



MANIFESTATIONS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA:

A. In the United States and Canada:

Canada: Ottawa man charged in attacks on mosque sites leaves trail of online hate— Shawn Le Guerrier found not criminally responsible for vandalism attacks at the Ottawa Islam Care Centre and the Ottawa Muslim Association Mosque, and he had continued to post anti-Muslim and neo-Nazi comments online, including praising Norwegian mass murderer Anders Breivik as “the greatest hero since Hitler.” Guerrier was charged with willfully promoting hatred, uttering threats and several counts of mischief in connection with the attacks on April 12 and April 25 at the Islam Care Centre on Somerset Street West and the Ottawa Mosque on Northwestern Avenue. He was also charged with two counts of assaulting a police officer, resisting arrest and several counts of violating his release conditions. Le Guerrier called 911 himself to report the first incident on April 12, saying that he had smashed windows at the Islam Care Centre on Somerset Street and the Ottawa Mosque on Northwestern Avenue. Le Guerrier was arrested and released the next day with orders he stay away from both locations. On April 19, a small fire was set at the rear of the centre and police later found Le Guerrier’s fingerprints on a piece of canvas found at the scene. Then, on April 25, Le Guerrier was in a Bank Street bar and bought a beer for woman he had met. When he found out she was Jewish, however, he began berating her with anti-Semitic comments and making Nazi salutes. Police were called and pepper-sprayed Le Guerrier, but he was able to escape and ran to the nearby Islam Care Centre and again hurled a rock.

See: Ottawa Citizen News’ entry, in: <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/ottawa-man-charged-in-attacks-on-mosque-sites-leaves-trail-of-online-hate>, retrieved on 3.2.2018

US: Anti-Muslim commentator shares fake video to prove immigrants are dangerous— Anti-Muslim activist Pamela Geller included a video in the February 11 edition of her newsletter, intended to prove that immigrants posed a dangerous threat. Unfortunately, the video appeared to be a hoax. The video, titled “Immigrants in Italy,” depicted a group of people battering an Italian police car with bats and sticks while others cheer on. By including the video in her newsletter, Gellar, who claimed that President Obama was radical Muslim who “wants jihad to win” and had ties to white supremacists and European right-wing extremist factions, was likely attempting to capitalize off of anti-immigrant fear in Italy just weeks before the country’s general election where immigration is anticipated to be a hot button issue. The video was in actuality an amateur recording of the shooting of an Italian film called *Mediterranea*. The film focused on two friends from Burkina Faso who “experience hostility after immigrating to Italy.” The video clearly shows the film’s camera crew and production crew could be seen walking into the scene at the end of the clip, prompting the actors to stop.

See: Think Progress News’ entry, in: <https://thinkprogress.org/pamela-geller-fake-video-8cee9c79bd2d/>, retrieved on 13.2.2018

US: A Texas council member advocated for banning Islam in schools. He refuses to resign— A council member in northern Texas was rejecting calls for his resignation over a series of anti-Muslim and anti-black Facebook posts, including one saying that President Trump should ban Islam in US schools. Tom Harrison, a city council member in Plano, Texas, shared a post from a Facebook page titled “Joined Hands across

America for Trump.” The meme, which showed a young girl wearing a hijab, read: “Share if you think Trump should ban Islam in American schools.” The post sparked a public outcry, with Plano Mayor Harry LaRosiliere calling for Harrison’s removal from the council and the council voting Sunday to publicly admonish Harrison. The council voted 7 to 1 to censure Harrison, which the mayor called “the only course of action available to the council.” He said that Harrison was the only dissenting vote.

See: The Washington Post News’ entry, in: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2018/02/19/a-texas-council-member-advocated-for-banning-islam-in-schools-he-refuses-to-resign/?utm_term=.d399d68e5823, retrieved on 20.2.2018

US: Southwest is sued by Arabic speaker who was removed from plane— Southwest Airlines Co was sued by an American citizen who came to the United States as an Iraqi refugee, and said he was removed from a California flight after another passenger became unnerved upon hearing him speak in Arabic. Khairuldeen Makhzoomi said he was seeking compensatory and punitive damages for civil rights violations, discrimination and emotional distress stemming from the "Islamophobia" underlying the 6 April, 2016 incident, which began as he awaited takeoff to Oakland from Los Angeles. The complaint was filed with the US District Court in San Francisco, and Southwest had no immediate comment. Makhzoomi said he had been seated and talking with his uncle by phone, after attending a dinner featuring United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, when two police officers and Southwest employee Shoaib Ahmed removed him from the plane. Makhzoomi said he was released by local law enforcement and the Federal Bureau of Investigation after hours of questioning and being "invasively searched," but that Southwest refused to rebook him, and instead refunded his ticket. He later flew home on Delta Air Lines.

See: Yahoo Finance News’ entry, in: <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/southwest-sued-arabic-speaker-removed-012448817.html>, retrieved on 15.2.2018

US: Officials: ‘F* God & Allah’ written on Va. mosque; CAIR wants hate crime investigation**— The Council on American-Islamic Relations was asking for a hate crime investigation after the words “F*** God & Allah” were found written on a Virginia mosque. The incident of vandalism happened on the wall of the Prince Edward County Islamic Center in Farmville on 28 September 2017.

See: WJLA News’ entry, in: <http://wjla.com/news/local/officials-fk-god-allah-written-on-va-mosque-cair-wants-hate-crime-investigation>, retrieved on 15.2.2018



US: Muslims Face Increasing Discrimination, State Surveillance Under Trump— US racist policy received another setback when the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Virginia, ruled against the latest version of Muslim ban. In its ruling, the court stated that the ban was “unconstitutionally tainted with animus towards Islam” and that its central purpose was “to exclude Muslims from the United States.” Despite the ruling, “Muslim Ban 3.0” would remain in effect while the Supreme Court considered the case. The decision by the Fourth Circuit had been cautiously welcomed by Muslims, many of whom had endured prolonged separation from their loved ones as a result of the ban. The Muslim ban was aimed at whipping up anti-Muslim hysteria in the country. It was clearly designed to reinforce the bogus notion that Muslim-Americans and Muslim immigrants constituted a unique threat to “national security.” The attempt to portray ordinary Muslims as potential security threats had a devastating impact on Muslim-Americans, contributing to an increase in hate crimes against Muslims and fostering a general climate of fear and uncertainty within the community. There were also indications that the government was planning a further crackdown on the democratic rights of Muslims, with increased surveillance of Muslim communities in the works.

See: Global Research News’ entry, in: <https://www.globalresearch.ca/muslims-face-increasing-discrimination-state-surveillance-under-trump/5629684>, retrieved on 20.2.2018

B. In Europe:

UK: Man Convicted of Murder Over Van Attack on Muslims in London— A man who drove a van into a crowd of worshippers near a north London mosque after expressing far-right and anti-Muslim opinions was convicted of murder and attempted murder. A jury at London's Woolwich Crown Court deliberated for about an hour before finding 48-year-old Darren Osborne guilty of the June 2017 attack in the city's Finsbury Park neighborhood. A 51-year-old man, Makram Ali, was killed and nine people were injured when a rented van ploughed into worshippers gathering to break their fast during Ramadan. Prosecutors said Osborne was motivated by a hatred of Muslims, whom he saw as extremists or rapists in pedophile gangs. Osborne, of Cardiff, Wales, had pleaded not guilty. Prosecutors said Osborne was radicalized over a short period of time, in part through online far-right propaganda. Searches for two prominent extreme-right figures - English Defense League founder Tommy Robinson and Britain First leader Paul Golding - were found on Osborne's computer. Osborne's partner, Sarah Andrews, told prosecutors he had become "brainwashed" and was a "ticking time bomb."

See: VOA News' entry, in: <https://www.voanews.com/a/man-convicted-of-murder-over-van-attack-on-muslims-in-london/4234752.html>, retrieved on 2.2.2018

Germany: Mosque must stop loudspeaker call to prayer because it violates Christian's religious rights, court rules— A mosque in northwest Germany might no longer broadcast its Friday midday call to prayer by loudspeaker after a local court upheld a challenge by a couple who live half a mile away. The local Christian couple, in the town of Oer-Erkenschwick, had argued that the call to prayers violated their own religious rights. Anti-Muslim sentiment and support for anti-immigration policies were growing in many parts of Germany after the influx of well over a million migrants from Iraq, Syria and other mostly Muslim countries, beginning in 2015. The court ruled that the town had not assessed the local Muslim community's request properly in 2013, but a court spokesman said that this did not prevent the mosque making a new application.

See: The Sun News' entry, in: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/5488926/mosque-must-stop-its-loudspeaker-call-to-prayer-broadcast-because-it-violates-christians-religious-rights-court-rules/>, retrieved on 3.2.2018

Netherlands: Mosque vandalized in Netherlands— A mosque in the Dutch port city of The Hague was vandalized and so far, no group had claimed responsibility for the act of vandalism, in which a Turkish flag was crossed with red paint with slogans against Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan also written on it. Europe had recently experienced a growing number of radical protests and violence from PYD/PKK supporters since the group launched a campaign to protest Turkey's operation in Syria.

See: AA News' entry, in: <http://aa.com.tr/en/europe/mosque-vandalized-in-netherlands/1053443>, retrieved on 4.2.2018



UK: Man targets Muslim woman with 'f*ing Muslims' slur on London Underground**— British Transport Police (BTP) was investigating an anti-Muslim hate incident on the London Underground which took place on 31st January 2018. The Muslim woman, who wore the hijab was abused by a man who boarded the train at Clapham Common station in south London at morning on 31 January. During the journey, the man stood near the woman and mumbled "f***ing Muslims" several times. He then moved to a seat opposite and continued to stare at her until he departed the train at Bank station. The woman then followed the perpetrator off the train where she witnessed him direct the same abuse at a group of Muslim women in headscarves around an hour later. She was then able to report the incident to a BTP officer after initially speaking with a member of TfL staff. The woman then contacted TellMAMA to raise awareness,

thanked the latetr, the Tfl staff member and the BTP officer for their support during the incident which made her uncomfortable.

See: TellMAMA News' entry, in: <https://tellmamauk.org/man-targets-muslim-woman-with-fing-muslims-slur-on-london-underground/>, retrieved on 6.2.2018

Italy: Berlusconi says 600,000 migrants are 'ready' to commit crime in Italy— Former Italian premier Silvio Berlusconi claimed in February 2018 that 600,000 migrants who arrived illegally in Italy were “ready” to commit crimes, and he vowed they would be sent back to their homelands if the march 2018



election month propelled his centre-right party into government. In an explosive contribution to the national debate after the shooting of a number of African migrants at the previous weekend by a far-right activist, Mr Berlusconi poured petrol on the flames by claiming that immigrants lived “*hand to mouth or from crime*” and that they were responsible for most bank robberies. The leaders of the main rival parties in the March 4 parliamentary election retorted that some policies from Mr Berlusconi’s three stints in office helped create the conditions that brought so many newcomers to Italy; while the

country’s experience with the hundreds of thousands of people who arrived after being rescued from smugglers’ boats in the Mediterranean Sea in the last few years had dominated much of the pre-election campaigning. Quite recently, the migrant issue took on even more energy when an Italian gunman allegedly shot and wounded six Africans from his car in the central Italian town of Macerata. Police described the suspect as a far-right extremist with neo-Nazi sympathies. The drive-by attack followed the arrest of a Nigerian man in the slaying of an 18-year-old Italian woman shortly after walking away from a drug rehabilitation center in the area.

See: The National News’ entry, in: <https://www.thenational.ae/world/europe/berlusconi-says-600-000-migrants-are-ready-to-commit-crime-in-italy-1.702052>, retrieved on 7.2.2018

Germany: Germany's AfD to open its own newsroom in preparation for mainstream media offensive— Germany’s populist Alternative for Germany (AfD) party announced plans to set up a television studio in its Berlin offices and employ up 20 new communications staff. According to the media, the AfD was looking to bypass Germany’s mainstream media landscape and build on its successes communicating directly to the public. The far-right party was reportedly looking to launch the service in April. The AfD newsroom staff members are expected to work in shifts round the clock, with three members dedicated to research and spotting topics. The far-right party entered the Bundestag for the first time last year after it picked up almost 13 percent of the vote in September’s federal election, finishing third nationwide. It is therefore set to become the main opposition party in the German parliament, given the decision taken on Wednesday by Chancellor Angela Merkel’s conservative bloc and the Social Democrats to form a grand coalition.

See: DW News’ entry, in: <http://www.dw.com/en/germanys-afd-to-open-its-own-newsroom-in-preparation-for-mainstream-media-offensive/a-42517544>, retrieved on 10.2.2018

France: 56% of French People Say Islam is Compatible with Their Society: Survey— Fifty-six percent of French people believed that Islam was compatible with the values of their country, according to a survey conducted by the French-based polling firm, the Institut Français d’Opinion Publique (IFOP). The survey results, which were published by the French weekly newspaper, Le Journal Du Dimanche, showed that the majority of French people thought that Islam was compatible with their society, while 43 percent believed the opposite. A similar survey conducted in September 2016 showed that 56 percent of French people saw Islam as incompatible with the country’s values, while only 44 percent of respondents thought that Islam is compatible with their society. According to the newspaper, notwithstanding this apparent development, “Islam remains a major topic that brings a cleavage” among French people according to their political

sensitivities and biases. The survey responses indicate a sharp divide based on political affiliation. 63 percent of Republicans supporters and 62 percent of National Front (Front National) supporters believed that Islam was incompatible with the values of French society. However, 73 percent of Socialist Party supporters and 60 percent of those of la France Soumise, as well as 58 percent of la République en Marche supporters, thought the opposite, according to the survey. In 2016, former French Prime Minister Manuel Valls said in an interview with the French newspaper Liberation that the majority of French people saw Islam as incompatible with the values of the Republic.

See: Morocco World News' entry, in: <https://www.morocoworldnews.com/2018/02/240422/56-french-people-say-islam-compatible-muslims-ifop-france/>, retrieved on 12.2.2018

UK: Islam 'glorifies death' and British Muslims should sign a document rejecting the Koran, Ukip's acting leader says—

UKIP's acting leader, Gerard Batten said that British Muslims should sign a document rejecting the Koran's teaching because Islam "*glorifies death*". He stood by a string of shocking anti-Islam comments in his first interview since he took over from Henry Bolton. The MEP suggested that new mosques should be banned - and hinted that he could seek to spread his views by seeking the Ukip top job full-time. Appearing on media, he was confronted over his previous views on Islam, which included calls for a ban on building mosques and a compulsory declaration of loyalty from Muslims. Batten said: "*Islam doesn't allow a Christian church or a Sikh temple to be built in its heartland, because it's in the Koran*". He defended his previous claim that Islam was a death cult, saying the comments were factually and historically true.



See: The Sun News' entry, in: <https://wwwthesun.co.uk/news/5605258/islam-glorifies-death-and-british-muslims-should-sign-a-document-rejecting-the-koran-ukips-acting-leader-says/>, retrieved on 19.2.2018

Germany: Germany's far-right AfD is the second biggest party in the country according to new poll, after Chancellor Angela Merkel's coalition partners lose support—

The far-right party Alternative for Germany (AfD) surpassed Merkel's coalition partners, the centre-left Social Democrats (SPD), for the first time in a national poll. Some 16 per cent of Germans said they would vote AfD, while the SPD fell one percentage point to just 15.5 per cent. Merkel's CDU/CSU bloc gained 2.5 percentage points to reach 32 per cent. The election saw the AfD won seats in parliament for the first time - a political earthquake that followed Merkel's 2015 decision to leave open German borders to more than 1 million migrants. Leaders of the party have repeatedly made headlines with insulting remarks about Germany's immigrant community.

See: Daily Mail News' entry, in: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5409609/Far-right-Alternative-Germany-party-second-biggest.html>, retrieved on 20.2.2018

Germany: Woman in burqa attacked, abused in Berlin— German police said a Muslim woman wearing a veil covering her entire face and body was attacked and verbally abused inside a Berlin store. A woman insulted the victim and ripped the veil of the burqa from her head. The attacker then followed the victim out of the store and continued shouting anti-foreigner abuse at her before being detained by police. Last year the German Parliament approved a government proposal to ban the wearing of all veils that fully cover the face by public employees in schools, courts and other institutions.

See: Enca.com News' entry, in: <http://www.thedailystar.net/world/woman-burqa-attacked-abused-berlin-1537900>, retrieved on 22.2.2018

UK: Far-right extremists preparing for 'war against Islam', report warns after terror plots exposed—

Hope Not Hate's annual report mentioned that the far right extremists were preparing for what they believed was a "war against Islam". It also forecasted further violence emanating from various factions following the Finsbury Park terror attack on Muslims and neo-Nazi murder of Labour MP Jo Cox. Nick Lowles, chief executive of the campaign group, said that with the combination of civil war rhetoric and growing online hatred, "*we must be prepared for more terrorist plots and use of extreme violence from the*

far-right for the foreseeable future”. He said a smaller number of extremists believed a war against Muslims “needs to happen” so they could be expelled from Europe. He was speaking few days after Mark Rowley, the outgoing head of UK counter-terror policing, revealed that four far-right terror plots had been foiled since the Westminster attack in March 2017. The report said that while anti-Semitism was still pervasive in the far-right, recent years had seen traditionally fractured groups rally around specifically anti-Muslim ideas in the wake of 9/11 and ISIS terror attacks.

See: Independent News’ entry, in: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/far-right-war-islam-hope-not-hate-britain-first-tommy-robinson-national-action-a8235556.html>, retrieved on 4.3.2018

C. In the Rest of the World

Myanmar: Myanmar bulldozes what is left of Rohingya Muslim villages— Satellite images of Myanmar’s troubled Rakhine state, released to Media showed that dozens of empty villages and hamlets had been leveled by authorities in recent weeks — far more than previously reported. The villages were all set ablaze in the wake of violence last year, when a brutal clearance operation by security forces drove hundreds of thousands of



Rohingya into exile in Bangladesh. While Myanmar’s government claimed it’s simply trying to rebuild a devastated region, the operation had raised deep concern among human rights advocates, who said the government was destroying what amounts to scores of crime scenes before any credible investigation took place. The operation had also horrified the Rohingya, who believe the government was intentionally eviscerating the dwindling remnants of their culture to make it nearly impossible for them to return.

See: NBC News’ entry, in: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/myanmar-bulldozes-what-left-rohingya-muslim-villages-n850521>, retrieved on 24.2.2018

POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS:

A. In the United States and Canada:

US: New Jersey city to pay \$400,000 in settlement allowing mosque to proceed— The New Jersey city of Bayonne agreed to a \$400,000 settlement with a local Muslim group that would allow a planned mosque to proceed, ending a lawsuit that accused officials of illegally rejecting the zoning application. The Bayonne Muslims filed a federal lawsuit last year after their application to establish a permanent home was rejected by the city’s zoning board, claiming the decision violated a US law that prohibits local governments from imposing an undue burden on religious exercise through land use regulations. The agreement called for a public hearing within 30 days to approve the mosque. The settlement did not affect a probe opened by the US Department of Justice last year into the case. In recent years, the Justice Department had settled lawsuits against numerous localities for denying mosque applications, including Bernards Township, New Jersey; Bensalem, Pennsylvania; and Des Plaines, Illinois. A similar Justice Department lawsuit against Culpeper County, Virginia, was dismissed as moot by a federal judge after the county agreed to allow the mosque to be built.

See: KWSN News’ entry, in: <http://kwsn.com/news/articles/2018/jan/31/new-jersey-city-to-pay-400000-allow-mosque-construction-in-settlement/>, retrieved on 1.2.2018

US: Court overturns order on FBI surveillance of Northern California Muslims— A federal appeals court overturned a ruling by a judge in San Francisco that would require the FBI to release documents describing its efforts to keep watch on Muslims in Northern California and recruit informants from the Muslim community. The writings were sought in a 2010 lawsuit by the American Civil Liberties Union, the Asian Law Caucus and the Bay Guardian newspaper. They said they wanted to know whether the FBI was using educational and “community outreach” programs to infiltrate Muslim institutions and conduct surveillance without evidence of criminal activity. The federal agency turned over more than 50,000 pages of documents, some of which showed that its agents in San Francisco had taken notes on the viewpoints and religious activities of Muslims they encountered from 2004 through 2010. However, the FBI deleted material from some of those documents and withheld more than 47,000 additional pages, saying the information was protected because it had been compiled for “law enforcement purposes.”

See: SFGate News' entry, in: <https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Court-overturns-order-on-FBI-surveillance-of-12544542.php>, retrieved on 2.2.2018

US: US court says Trump travel ban unlawfully discriminates against Muslims— The US federal appeals court ruled in February saying that President Donald Trump's travel ban targeting people from six Muslim-majority countries violated the US Constitution by discriminating on the basis of religion, meaning another legal setback for the policy. The Richmond-based 4th US Circuit Court of Appeals, on a 9-4 vote, became the second federal appeals court to rule against the ban, finding that the Republican president's own words demonstrated that bias against Muslims was the basis of the policy. What happened was that the US Supreme Court had allowed the ban, put in place by Trump with a presidential proclamation in September 2017, to go into effect while litigation challenging it continued. The 4th Circuit ruling went further than the earlier decision by the San Francisco-based 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals, which found the ban violated federal immigration law but did not address the question of whether it also violated the Constitution. The Supreme Court already had said it would consider both issues in deciding the legality of the ban in the coming months. The justices were due in April 2018 to hear arguments over the ban and issue a ruling by the end of June 2018.

See: CNBC News' entry, in: <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/02/15/us-court-says-trump-travel-ban-unlawfully-discriminates-against-muslims.html>, retrieved on 16.2.2018

US: NYPD spying on Muslims challenged— Two Muslim men challenged the New York Police Department's cloak of secrecy over NYPD surveillance of Muslim mosques and student groups. The men's case went to the New York Court of Appeals. The men's lawyer demanded to know why New York state's Freedom of Information Law request for the spy documents was met with an evasive NYPD response that it could “neither confirm nor deny” that such documents even existed. The NYPD had a long history of spying on civil rights organizers and anti-war activists, as well as leftist organizations and members. A 1971 federal lawsuit put in place guidelines that supposedly prohibit the NYPD from collecting information on political speech unless it was related to terrorism. News reports in 2011 and 2012 exposed a combined CIA/NYPD program to spy on Muslims in the New York area. The Demographics Unit was at the heart of a police spying program, built with help from the CIA, which assembled databases on where Muslims lived, shopped, worked and prayed. Police infiltrated Muslim student groups, put informants in mosques, monitored sermons and catalogued every Muslim in New York who adopted new, Americanized surnames.

See: Workers World News' entry, in: <https://www.workers.org/2018/02/18/nypd-spying-on-muslims-challenged/>, retrieved on 19.2.2018

B. In Europe:

UK: Senior education official to support headscarf ban— Amanda Spielman, chief inspector for the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), publicly supported Neena Lall, the head teacher of a predominantly Muslim state school who imposed the ban earlier month, setting off an uproar from parents and community leaders in east London. Speaking at a Church of England conference, Spielman said that school leaders must have the right to set school uniform policies as they see fit, in order to “promote cohesion,” and also to warn of the dangers people pose in using religion to “actively pervert” education. She claimed, “*Under the pretext of religious belief, they use education institutions, legal and illegal, to narrow young people's horizons, to isolate and segregate, and in the worst cases to indoctrinate impressionable minds*”

with extremist ideology.” Rebutting Spielman’s remarks, a spokesman for the Muslim Council of Britain said: “As Ms. Spielman continues to issue a disproportionate number of public statements about Muslims and apparent links to extremism, we hope she will consult before issuing further unjustifiable policies.” The predominantly Muslim state school’s ban on young Muslim girls wearing the hijab was overturned after the resignation of the chair of governors.

See: World Bulletin News’ entry, in: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/haberler/198413/uk-senior-education-official-to-support-headscarf-ban>, retrieved on 3.2.2018

Sweden: Sweden Democrat leader backs away from burqa ban— The leader of the anti-immigration Sweden Democrat party appeared to have dropped his push for a burqa ban, days after Denmark’s government proposed a national ban on full-face veils. In a gambit seen as part of his preparations for a post-election deal with Sweden’s centre-right, Jimmie Åkesson said he did not think a ban was right. “I think that it is problematical,” Åkesson told media saying he was against a “blanket ban on any item of clothing”. He said: “I’m more in favour of limiting parents’ ability to force children to wear religious symbols which degrade women.” Åkesson in the past railed against the veil, claiming in 2010 that “terrorists and other criminal elements” used them to disguise their identities.

See: The Local News’ entry, in: <https://www.thelocal.se/20180208/sweden-democrat-leader-backs-away-from-burqa-ban>, retrieved on 9.2.2018

UK: Baroness Warsi: Islamophobia is ‘widespread’ in Britain— Baroness Warsi, a former Tory cabinet minister said the situation of Islamophobia was far worse now than in 2011, when she argued prejudice against Muslims had passed the dinner-table test. She described Islamophobia as the country’s “bigotry blindspot” as she gave evidence to the Commons Home Affairs Committee. She said: “There is widespread Islamophobia across Britain and anti-Muslim sentiment and anti-Muslim discrimination. Specifically with the press, I could spend hours giving you case after case after case.” In 2011 Baroness Warsi claimed that prejudice against Muslims had become widely socially acceptable in Britain.

See: The Lancashire Telegraph News’ entry, in:

http://www.lancashiretelegraph.co.uk/news/national/16035939.Baroness_Warsi_Islamophobia_is_widespread_in_Britain/, retrieved on 21.2.2018

C. In the Rest of the World

Indonesia: In Indonesia, a mosque and a church foster friendship amid religious tensions— On a tree-lined side street in the Indonesian capital sits a colonial-era Protestant church with an antique pipe organ built into a large wall behind the altar. Across the street is a modern, 100,000sq ft mosque with towering arches at its entrances and a cavernous prayer area laid wall-to-wall with red carpet. Despite their different faiths, the two houses of worship were friendly, helpful neighbours — and an example of pluralism in the world’s most populous Muslim-majority nation at a time of heightened fears over religious intolerance. Mr Nur Alam, the imam at the Sunda Kelapa Grand Mosque, he said: “We respect each other. If we never offend other people, then we will be respected.” Across the street, Mr Adriaan Pitoy who was a pastor at St Paul’s Church, said with similar tone: “Our relationship is just one of many steps we take. We also go to other mosques to promote dialogue. Our relationship with our friends next door is normal.” For the two houses of worship, normal means sharing parking spaces during busier services: Friday Prayer for the mosque, Sunday Mass for the church. They also hosted interfaith dialogue sessions, and even volleyball tournaments. During Ramadan, the Muslim holy fasting month, the staff at St Paul’s, some of whom were Muslim, carried boxes of food to the mosque for worshippers there to break their fast. This type of religious harmony among neighbouring houses of worship was evident not just in Jakarta, but across the Indonesian archipelago. About 90 per cent of Indonesia’s 260 million people were identified as Muslim, but the country also had Christian, Hindu, Buddhist and Confucian populations.

See: Today News’ entry, in: <http://www.todayonline.com/world/asia/indonesia-mosque-and-church-foster-friendship-amid-religious-tensions>, retrieved on 20.2.2018

ON BURQAH AND VEIL RELATED ISSUES:

Denmark: Danish Government Plans Face Veil Ban— Denmark's government announced in February 2018 that it planned to fine people who covered their face in public, putting it in line to join France and others restricting the burqa and the niqab, worn by some Muslim women. The center-right government, which was backed by the nationalist Danish People's Party, said it would bring in legislation imposing fines of up to 10,000 Danish crowns (\$1,658) for repeat offences. It did not give a date for a vote on the law. Full and partial face veils such as burqas and niqabs divide opinion across Europe, setting advocates of religious freedom against secularists and those who argue that such garments are culturally alien or a symbol of the oppression of women. The Danish Justice Minister Soren Pape Poulsen was quoted saying: "*It is incompatible with the values of the Danish society or the respect for the community to keep the face hidden when meeting each other in the public space.*"

See: U.S.NEWS News' entry, in: <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2018-02-06/danish-government-plans-face-veil-ban>, retrieved on 2.2.2018

ON DIALOGUE:

US: Female faith leaders taking a stand against violence, hate, racism— Female faith leaders in East Central Illinois came together in February 2018 to call for courage in the face of any form of violence, hatred, racism, intolerance and social injustice through a declaration, committed the 31 members to "challenge the resurgence of groups ... who are promoting dangerous, white-supremacist, far-right ideologies." It also cited a statement by the Charlottesville Clergy Collective in Virginia that called for unity and justice in the wake of the Unite the Right rally in August 2017 that turned violent, leaving one woman dead and 38 people injured. The declaration was largely in response to recent threats and instances of harassment made to members of the University of Illinois community by far-right groups. The group leader, Cindy Shepherd said the past year had troubled her and the rest of the faith community, as discussions on faith and politics became more contentious and opinions more polarized. She mentioned that threats and harassment by far-right groups had abounded since President Donald Trump's election in 2016, as she remarked as "The times that reflect a spirit of intolerance."

See: The News Gazette News' entry, in: <http://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/2018-02-13/female-faith-leaders-taking-stand-against-violence-hate-racism.html>, retrieved on 14.2.2018



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