



DIALOGUE & OUTREACH Department

OIC Islamophobia Observatory

Monthly Bulletin – January 2017

MANIFESTATIONS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA:

A. In the United States and Canada:

US: Teacher under fire for Facebook posts calling for Muslims to be 'butchered'— An Oklahoma teacher was accused of taking to social media and urging support for Donald Trump so that Muslims could be 'butchered'. The Oklahoma chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) issued a press release urging disciplinary action be taken against Dewey High School teacher Dan Close. Mr. Close was listed as a history teacher and head track coach on the school's website. CAIR-Oklahoma civil rights director Veronica Laizure said the group would like the school to conduct diversity training for educators and support staff, in saying: "We sincerely hope that the Dewey Public School District will not only discipline this individual, but will take steps to rectify this problem by embracing the diversity and cultural competency training." Superintendent of Dewey Public Schools Vince Vincent responded through a statement: "We are aware of the story and have addressed it, but with it being a personnel matter there is nothing more that we can discuss." Close's Facebook page was reportedly public before he recently set it to private.

4News News' entry, in: <http://cbs4local.com/news/nation-world/oklahoma-teacher-under-fire-for-facebook-posts-calling-for-muslims-to-be-butchered-01-12-2017>, retrieved on 13.1.2017

US: Arson Attack on Essex Mosque— Police in Braintree, Essex, were seeking two men who attempted to break into the Al Falah Braintree Islamic Centre and lit a small fire at one of its entrances. The pair carried out the attack shortly after the pubs were closed. Essex Police confirmed that they investigating the incident as a hate crime. Braintree Chief Inspector Craig Carrington described the attack as a concerning but rare incident and urged anyone who could help identify the attackers to come forward.

The Breitbart News' entry, in: <http://www.breitbart.com/london/2017/01/13/arson-attack-essex-mosque/>, retrieved on 14.1.2017



US: Anti-Muslim Hysteria Continues at the Texas Capitol— Muslim-hater Molly White, a Belton Republican, used to interrogate Muslim visitors to her legislative office about whether they "renounce Islamic terrorist groups and publicly announce allegiance to America" while she openly expressed her contempt for Islam in Facebook by saying: "Yes, I hate Islam, the Muslim Brotherhood and all terrorist organizations." Now Molly White failed to win reelection to the Texas House, but Texas Legislature was having another anti-Muslim fanatic to replace her: freshman state Rep. Kyle Biedermann. It was reported that Biedermann recently sent to Texas Muslims a questionnaire asking about their personal beliefs.

Biedermann's letter went to mosques and Muslim students organizations, a survey asking whether recipients support the Declaration of the Muslim Reform Movement and the Muslim Pledge for Religious Freedom and Safety from Harm for Former Muslims. It also asked whether recipients support federal legislation requiring the US Secretary of State to designate the Muslim Brotherhood as a foreign terrorist organization.

TFN News' entry, in: <http://tfn.org/anti-muslim-hysteria-continues-texas-capitol/>, retrieved on 20.1.2017

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



Daily News' entry, in: <http://thehill.com/homenews/315454-steinem-we-will-all-register-as-muslims-if-there-is-a-registry>, retrieved on 21.1.2017

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

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



US: Muslims Trying To Get A New Mosque are Asked, "Anybody Want A Pork Chop?"— Plans to build a Muslim community center and mosque in New Jersey were delayed again by local officials after a nearly five-hour meeting. It had been more than a year since the first tense zoning board meeting in Bayonne, where residents for and against the mosque clashed. At the time, anti-mosque protesters held signs that read "*If the Mosque Comes the Mayor Go's,*" while others just read

“Trump.” Counter-protesters held “No to RACISM” and “Anti-Muslim Bigotry” signs. After that meeting there was a series of delays. During a ten-minute break of the meeting, a member of the audience using a



crowded bathroom loudly asked, “Does anybody want a pork-chop?” and called Muslims “Hajis.” He added: “Ain’t no one taking my Bayonne.” Audience members against the mosque, one after the other, grilled the engineers hired by Muslims for Bayonne to conduct studies on the proposed building site and traffic impact for the zoning board.

BuzzFeed News’ entry, in: https://www.buzzfeed.com/talalansari/muslims-keep-waiting-for-bayonne-mosque?utm_term=.pvz2YEINY#.idDm48BG4, retrieved on 25.1.2017

US: Women’s March Organizer Targeted by Vicious Islamophobic Attacks Online— Since the day of

Women’s March on Washington, right-wing and anti-Muslim sites had launched a vicious attack on a Muslim organizer of the protest, Linda Sarsour, baselessly accusing her of supporting terrorism. Days since the Washington protest — where Sarsour delivered a powerful five-minute speech to a crowd of half a million people — *The Daily Caller*, *FrontPageMag*, *The American Thinker* and *The Gateway Pundit*, plus a slew of anti-Muslim hate sites, published disparaging articles about Sarsour. *The Gateway Pundit*, which claimed to have received White House press credentials from the Trump administration, published a 2015 picture of Sarsour holding up her index finger. In the *Gateway Pundit*’s head-scratching estimation, this photo somehow showed Sarsour “flashing the ISIS sign.” Other sites deployed Islamophobic tactics in trying to discredit Sarsour, claiming she was connected to terrorist groups, that she supported the spread of Sharia in the US and by equating her criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism. In response, Sarsour said in a statement: “It’s a shame that the alt-right would spend their time putting out falsehood and discrediting a proven effective activist and leader.” Sarsour, a Palestinian-American, was the director of the Arab American Association of New York, a member of the police reform group the Justice League, and the 2012 recipient of a Champion of Change award from President Barack Obama. She was a vocal supporter of Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders.

The Huffington Post News’ entry, in: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/linda-sarsour-womens-march-attacked-online_us_58865134e4b0e3a7356adbb2, retrieved on 25.1.2017

US: ‘Very Dangerous’: Trump Gives Racist Steve Bannon More Power— Donald Trump’s controversial senior adviser Steve Bannon would have a permanent seat at White House National Security Council meetings, solidifying his role as one of the most powerful members of the president’s inner circle. In an executive memorandum signed in January, Trump elevated Bannon while downgrading the status of the Director of National Intelligence and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the Security Council’s principals committee. The Director and Chairman now would only be present at meetings where issues pertaining to their responsibilities and expertise were discussed, as the memorandum said. Bannon, credited in large part with successfully orchestrating Trump’s election victory, led the Breitbart News website — described as a haven for the so-called ‘alt-right’ movement, which included various neo-fascists and white supremacists. The site ignited controversy during the presidential campaign because of its alignment with open white nationalists and anti-Semites. Unnamed Republican officials told the media that Bannon and Trump’s policy advisor Stephen Miller were the driving force behind the president’s order to stop accepting Syrian refugees and prohibiting immigration from seven Muslim-majority countries, including the one on green card holders entering the United States.

TelesurTV News’ entry, in: <http://www.telesurTV.net/english/news/Very-Dangerous-Trump-Gives-Racist-Steve-Bannon-More-Power-20170129-0037.html>, retrieved on 30.1.2017

B. In Europe:

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



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

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

The Breitbart News' entry, in: <http://www.breitbart.com/london/2017/01/13/investigation-launched-pig-heads-hung-site-future-mosque/>, retrieved on 14.1.2017

Switzerland: Swiss Up in Arms Over Ad by Far-Right Party Featuring Woman in Burqa— As Switzerland prepared for a controversial immigration referendum in February 2017, the Swiss Federal Railways was under pressure to remove political ads featuring a woman in a burqa, to which critics had



called ‘offensive propaganda’. The 12 February Referendum would naturalize as many as 25,000 third-generation immigrants under the age of 25, provided they spoke one of the four official languages of the country, respected Swiss law, and met other criteria. The far-right Swiss People’s Party (SVP), which ordered up the ad campaign, opposed the referendum, saying broader naturalization would have “*damaging consequences to Swiss culture and identity.*” The SVP’s anti-referendum ads depicted a woman in a burqa—a symbol of lack of integration’ as was said by one prominent SVP politician—with the campaign’s slogan: “*Uncontrolled naturalization? No to facilitated naturalization.*” The railway was under pressure because the SVP had run the ads in train stations where thousands of passengers saw them daily. On Facebook, critics described the burqa ad as racist, hateful, and propaganda. The ads were created by Goal AG, an agency known for its controversial ads about Muslim assimilation and immigration. In 2009, as Switzerland considered whether to deport immigrants who had committed serious crimes, Goal AG created a poster showing a white sheep booting a black sheep off a Swiss flag.

Heatstreet News’ entry, in: <http://heatst.com/culture-wars/swiss-up-in-arms-over-ad-by-far-right-party-featuring-woman-in-burqa/>, retrieved on 14.1.2017

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

SOFREP News’ entry, in: <https://sofrep.com/72495/austrias-far-right-party-wants-ban-islam/>, retrieved on 17.1.2017

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

News’ entry, in: <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/jan/17/malcolm-turnbull-says-australia-must-put-safety-first-when-asked-about-burqa-ban>, retrieved on 18.1.2017

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

The Sun News’ entry, in: <https://wwwthesun.co.uk/news/2613093/muslim-woman-wearing-headscarf-spat-on-and-abused-by-racist-thug-in-london-chip-shop/>, retrieved on 15.1.2017

Germany: Wilders joins far-right parties in attack on EU, Islam and the press— Geert Wilders joined Marine Le Pen and several other populist party leaders in what described as an



‘unprecedented’ meeting of European right-wing groups in Koblenz, Germany in January. Wilders, who led in several opinion polls ahead of the March 15 general election, told his audience of several hundred: “Yesterday a free America, today Koblenz, and tomorrow a new Europe.” Wilders was the second speaker behind Le Pen and was introduced as ‘the man who has given up his own freedom.’ The loudest applause came when Wilders told his audience: “Europe needs AfD leader Frauke, not Angela.” The meeting was organised by Germany’s Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) party, under the slogan ‘Freedom for Europe’. As well as Le Pen and Petry, the meeting was attended by members of Italy’s Northern League, Belgium’s Vlaams Blok and Austria’s FPÖ. All the parties were members of the ‘Europe of Nations and Freedoms alliance’ in the European parliament.

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

France: In the south of France, a mosque is at the center of a raw debate— The Mosque En-Nour was hidden on the outskirts of town, tucked away in an anonymous office park behind the airport and off a highway. No feature of its identity, no sign marks its entrance. On two occasions since it opened, nearby residents humiliated worshipers by leaving the bloodied heads of pigs outside the mosque’s door. Shortly thereafter, regional authorities resumed their push to shut it down, after nearly 15 years of trying – and failing – to prevent it from opening. This modest, nondescript house of worship, the largest yet to open in the region, had become a symbol of the precarious position occupied by French Muslims, the country’s largest minority. If the mosque was forced to close, it would violate the age-old promise of a proudly secular republic never to discriminate among citizens on the basis of race or religion. However, a forced closure was a real possibility. Christian Estrosi, the president of the administrative region that included the city of Nice, announced in January that he would launch yet another legal challenge against the mosque which Estrosi would prefer to convert into a day-care center.

Albuquerque Journal News’ entry, in: <https://www.abqjournal.com/933960/in-the-south-of-france-a-mosque-is-at-the-center-of-a-raw-debate.html>, retrieved on 24.1.2017

Germany: Ugly, dangerous forces gather in Europe— French, German, Dutch and other rightist parties



from around the continent gathered in January in the German city of Koblenz to spew their racist and Islamophobic bile. They condemned the European Union and demanded a return of large measures of political control from Brussels, with the clear intention of banning further migrant movement. They had been inspired by Brexit and heartened by the overtly nationalist, ‘America First’ policy of President Trump. However, the British UK Independence party and some of the racist Alternatif für Deutschland activists stayed away from the Koblenz gathering. The meeting was characterized by hatred and xenophobia.

Saudi Gazette News’ entry, in: <http://saudiqazette.com.sa/opinion/editorial/ugly-dangerous-forces-gather-europe/>, retrieved on 25.1.2017

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

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

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

C. Rest of the World:

Myanmar: Myanmar Vows Action after Video Shows Police Beating Rohingya Muslims—Myanmar promised to take action against policemen who beat Muslims after footage of villagers being treated violently appeared online amid tension over a government crackdown aimed at rooting out suspected insurgents. Troops had poured into Rakhine State on Myanmar's northwestern border with Bangladesh since gunmen attacked border posts on 9 October killing nine officers. The military operation was reported by the UN to have sent around 34,000 members of the Rohingya Muslim minority fleeing into neighboring Bangladesh. Residents and rights groups accused security forces of abuses during the operation including summary executions and rape, which the government of Aung San Suu Kyi denied. Suu Kyi's office confirmed the authenticity of the footage, which it said was shot by a member of the police during operation on 5 November in northern Rakhine State. The office identified four police officers by name, including the leader of the operation and one it said could be seen beating villagers in the video. The office said in a statement: *"Action will be taken against police who allegedly beat villagers."* The violence in Rakhine State had renewed international criticism that Nobel Peace Prize winner Suu Kyi had done too little to help members of the Muslim minority, who were denied citizenship in predominantly Buddhist Myanmar.

The Huffington Post News' entry, in: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/myanmar-rohingya-muslims_us_586a6184e4b0de3a08f9050f, retrieved on 4.1.2017

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



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

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

Myanmar: Myanmar refuses to obey OIC's demand to end violence against Muslims— Myanmar defied a call by Muslim governments to stop atrocities against Rohingya Muslims, slamming instead Malaysia for hosting a meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). At an extraordinary OIC meeting in Kuala Lumpur, the Malaysian Premier called on Myanmar to end its crackdown on Rohingya Muslims and stop the unspeakable cruelty against them. Myanmar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said one day after that it was regrettable that Malaysia had called the emergency meeting to discuss the plight of the Rohingya. The ministry accused Malaysia of exploiting the crisis to promote a certain political agenda and disregarding alleged efforts of the Myanmar government to tackle the crisis. Myanmar's military

began its crackdown in Rakhine State after an attack on the country's border guards on October 9 left nine police officers dead, which the government blamed on the Rohingya. There were reports that since the incident, at least 400 people had been killed, more than 2,500 houses, mosques, and religious schools destroyed, and three villages completely wiped out during the military siege. The Myanmar government also blocked humanitarian and media access to Rakhine which was home to about 1.1 million Rohingya.

ABNA News' entry, in <http://en.abna24.com/service/east-asia/archive/2017/01/21/806303/story.html>, retrieved on 22.1.2017

POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS:

A. In the United States and Canada:

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

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

US: George Takei: We must stand up for Muslims in the US— American actor, best known for his role in "Star Trek," was 5 years old when he and his family were taken from their Los Angeles home at gunpoint to an internment camp. He recalled gazing out the front window with his brother as their parents packed their belongings in another room, and spotting two soldiers marching up the driveway with rifles in tow. Four years later, when the war ended, the terrors of internment continued to haunt Takei and his family, as they had been left impoverished and were forced to find a home in downtown Los Angeles' notoriously crime-ridden Skid Row. As an adult, Takei became determined to prevent anything like the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II from happening in the United States again. His story became the subject of the musical 'Allegiance', which would soon be making its way from Broadway to movie theaters. So when he first heard then-presidential candidate Trump called for a ban on Muslims to the United States, he said: *"It was chilling. That was what happened to us. Overnight after Pearl Harbor, we were characterized as the enemy. We were looked at with fear and suspicion and outright hatred."* By suggesting that Muslims were all potential terrorists, Takei argued, Trump had done the same thing with an entire faith group. Recently, Takei created an online petition calling for people to stand up in support of Muslim Americans in the face of President-elect Trump, who appeared to be standing by his plans to impose a temporary ban on immigrants from certain Muslim countries and to create some sort of database of Muslims. The petition had garnered more than 100,000 signatures.

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

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

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

US: Major US university creates ‘safe space’ for Muslims in burqas The University of Kansas had created a women’s-only lunchroom especially for Muslim students who wear the hijab, or the more extreme face-covering garb such as the burqa and the nijab. It was the Muslim Student Association leaders who said Muslim women needed a ‘safe space’ on campus to eat their lunches. The room, open on weekdays from noon to 1pm in the public university’s Office of Multicultural Affairs, was available to all female students that allowed them to eat in a segregated, private area. Abdoulie Njai, the KU Student Senate director of diversity and inclusion, said: “*It is mainly used by Muslim women because it allows them a space to remove hijabs and eat.*”

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

US: Steinem: If Trump creates Muslim registry, we'll all register— Feminist icon Gloria Steinem in January said that if the new US Government began a registry of Muslims, then “*we will all register as Muslims.*” Steinem said during a speech at the Women’s March in Washington, “*If you force Muslims to register, we will all register as Muslims. So don’t try to divide us. Do not try to divide us.*” President Trump during his presidential campaign called for a temporary ban on Muslims coming into the US, stoking fears that he would create a registry of Muslims.

The Hill News' entry, in: <http://thehill.com/homenews/315454-steinem-we-will-all-register-as-muslims-if-there-is-a-registry>, retrieved on 22.1.2017

US: Local mosque receives letter of support ahead of Trump inauguration— In Washington some local people were trying to bring their community closer together and support minority groups that might feel alone. A letter and a postcard were sent to the Masjid an Nabawi Mosque in Schenectady ahead of Mr Trump’s Inauguration Day, saying: “*To our Muslim brothers and sisters at Masjid an Nabawi, we stand with you.*” Lynell Engelmeyer helped write the simple but profound message on a postcard also sent to the mosque. She said that she wanted to make sure members of the Mosque didn’t feel alone. Taslim Yousaf, a member of Muslim community said: “*I feel very excited and we are very happy and we are very thankful for having such a great community around us.*”

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

B. In Europe:

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

He was finally found guilty and faced a potential prison sentence of up to two years but instead was fined €300.

The Great Middle East News' entry, in: <http://en.thegreatmiddleeast.com/2017/01/bisexual-politician-all-terrorists-are-muslim-could-be-jailed-now-photo/>, retrieved on 14.1.2017

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

Mail Online News' entry, in: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4147880/Plans-bury-copies-Koran-Birmingham-cemetery.html>, retrieved on 24.1.2017

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

Yahoo News' entry, in: <https://www.yahoo.com/celebrity/president-trump-immigration-ban-fuels-231539752.html>, retrieved on 31.1.2017

ON BURQA AND VEIL RELATED ISSUES:

Europe: These 12 European countries have burka bans...but we STILL will not consider it— A staggering 310 million Europeans was now living in countries with some form of ban on the burka, niqab or hijab, which was more than half of the population of the continent. France, Belgium and the Netherlands had agreed complete bans on Islamic face coverings, while Germany, Spain, Italy, Switzerland and Denmark had bans in some places. More were on the way – with Estonia and Albania were intensive debates on full bans. More than two-thirds of Brits wanted full-face veils outlawed, according to a YouGov poll. An exclusive Daily Star Online poll put it even higher – at 88%.

Daily Star News' entry, in: <http://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/571766/Map-how-many-countries-Europe-burka-ban-burqa-hijab-niqab-merkel-Britain-uk-ukip>, retrieved on 3.1.2017

Morocco: Morocco plans to ban Burqas— Morocco seemed to follow France, Germany, and Belgium to call for the burqa ban. News media in Morocco had reported that the ban of burqas, which was due to take effect soon, also prohibited import and marketing of the garment in all cities and towns, allegedly for security purposes. Although burqas, as opposed to the hijab, were not worn popularly in Morocco, it was however worn more in the north of Morocco known as conservative region, which was also the home of fighters who went to fight in Syria and Iraq. Morocco had seen a number of arrests concerning terror threats in their country. In July 2016, 52 suspects planning to create a branch of the Islamic State group and carry out attacks in the North African were arrested. In July 2016 Moroccan police arrested 10 suspected female Islamic State suicide bombers who were allegedly planning to strike during parliamentary elections which were held in 2016. It was believed that 1,500 Moroccan nationals were fighting in Syria and Iraq, of which 220 were jailed after returning home. Moroccan Government gave retailers a 48-hour mandate to liquidate their stock of burqas and stop the sale of the garment completely.

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

Europe: Europe's Burqa Ban Boom Proves Unpopular in US despite Trump Rhetoric—

Morocco became the latest country to take steps against the burqa. The government banned the sale, production and import of the burqa, giving retailers 48 hours to destroy their stocks. It was still unclear at the current stage if the garment would be banned, but officials indicated a strong hostility towards the burqa. In 2016 several French coastal towns implemented a Burkini ban, a swimming suit for Muslim women, after government officials said that it raised concerns around security. The ban led to hundreds of protests taking place throughout France and Europe, with campaigners citing that it infringed on their human rights.

Sputnik International News' entry, in: <https://sputniknews.com/society/201701171049689305-brits-germany-ban-burqa/>, retrieved on 18.1.2017

Australia: Hanson to move ahead with burqa ban plan — Australian 'One Nation' leader Pauline Hanson stated her party would move to ban the burqa nationally after indicating a ban would be put in place in Queensland if it won the state election there. She told that the party would forge ahead with a proposal to ban the burqa in public areas, including schools and government buildings in Queensland. Following Senator Hanson's comments, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull told reporters: "we don't see a lot of burqas in Australia ... we have a very open society, we've got a very easy-going society, we don't tell people what to wear." One Nation had more than 30 candidates seeking election in Queensland and according to an opinion poll was enjoying around sixteen percent support in the state.

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

Australia: Malcolm Turnbull says Australia must put 'safety first' when asked about burqa ban— Malcolm Turnbull said there were certain environments in which people's faces shouldn't be covered when asked about a call to ban the burqa in public buildings – but he insisted it was a matter of 'safety first' and



unrelated to religion. The comments came in an interview in which Turnbull also refused to be drawn about an imminent cabinet reshuffle, after a report suggested Greg Hunt was in the box seat to become the health minister. When asked about “how much of a risk to national security” the burqa was, Turnbull said: *“It’s not something that you should be generalizing about but there are obviously environments where it’s important for people’s faces not to be covered for identity reasons.”*

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

ON DIALOGUE:

Thailand: Southern Buddhists and Muslims celebrate coexistence— Around 3,000 Buddhists and Muslims gathered in January at a Buddhist temple to celebrate their harmonious relationship and express gratitude to the senior monk who helped to keep goodwill alive.

The Bangkok Post News’ entry, in: <http://www.bangkokpost.com/archive/faith-and-fellowship-in-narathiwat/1175961>, retrieved on 8.1.2017

US: Evangelical Fuller Seminary to Lead Plan to Foster Unity with Muslims, Address Islamophobia—

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

The Gospel Herald News’ entry, in: <http://www.gospelherald.com/articles/69324/20170112/evangelical-global-church-plan-to-foster-unity-with-muslims-address-islamophobia.htm>, retrieved on 13.1.2017

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