



DIALOGUE & OUTREACH Department

OIC Islamophobia Observatory

Monthly Bulletin – August 2017

MANIFESTATIONS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA:

A. In the United States and Canada:

US: 3 dead, dozens injured, amid violent white nationalist rally in Virginia— A car rammed into a crowd of protesters and a state police helicopter crashed into the woods as tension boiled over at a white supremacist rally. The violent day left three dead, dozens injured and this usually quiet college town a bloodied symbol of the nation's roiling racial and political divisions. The chaos erupted around what was believed to be the largest group of white nationalists to come together in a decade — including neo-Nazis, skinheads, members of the Ku Klux Klan — who descended on the city to "take America back" by rallying against plans to remove a Confederate statue. Hundreds came to protest against the racism. There were street brawls and violent clashes; the governor declared a state of emergency, police in riot gear ordered people out and helicopters circled overhead. City Mayor Jim Gray said on Twitter: "*Today's events in Virginia remind us that we must bring our country together by condemning violence, white supremacists and Nazi hate groups. We cannot let them define our future.*"

See: Chicago Tribune News' entry, in: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-unite-the-right-charlottesville-20170812-story.html>, retrieved on 14.8.2017

US: Attacks on Muslims on the rise: report— The Council on American Islamic Relations' 2017 civil rights report, 'The Empowerment of Hate', found there was a 57 percent increase in anti-Muslim bias incidents since 2015, and a 44 percent increase in hate crimes against Muslims during the same period. Harassment, which the group defined as a non-violent or non-threatening bias incident, was the most frequent type of abuse, accounting for 18 percent of the total cases recorded in the report. The trigger for most of the incidents was the victim's ethnicity or national origin, accounting for 35 percent of all cases, and 16 percent were the result of women wearing headscarfs, and the majority of the cases took place in a residence or home.

See: Queens Chronicle News' entry, in: http://www.qchron.com/editions/queenswide/attacks-on-muslims-on-the-rise-report/article_22b75ea4-3e99-5a71-8bb9-e6bdce9ce685.html, retrieved on 18.8.2017

B. In Europe:

UK: Bradford Muslims receive acid attack threat— Muslim residents in a city in northwestern England received letters containing threats of acid attacks, amid the rising rate of hate crimes in the UK, particularly after terrorist attacks in London and Manchester. West Yorkshire police was taking the threats in Bradford seriously and increased surveillance in the predominantly-Muslim city. A police spokesperson said. "*A thorough investigation has been launched and officers are working with the local community and partners to identify and prosecute those responsible for this despicable crime.*" The British counter-terrorism police had also been conducting an investigation into a separate campaign of hate mail and suspicious packages sent to mosques in the United Kingdom and the United States. The letters contained offensive material and threats, saying the sender would be visiting the mosques.

See: PressTV News' entry, in: <http://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2017/08/30/533400/Muslims-Bradford-hate-crimes-acid-attacks>, retrieved on 1.9.2017

Europe: Populism invading Europe, says study— A new study indicated that Populism had now surpassed liberalism in European politics. The anti-establishment ideologies had apparently succeeded in taking over the desperate hearts of European voters who placed their faith in the hands of those who promise total change, despite the fact that authoritarian governments rarely existed in Europe since 1980s. Today, the trend showed European Union member states had a tendency to be led by anti-establishment governments, as we had recently witnessed the infamous Brexit in the UK, as well as Geert Wilders' Party for Freedom in the Netherlands and Marine Le Pen's Front National in France were coming close to victory in their respective general elections. The signs were confirmed out by a recent study published by Swedish think tank TIMRBO and the European Policy Information Center, in a document so-called Authoritarian Populism Index 2017 indicating that conservatism and social democracy continued to be the first two ideological preferences by European voters, but authoritarian-populism had now moved past liberalism and become the third choice. In addition, Populist parties feeling the support in Europe as one fifth of European voters, or 55.8 million people, casted a vote in favor of a populist party in the latest general elections. The report mentioned that while left-wing populism had emerged strongly in the last decade, right-wing populism witnessed a constant growth over the last 30 years and remained the favorite of the two.

See: BlastingNews News' entry, in: <http://us.blastingnews.com/world/2017/08/populism-invading-europe-says-study-001893829.html>, retrieved on 2.8.2017

UK: Man threatens to blow up Islamic bookshop and 'kill the Muslims' in London— A man had been sentenced for threatening to blow up an Islamic bookshop in London and "*kill all the Muslims*". David Moffatt pleaded guilty to religiously aggravated intentional harassment, alarm and distress at Willesden Magistrates' Court.

See: The Independent.co.uk News' entry, in: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/islamic-book-shop-bomb-plot-david-moffatt-catholic-kill-all-muslims-london-cricklewood-broadway-a7874506.html>, retrieved on 4.8.2017

France: Muslim woman wearing burkini kicked out of pool in France, told to pay cleaning fees— A Muslim woman wearing a Burkini who went to a community pool in Marseille, France was told to leave the pool and paid fees to clean the facilities. The woman, identified as Fadila, reportedly went to the pool with her family on 21 July, and while she was swimming, pool officials told everyone to leave it and asked Fadila's husband to stop his wife from swimming, claiming that her swimsuit was not hygienic. The official also told the Muslim family that they would have to pay €490 for emptying and cleaning the pool, but the latter refused to do so. The Muslim woman told French non-governmental organization United Against Islamophobia in France (CCIF) that she was extremely disappointed about what happened. France and Belgium had both banned Burqa and Niqab in public, while French beach resorts sparked international controversy recently with local bans on the full-body Burkini swimsuit. In 2016, Cannes became the first city to outlaw Burkinis and other French resorts brought similar measures. However, the country's highest administrative court overturned the ban for violating fundamental freedoms.

See: Daily Sabah News' entry, in: <https://www.dailysabah.com/islamophobia/2017/08/07/muslim-woman-wearing-burkini-kicked-out-of-pool-in-france-told-to-pay-cleaning-fees>, retrieved on 8.8.2017

UK: UK restaurant refuses service to actress Nadia Jamil, father due to 'his beard'— An Italian restaurant in Cambridge, UK had refused service of Pakistani actress and philanthropist Nadia Jamil and her father. Nadia took to the micro blogging site Twitter to express her shock and outrage at the incident which she attributed to blatant racism. She wrote that Italian restaurant in Main Market Square refused service to her father and her. Pointing out the fact that her father had a beard and she was brown, she claimed that it was a racist refusal of service. However, the restaurant denied Jamil's claims of refusal of service on the basis of religious prejudice and racial profiling. The Twitter handle of the restaurant denied there was any directive from management to deny people entry based on their race. Enraged by the restaurant's lack of remorse, Jamil further clarified how she was refused service and then asked to leave.

See: The Nation News' entry, in: <http://nation.com.pk/national/22-Aug-2017/uk-restaurant-refuses-service-to-actress-nadia-jamil-father>, retrieved on 23.8.2017

France: France's Charlie Hebdo publishes provocative Islam cartoon— French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo again published a provocative front-page cartoon about Islam and the recent terror attacks in Spain,

leading to criticism that it risked fanning Islamophobia. The latest edition of the magazine, which was targeted by Islamist gunmen in 2015, showed two people lying in a pool of blood having been run over by a van next to the words "Islam, eternal religion of peace." As the cartoon became one of the top trending topics on Twitter in France, prominent Socialist MP and former minister Stephane Le Foll called it "extremely dangerous". See: i24NewsTV News' entry, in: <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/international/europe/153679-170823-france-s-charlie-hebdo-publishes-provocative-islam-cartoon>, retrieved on 24.8.2017

UK: Muslims targeted in pig's head incident— Police in Newtownards were investigating two incidents targeting Muslims in the town, that a pig's head had been placed on a doorstep and graffiti painted on a wall of a building which is a venue used by the Muslim community. Later on the same night, graffiti had been painted on a wall in the Castle Street area, and was made reference to Muslims. Both incidents were treated as hate crimes.

See: Newsletter.co.uk News' entry, in: <http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/muslims-targeted-in-pig-s-head-incident-1-8119740>, retrieved on 25.8.2017

Italy: Mayor promises anyone who shouts 'Allahu Akbar' in Venice will be gunned down— The Italian city's mayor has ordered Cops in Venice to target anyone shouting "Allahu Akbar", Arabic for God is Greater. Luigi Brugnaro, mayor of the tourist hot spot of Venice, revealed the order at a summer think tank and was applauded by delegates. He said: "Anyone who shouts Allahu Akbar in St Mark's Square can expect to be gunned down by snipers within four paces. They said they wanted to go and meet Allah so we will send them straight to Allah without having to throw them off the bridge, we will just shoot them."

See: The Sun News' entry, in: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/4308989/venice-mayor-terror-attack-warning/>, retrieved on 26.8.2017

C. In the Rest of the World

Australia: 'Say no to the Burqa': Flyers are being distributed around western Sydney banning Muslim women from wearing Islamic clothing— Islamophobic flyers were posted around the city of Penrith read: "Say no to the Burqa", claiming to be from the local council. It also said: "For reasons of security no person with any form of facial covering should be allowed to enter or be served in Penrith. Save our values, save our laws." The council was aware of the flyers and strongly denied any links.

See: Dailymail.co.uk News' entry, in: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4745574/Flyers-Penrith-want-ban-Muslim-women-wearing-burqas.html>, retrieved on 1.8.2017

POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS:

A. In the United States and Canada:

US: Minnesota Governor Calls Mosque Attack a 'Criminal Act of Terrorism'— The governor of Minnesota, Mark Dayton, denounced an attack on a mosque as a "terrible, dastardly, cowardly" act of terrorism. He said during a visit to Dar Al Farooq mosque, in Bloomington: "It's an act of terrorism, a criminal act of terrorism. I hope and pray that the perpetrator will be caught and prosecuted to the full extent of the law." The explosion, which the FBI said was caused by an improvised explosive device, rocked the mosque in August as congregants began to gather for prayers. No one was injured, but the building sustained damage close to the site of the explosion.



See: The New York Times News' entry, in: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/07/us/minnesota-mosque-explosion.html>, retrieved on 8.8.2017

US: Judge refuses to order Congress to outlaw parts of the Koran or issue an official federally edited Koran— On 17 February 2017, Plaintiff Ross Levay filed a complaint alleging that the United States and various government officials had committed gross negligence, breach of contract, First Amendment violations, and breach of oath by failing to prevent incitement to imminent lawlessness by Radical Islamic Terrorists. On 11 July 2017, the Court concluded that Levay's suit was frivolous and would be dismissed. On 21 July 2017, Levay filed a Motion to Amend Judgment, asking, among other things, that the court amend the previous order to remove the holding that the suit is frivolous. In his complaint, Levay explained that *"there have been a high and increasing number of Islamic motivated violent acts targeting Jews and our places of worship."* Levay was a Jew and contends that the incitement to imminent violence found in the Quran and cited by ISIS, Al Qaeda and others has deprived Levay of the freedom of religious expression. Levay provided an extensive list of requested relief. He wished the Court to hold that *"specific Koranic verses, presented during the trial, fail the Imminent Lawlessness Test."* He also intended to prove a direct link to specific Koranic verses extolling among specific Radical Islamic Terrorists as the underlying motive, cause and essential for 74 specific Radical Islamic Terrorist attacks within the US. He desired a formal declaration of incompatibility between Koranic Sharia Law ... and US Constitutional Law. He also asked that the Court direct Congress to take action by outlawing certain passages of the Quran, issue a federally sanctioned and edited Koran, and withdraw tax-exempt status from mosques which do not adopt the new Quran, and institute a National Islamic Registry Program. The Court found that Levay's suit was frivolous and his legal theory was manifestly foreclosed by settled law. As such, no appeal could be taken in good faith.

See: The Washington Post News' entry, in: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2017/08/18/judge-refuses-to-order-congress-to-outlaw-parts-of-the-koran-or-issue-an-official-federally-edited-koran/?utm_term=.a6a36b22c212, retrieved on 19.8.2017

US: Virginia governor urges people to avoid far right rally— Virginia's governor, Terry McAuliffe, urged people to stay away from a planned rally of far right and white supremacist groups in the university town of Charlottesville. The National Guard had been put on alert because of the risk of violence during the so-called "Unite the Right" rally while counter demonstrators were also expected. Thousands of white nationalists, including supporters of the Ku Klux Klan white supremacist group, and anti-fascist activists were expected to turn out in Charlottesville, a sleepy town planning to remove a statue of General Robert E. Lee, who led Confederate forces in the US Civil War.

See: Enca.com News' entry, in: <https://www.enca.com/world/virginia-governor-urges-people-to-avoid-far-right-rally>, retrieved on 13.8.2017

US: Steve Bannon Is Leaving the White House— Stephen Bannon, the former Breitbart News chairman who helped Donald Trump win the election and served as the West Wing's resident nationalist ideologue, was leaving the White House. Trump had told senior aides that he had made the decision to remove his embattled chief strategist, and was later reported that Bannon had already resigned.

See: Vanity Fair News' entry, in: <https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2017/08/steve-bannon-leaving-white-house>, retrieved on 19.8.2017



US: Thousands take to streets to protest against far-right 'free speech' rally — Tens of thousands of people took to the streets of Boston to protest a "free speech" rally featuring far-right speakers a week after a woman was killed at a Virginia white-supremacist demonstration. Rally organisers invited several far-right speakers who were confined to a small pen that police set up in the historic Boston Common park to keep the two sides separate. The city avoided a repeat of bloody street battles in Charlottesville, Virginia, where one woman was killed. Police estimated that as many as 40,000 people packed into the streets around the nation's oldest park.

See: First Post News' entry, in: <http://www.firstpost.com/world/boston-thousands-take-to-streets-to-protest-against-far-right-free-speech-rally-3951177.html>, retrieved on 21.8.2017

US: Nearly 2,600 advertisers have pulled advertising from the far-right website— More than 2,500 advertisers had reportedly stopped advertising on right-wing news website Breitbart News in recent months, underscoring the swelling power of a grassroots campaign to boycott the platform, especially amid escalating political tensions in the US. According to a tweet by Sleeping Giants, a campaign group aiming to pressure companies into cutting ties with media they deem to be racist or sexist, the number of advertisers that had ceased advertising was climbing towards 2,600. Breitbart gained prominence as a deeply divisive mouthpiece for many supporters of US President Donald Trump ahead of last year's election. In February, Milo Yiannopoulos, a senior editor and well known figurehead for the site, was forced to resign his position after remarks surfaced in which he seemed to condone paedophilia. Recently Steve Bannon, known for his nationalist views, returned to head up the site. He had been executive chairman until August last year before taking a leave of absence to serve as chief strategist to Mr Trump. Mr Bannon was the force behind some of Mr Trump's most contentious policies, including the travel ban on people from a number of Muslim-majority countries. He left the White House last week. Amid the advertiser exodus, Sleeping Giants had repeatedly urged e-retail giant Amazon to cut advertising ties with Breitbart, a move that many of the company's employees appear to support. In April 2017, nearly 600 people at the Seattle-based organisation reportedly signed an email sent to chief executive Jeff Bezos and senior vice president Jeff Blackburn with the heading: "Amazon Must Stop Advertising on Breitbart News".



See: Independent.co.uk News' entry, in: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/breitbart-news-latest-advertising-companies-pull-business-far-right-white-supremacist-nationalist-a7904041.html>, retrieved on 22.8.2017

US: 'No Hate, No Fear': Large Protests in Berkeley Against Far-Right Rally — Protests against a far-right rally in Berkeley had drawn more than 3,000 people, with the atmosphere moving from festive to tense as the day wore on. Marchers and anti-fascists gathered at Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Center Park, where a large police presence was on scene and many of them have donned riot gear and gas masks. Many parts of Berkeley were filled with people protesting the far right. At the corner of Center and Oxford streets, people chanted, "No hate, no fear, Nazis get out of here" and "When immigrants are under attack, what do we do? Stand up, fight back." The protests came a day after thousands turned out to demonstrate against a far-right rally in San Francisco.

See: KQED News' entry, in: <https://www.kqed.org/news/2017/08/27/no-hate-no-fear-large-protests-in-berkeley-against-far-right-rally/>, retrieved on 28.8.2017

ON BURQAH AND VEIL RELATED ISSUES:

Australia: Two-thirds of Australians are 'uncomfortable with women wearing burqas' - as it's revealed even Muslims have a problem with face coverings— A study by RMIT University showed that two-thirds of Australians living in poorer suburbs were uncomfortable with women wearing burqas. The sample was taken among people in Broadmeadows and Fawkner, in Melbourne's north, found high levels of discomfort with burqas, with two-thirds of non-Muslims surveyed expressing concerns about Muslim women wearing face coverings. The study also found that even Muslims were uneasy about burqas, with 28 per cent of them saying they were uncomfortable, as Burqas and niqabs were seen as forms of clothing that 'precluded inter-ethnic communication'. On the individual level, respondents with lower socio-economic status and older respondents tended to be more Islamophobic, which confirms findings of other Australian and overseas studies. The study was done with help from the Islamic Council of Victoria and Moreland City Council.

See: Dailymail.co.uk News' entry, in: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4788608/Two-thirds-Australians-uncomfortable-burqas.html>, retrieved on 15.8.2017

Australia: Politician wears burqa in parliament in bid to ban them— Australian far-right senator Pauline Hanson wore a burqa to parliament as part of her campaign to ban the all-enveloping garment worn by some Muslim women, drawing a quick rebuke from the government and Muslims. Hanson sat in her seat in the assembly for about 20 minutes covered by the black burqa before removing it to call for them to be banned in public for national security reasons. Hanson, who first rose to prominence in the 1990s because of her strident opposition to immigration from Asia and to asylum seekers, had in recent years campaigned against Islamic clothing and the building of mosques.

See: New York Post News' entry, in <http://nypost.com/2017/08/17/politician-wears-burqa-in-parliament-in-bid-to-ban-them/>, retrieved on 18.8.2017

Canada: Montreal Opposes Law That Forces Muslim Women to Remove Burqas— Around 4,000 people took part in a protest against a far-right anti-immigration demonstration in the Canadian city of Vancouver. The rival demonstrations ended without violence with police escorting several far-right protesters away from the crowd.

See: Sputnik International News' entry, in: <https://sputniknews.com/world/201708201056616396-vancouver-far-right-rally-protest/>, retrieved on 21.8.2017

ON DIALOGUE:

UK: Multi-faith group condemns planned anti-Islam rally in London— Backlash against a planned anti-Islam rally continued to grow and now an interfaith group was adding its voice to the mix. The Centre for Jewish-Catholic-Muslim Learning based out of King's University College released a statement saying that "when one of us is being marginalized or threatened, we are all marginalized and threatened." Michael Bechard, Chair of the centre said: "As a centre, we thought that we could make a very strong statement to indicate that we have no time or tolerance for any forms of bigotry in our community. We ask that other people of faith – and really all folks of good will – stand together with us to make sure that London is a safe place for all of God's people."

See: Global News' entry, in: <https://globalnews.ca/news/3693904/multi-faith-group-condemns-planned-anti-islam-rally-in-london/>, retrieved on 25.8.2017

Vatican: Pope laments "persecutions" of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar— Pope Francis was decrying persecution of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar and praying they received full rights. The pontiff said there was "*sad news about the persecution of the religious minority of our Rohingya brothers,*" as thousands of Rohingya were trying to flee into Bangladesh after escalated deadly violence at home. Francis asked the faithful in St. Peter's Square to pray that God "*saves them*" and they received help. A Myanmar bishop recently said Francis would most likely visit Myanmar.

See: The Seattle Times News' entry, in: <https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/pope-laments-persecutions-of-rohingya-muslims-in-myanmar/>, retrieved on 28.8.2017

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