



**DIALOGUE & OUTREACH Department**

**OIC Islamophobia Observatory**

**Monthly Bulletin – February 2017**

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**MANIFESTATIONS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA:**

**A. In the United States and Canada:**

**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.

RT News’ entry, in: <https://www.rt.com/news/376211-quebec-vandals-mosque-attack/>, retrieved on 3.2.2017

**Canada: Quebec's growing far right fringe faces scrutiny after the mosque attack**— In the days following the Quebec City mosque attack, Quebec police reported a spike in Islamophobic hate crimes in the province. According to Statistics Canada, hate crimes against Muslims were on the rise nation-wide, with roughly one-third of the incidents occurring in Quebec. 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.

CBC News’ entry, 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

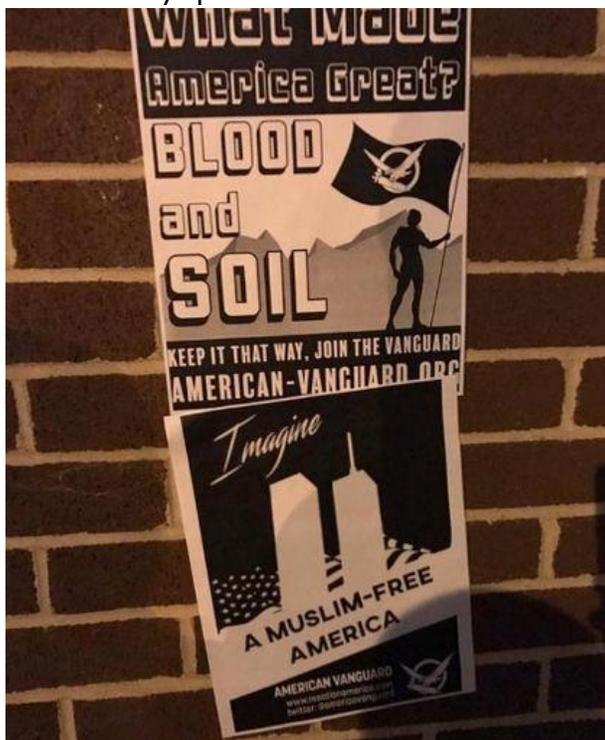
**US: Police, FBI investigate vandalism at Columbus mosque**— The Columbus chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) said that a man was caught on surveillance video vandalizing the Ahlul Bayt Islamic Center on the city’s northwest side. Early morning in February 2017, while a group of people were worshipping 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.

NBC4i News' entry, in: <http://nbc4i.com/2017/02/13/police-fbi-investigate-vandalism-at-columbus-mosque/>, retrieved on 14.2.2017

**Canada: Police investigate anti-Muslim flier at Louisiana mosque**— 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.

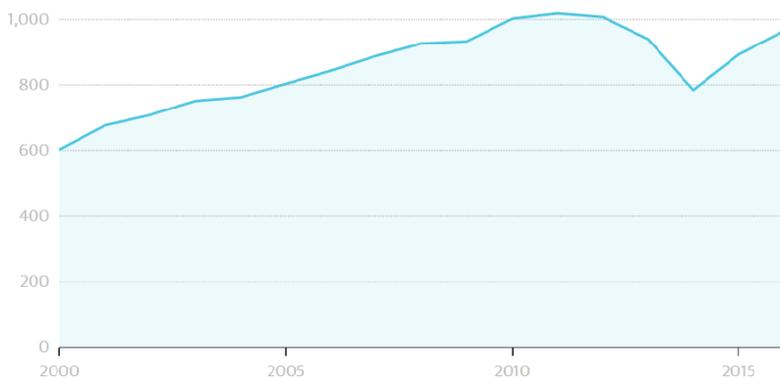
Toronto Sun News' entry, in: <http://www.torontosun.com/2017/02/15/police-investigate-anti-muslim-flier-at-louisiana-mosque>, retrieved on 16.2.2017



**US: Anti-Muslim hate groups nearly triple in US since last year, report finds**— The number of organized anti-Muslim hate groups in America nearly tripled since 2016, from 34 to more than 100, according to a report from the Southern Poverty Law Center, a left-leaning non-profit that tracks extremist groups. 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 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 lead author of the, 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

**Hate groups, 2000-2016**



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

The Guardian News' entry, in: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/feb/15/anti-muslim-hate-groups-increase-far-right-neo-nazis>, retrieved on 16.2.2017

**US: Workplace Discrimination against Muslims**— Anti-Muslim sentiment has translated into a serious issue of anti-Muslim discrimination in the workplace 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. Since 2002, Muslims continued to make up a disproportionate amount of the commission's religion-based discrimination charges, hovering over 20%. While in office, President Obama spoke out against Muslim discrimination on several occasions. In July 2016 for instance, seen as a response to the growing anti-Muslim rhetoric of then candidate Trump's campaign, President Obama called discriminatory policies against Muslims an insult to the "values that already make our nation great." The EEOC looked poised to further took on discrimination against Muslims in the workplace under President Obama. In September 2016, the commission adopted its strategic enforcement plan for 2017 to 2021. Among other things, the plan added the emerging issue of anti-Muslim discrimination to its list of priorities. Specifically, the plan called for a focus on "backlash discrimination against those who are Muslim or Sikh, or persons of Arab, Middle Eastern or South Asian descent, as well as persons perceived to be members of these groups, as tragic events in the United States and abroad have increased the likelihood of discrimination against these communities." It was not clear how anti-Muslim workplace discrimination would evolve under President Trump's administration. The President appointed Commissioner Victoria Lipnic as the acting chair of the EEOC shortly after taking office. Lipnic, a Republican, voted against the strategic enforcement plan that called for an increased focus on discrimination against Muslims and was expected to move the commission in a conservative direction. Further, there was no indication that the President's closest advisors plan on making discrimination against Muslims in the workplace a priority, as many of them had a history of criticizing Islam as a whole, a religion of roughly 1.6 billion people. Michael Flynn, President Trump's now former National Security Adviser, used to say: "Islam is not necessarily a religion but a political system that has a religious doctrine behind it." While acknowledging that Islam was indeed a religion, Steve Bannon, the President's Chief Strategist, said it was not one of peace but one of submission. President Trump himself had used extremely hostile rhetoric in reference to Muslims. In addition to being open to a registry of Muslims in America, the President 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.

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

**US: People want South Carolina schools to stop using textbooks that teach Islam to students**— South Carolina 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. Ryan Brown, the spokesperson for South Carolina's education department said: "It's the current political climate, but we can certainly understand parents being concerned. ... With some of the rhetoric that has been going on in the news, they're thinking about those types of things." 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.

Mic.com News' entry, 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

**Canada: Protesters outside Masjid Toronto call for ban on Islam as Muslims pray inside**— 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. Mohamed Abdi, a member of the



mosque, said it was the first time he had seen such a strong backlash against his religion. Mayor John Tory and city councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam sent tweets condemning the protest.

CBC News' entry, in: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/anti-muslim-protest-masjid-toronto-1.3988906>, retrieved on 18.2.2017

**US: Bill Maher's outrageous statements about Islam and Muslims are beyond the pale**— 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.

Salon News' entry, in: [http://www.salon.com/2017/02/23/bill-maher-bigtime-bigot-his-outrageous-statements-about-islam-and-muslims-are-beyond-the-pale\\_partner/](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

**US: Anti-Muslim Hate Crimes are Spiking in the US Donald Trump Won't Speak Up**— Since Trump entered the White House, mosques had been vandalized and even set on fire, a prominent Muslim civil rights leader had been threatened with physical assault, and Muslim university students had been targeted with racist fliers and propaganda. Such an Islamophobia was nothing new, 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 are safe. Corey Saylor, a leader at the Council on American-Islamic Relations, said that this 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 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.

The Huffington Post News' entry, in: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-islamophobia-anti-semitism\\_us\\_58b08debe4b0780bac2938b4](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-islamophobia-anti-semitism_us_58b08debe4b0780bac2938b4), retrieved on 28.2.2017

## **B. In Europe:**

**France: France's far-right leader Le Pen applauds Trump's travel ban**— Marine Le Pen 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.

KPAX.com News' entry, in: <http://www.kpax.com/story/34399549/frances-far-right-leader-le-pen-applauds-trumps-travel-ban>, retrieved on 2.2.2017

**France: France's far-right party says it could replicate Trump's ban if Le Pen is elected**— 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 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.

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette News' entry, 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

**Europe: Most Europeans Want Immigration Ban from Muslim-Majority Countries, Poll Reveals**— A majority of Europeans wanted a ban on immigration from Muslim-majority countries, a poll had revealed. 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.

Red Ice TV News' entry, in: <https://redice.tv/news/most-europeans-want-immigration-ban-from-muslim-majority-countries-poll-reveals>, retrieved on 9.2.2017

**France: French far-right candidate Le Pen's plan: "Made in France"**— 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. 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 euro currency, European Union or open borders, and no more second chances for foreigners under surveillance as suspected potential terrorists expelled.



The Big Story News' entry, in: <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/platform-french-far-right-candidate-made-france>, retrieved on 5.2.2017

**Netherlands: Geert Wilders promises to 'de-Islamise' the Netherlands**— Far-right Dutch MP 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'.

Sbynews.blogspot.com News' entry, in: <http://sbynews.blogspot.com/2017/02/geert-wilders-promises-to-de-islamise.html>, retrieved on 15.2.2017

**Slovakia: Woman films herself urinating on Koran before setting it on fire**— 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 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.

Metro.co.uk News' entry, 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

**Netherlands: Dutch politician Geert Wilders claims 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.

International Business Times News' entry, in: <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/dutch-politician-geert-wilders-claims-islam-more-dangerous-nazism-1606492>, retrieved on 15.2.2017

**France: French fears as far-right Le Pen leads presidential polls**— Far-right Marine Le Pen was ahead in the polls as campaigning heated up before the first round of the French Presidential election on April 23. 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 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.

Yahoo News' entry, in: <https://uk.news.yahoo.com/french-fears-far-le-pen-173138956.html>, retrieved on 17.2.2017

**Netherlands: Populist Leader Geert Wilders Calls Moroccan Immigrants 'Scum'**— The Dutch populist leader 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.

Morocco World News' entry, in: <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2017/02/208744/netherlands-populist-leader-geert-wilders-calls-moroccan-immigrants-scum/>, retrieved on 20.2.2017

**Hungary: Hungarian Mayor seeks to ban Muslims and gay people from his village**— The mayor of a village in Hungary had said that Muslims were not welcome, despite a need to fill houses in the area. Laszlo Toroczkai, 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.*"

Independent.co.uk News' entry, 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

**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.

Mirror.co.uk News' entry, in: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/weird-news/woman-accused-filming-herself-urinating-9859538>, retrieved on 22.2.2017

**Netherlands: Geert Wilders: Far-right Dutch PM front runner says 'Islam and freedom are not compatible'**— Politician 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 '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."*

Independent.co.uk News' entry, 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

**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.

Daily Sabah Europe News' entry, in: <https://www.dailysabah.com/europe/2017/03/01/turkish-mosque-attacked-in-the-netherlands>, retrieved on 2.3.2017

**Netherlands: Geert Wilders: Islam Is Not a Religion, It's a Totalitarian Ideology**— Geert Wilders stated that Islam was a totalitarian ideology, not a religion, and therefore 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; 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.



BlueWhite News' entry, 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

## C. Rest of the World:

**Australia: Muslim Activist Schools Senator Jacqui Lambie on the Definition Of Islam**— Founder of Youth without Borders, Yassmin Abdel-Magied, and Senator Jacqui Lambie majorly clashed heads when the discussion turned towards migration, specifically the idea of deporting Muslims who support Sharia Law. Lambie started voicing her support for looking after people within Australia first and helping those who live under the poverty line. The host Tony Jones questioned about whether she supported a Trump-like migration law on Muslims for Australia that really set the pair off. Lambie answered: "Yep, *that's right. Anybody who supports Sharia Law should be deported,*" before Abdel-Magied interrupted by asking pointedly "Do you know what that is? Me praying 5 times a day is Sharia." Abdel-Magied - who was the 2015 Queensland Young Australian of the Year - managed to find her cool again that the discussion regained some order and then, she schooled Lambie on the definition of Islam. She said: "My frustration is that people talk about Islam without knowing anything about it. They're willing to completely negate any of my rights as a human being, as a woman, as a person with agency, simply because they have an idea about what my faith is about." While Lambie did have one last thing to say, it was Abdel-Magied who was gifted the last word of the argument. Lambie said: "We have one law in this country and it is the Australian law. It is not Sharia Law, not in this country. Not in my day." Abdel-Magied concluded: "It says in Islam that you follow the law of the land on which you are on. You don't know anything about my religion."

The Huffington Post News' entry, in: <http://www.huffingtonpost.com.au/2017/02/13/muslim-activist-schools-senator-jacqui-lambie-on-the-definition/>, retrieved on 1.2.2017

**Australia: Lambie reignites burqa ban debate**— Senator Jacqui Lambie had 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.

Yahoo News' entry, in: <https://au.news.yahoo.com/a/34371591/lambie-reignites-burqa-ban-debate/>, retrieved on 9.2.2017

## POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS:

### A. In the United States and Canada:

**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--like the one seen outside JFK Airport in New York--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.

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

**Canada: Toronto rallies Against Islamophobia & White Supremacy** — Thousands 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 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.

DailyHive.com News’ entry, in: <http://dailyhive.com/toronto/toronto-rallies-against-islamophobia-white-supremacy-2017>, retrieved on 7.2.2017

**US: Appeals Court Deals New Blow to Donald Trump's Travel Ban Targeting Muslims**— In a major setback for the Trump administration, 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.

The Huffington Post News’ entry, in: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-muslim-ban-appeals-ruling\\_us\\_589b49cfe4b09bd304bf279e](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-muslim-ban-appeals-ruling_us_589b49cfe4b09bd304bf279e), retrieved on 11.2.2017

**US: Teach-In at Cornell: Combatting Islamophobia through education**— 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.

Cornell University News’ entry, in: <http://pma.cornell.edu/news/teach-cornell-combatting-islamophobia-through-education>, etrieved on 13.2.2017

**US: Islamophobia is fueling terrorism says UN chief**— 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.

MEMO News’ entry, in: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170213-islamophobia-is-fuelling-terrorism-says-un-chief/>, retrieved on 16.2.2017

**US: Tennessee man convicted of plotting to attack New York mosque**— A federal jury convicted a Tennessee man of planning to attack a mosque in New York. A 65-year-old Robert Duggart 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 Duggart 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 Duggart’s home and prosecutors played a series of conversations Duggart had with a confidential informant in March 2015. Duggart’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 Duggart was not charged with terrorism because the federal government did not have a law punishing domestic terrorists. The attorneys said prosecutors used non-terrorism charges for Duggart’s case because current statutes were largely aimed at foreign radical groups.

CBS News’ entry, in: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/tennessee-man-convicted-of-planning-to-attack-new-york-mosque/>, retrieved on 17.2.2017

**US: Hate Crime suspect arrested after vandalizing a mosque with Bacon**— 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.*”

The Daily Meal News’ entry, in: <http://www.thedailymeal.com/news/eat/hate-crime-suspect-arrested-after-vandalizing-mosque-bacon/021717>, retrieved on 17.2.2017

**US: Christian university opens prayer room for Muslims**— 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.

WND News’ entry, in: <http://www.wnd.com/2017/02/christian-university-opens-prayer-room-for-muslims/>, retrieved on 17.2.2017

**US: Muslims, Mormons viewed more favorably in America today than in 2014, survey finds**— Muslims, the lowest-rated group, had been pegged at 40 in 2014, one degree shy of the 41 rating attached to atheists, who saw their new number rise to 50. Muslims were viewed more favorably as various studies showing similar increases — despite acts of terrorism in San Bernardino, California, and Orlando. Jews (67) and Catholics (66) continued to receive the warmest 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. Imam Shuaib-ud Din of the Utah Islamic Center said: “*Positive Muslim role models were brought into the public eye when boxing legend Muhammad Ali died and when Khizr and Ghazala Khan — whose US soldier-son died in Iraq — took on Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump’s views at the*

Democratic National Convention. The more Donald Trump speaks against Muslims, the more people's attitudes are shifting in favor of Muslims, at least among the Democrats and independents."

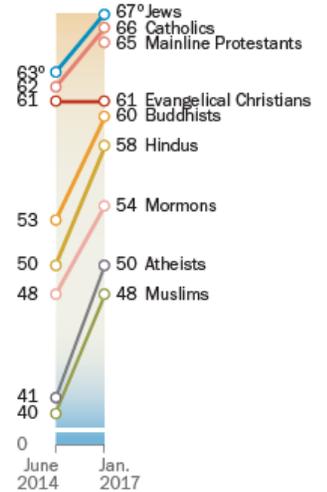
Mic.com News' entry, in: <https://mic.com/articles/168857/people-want-south-carolina-schools-to-stop-using-textbooks-that-teach-islam-to-students#.w8jWz4OzQ>, retrieved on 17.2.2017

**US: Amid Trump rise, more Americans see Muslims and Jews positively**— As 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.

**Americans feeling warmer toward variety of religious groups**

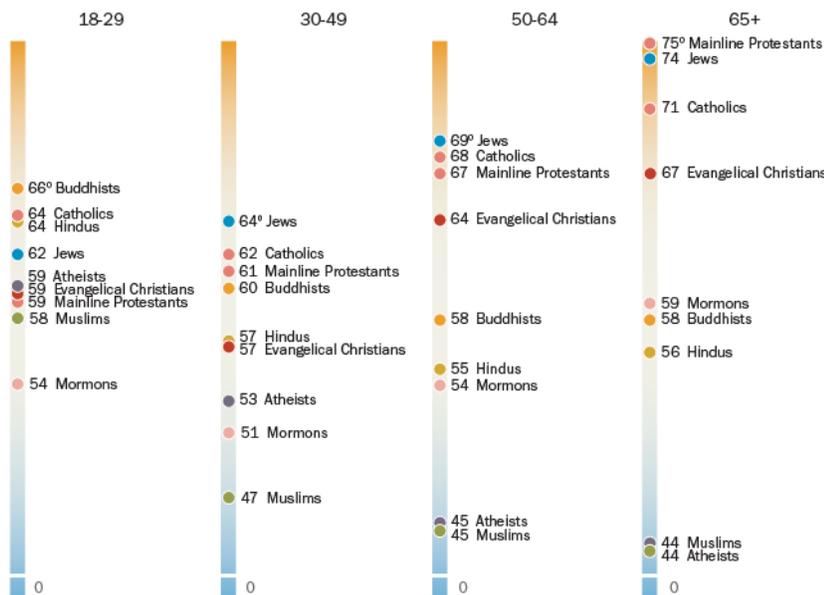
Mean thermometer ratings



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

**Ratings of religious groups vary more widely among older than younger Americans**

Mean thermometer ratings among Americans ages ...



Note: Based on respondents who received version of "feeling thermometer" question that used slider; see topline for more detail. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 9-23, 2017. "Americans Express Increasingly Warm Feelings Toward Religious Groups" PEW RESEARCH CENTER

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.

Bradenton Herald News' entry, in: <http://www.bradenton.com/news/nation-world/national/article133107654.html>, retrieved on 17.2.2017

**US: New Yorkers rally to say 'Today I am a Muslim, too'**— New Yorkers by the thousand, 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 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.

CNN News' entry, in: <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/02/19/us/today-i-am-muslim-too-rally-new-york/>, retrieved on 21.2.2017

**US: Sanctuary city Seattle is 'open to all,' declares mayor Murray at mosque**— 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 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.

Middleeasteye.net News' entry, in: <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/mayor-seattle-delivers-annual-city-speech-mosque-we-remain-open-all-961637838>, retrieved on 22.2.2017

**Canada: Anti-Islamophobia motion passes Ontario legislature**— 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.

Newstalk1290 News' entry, in: <http://www.iheartradio.ca/newstalk-1290-cjbk/anti-islamophobia-motion-passes-ontario-legislature-1.2424514>, retrieved on 25.2.2017

**US: Another 100 companies pull advertising from Breitbart**— 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.

Independent.co.uk News' entry, 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

## B. In Europe:

**UK: National Day of Action against Islamophobia being held in London**— 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.

Newstalk 1290 CJBK News' entry, 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

**Austria: 3,000 Muslim women protest in Austria against face-veil ban move**— 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 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!'

ABNA News' entry, in: <http://en.abna24.com/service/europe/archive/2017/02/09/810530/story.html>, retrieved on 10.2.2017

**Netherlands: 'Zero' chance I will work with you: Dutch PM to Wilders**— Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte again 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.

Yahoo News' entry, 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



**Germany: Merkel: Islam is not the source of terrorism**— 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.

Aljazeera News' entry, in: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/02/merkel-islam-source-terrorism-170218081154919.html>, retrieved on 19.2.2017



**Spain: Why right-wing populist parties have failed to flourish in Spain**— Around 160,000 Spanish protestors took to the streets in Barcelona in February 2017 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% of the population, but this figure jumped to 14% by 2012. The increase in immigrants coincided with a boom in the Spanish economy between 1996 and 2007, which was largely based on a construction bubble. The bubble burst in 2007 when the construction industry collapsed. The unemployment rate shot up to 26% in 2013 from 8% in 2008. Unemployment rose to 11% from 7% across the EU in the same period. The financial crisis in Spain was particularly brutal to migrants and low-skilled workers. This collapse of the economy was coupled with a crisis in trust; particularly in domestic, European, or international public institutions. Explanations were offered for the absence of an enduring right-wing populist response to the crisis. First, a lack of strong leadership by the far right. Second, the Spanish electoral system, which tended to favor big parties that have an established presence in electoral districts of differing sizes. Lastly, the legacy of Francisco Franco's 1939 to 1975 dictatorship, which weakened national identity and introduced a strong sense of cynicism in the authoritarian right, which in some way inoculated the country from the virus of extreme nationalism and xenophobia.

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

## ON BURQAH AND VEIL RELATED ISSUES:

**Germany: Bavaria pushes ahead with burqa ban as elections loom**— Bavaria 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.

Reuters News' entry, in: <http://www.reuters.com/article/religion-burqa-germany-bavaria-idUSKBN161090>, retrieved on 23.2.2017

## ON DIALOGUE:

### **US: How Jews and Christians in This Texas Town are Helping Muslims Whose Mosque 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.

Time News' entry, in: <http://time.com/4657876/texas-mosque-fire-jewish-christian-communities-help/>, retrieved on 3.2.2017

**Canada: Richmond multicultural-multi-faith gathering mourns victims of the senseless attack by racist Far-Right killer**—

On 29 January 2017, a 27 year old university student known for far right sympathies, walked into a Quebec mosque and brutally massacred six innocent people and injured several more seriously. The suspect, Alexandre Bissonette, a sociology student at Laval University, was charged with six counts of first degree murder and five charges of attempted murder at the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec in the historic city of Quebec. This horrific tragedy shook Canadians from coast to coast, caused pain to every peace loving Canadian. In particular, it had put fear and anxiety in the minds and hearts of Muslims throughout Canada, provoked expressions of sympathy and support for the Muslim community all across the land. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, along with other party leaders, was quick in



condemning this act of terrorism. Trudeau said: "...Muslim Canadians are valued members of every community. Wherever they live and work they deserve to feel welcomed and safe. They are home here. .. Canadians will meet fear and hatred with love and compassion." Addressing the Muslim community Justin also said: "You are important to us...You are at home." Locally, 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 this heinous crime. 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.



LINK News' entry, in: <http://thelinkpaper.ca/?p=61220>, retrieved on 5.2.2017

**Vatican: Pope decries treatment of Rohingya Muslims**—

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.

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

**US: American Muslims start fundraiser to repair vandalized Jewish**— American Muslim activists started a fundraiser 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 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.

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

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