹



In France, Marine Le Pen's proposal to pull France out of the euro and her hardline stance on Islam came under attack from her fellow presidential hopefuls in March, in a combative TV debate a month before the country went to the polls.



France's election was shaping up as the most unpredictable in decades, with far-right National Front (FN) leader Le Pen and centrist Emmanuel Macron tied in polls for the April 23 first round, while the mainstream left and right languish in third and fourth place. With polls showing Macron would easily beat the anti-immigration Le Pen, 48, in a decisive run-off vote on 7 May, he had been expected to take the most heat in TV battle. However it was Le Pen who was repeatedly thrust onto the defensive as Macron, conservative nominee Francois Fillon, the Socialist Party's Benoit Hamon and fifth-placed leftist radical Jean-Luc

Melenchon all tore into her programme. Macron traded barbs with Le Pen on the Islamic full-body swimsuit. The so-

¹⁸⁰ See: Sunday Express News' entry "We are also winners' Wilders admits DEFEAT to Rutte but hopes for coalition government", in: <http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/779788/geert-wilders-admit-defeat-mark-rutte-hopes-coalition-government-invite-pvv-vvd-netherlan>, retrieved on 17.3.2017

¹⁸¹ See: The Guardian News' entry "London anti-racism march draws tens of thousands of protesters", in: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/18/london-anti-racism-march-draws-tens-of-thousands-of-protesters>, retrieved on 19.3.2017

called burkini was at the centre of a furore in France after several coastal towns banned the garment. Le Pen said the burkini was a sign of the "rise of radical Islam in our country" and accused Macron of supporting it. Former economy minister Macron retorted: "*The burkini is a public order problem. Do not use it to divide the French,*" accused her of transforming "*the over four million French people, whose religion is Islam...into enemies of the Republic*".¹⁸²

3.5. Supports on Mosques

In Taiwan, Taipei Mayor Ko Wen-je said the Taipei City Government should fund the building of a bigger mosque to signal the city's friendliness to Muslims. Ko made the remarks in response to queries about Taiwan's inclusion in a US-led multinational coalition to fight the Islamic State group. Such a statement was said before reiterated his commitment to running an inclusive and friendly city, and touting Taipei's various Muslim-friendly facilities, including the establishment of prayer rooms at city hall. Ko said he had been invited to attend a service at a Taipei mosque during Ramadan and found that overcrowding was a problem, therefore he came to conclusion saying: "*The city should use its budget to build "a bigger mosque, preferably close to Mass Rapid Transit station"*". When asked for comments, Taipei City councilors appeared to be surprised by Ko's remarks, with many decrying the timing or propriety of the proposal. Democratic Progressive Party Taipei City Councilor Ho Chih-wei said the mayor's suggestion needed to be proof-read for logic, adding that the government had almost no history of giving financial aid for the construction of religious buildings, regardless of faith or creed. Ko said his comments were prompted by a desire to alleviate overcrowding at the Taipei Grand Mosque in Daan District, which had been serving a large congregation of Muslim migrant workers that its facilities were not spacious enough to accommodate. He added that when visited the Taipei Grand Mosque during Ramadan and had inspected Taipei Railway Station at the weekend, where he found that more than 10,000 Muslim migrant workers congregated.¹⁸³

In Germany, President apologized to Turkish imam for mosque attack. As Turkey's concerns grew over Islamophobic and xenophobic attacks in Germany, the country's president and chancellor hosted Hamza Turan, the imam of a Turkish-run mosque in Dresden. Turan and his family met President Joachim Gauck and Chancellor Angela Merkel and after the meetings the imam told the Turkish media that Gauck apologized for the attack and expressed failure to provide protection for them. Turan said Joachim Gauck met him and his family, expressed his sorrow over the attack and apologized. The attack followed the firebombing of the Mimar Sinan Mosque in Hessen. Unidentified suspects hurled Molotov cocktails in the non-lethal attack targeting the mosque in the city of Bebra. The incidents came in the wake of defamation campaign by German politicians. Mosques in Germany, where anti-Muslim sentiment accompanying the influx of Muslim refugees rises, were occasionally subject to attacks, ranging from Molotov cocktails to tossing of pig's heads. A Turkish parliamentary committee was investigating the targeting of mosques found some 297 attacks against mosques between 2001 and 2014 and they mostly targeted Turkish mosques.¹⁸⁴

In the US, locals protested 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*

¹⁸² See: Luremburger Wort News' entry "France's Le Pen under fire in first presidential TV debate", in: <http://www.wort.lu/en/politics/france-s-le-pen-under-fire-in-first-presidential-tv-debate-58d0c8c5a5e74263e13ac4bc>, retrieved on 22.3.2017

¹⁸³ See: Taipei Times' News entry "Mayor says Taipei should fund, build larger mosque", in: <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2016/10/04/2003656487>, retrieved on 5.10.2016

¹⁸⁴ See: Daily Sabah News' entry "German president apologizes to Turkish imam for mosque attack", in: <http://www.dailysabah.com/nation/2016/10/06/german-president-apologizes-to-turkish-imam-for-mosque-attack>, retrieved on 5.10.2016

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.¹⁸⁵



In the US, the Justice Department was suing a Virginia county accused of discriminating against Muslim residents who wanted to build a small mosque. Federal prosecutors said that authorities in Culpeper violated the rights of the Islamic Center of Culpeper when it denied the sewage permit for their new house of worship. The county had never denied an application in 26 attempts since 1992, according to the filed suit, which said the county violated a federal law on religious discrimination and land use passed in 2000. A Community member told that residents had called that the mosque for about 20 people would bring terrorism to small town Virginia, and gathered crowds cheered when the permit was rejected in April 2016. The Islamic Center of Culpeper, currently operating out of a small home, did not immediately respond to a request for comment about how it would proceed after the federal suit.¹⁸⁶

US: Lake Travis community gathers a week after fire destroys mosque— The Islamic Center of Lake Travis and the Lake Travis United Methodist church gathered with community members following mosque fire incident. The gathering themed "Solidarity with the Community" was held at the Lake Travis United Methodist Church bringing in members from different religious backgrounds. A week before, fire burned down the Islamic Center of Lake Travis that was under construction at the time. Islamic Center of Lake Travis Board member Shakeel Rashed said the event was created to not only bring the community together, but to thank everyone for their support. The Islamic Center of Lake Travis has created a campaign to collect donations in hopes to rebuild the mosque. The Travis County Fire Marshals were still investigating the cause of the fire.¹⁸⁷

US: Local mosque receives letter of support ahead of Trump inauguration— In Washington some local people were trying to bring their community closer together and support minority groups that might feel alone. A letter and a postcard were sent to the Masjid an Nabawi Mosque in Schenectady ahead of Mr Trump's Inauguration Day, saying: "To our Muslim brothers and sisters at Masjid an Nabawi, we stand with you." Lynell Engelmyer helped write the simple but profound message on a postcard also sent to the mosque. She said that she wanted to make sure members of the

¹⁸⁵ See: IQNA News' entry "Hundreds Protest Islamophobia at Austin Mosque", in: <http://iqna.ir/en/news/3461466/hundreds-protest-islamophobia-at-austin-mosque>, retrieved on 20.11.2016

¹⁸⁶ See: Daily News' entry "Feds sue Virginia County that refused permit for mosque", in: <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/feds-sue-virginia-county-refused-permit-mosque-article-1.2908403>, retrieved on 13.12.2016

¹⁸⁷ See: KXAN News' entry "Lake Travis community gathers a week after fire destroys mosque", in: <http://kxan.com/2017/01/15/lake-travis-community-gathers-a-week-after-fire-destroys-mosque/>, retrieved on 16.1.2017

Mosque didn't feel alone. Taslim Yousaf, a member of Muslim community said: *"I feel very excited and we are very happy and we are very thankful for having such a great community around us."*¹⁸⁸

3.6. Positive Development on Hijab

In the US, cultural awareness was brought to the Hilltop in the form of Hijabi Awareness Week, co-sponsored by the Muslim Student Association and Gender Studies department. The events of the week examined the role of perceptions of hijab in current Islamophobia which featured presentation, the film 'They Call Me Muslim' and discussion, covering topics such as current events and the wide range of meanings that hijab could have. Jennifer Thorn, the leader of the organizer said, *"This week is prompted by three realities: the ways ideas about Muslims have figured in recent political rhetoric, the ways Syria; and Syrian people, are represented in the western media; and our own knowledge of cases of bullying and harassment of women wearing hijab here in New Hampshire and in the Boston area. In a school where so many of the students came from similar ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, awareness of issues like these are vital."* Senior Mina al Rais added, *"I think this week is very important, because this event helps raise awareness of hijab, women, and Islam in general. Based on what is going on around us nationally and internationally such as political climate, the Syrian crisis, and the increased quantity of harassment and bullying, we decided to step up and create a hijab week on campus to correct the misjudgements that have been created by Islamophobic groups and individuals."*¹⁸⁹



In the US, a group of Brigham Young University students was turning heads on campus by wearing traditional hijabs. For three Wednesdays, Sondra Sasser and 11 other students had added the garment to their wardrobe to show support for Utah's Muslim community. She said: *"A lot of Muslims are feeling uncomfortable about things... feeling scared about things or just misunderstood, and so any show of solidarity I think can be touching."* The move was raising a lot of eyebrows around the Provo campus.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ See: News10 News' entry "Local mosque receives letter of support ahead of Trump inauguration", in: <http://news10.com/2017/01/20/local-mosque-receives-letter-of-support-ahead-of-trump-inauguration/>, retrieved on 21.1.2017

¹⁸⁹ See: The Saint Anselm Crier News' entry "Hijabi Awareness Week brings cultural diversity to campus", in: <http://criernewsroom.com/culture/2016/10/19/hijabi-awareness-week-brings-cultural-diversity-to-campus/>, retrieved on 20.10.2016

¹⁹⁰ See: NBC New York News' entry "Students Wear Hijabs to Support Muslims on Campus", in: <http://www.nbcnewyork.com/on-air/as-seen-on/Students-Wear-Hijabs-to-Support-Muslims-on-Campus-New-York-407019826.html>, retrieved on 17.12.2016

In Australia, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull rejected calls to ban the burqa in his country following Chancellor Angela Merkel's call to ban full-face veils in Germany. He said: *"It is not something my government would support or propose."*



Pauline Hanson, the leader of Australia's anti-Islam party One Nation, wrote on Facebook that she would push for a similar law to Merkel's proposal to be introduced to the parliament in 2017. regarding what was happening in Germany, Turnbull said: *"The Europeans regrettably lost control of their borders,"* adding that European leaders spoke with him recently about the threat posed to their societies by 'large-scale irregular migration.' Australia had been maintaining a stiff border policy of intercepting and turning back all boats carrying asylum seekers trying to reach its

shores, with hundreds then forced to languish in offshore detention centres in Nauru and on Papua New Guinea's Manus Island.¹⁹¹ Malcolm Turnbull said there were certain environments in which people's faces shouldn't be covered when asked about a call to ban the burqa in public buildings – but he insisted it was a matter of 'safety first' and unrelated to religion. The comments came in an interview in which Turnbull also refused to be drawn about an imminent cabinet reshuffle, after a report suggested Greg Hunt was in the box seat to become the health minister. When asked about "how much of a risk to national security" the burqa was, Turnbull said: *"It's not something that you should be generalizing about but there are obviously environments where it's important for people's faces not to be covered for identity reasons."*¹⁹²

In Austria, thousands of Muslim women marched in Vienna in February 2017 against controversial government plans to ban full-face veils in public. An estimated 3,000 took part in the rally calling for the law change to be abandoned, accusing the government of Islamophobia. Placards declared that wearing a veil was a personal choice, and protesters claimed that the measure was both sexist and anti-Muslim. The week before Austria's ruling coalition said the niqab and burka ban would come into effect over the following 18 months. It had widely been seen as an effort to counter the far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ) ahead of parliamentary elections in 2018. At the protest, which



¹⁹¹ See: Gulf Times News' entry "Turnbull rules out burqa ban in Australia", in: <http://www.gulf-times.com/story/523960/Turnbull-rules-out-burqa-ban-in-Australia>, retrieved on 9.12.2016

¹⁹² See: The Guardian News' entry "Malcolm Turnbull says Australia must put 'safety first' when asked about burqa ban", in: <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/jan/17/malcolm-turnbull-says-australia-must-put-safety-first-when-asked-about-burqa-ban>, retrieved on 18.1.2017

passed peacefully, women marched under the slogan 'My body, My right of self-determination!' They accused the Austrian government of attacking their freedoms that chants included: 'Hey, minister! Hands off my sister!'¹⁹³

3.7. On Inter-Faiths

In Azerbaijan, Pope Francis visited Heydar Aliyev a mosque and told leaders of all faiths that God should never be used to justify fundamentalism. He said: *"From this highly symbolic place, a heartfelt cry rises up once again: no more violence in the name of God! May his most holy name be adored, not profaned or bartered as a commodity through forms of hatred and human opposition.....God cannot be used for personal interests and selfish ends; he cannot be used to justify any form of fundamentalism, imperialism or colonialism."*¹⁹⁴

In the US, Waterloo-area congregations and members of the clergy had rallied in support of an Islamic center that was marred by graffiti. The Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier reported that an interfaith prayer service was held on the steps of the Masjid Al-Noor Islamic Center in Waterloo saying "we want to be here and support you." Members of the Islamic Center and the other churches planted what they called a 'peace tree' in front of the building. The graffiti consisted of Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's last name spray-painted in red letters on a brick wall of the center.¹⁹⁵

In the US, Church members in a small city in southwest Kansas marched in support of the local Muslim community, after details emerged of a foiled plot by a far-right militia to bomb an apartment complex where many immigrants lived. Federal investigators announced the arrest of three men on 14 October, for involvement in a domestic terrorism plot. They had allegedly planned to blow up a suburban housing estate in Garden City where several African immigrant families lived, along with a community from Burma. Hundreds of predominantly Christian residents of the city gathered outside the apartment complex on 15 and 16 October to show support for the immigrant communities. Many also attended a candlelit unity walk vigil. Reverend Denise Pass, a Presbyterian Church pastor who organised the initial rallies, said she felt it was important to hold an event in solidarity with the families affected by the bomb scare. She said: *"When I heard this tragic news, it came to my mind that we — as members of this community and as Christians — should support and protect the local Muslim community."*¹⁹⁶

In Vatican, 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

¹⁹³ See: ABNA News' entry "3,000 Muslim women protest in Austria against face-veil ban move", in: <http://en.abna24.com/service/europe/archive/2017/02/09/810530/story.html>, retrieved on 10.2.2017

¹⁹⁴ See: Hindustan Times' News entry "No more violence in God's name, urges Pope from a mosque in Azerbaijan", in: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/no-more-violence-in-god-s-name-pope-urges-world-from-a-mosque-in-azerbaijan/story-t2iHA3zeLHicbs4FBLRrL.html>, retrieved on 3.10.2016

¹⁹⁵ See: KCRG News' entry "Local congregations rally around graffiti-marred mosque", in: <http://www.kcrg.com/content/news/Local-congregations-rally-around-graffiti-marred-mosque-397360821.html>, retrieved on 18.10.2016

¹⁹⁶ See: Independent News' entry "Kansas churchgoers hold candlelit vigil in support of Muslim immigrants targeted by far-right terrorists", in: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-christians-muslims-somali-refugees-rally-terror-plot-kansas-a7377306.html>, retrieved on 25.10.2016

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.¹⁹⁷



In Italy, 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.¹⁹⁸

In the US, Boston Jews and Muslims marched in solidarity against racism. Organized by the Jewish Voice for Peace Boston chapter, the Hanukkah solidarity march was a way for Jews, Muslims and all allies to combat Islamophobia and racism at a time treacherous for those minorities. Liza Behrendt, an organizer with Jewish Voice for Peace Boston, said: *"This is the second annual Hanukkah against Islamophobia but given the past election year we've been through, we're seeing a rise in hate crimes targeting Muslims."* Kanwal Haq, director of development of Jetpac Inc., said: *"There were more than 60,000 Muslims in the Greater Boston area, and yet their voices were not heard."* Jetpac Inc. was an organizing partner of the march and a political advocacy center that focuses on equipping Muslim residents with relevant skills. Haq spoke at the march about Jetpac and about how communities in Boston could work in solidarity together. Shannon Erwin, executive director of the Muslim Justice League, said that the timing of this march was important for getting people who were wondering what they could do to help involved.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ See: Cruxnow.com News' entry "Bishop says peace, justice and education key to dialogue with Islam", in: <https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2016/11/09/bishop-says-peace-justice-education-key-dialogue-islam/>, retrieved on 10.11.2016

¹⁹⁸ See: Forward News' entry "Interfaith Delegation from Arab Countries Holds 'Historic' Meeting with Italian Jewish Leaders", in: <http://forward.com/news/breaking-news/354306/interfaith-delegation-from-arab-countries-holds-historic-meeting-with-itali/>, retrieved on 14.11.2016

¹⁹⁹ See: Metro News' entry "Boston Jews, Muslims to march in solidarity against racism", in: <http://www.breitbart.com/london/2016/12/02/populist-mp-fined-e450-linking-terrorism-islam/>, retrieved on 3.12.2016

In the UK, hundreds of Muslims flocked to the East London Mosque in a drive to feed London's homeless during the festive period. Pictures showed members of the 7,500 strong Muslim congregation donating food as they attended Friday prayers at the mosque in Whitechapel. Shopping bags filled with rice, pasta, cereals and other tinned goods, were ready to be distributed to people living on the street. Organisers estimated that over seven tonnes of food were donated with local businesses, schools, a university and leaders from other faiths chipping in. More than 90 per cent of the food, which was given to homeless charity Crisis, would go to non-Muslims, with Christian Reverend Gary Bradley describing the drive as all faiths working together for a common humanity. Shaykh Abdul Qayum, Chief Imam of the East London Mosque, who organised the collection along with charity Muslim Aid, said the drive was inspired by their faith. He said: *"Muslims are inspired by their faith towards helping others in need. It is a religious duty for Muslims to try to help others, irrespective of a person's faith or background. This compassion is truly reflective of what Islam stands for."* The number of people sleeping rough in the UK had risen dramatically, with government figures estimating that over 3,500 people slept on the streets each night. The charity Centrepont warns that 25,000 young people could be at risk of homelessness during the 2016 Christmas.²⁰⁰



In another part of the UK, Muslim and Christian groups were joining forces to help the country's homeless and other vulnerable groups during the Christmas period. Organisations including Muslim Aid, the Al-Khair Foundation,



Streetlytes, and churches across the English capital of London were expanding their efforts by providing meals and shelter packs to rough sleepers. Their aim was to make sure those most in need were protected from cold weather and hunger during the holidays when many shops and services were closed or operating at reduced capacity. More than 100 homeless people attended a Christmas dinner event organised by the groups at the Church of St Stephen and St Thomas in Shepherd's Bush, west London.²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ See: Evening Standard News' entry "London Muslims donate 10 tonnes of food for homeless at Christmas", in: <http://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/london-muslims-donate-ten-tonnes-of-food-for-homeless-at-christmas-a3422611.html>, retrieved on 18.12.2016

²⁰¹ See: Aljazeera News' entry "Muslims and Christians team up to help homeless", in: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/12/muslims-christians-team-homeless-161219213135022.html>, retrieved on 23.12.2016

In the US, various faiths were showing their solidarity with the Islamic Society of Vermont after it received a letter expressing disdain for the Muslim religion. About 150 nonmembers gathered to pray with the Muslim congregation, and many had sent messages of support. Reports said more than 100 mosques in the US received hate mail in late November. It called the behaviors of Muslim people un-American, and the writer vowed to try to prevent the further entry of Muslims into the United States. Farhad Khan, president of the Islamic society, said *"When anything hateful happens we have such an outpouring of love."* Vermont Interfaith Action was a coalition of more than 40 congregations, which promoted religious tolerance.²⁰²



In the US, Evangelical Fuller Seminary led plan to foster unity with Muslims to address Islamophobia. Mark Labberton and Richard Mouw, President and President Emeritus of Fuller Theological Seminary, suggested dedicated work to bring together American evangelicals to address hostility toward Muslims and found ways to counter Islamophobia. Labberton stated that both Islam and Muslim continued to garner a lion's share of the public's attention in America. He said: *"The vast majority of Muslim scholars have critiqued and rejected the rhetoric of militant Islam, underscoring their commitment to Islam as the way of peace in the name of and for the glory of Allah. But these declarations receive little attention in the Western press, garner little increased trust, and do not seem to affect common opinion, political rhetoric, or popular Western biases. Given this religious backdrop, American evangelicals have tended to respond to Islam in a myriad of ways. On the one hand, some evangelicals have responded through expressions of fear and condemnation, a response that views Islam as terroristic, violent, and a threat to 'Western values.' This type of response tends to demonize Islam as a religion and Muslims as a people."* Mouw said some of the most urgent and pressing questions among evangelicals remain dormant, or relegated to conversations with friends or following a board meeting with particular constituencies. Labberton, Mouw and Fuller Theological Seminary faculty members actively engaged in Christian-Muslim dialogue for years, seeking to demonstrate openness, understanding and love.²⁰³

In Canada, more than 200 concerned men, women and children gathered at the Blundell Mosque at Blundell Road and #5 Road in Richmond on 30 January evening. The organizers had appealed to the broader community to join them in paying tribute to the victims of the earlier Mosque attack in Quebec City. The vigil attracted a large number of people representing the diversity of this community. The attendees included Richmond Mayor Malcolm Brodie, Councillor Chak Au and a number of other community leaders.²⁰⁴

²⁰² See: VT Digger News' entry "Faith community stands with Muslims in wake of hate mail", in: <https://vtdigger.org/2016/12/18/faith-community-stands-with-muslims-in-wake-of-hate-mail/>, retrieved on 19.12.2016

²⁰³ See: The Gospel Herald News' entry "Evangelical Fuller Seminary to Lead Plan to Foster Unity with Muslims, Address Islamophobia", in: <http://www.gospelherald.com/articles/69324/20170112/evangelical-global-church-plan-to-foster-unity-with-muslims-address-islamophobia.htm>, retrieved on 13.1.2017

²⁰⁴ See: LINK News' entry "Richmond multicultural-multi-faith gathering mourns victims of the senseless attack by racist Far-Right killer", in: <http://thelinkpaper.ca/?p=61220>, retrieved on 5.2.2017

In the US, Jews and Christians in Texas Town were helping Muslims whose mosque was burned down. Soon after a mosque in the small town of Victoria, Texas, burned to the ground, local Jewish and Christian communities there came together to help those affected. Members of the B’Nai Israel temple gave the keys to their synagogue to the Muslim community so they would have a place to worship. Four churches in the town also offered space for the mosque’s Muslim congregation to hold services. Melvin Lack, treasurer of Congregation B’Nai Israel said: *"We were very happy to do this. You feel what’s happening in the community and everyone reacts."* The fire occurred just hours after President Donald Trump announced the controversial executive order that banned immigrants from seven Muslim-majority countries, the cause of the incident had not been determined yet, and authorities were still investigating. Children from the local Catholic school in Victoria also visited the mosque, forming what the Islamic Center called a *"human chain of love and peace."* The students also presented the Muslim community with a tree, as they stated: *"The tree will be planted in the grounds of our new mosque & prominently displayed to remind us of this beautiful moment."* In addition, the Islamic Center also received financial support such as a GoFundMe page who had raised more than \$1 million for reconstruction. On the day after the page was created, the campaign was already close to hitting its target of \$850,000.²⁰⁵



In Vatican, Pope Francis had called for prayers for the Rohingya, the Muslim minority group forced to flee violence and persecution in Myanmar. The pope made a personal appeal during his weekly audience at the Vatican in February, asking pilgrims to pray with him *"for our Rohingya brothers and sisters who are being chased from Myanmar and are fleeing from one place to another because no one wants them."* Pope Francis added: *"They are good people, they are not Christians, they are peaceful people, they are our brothers and sisters, and for years they have been suffering. They are being tortured and killed, simply because they*

uphold their Muslim faith." The pontiff asked the 7,000 pilgrims gathered at the Vatican to pray with him for all exploited and humiliated migrants, and especially the Rohingya.²⁰⁶

In the US, American Muslims started fundraiser to repair vandalized Jewish. The activists intended to help pay for needed repairs of a Jewish cemetery in the St. Louis suburb of University City, after it was vandalized. The fundraising page on the site was quoted saying: *"Through this campaign, we hope to send a united message from the Jewish and*

²⁰⁵ See: Time News' entry "How Jews and Christians in This Texas Town are Helping Muslims Whose Mosque Burned Down", in: <http://time.com/4657876/texas-mosque-fire-jewish-christian-communities-help/>, retrieved on 3.2.2017

²⁰⁶ See: Deseretnews.com News' entry "Pope decries treatment of Rohingya Muslims", in: <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865672914/Pope-decries-treatment-of-Rohingya-Muslims.html>, retrieved on 9.2.2017

Muslim communities that there is no place for this type of hate, desecration, and violence in America." The fundraising page said they would pray that their campaign restored a sense of security and peace amongst Jewish-American community. The page had got above its goal of raising USD20,000 within a few hours. The campaign was created by Tarek El-Messidi along with fellow activist Linda Sarsour. Tarek said he was reminded of a story about the prophet Muhammad, who had stood up when a Jewish funeral procession passed when he saw the news about the vandalism at Chesed Shel Emeth Society cemetery.²⁰⁷

In the US, speaker told how religion builds bridge of cooperation. With recent vandalism at a Jewish cemetery in Philadelphia and threats made against Jewish organizations across the country as well as President Trump's ban on travel from several Muslim countries, interfaith dialogue was held. More than 200 students, faculty and staff from St. Joseph's and area colleges attended presentation in the Cardinal Foley Campus Center. St. Joseph's University hosted the gathering with the goal to inspire college students and campus communities in Philadelphia to embrace diversity of faith, as well as to offer specific strategies that attendees could take back to their own schools. Eboo Patel, director of Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) delivered a keynote address on interfaith leadership on 7 March. Patel founded IFYC based on *"the idea that religion should be a bridge of cooperation rather than a barrier of division."* Beth Ford-McNamee, assistant director of campus ministry and organizer of the event, said: *"As a Jesuit university, St. Joseph's is committed to providing educational and experiential learning opportunities for students regarding interfaith study, dialogue and encounter."* She added that learning about different religions was part of the General Education Program at St. Joseph's, and students were required to take a religious difference course as an elective. Jesuit Father Daniel Joyce, executive director of mission programs at the university, noted that Patel's message had the potential to inspire students to action that was aligned with SJU's mission.²⁰⁸

In the UK, the Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, had visited the city's mosque and Islamic centre to hear more about its work within the community. He visited the mosque in Bull Lane to meet with the Imam and members of the mosque as part of work to foster good community relations. Speaking before the visit, he said: *"In the Old Testament the Prophet Micah challenges his listeners to 'live justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God' and so I am very much looking forward to visiting York Mosque today and to find out more of the social action projects that York Mosque is doing. We each have a responsibility to foster better community relations and improve our sense of what it means to be a good neighbour"*. Imam Abid Salik said: *"We recently held an Open Day and on behalf of the whole congregation of York Mosque we would like to express deep and sincere gratitude to each and every person who made it possible and to our neighbours and friends from York and beyond who came along to support the day – it was so humbling."* 'Visit My Mosque' in the UK had been now in its third year and the annual open day was held in February 2017 with over 150 mosques opening their doors for peoples of all faiths and none to discover more about how British mosques were helping local communities.²⁰⁹

In the US, Eighteen mosques across Massachusetts held an Open Mosque Day to give the public a chance to meet their Muslim neighbors, where attendees had the chance to tour a mosque, hear a brief introduction to Islam and witness a Muslim prayer service. Wafaa Wahabi of the American Islamic Center in Everett said that during a time of misunderstanding about Islam, Muslims hoped to show the communities they lived in that they *"live, pray and dream just like anyone else."* Participating mosques included the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center in Boston, the

²⁰⁷ See: DNA News' entry "American Muslims start fundraiser to repair vandalized Jewish", in: <http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report-american-muslims-start-fundraiser-to-repair-vandalized-jewish-2331091>, retrieved on 23.2.2017

²⁰⁸ See: Catholicphilly.com News' entry "Muslim speaker tells how religion builds bridge of cooperation", in: <http://catholicphilly.com/2017/03/news/local-news/muslim-speaker-tells-how-religion-builds-bridge-of-cooperation/>, retrieved on 16.3.2017

²⁰⁹ See: The Press News' entry "The Archbishop of York visits York Mosque", in: <http://www.yorkpress.co.uk/news/15153092.The-Archbishop-of-York-visits-York-Mosque/>, retrieved on 15.3.2017

Islamic Society of Greater Lowell in Chelmsford, Masjid Al-Ehsan in Dartmouth and the Islamic Society of Greater Haverhill. Mosques in Worcester and Chelsea planned to hold separate open days in May 2017.²¹⁰

²¹⁰ USNews.com News' entry "Open Mosque Day Aims to Give Public Chance to Meet Muslims", in: <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/massachusetts/articles/2017-04-01/open-mosque-day-aims-to-give-public-chance-to-meet-muslims>, retrieved on 2.4.2017

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Observing events, media news, discourses, public feelings, and incidents on Islamophobia occurring during the latest 8-months period, the Islamophobia Observatory draws some conclusions as pointed below:

- Islamophobia continued to grow high without any sign of possible decline, with main hotspots remains in the US and Europe. The graphic was constantly high, reflected by the wide scale of negative narratives against Islam as well as incidents targeting mosques, Islamic Centers, Muslim individuals, Communities, and women wearing veil or hijab.
- Mosques and Islamic Centers were the most common target of Islamophobes in the US and Europe, as the Islamophobia Observatory noted major incidents of vandalism against mosques and prayer facilities in the US, Canada, Germany, Sweden, UK and Netherlands.
- Particular in the US, Mosques and Islamic Centers continued to suffer from major attacks and vandalism i.e. the Islamic Center of Lake Travis in Austin, the Islamic Center of Eastside in Bellevue, Washington, the Islamic Center of Victoria, the Daarus Salaam Mosque, the Islamic Education Center and the Masjid Omar mosque all in Tampa region, the Masjid Abu Bakr mosque in Denver, the Muslim Association of Puget Sound mosque's in Redmond, Washington, and the Davis Islamic Center in California, etc.
- Islamophobia trend in the US is the most concerning in term of scale and number of incidents. Racist graffiti, pig carcass dumping, threatening mails, Holy Quran defacing, physical assaults, and verbal insults were among the frequent incidents, while a plot to murder immigrants from Muslim countries was among the most disturbing.
- The growing xenophobia in the US was not only targeting Muslims but also Jews and some other ethnic and religious minorities i.e. Black and Hispanic Americans.
- The confirmation of Donald Trump's Presidency has left Muslims living in the US with deep concerns, due to some reasons: Mr. Trump has been standing on the opposite stance against Islam and Muslims as he declared that "*Islam hates Americans*"; He proposed to ban Muslims from entering the country and heightened surveillance of mosques across the nation; He embraced the hateful language of Quran-burning rallies and anti-mosque protests; the very high number of Islamophobic and racist harassments or intimidations were reported since Mr. Trump was sworn, etc.
- The new US government has embraced a new culture of which the government authorizes discrimination and violence against Muslim Americans. Among the most notorious instances was the issuance of a racist, Islamophobic and a state-sponsored provocation called as '*Executive Order Protecting The Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into The United States*', that suspend entry for nationals of certain Muslim countries.

- Trump's election has bolstered right-wing forces elsewhere in the world, particularly in Europe, where significant reordering of the political landscape was underway.
- Countries in Europe have been struggling with serious debt issues and high level of unemployment since the economic crisis hit in 2008, which, in turn, led to domestic debates about hot issues such as immigrants, non-European foreigners, assimilation and integration, national identity etc. Such a circumstances was worsened by the surge of refugees fleeing the Syrian civil war and periodic terrorist attacks hence, altogether, has been creating the necessary environment for right-wing parties and figures to prosper, in parallel with the European Union's policies of integration of which been blamed for the situation. As the consequences, anti-EU, anti-immigration and anti-Muslim platforms have gained a fertile ground, soaring Islamophobia highly across Europe.
- In Europe, the alarming trend of Islamophobia was seen particularly in Netherlands, France, Germany, the UK, Austria, Denmark, Sweden, Hungary, Slovakia, and Italy due to the intense campaigns against Islam and Immigrants spread by Populist-Right Wing parties amidst the on-going elections.
- Despite the Far-Right Parties are not in a position to win a true electoral majority in any European countries, they have however shaped political debates and forces other parties to mainstream some of their ideas and the political trend in key European countries hence moving bold towards opposing Islam.
- Islamophobia has been concerning in Myanmar due to the prolonging issue related to Rohingya Muslims. Rohingya Muslims was becoming the constant headlines of world Media due to the harsh approach applied by the Burmese Security Forces following the incident of 9 October 2016.
- Far Right groups was active in Australia and the major issue was around the Muslim refugees in the country as well as some proposals to ban particular dresses associated to Muslim Women. Nevertheless, the trend of Islamophobia in Australia was declining despite the continuous campaigns and xenophobic acts by Far-Rights groups aimed at spreading hates against Islam and Muslims. Within such circumstances, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has shown a strong commitment on multiculturalism to manage the diversity of Australian society, while making continued efforts to provide sufficient protection to Muslim communities living in the country.
- A significant wave of Islamophobia came from Israel as representatives of Israel's Knesset had given their approval to what was known as the 'Muezzin Bill' for banning religious leaders from using loudspeakers or public address systems to summon worshippers for prayers. While the bill was targeted at curbing noise pollution, the law contained a clause harmful to the freedom of religion.
- Phobia against veil, hijab, and burqa continued to be a serious contagion spreading across the globe. The 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.
- Outlawing veil, headscarf, hijab, niqab is now becoming a trend in Europe, especially after the decision taken in March 2017 by the European Court of Justice (ECJ), which ruled that employers/companies in Europe could ban

staff from wearing these particular clothes. A country followed by another, made the ban part of their national law, despite the clear manifestation of social discrimination behind such a policy.

- Twelve European countries have partially or fully banned veil, headscarf, hijab, niqab, and burqa i.e. France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Denmark, Bulgaria, Latvia, Estonia, and Albania. More were on the way with debates were ongoing in many other countries i.e. in the United Kingdom, Sweden, Guinea, Central African Republic, Malta, and Morocco.
- 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 was significant to combat Islamophobia.
- President Trump's 'travel-ban' has rippled anger and dismay across the world as politicians, community leaders, actors, and even sport stars reacted against the entry-ban policy that the US President Donald Trump imposed on refugees and citizens from seven Muslim-majority nations. i.e. Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia and Yemen.
- Within the US territory itself, demonstrations were organized across the country since January, to show supports on Muslims in response to the travel ban.
- Interfaith solidarity between Jews and Muslims is growing fast in the United States.
- The offspring of interfaith dialogue was found quite everywhere around the world such as in the US, the UK, Italy, India, and Vatican, each with various emphasis.
- Vatican was making further move to minimize its gap with the Muslim World by restoring the Holy See's relations with the Al-Azhar Mosque which had been frozen since 2011 (after the incident on Alexandria Church).
- British Prime Minister Theresa May, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, Russian President Alexander Putin, British Prince Charles, Pope Francis of Vatican, are among World Leaders who, during the period under review, have shown 'friendly' gestures to Islam and Muslims.

Based on the above-pointed conclusions, the Observatory envisages some tangible measures that could be undertaken to reverse Islamophobia:

1. To make more serious efforts to address the alarming issue of Islamophobia.
2. To boost 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.
3. To encourage advocacy by Muslim community leaders in order to normalize or mainstream Islamophobia at political and media discours in Europe and the US.
4. To give special attention to the problems of the European Muslims, i.e. by taking the necessary action to operationalize the Contact Group on Muslim Minorities in Europe.
5. To increase supports to Muslim communities in non-Muslim societies to empower them to fight and stand against Islamophobia.
6. To initiate global Muslim diaspora projects while collecting information about Muslim communities in the West.
7. To engage in a constructive and meaningful dialogue with Non-Muslims in order to develop a successful mechanism to counter all types of discrimination against Muslims.
8. To strategize and enhance dialogue (interreligious, intercultural, and inter-civilization).
9. To promote cultural exchanges among Muslim countries, Islamic culture of Muslim minorities, exchange of Islamic cultural products; and to benefit from Muslim competencies outside the Islamic World (inward-approach).
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. To initiate projects of countering 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.
13. To start collaborating with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) who have been working actively in advocating anti-Islamophobia and in addressing the causes of Islamophobia at community and grassroots levels.
14. 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.
15. To expand the outreach programs covering the deprived immigrant communities, especially those in Europe and in the US.

16. 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.
17. To work for decreasing media reports which propagating stereotypes and stigmatizing Muslim populations.
18. 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.
19. To give a high priority on the implementation of "OIC Media Strategy in Countering Islamophobia and its Implementation Mechanism" which was adopted on 21 December 2016 by the 11th Session of the Islamic Conference of Information Ministers, held in Jeddah.
20. 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.
21. To integrate Islamophobia along with peace education, human rights and multicultural values into school curricula in Member Countries.
22. To emphasize on the importance of proper Islamic education for early-aged children to avoid ignorance of religion among the new generation.
23. 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.
24. To provide supports to the Islamophobia Observatory by allocating necessary resources to allow the Observatory establishing network with other hate speech monitoring and reporting mechanisms around the world.
25. To make a link with those who fight anti-Semitism and Christian-phobia with the view of creating alliance with other marginalized and dehumanized groups on the base of racism, classism, and xenophobia.
26. To create partnerships with non-Muslim institutions and individuals to implement concrete actions i.e. policies, development, relief, etc.
27. To appoint a special envoy to conduct OIC's engagement with international and regional organizations and civil societies.
28. To disseminate the Islamophobia Report, information periodicals, and journals among Muslim population, diaspora, Member states as well as Non-member states, widely.
29. To maximize the roles of OIC Offices abroad by giving them assignment to deal with Islamophobia-related issues as well as by giving them more space to informally working with local Muslim communities to address the issue Islamophobia at community level.
30. To closely work with concerned stakeholders in Europe with a view to changing the hearts and mind of Non-Muslim westerners that immigrants are not necessarily a threat to the values and principles of European societies.

31. To challenge the ongoing myth of “Islamization” of the West as been nurtured by xenophobic, populist parties that are on the rise across Europe and elsewhere.
32. To provide more support, politically and financially, to initiatives/projects against Islamophobia by relevant OIC Institutions.
33. To keep the issue of Islamophobia as an international concern and thus remains on the agenda of UN’s Human Rights Council and General Assembly.
34. To utilize the Human rights declaration of Geneva and the UN as the base and core framework to address the issue of Islamophobia.
35. To use the existing UN treaties like religious freedom, freedom of expression, prohibition of racial discrimination etc. as tools to combat Islamophobia.
36. To take all appropriate measures including necessary legislation against such acts that lead to incitement to hatred, discrimination and violence against persons based on their religion.
37. To continue condemning all acts of terrorism irrespective of wherever they take place and whosoever commits terrorism.
38. To ensure progress on the existing international consensus in the form of the Action Plan of UN Human Rights Council’s Resolution 16/18; as well as the Rabat Plan of Action—since the Action Plan of Resolution 16/18 represents the current international consensus and has a follow up mechanism in the form of annual Sessions of Istanbul Process.

ANNEXES

Islamophobic Incidents

I. Incidents Related to Mosques:

Germany: Another Mosque Attack Raises Concerns over Muslims' Safety in Germany — Two Polish men caused uproar a mosque when they pelted worshippers with bacon just before evening prayers. The men, Piotr Czak-Zukowski and Mateusz Pawlikowski also threw rashers at the shoe rack of the Al-Rahman Mosque in Camden, and a piece landed inside a shoe. The pair were remanded in custody until their sentencing over fears for their safety if they were bailed.

In: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/men-pelt-worshippers-mosque-bacon-8984499>, retrieved on 6.10.2016

US: Iowa mosque vandalized— The name 'Trump' was spray-painted in red on the outside wall of a mosque in Waterloo, Iowa. Police were investigating.

In: <http://www.wowt.com/content/news/iowa-mosque-vandalized-397242621.html>, retrieved on 17.10.2016

Germany: Another Mosque Attack Raises Concerns over Muslims' Safety in Germany — Three attacks targeting Turkish-run mosques in Germany since September triggered concerns on rising Islamophobia in the country where xenophobic and Islamophobic movements had gained popularity since a recent influx of refugees. The latest target of unknown assailants was a mosque under construction in Herringen, a small town in the North Rhein Westphalia state. Suspects sprayed painted anti-Islamic and anti-Turkish slogans on the walls of the unfinished mosque being built by the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs which also run mosques in Dresden and Bebra. A swastika was also painted on the walls next to slogans reading, "Get out of Germany," "Center of Terror" and "Put Turks in Gas Chambers." Although mosque attacks were common in Germany, the recent rise in figures raised alarm among Muslims, especially in the Turkish community, which constitutes the largest Muslim community in the country.

In: <http://iqna.ir/en/news/3461129/another-mosque-attack-raises-concerns-over-muslims-safety-in-germany>, retrieved on 10.10.2016

Canada: Mosque vandalized for second time in a row—The glass on the front door of the Ranchlands Mosque in Calgary, Alberta was smashed, and a sign indicating that the mosque was open during construction was also thrown

the parking lot. A similar incident happened a week before at the southeast Islamic centre in Queensland, where the glass on the entrance was smashed and the Holy Quran desecrated. A Muslim, Beenish Khurshid said it was disappointing to see the damage at the mosque, but said she was not afraid. She said that the majority of Canadians were quite welcoming and the Muslim community had enjoyed the love and respect they receive. The two incidents were part of a series of attacks on religious groups in Alberta. Earlier within the month, about 40 anti-Muslim posters were put up around the University of Calgary campus.



In: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1201720/canada-mosque-vandalised-second-time-row/>, retrieved on 19.10.2016

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."*

In: <http://wsvn.com/news/local/vandal-writes-obscenity-on-florida-mosques-street-signs/>, retrieved on 3.11.2016

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.

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 fiancé, 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.

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

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.

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

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.

In: <http://muslimnews.co.uk/news/islamophobia/canadian-police-investigating-hate-graffiti-mosque/>, retrieved on 20.11.2016

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.



In: <http://www.seattlepi.com/local/crime/article/Redmond-mosque-vandalized-10630890.php>, retrieved on 22.11.2016

US: Pig carcass dumped outside Oklahoma mosque in possible hate crime— The Islamic Center of Lawton was alerted of the hog dumping to the mosque where Police were investigating the incident as a possible hate crime. Footage captured by the mosque's security cameras showed two men unloading the carcass from the back of a pickup truck before speeding off. Lawton animal control representatives quickly removed the dead hog, but a large blood stain remained in the parking lot. The imam of the mosque said the hoggish event clearly signaled that somebody intended to offend Lawton's Muslim minority, as Islamic faith prohibits the consumption of all pork products.

In: <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/pig-carcass-dumped-oklahoma-mosque-hate-crime-article-1.2903909>, retrieved on 10.12.2016

US: Voicemail Threatening to ‘Drop a Bomb’ on a California Mosque Being Investigated— A California mosque received a message on their voicemail service from an individual who threatened to drop a bomb on the mosque. The incident at the Islamic Center of Tustin that was reported to the Tustin Police Department. The voicemail was among

several threats Southern California mosques been received over the recent few weeks, as was reported by the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) of Los Angeles. The Police was investigating.

In: <http://christiannews.net/2016/12/14/voicemail-threatening-to-drop-a-bomb-on-a-california-mosque-being-investigated/>, retrieved on 15.12.2016

Germany: Mosque in southwest Germany attacked with pig's head— Unknown attackers spewed a pig's head on a fence in front of Aksemseddin Mosque in Öhringen's business district Sichert in southwest Germany in December. A man discovered the impaled pig's head as he was bringing his son to a Koran course at the mosque. The mosque filed a complaint, but the community had little hope that the perpetrator would be caught. Police stated that there had been no concrete progress in the case. This was not the first attack to the mosque. In August 2015, an unknown man sprayed "Shit Muslims should die!" on the transformer house in front of the mosque. A few weeks later, attackers threw eggs against the mosque wall. At the end of November 2016, a car entered the mosque grounds as the community and Imam were leaving. The driver shouted "Dirty Foreigners" before driving off. Hatred for refugees and Muslims had been consistent in and around Öhringen for more than a year, especially in Facebook posts and at political rallies of the right alliance "Hohenlohe wake up". An increasing number of Muslims were experiencing verbal attacks, such as being called "bomb planter".

In: <http://www.dailysabah.com/europe/2016/12/16/mosque-in-southwest-germany-attacked-with-pigs-head>, retrieved on 17.12.2016



UK: Mosque in Cumbernauld sprayed with racist graffiti— Anti-Islamic graffiti was sprayed on a mosque in North Lanarkshire. The words "Saracen Go Home" and the term "Deus Vult", translated from Latin as "God Willing", were painted on two walls of the mosque in Cumbernauld. Mosque leaders described the incident as unusual and said local people were very worried by it. Azhar Din, a trustee of The Islamic Education Trust Cumbernauld, which runs the mosque, said: "The graffiti wasn't there when people left after late

prayers at the mosque around nine o'clock the night before. It was discovered when the first people arrived for morning prayers." The graffiti has been reported to police.

In: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-38353706>, retrieved on 18.12.2016

US: Redmond mosque vandalized for second time in a month— The sign outside a Redmond mosque was vandalized for a second time in a month. The metal on the sign at the Muslim Associated of Puget Sound was torn off, and there was also damage to the concrete that the sign was mounted on. Police said the damage occurred just after midnight before and that the suspect was described as a tall and thin young adult white male who was wearing dark clothing and a dark baseball hat. The act was condemned by a number of public officials. Redmond Mayor John Marchione said:



"Acts like this aren't representative of the Redmond community, and will not be tolerated. The city works closely with MAPS leadership and our Islamic community to ensure that they and all residents feel safe in their homes, at their place of business, and where they worship. I am confident that this act does not represent the feelings of Redmond residents. Our community will continue to stand strongly in favor of diversity and inclusion, and not allow an individual act of vandalism to define us." Police said they were investigating both incidents as possible hate crimes.

In: <http://www.seattlepi.com/local/komo/article/Redmond-mosque-vandalized-for-second-time-in-a-10803707.php>, retrieved on 18.12.2016

Canada: Muslim cultural center in Canada attacked for fourth time— A fire broke out at a Muslim cultural center in Sept-iles, in Canada's Quebec Province. The center was used as a prayer room in the town with 25,000 inhabitants, which was also targeted in October by an attacker who broke into the building and vandalized the walls and bookshelves. Quebec provincial police opened an investigation into the probable arson.

In: <http://www.dailysabah.com/americas/2016/12/26/muslim-cultural-center-in-canada-attacked-for-fourth-time>, retrieved on 27.12.2016

Netherlands: Islamic centre burnt down in the Netherlands by suspected far-right arsonist as tensions continue to rise across the continent— A mosque had been destroyed by a massive fire after a suspected far-right arson attack in the Netherlands. Dramatic footage showed the moment emergency crews arrived to tackle the huge blaze at an Islamic centre in the town of Culemborg. It was suspected extreme anti-migrant thugs had torched the former public baths building, which was in the process of being converted into a hub for Muslims in the area. The building was recently bought by the Association of Islamic Communities in Culemborg. Police launched a hate crime investigation believing it might have been the target of violent skinheads.

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In: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2497073/islamic-centre-burnt-down-netherlands-suspected-far-right-arsonist-tensions-rise-across-continent/>, retrieved on 30.12.2016

South Africa: Pig's snout left at Cape Town mosque— A pig's snout and blood were placed outside the door of the Simon's Town Mosque, which was one of the oldest in South Africa. Local Muslim Community Leader, Moulana Abdul Khaliq Allie, said the community to remain compliant in hoping the authorities would bring the perpetrators to justice. Reverend Gordon Richard Oliver of the Cape Town Interfaith Initiative said they also condemned the incident, in saying: "We condemn this act in the strongest terms. We also offer our deepest concern and compassion to the Muslim community of Simon's Town. This seriously offends all that is good and noble in human kind. It offends the basic values of all religions." Police confirmed that the incident took place and that a case of crimen injuria has been



been lodged at the Simon's Town police station and the matter was being investigated.

In: <http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/western-cape/pigs-snout-left-at-cape-town-mosque-7354309>, retrieved on 9.1.2017

France: Islamophobic attack targets Muslims in eastern France— Muslim community in eastern French town of Dijon were targeted by an Islamophobic attack. The France Bleu Radio said that a pig's head was hanged on the railings of a mosque currently being constructed to make it suitable for prayer. Genlis City Mayor Vincent Dancourts confirmed the hate attack in a written statement and said that the authorities were in full solidarity with the Muslim community in the area. SOS Racism, an anti-racist movement in France, strongly condemned the attack and called on the authorities to take those responsible for the attack to justice. Dijon prosecutor's office launched an investigation under charges of ethnic hate and fueling discrimination.

In: <http://aa.com.tr/en/europe/islamophobic-attack-targets-muslims-in-eastern-france/726845>, retrieved on 14.1.2017



France: Investigation Launched After Pig Heads Hung On Site of Future Mosque— The Dijon prosecutor launched an investigation after a number of pig heads were hung on the gates of a building recently purchased by an Islamic association prior to its conversion to a place of worship. Six sawn-halves of pigs heads were discovered on the gates of the building in Genlis, a small town near Dijon, France in January 2017. Cold cuts of pork were also discovered thrown into the yard. France's *Le Figaro* reported the comments of the local Mayor, who said the Association of Socioculture and Muslim Culture of Genlis had acquired this building with the aim of making it a place of worship in the future. This announcement, made in the regional press the week before, had unleashed bad feelings". Anti-racism activist group spokeswoman Maryna Schcherbyna joined the mayor in a call for punishment, saying that "SOS Racisme... demands that justice be done". She also referred to a 2016 case in the same town where the then-mayor Georges Grossel called in a Facebook post for pork to be served in canteens. SOS Racisme demanded his resignation at the time — he was suspended from the mayoralty and fined €2,000.

In: <http://www.breitbart.com/london/2017/01/13/investigation-launched-pig-heads-hung-site-future-mosque/>, retrieved on 14.1.2017

US: Arson Attack on Essex Mosque— Police in Braintree, Essex, were seeking two men who attempted to break into the Al Falah Braintree Islamic Centre and lit a small fire at one of its entrances. The pair carried out the attack shortly after the pubs were closed, and were believed to have been intoxicated. The Centre's secretary, Sikander Sleemy, described them as two drunk guys who didn't know what they were doing and were being stupid, but Essex Police confirmed that they investigating the incident as a hate crime. Braintree Chief Inspector Craig Carrington described the attack as a "concerning but rare incident" and urged anyone who could help identify the attackers to come forward.

In: <http://www.breitbart.com/london/2017/01/13/arson-attack-essex-mosque/>, retrieved on 14.1.2017



US: Vandals smash windows, leave bacon on door handles at California mosque— A Davis mosque was the target of a hate crime in January 2017. Just before first prayer, members of the Islamic Center of Davis were greeted by destruction of five glass doors and one window, slashed tires and seats of bicycles locked up outside the mosque, and bacon over door handles. The Davis Police Department said it was a hate crime because of the bacon left behind. The incident targeting the same mosque was reported not the first time as in December 2016, a hateful and threatening letter was sent to the mosque.

In: <https://www.aol.com/article/news/2017/01/23/vandals-smash-windows-leave-bacon-on-door-handles-at-california/21660925/>, retrieved on 24.1.2017

Canada: ‘Display of hate’: Montreal mosque vandalized days after Quebec gun attack—



A mosque in Quebec was vandalized with graffiti and had its windows smashed on February 2017, the same day thousands of Canadians attended the funerals of earlier's Quebec City gun attack victims, when six people were killed and 19 injured. Police said the Khadijah Masjid Islamic Center in Montreal had been the target of vandals and were investigating the motive as a possible hate crime. Mosque Director, Ashek Ahmad said the building had been sprayed with graffiti just days before the gun attack, but did not initially believe it was particularly sinister. In response to the incident, Montreal City Councillor Craig

Sauve said in the Facebook post that the attack was an act of terrorism *"intent on inciting fear into the heart of a community, demonstrating hate and ill-will."* Local Member of Parliament Mark Miller also condemned the attack in his constituency.

In: <https://www.rt.com/news/376211-quebec-vandals-mosque-attack/>, retrieved on 3.2.2017

US: Police, FBI investigate vandalism at Columbus mosque— The Columbus chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) said that a man was caught on surveillance video vandalizing the Ahlul Bayt Islamic Center on the city's northwest side. Early morning in February 2017, while a group of people were worshiping inside, security cameras caught the man scrawling anti-Islamic graffiti on the mosque doors. CAIR wanted local law enforcement and the FBI to look into the act as a hate crime, and the FBI had stepped in to see if what was written on those doors could be considered a hate crime. Not long after the incident, the community rallied around the Islamic Center, showing their support for the mosque and the Muslim faith.

In: <http://nbc4i.com/2017/02/13/police-fbi-investigate-vandalism-at-columbus-mosque/>, retrieved on 14.2.2017

Netherlands: Turkish mosque attacked in the Netherlands— The Nebi mosque in the Dutch city of Kampen became the target of unknown attackers in February 2017. Mustafa Tozan, the mosque spokesperson, stated that assailants smashed the windows at the entrance of the building and vandalized the outer wall. The number of attacks on mosques and Turkish associations in Europe had risen rapidly over the past few years. Several European countries had witnessed a spike in Islamophobia and anti-migrant sentiment, especially after an unprecedented influx of refugees, most of whom were Syrians fleeing war and violence.

In: <https://www.dailysabah.com/europe/2017/03/01/turkish-mosque-attacked-in-the-netherlands>, retrieved on 2.3.2017

US: Lexington mosque receives bomb threat — mailed from England— A Lexington mosque was stepping up security following a bomb threat it received in February from overseas. The bomb threat against Lexington's Masjid Bilal was received through the mail from Sheffield, England, contained a green index card wrapped in a blank sheet of paper with the words, *"An explosive device will be placed at your mosque very soon!"* written on it. The letter was opened by Mosque's President Salah Elbakoush who immediately called the Lexington police who then investigated. Following the advice from the officers, the mosque staff would start a daily walk-through of its facility at 1545 Russell Cave Road. Threats against mosques had been made almost every month in other American cities since the presidential election. In late November 2016, 10 Islamic centers received letters calling Muslims 'children of Satan' and championing President Donald Trump as the 'new sheriff in town'. Similar threats were made to mosques in Maryland and Georgia in February 2017. The letter sent to the Greenview Madani Center in Lawrenceville, was from a Muslim slayer threatening *"death for you and your kind."*

In: <http://www.kentucky.com/news/local/crime/article136828668.html>, retrieved on 7.3.2017

Germany: Turkish mosque in Germany vandalized— In another instance of Turkophobia and anti-Islam attitudes running rampant in Europe, a mosque run by the local Turkish community in Bremen, Germany, was vandalized by unknown assailants in March. The suspects threw pig's ears and feet in the courtyard of the Yeni Fatih Mosque in Bremen's Bremerhaven town. The Turkish foundation that run the mosque called German police to find the perpetrator or perpetrators as soon as possible. Mosques in Germany, where anti-Muslim sentiment that had accompanied the influx of Muslim refugees had been rising, were occasionally subject to attacks, which range from Molotov cocktails to the tossing of pig's heads. A Turkish parliamentary committee investigating the targeting of mosques found some 297 attacks against mosques between 2001 and 2014, mostly targeting Turkish mosques. German police had been criticized for their failure to identify the suspects responsible for the attacks. Turks, who comprised one of the largest minorities in the country with more than 3 million people, had been frequent targets of racist attacks in the formerly Nazi-ruled Germany, especially in the 1990s. The trend of attacks targeting mosques reemerged in recent years with the rise of the far right in the country. In December, German police detained a man linked to the anti-Islamic, xenophobic group Patriotic Europeans against the Islamification of the West (PEGIDA) on suspicion of involvement in an attack targeting a Turkish mosque and an event venue in Germany's Dresden in September. The suspect was accused of throwing homemade explosives at Fatih Mosque, owned by the Turkish Islamic Union for Religious Affairs on 26 September 2016.

In: <https://www.dailysabah.com/investigations/2017/03/20/turkish-mosque-in-germany-vandalized>, retrieved on 20.3.2017



II. Political and Social Campaigns against Islam and Muslims

US: Guest pastor speaks out against Islam; protesters gather— Shahram Hadian, an Iranian-born pastor who converted from Islam to Christianity in 1999, strove to drive home his point against Islam with statistics and scripture while protesters stood in silence outside. His event at the DoubleTree Inn in Missoula, "*Unveiling the True Face of Islam: A Wake up Call for the World*," brought about 90 people to the conference room. The event was sponsored by the Lake County chapter of American Congress of Truth for America. ACT for America formed in 2007, a hate group organization established on the pretext of promoting national security and defeating terrorism. Shouts of "Amen!" filled the room as Hadian outlined his views on the dangers of Islam.



In: http://mtstandard.com/news/local/guest-pastor-speaks-out-against-islam-protesters-gather/article_cbd4bafd-2b80-5660-9ed8-32574b02e941.html, retrieved on 13.10.2016

Austria: Far-right group hangs banner on Turkish embassy in Vienna reading 'Erdogan, pull your Turks back'— Members of a far-right group hung a banner reading "*Erdogan, pull your Turks back*" over the roof of Turkish embassy in Vienna in March. Two suspects jumped over the roof from a neighbouring building, and after realizing that they were detected, the two suspects immediately fled the scene. Turkish embassy was in close touch with Austrian officials for capturing the two suspects.

In: <https://www.dailysabah.com/europe/2017/03/22/far-right-group-hangs-banner-on-turkish-embassy-in-vienna-reading-erdogan-pull-your-turks-back>, retrieved on 23.3.2017

Canada: Islamophobic posters distributed in Edmonton neighborhoods — The Alberta Muslim Public Affairs Council said that for the third time in October, three neighborhoods with large Muslim presence: Millwoods, Calder, and Evansdale had received offensive posters against their religion.

In: <http://edmonton.ctvnews.ca/mobile/islamophobic-posters-distributed-in-edmonton-neighbourhoods-1.3128062>, retrieved on 24.10.2016

III. Intolerance against Islam and its Sacred Symbols

Slovakia: Woman accused of filming herself urinating on Koran before burning it faces six years in jail— A woman who allegedly filmed herself urinating on the Koran before burning it and declaring war on Muslim faced six years in jail. The woman was identified as Sheila Szmerekova, 24, from the central Slovakian city of Ruzomberok after the video sparked outrage on social media. In the video, the woman was seen standing in front of the Slovak national flag with the Muslim holy book which she insulted, urinated on and then set alight. A Special Court in Banska Bystrica ruled she would be kept in custody before facing trial. Szmerekova was accused of creating extremist promotional materials, defamation of a nation and race and incitement of national, racial or ethnic hatred.

In: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/weird-news/woman-accused-filming-herself-urinating-9859538>, retrieved on 22.2.2017

US: Man breaks into Arizona mosque, desecrates copies of Quran— A man broke into an Arizona mosque in march 2017 and desecrated copies of the Quran. The suspect entered the mosque and ripped copies of the Quran before



throwing them on the floor. The center wrote: *"He ripped copies of the Qur'an and threw them around the prayer room before leaving the building. Thankfully no one was hurt. The Tucson Police Department are looking for him."* Surveillance footage circulated by the center showed the suspect wearing a red University of Arizona T-shirt and a baseball cap. The vandalism came on the heels of a spate of threats directed at Jewish Community Centers across the country. A month before, a group of Muslim activists started a crowdfunding campaign to help repair a

vandalized Jewish cemetery near St. Louis, Missouri, raised more than \$161,000.

In: <http://www.wjbradio.com/national-news/2017/03/15/man-breaks-into-arizona-mosque-desecrates-copies-of-quran>, retrieved on 16.3.2017

IV. Discrimination against Muslim Individuals and Communities

US: Muslim man punched on his way to sermon— Rashid Dar, a Muslim researcher in the US who was on his way to deliver Friday sermon wearing traditional attire was punched by an unknown man. He was walking along with his brother near Dupont metro station when a man approached him and punched him in the throat. Dar was donning a black overcoat often worn by imams and a hat for praying. Dar was quoted saying: *"I believe I was attacked for the way I was dressed. It is generally my habit to wear overtly Muslim clothing on my way to Friday prayer."*

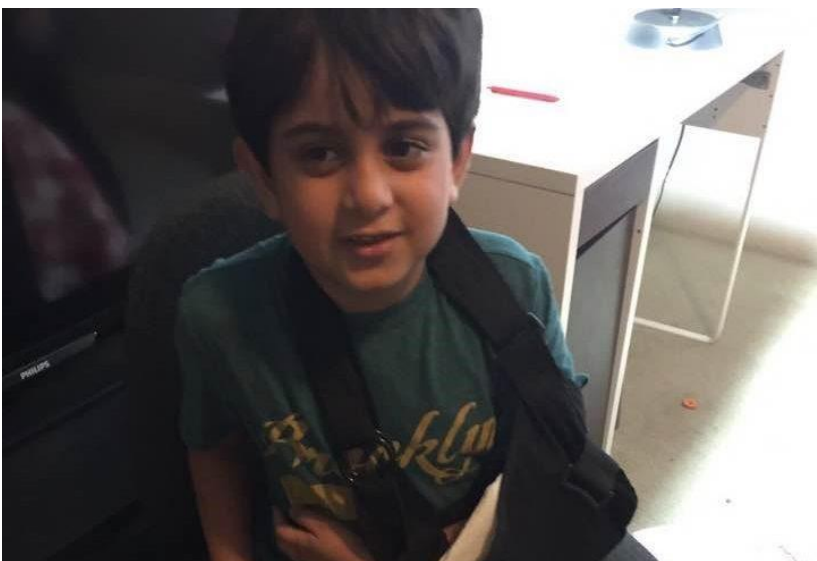
In: <http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-islamophobia-in-us-muslim-man-punched-on-his-way-to-sermon-in-the-us-2260704>, retrieved on 3.10.2016

US: Tennessee mom opposes textbook that includes Islam— A Tennessee mother was objecting to a social studies textbook used in her local school district, alleging that it promoted Islam. Speaking at a Sullivan County School Board meeting, Michelle Edmisten demanded that the district removed the textbook. Edmisten claimed that her seventh-grade

daughter's personal religious beliefs were violated with lessons about Islam. Edmisten said that her daughter, who attended Bluff City Middle School in Blountville, took zeros on the section on Islamic history after a teacher didn't allow her to opt out of the curriculum and standards and do alternative studies. Director of Schools Evelyn Rafalowski and Board of Education Chairman Michael Hughes said the system was exploring a religious accommodation option since there was no opt out allowed in Tennessee. The school board said any replacement textbook would have to meet current state standards. According to the state board of education's website, those standards included educating students about Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism in the sixth grade, and Islam in the seventh grade. The National Council for the Social Studies called the study of religions an essential part of the curriculum.

In: <http://www.ajc.com/news/national/tennessee-mom-opposes-textbook-that-includes-islam/NIBN5jMIsMJ4fDjRMJpLAJ/>, retrieved on 8.10.2016

US: This Muslim boy's family is leaving the US because of bullying—Zeeshan-ul-hassan Usmani and his family had been victims of Islamophobia in the US. Usmani's youngest son, 7-year-old Abdul Aziz was beaten and bruised at his school in Cary, North Carolina after refusing to eat non-halal food. Following the incident, Usmani wrote in a Facebook post: *"Welcome to the United States of America of Donald Trump. Meet my son Abdul Aziz. He is in grade 1, bullied and beaten by his own classmates in school bus for being a Muslim. Five classmates ganged up on the 1st grader. They taunted him about his name, and then got physical. They punched him in the face, kicked him in the stomach, and twisted his arm while calling him 'Muslim' again and again."* Usmani himself is a two-time Fulbright Scholar and an award-winning computer scientist to combat terrorism. He had developed a software that models the damage of suicide bombings. He fought terrorism for a living, and this was how his family got repaid for it. This was not the first time Usmani's family faced prejudice. His two other boys were also victims of bullying. The classmates called their father a terrorist for having a beard. The family's neighbor had a history of harassing them with racial slurs and threatening Usmani's wife.



In: http://stepfeed.com/more-categories/big-news/this-muslim-boys-family-is-leaving-america-because-islamophobia/#.WBXqN_I96M8, retrieved on 14.10.2016

US: Islamophobic hate note left at Dundalk family's home —The Council on American-Islamic Relations, called on state and federal law enforcement authorities to investigate a note left at the family's Dundalk home of a family of Iraqi Muslim refugees. CAIR said the hate message, left on the door of the family's home, said, *"Terrorist, Leave, No one wants you here, Your kind is a disgrace, 9/11 was your fault."* The message also included a crude drawing of a Muslim woman wearing a head scarf and holding a bomb, with the comment, *"Take that off your head."* The victim's father, who's family recently found refuge in the US and speaks very little English, said he's worried about his family's safety after his 11-year-old daughter received the note.

In: <http://www.wbalv.com/article/islamophobic-hate-note-left-at-dundalk-familys-home/7025809>, retrieved on 22.10.2016

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.

In: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/18/far-right-group-attacks-refugee-camp-greek-island-chios>, retrieved on 19.11.2016

US: First US Somali lawmaker gets 'Islamophobic threats' in taxi— The first Somali-American lawmaker in the US said she was subjected to hateful anti-Muslim threats from a taxi driver in Washington DC. Minnesota Representative-elect Ilhan Omar said the cabbie threatened to remove her hijab during a confrontation. She wrote in a social media post: *"On my way to our hotel, I got in a cab and became subjected to the most hateful, derogatory, Islamophobic, sexist taunts and threats I have ever experienced.....The cabdriver called me ISIS and threatened to remove my hijab, I really wasn't sure how this encounter would end as I attempted to rush out of his cab and retrieve my belongings. I am still shaken by this incident and can't wrap my head around how bold are becoming in displaying their hate toward Muslims. I pray for his humanity and for all those who harbor hate in their hearts."* The 34-year-old said the incident occurred just after she attended policy training at the White House. Ms Omar came to the US from a refugee camp in Kenya as a child. She made history and national headlines in November when she defeated a Republican to gain a seat in Minnesota's state house of representatives. Minnesota has the nation's largest Somali community - about 50,000, according to the US Census.

In: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-38245278>, retrieved on 9.12.2016

US: Women's March Organizer Targeted by Vicious Islamophobic Attacks Online— Since the day of Women's March on Washington, right-wing and anti-Muslim sites had launched a vicious attack on a Muslim organizer of the



protest, Linda Sarsour, baselessly accusing her of supporting terrorism." Days since the Washington protest — where Sarsour delivered a powerful five-minute speech to a crowd of half a million people — The Daily Caller, FrontPageMag, The American Thinker and The Gateway Pundit, plus a slew of anti-Muslim hate sites, published disparaging articles about Sarsour. The Gateway Pundit, which claimed to have received White House press credentials from the Trump administration, published a 2015 picture of Sarsour holding up her index finger. In the Gateway Pundit's head-scratching estimation, this photo somehow showed Sarsour "flashing the ISIS sign." Other sites deployed Islamophobic tactics in trying to

discredit Sarsour, claiming she was connected to terrorist groups, that she supported the spread of Sharia in the US and by equating her criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism. In response, Sarsour said in a statement: *"It's a shame that the alt-right would spend their time putting out falsehood and discrediting a proven effective activist and leader."* Sarsour, a Palestinian-American, was the director of the Arab American Association of New York, a member of the

police reform group the Justice League, and the 2012 recipient of a Champion of Change award from President Barack Obama. She was a vocal supporter of Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders.

In: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/linda-sarsour-womens-march-attacked-online_us_58865134e4b0e3a7356adb2, retrieved on 25.1.2017

V. Incidents Related to Hijab

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.

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: Three white men attack Muslim teenager in New York train, try to rip off her hijab— An 18-year-old Muslim woman was attacked in a subway train in New York by three White men, who screamed “*Donald Trump*” at her and tried to rip her hijab off her head, all the while screaming obscenities and slurs at her, including telling her to get out of the country. The young Muslim woman was standing on an uptown 6 platform at the 23rd Street and Park Avenue stop at about 10 pm when the trio of drunks allegedly started yelling at her. They followed her as she then boarded a train. In another incident which smacked of a hate crime, a 20-year-old NYU student came across a message saying black people “*must burn*” using a hateful term. Police said there had been 34 reported incidents since 8 November 2016.

In: <https://www.americanbazaaronline.com/2016/12/02/three-white-men-attack-muslim-teenager-new-york-train-try-rip-off-hijab/>, retrieved on 03.12.2016

UK: Muslim woman wearing headscarf ‘spat on and abused by racist thug’ in London chip shop— A woman wearing a hijab was assaulted and spat at by a racist thug in London. Nahella Ashraf from Manchester was attending a business conference in the capital city when she was allegedly approached and attacked by a stranger. She was on her lunch break at a nearby fish and chip shop with colleagues when a man grabbed her by the arm and tried to throw her out telling her she shouldn't be there. While one of her companions and a staff member tried to push the man out of the way asking him what his problem was, the man apparently replied: “People like her, they kill.” As the man was escorted out, he allegedly spat in Nahella's face. Police were investigating the alleged assault which happened in Hammermith.

In: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2613093/muslim-woman-wearing-headscarf-spat-on-and-abused-by-racist-thug-in-london-chip-shop/>, retrieved on 15.1.2017

Germany: Turkish woman in Germany targeted in racist attack for wearing headscarf— A Turkish woman was physically and verbally attacked by a racist man for wearing a headscarf in the German city of Mannheim in March. The 33-year-old woman was walking on the road along with her three-year-old child when Wolfgang, a German neighbor who lived in the same building, approached her holding a mobile phone to her face. When the woman reacted and asked why the man was taking her picture, Wolfgang landed a punch on the woman's face. As she staggered and fell, the man kept kicking her. The woman told that the man had been harassing women wearing headscarves for the past six months, taking photos of women he came across and making weird sounds as well as spitting on the ground. While

a police officer on patrol duty detained the assailant, he was reportedly set free shortly after. The victim said she lived in fear as the assailant, who she recorded shouting "*Just wait and see what else will happen to you.*"

In: <https://www.dailysabah.com/islamophobia/2017/04/01/turkish-woman-in-germany-targeted-in-racist-attack-for-wearing-headscarf>, retrieved on 2.4.2017