



ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION

Political Affairs Department

Islamophobia Observatory

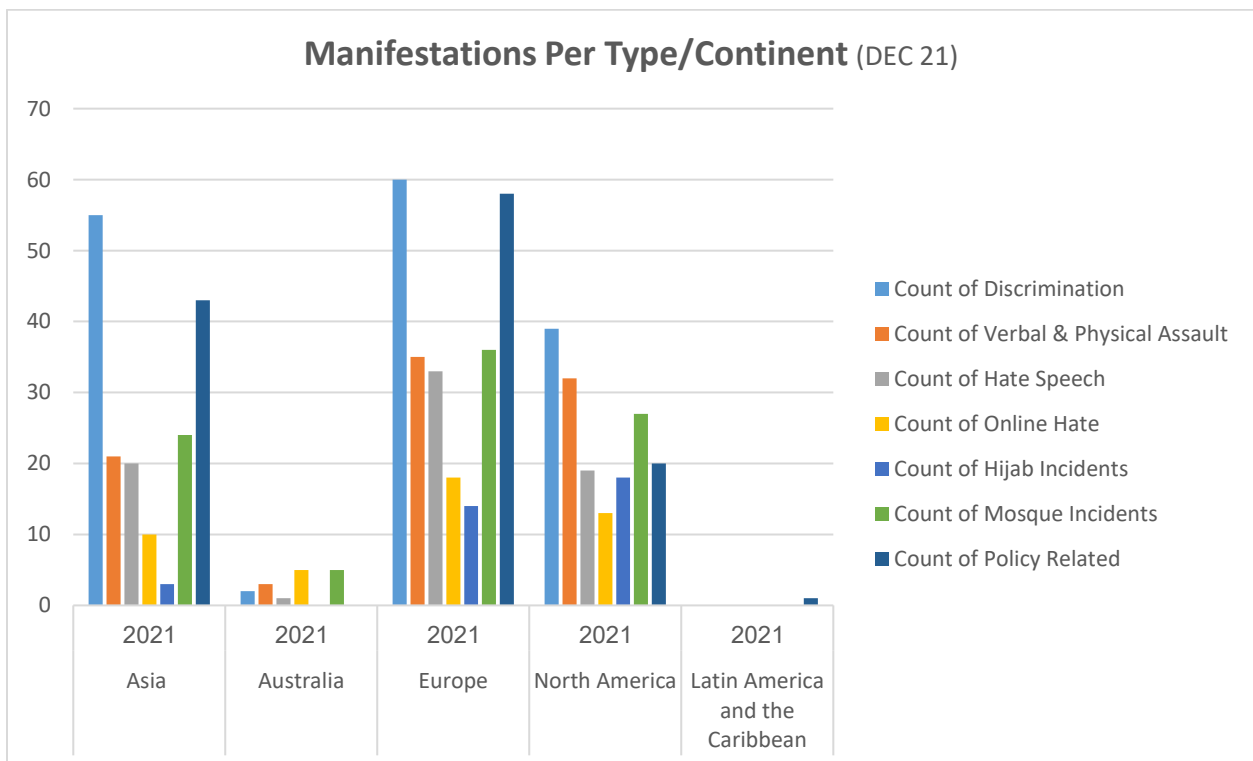
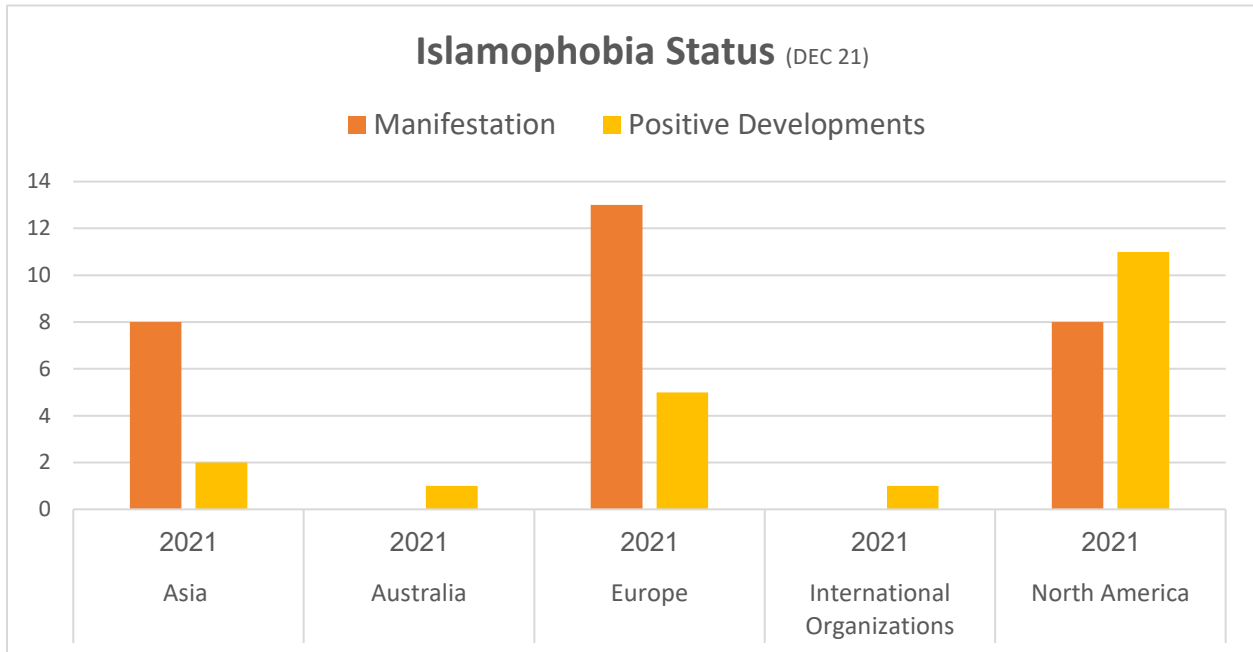
Islamophobia Monitoring

Month: December 2021



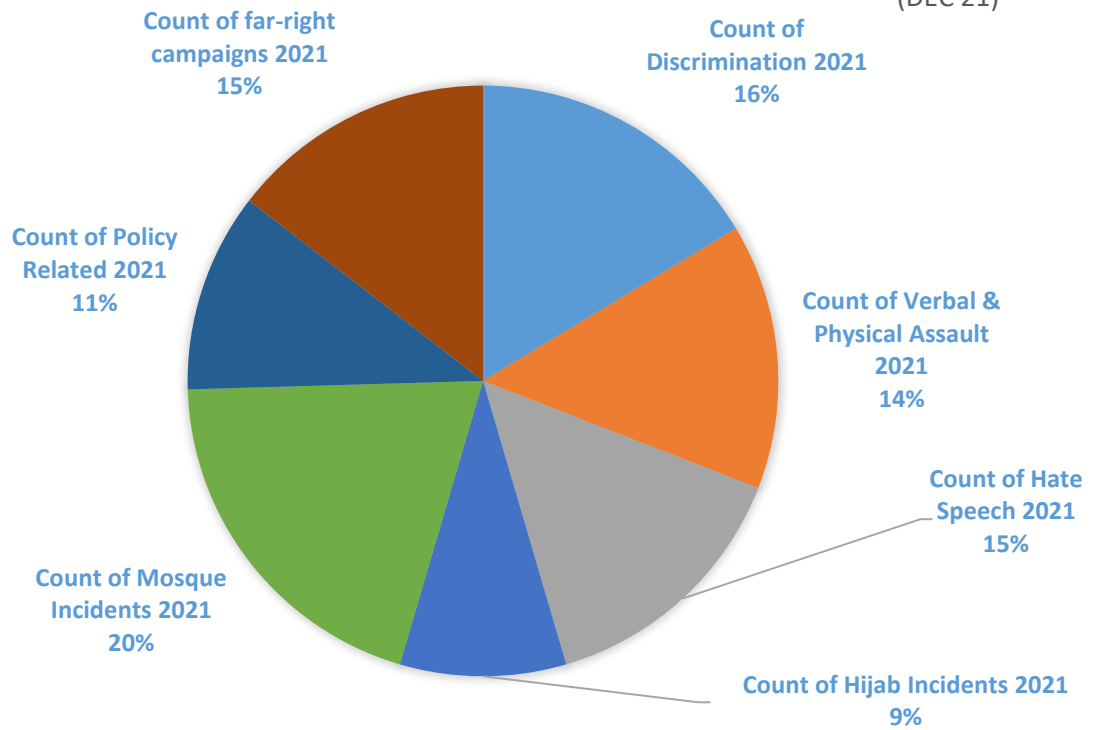
OIC Islamophobia Observatory

Issue: December 2021



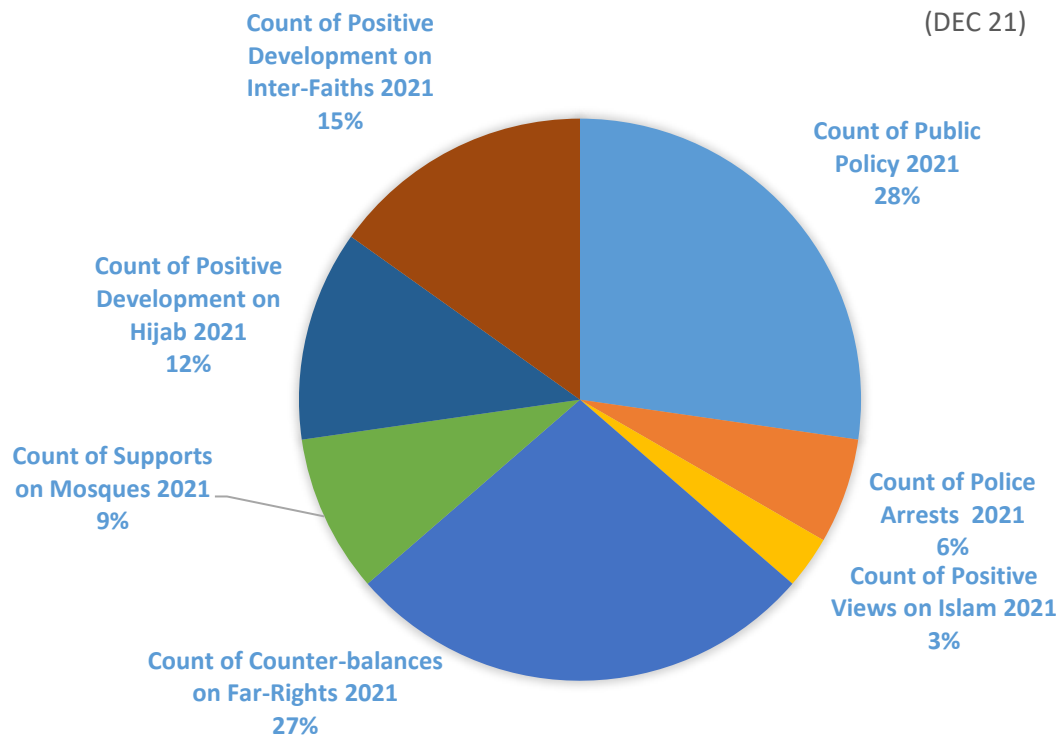
MANIFESTATION

(DEC 21)



POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT

(DEC 21)



MANIFESTATIONS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

NORTH AMERICA



IsP140614-US: FBI Investigates Fire at Albuquerque Mosque As Possible Hate Crime— The Islamic Center of New Mexico on Yale Blvd had been targeted by a hate crime. Surveillance video showed a woman setting multiple fires on December 6 morning near the prayer hall of ICNM. Mosque members believe the fires were started by a woman who came to the center the week before where she expressed hostility. “The woman in the video had been to the mosque three times in the past two months,” said Tahir Guaba, public relations director for ICNM. “She tried to set fire to the carpet where the children play in an incident in early November,” he said. That incident was not reported to law enforcement at the time because of miscommunication among members. “At the time, our Imam tried speaking with her and she told him ‘F**k all Muslims.’” This latest incident occurred on November 29, when several cars driving by the mosque noticed a fire burning near the prayer hall and children’s playground. “Thankfully they stopped and helped put out the fire before there was much damage,” said Guaba. “After that incident, we looked at the cameras and realized it was the same woman who had returned.”

See: ABQ News entry, in: <https://abq.news/2021/12/fbi-investigates-fire-at-albuquerque-mosque-as-possible-hate-crime/>, retrieved on 05.12.2021

IsP140615-US: CAIR-Missouri Calls for ‘Independent and Transparent’ Probe of Alleged Racist ‘Porch Monkey’ Assault on Muslim 6th Grader— On December 8, The Missouri chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-Missouri), called on Kirkwood School District in Kirkwood, Missouri, to do a thorough and “independent and transparent” investigation of alleged racist discrimination and assault which targeted a Muslim of African heritage. A Nipher Middle School teacher allegedly grabbed the Muslim 6th grader, threw him out of class and then reportedly threw the student’s backpack over him in the hallway. Before taking that action, the teacher reportedly said, “I can’t F...ing do this.” The student’s father registered a complaint about the incident to the principal, but the school did not resolve the case. In October 2021, while he was returning home on the school bus. The Muslim student was reportedly assaulted by a 7th grader who started making fun of him, where he called him names, including

“porch monkey.” Again, the school principal reportedly did not take any disciplining measures. The day before, an 8th grader allegedly assaulted the Muslim student, again and called him a “porch monkey.” The Muslim student sought medical treatment for a swollen lip.

See: CAIR News entry, in: https://www.cair.com/press_releases/cair-missouri-calls-for-independent-and-transparent-probe-of-alleged-racist-porch-monkey-assault-on-muslim-6th-grader/, retrieved on 09.12.2021

IsP140616-US: Police accused of mishandling Islamophobic attack on Muslim student—

Members of the Muslim-American community in the US state of Virginia criticized the Fairfax City Police Department for mishandling an attack on a 16-year-old female Muslim high school student in which they refused to characterize the case as a hate crime. The student was reportedly subjected to Islamophobic and racist slurs before she was physically assaulted and had her hijab pulled off by a fellow student at Fairfax High School in Fairfax City, a suburb of Washington, D.C. According to local news reports, the police said their investigation had determined that there were no racist or Islamophobic slurs made against the victim and that her hijab was not forcibly removed by the male student during the attack. But according to numerous witnesses and the victim’s legal representative, she was subjected to Islamophobic slurs and was attacked by another student. Several members of the Muslim-American community in the area who were familiar with the case told Arab News that they fear the police were engaged in a cover up because they mischaracterized the victim’s words in a way to make it appear as a fight between two students. They also said the police did not interview any witnesses before they made the determination.

See: Arabnews newspaper entry, in: <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1990606/world>, retrieved on 22.12.2021

IsP140617-US: Suit: Missouri shooting range made Muslim woman remove hijab—

A firearms store and gun range in suburban Kansas City refused to let a Muslim woman use the range unless she removed her hijab, a Muslim civil rights organization alleged in a federal lawsuit. In a lawsuit filed on December 28, the Council on American-Islamic Relations and the law firm of Baldwin & Vernon in Independence alleged that the gun range at Frontier Justice in Lee’s Summit enforced a dress code in a discriminatory way that disproportionately affects Muslim women. Rania Barakat and her husband went to Frontier Justice on Jan. 1, 2020, to shoot at the gun range. According to the lawsuit, Barakat was told she would not be allowed to use the range unless she removed her hijab.

See: Religion News entry, in: <https://religionnews.com/2021/12/30/suit-missouri-shooting-range-made-muslim-woman-remove-hijab/>, retrieved on 31.12.2021

IsP140618-Canada: Teacher removed from post in Quebec elementary school for wearing a hijab—

A teacher employed at an elementary school in Chelsea, Quebec, had been removed from her teaching position because she wore a hijab, CTV News reported on December 8. The Western Quebec School Board confirmed that a Grade 3 teacher at Chelsea Elementary School, located 20 kilometres north of Ottawa, was moved from her job as a teacher in the classroom because of Bill 21, Quebec’s law that bared some civil servants from wearing religious symbols.

See: Montreal Gazette News entry, in: <https://montrealgazette.com/news/quebec/teacher-removed-from-post-in-quebec-elementary-school-for-wearing-a-hijab>, retrieved on 09.12.2021

IsP140619-Canada: Edmonton man accused in 'hate-motivated' attack on Muslim women remains at large—

Richard Bradley Stevens, remained the subject of an arrest warrant after he failed to attend trial in August, police confirmed earlier in the week. Stevens faces two counts of assault and a count of mischief for allegedly attacking a mother and daughter outside Southgate Centre mall on December 8, 2020. The incident was the first in a string of allegedly “hate-motivated” assaults on Muslim women that took place in the Edmonton area in 2020. Stevens failed to appear in court on August 18, which was supposed to be the start of his two-day trial. His then-lawyer told court he had lost contact with his client and asked to withdraw from the case. An arrest warrant was issued that day.

See: Edmonton Journal News entry, in: <https://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/edmonton-man-accused-in-hate-motivated-attack-on-muslim-women-remains-at-large>, retrieved on 11.12.2021



IsP140620-Canada: The British Army Has a Fake Mosque in Canada for Training Troops—

A fake mosque on a military base in Canada, was discovered by a Muslim man who came across the mosque on publicly accessible military grounds. But the Canadian Armed Forces, or CAF, promise it's not used for training with live ammunition. Mahmood Mourra was out hunting with friends in the Alberta prairie, about 250 km southeast of Calgary, when he first spotted the fake mosque, the CBC first reported the week before. He told VICE World News he was “aggravated and confused” when he saw it. Lieutenant-Colonel Lena Angell, director of the army’s public affairs, told VICE World News that British armed forces used the base for training put up the mosque in 2006 as part of a simulated village. The fake mosque was used to train British soldiers for the war in Afghanistan and, Angell said, it was only used for non-live fire training and never by Canadian soldiers. The structure was still standing but was scheduled to be deconstructed in 2022. A UK Ministry of Defense spokesperson told VICE World News the mosque was used in tandem with cultural advisors to “teach soldiers how to interact appropriately with Muslims and respect protected sites.”

See: VICE News entry, in: <https://www.vice.com/en/article/m7vgv3/canada-fake-mosque-on-military-base/>, retrieved on 17.12.2021

IsP140621-Canada: Animal carcass found outside Vaudreuil-Dorion mosque— Quebec provincial police were called to the mosque on Rang Saint-Antoine in Vaudreuil-Dorion Saturday morning December 11, after an animal carcass was discovered outside. The Sûreté du Québec had provided little detail about the case, they could not say what kind of animal or in what state it was, and whether there was a note or message.

See: CBC News entry, in: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/animal-carcass-vaudreuil-mosque-1.6283313>, retrieved on 15.12.2021

THE MAJORITY OF MUSLIM HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS HAVE EXPERIENCED SYSTEMIC AND INTERPERSONAL BIAS, PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION IN THEIR CAREERS. MANY ARE UNCOMFORTABLE OPENLY PRACTISING THEIR RELIGION WHICH PREVENTS THEM FROM SHOWING UP AUTHENTICALLY.

ASSUMPTIONS, STEREOTYPES, BIAS AND DISCRIMINATION

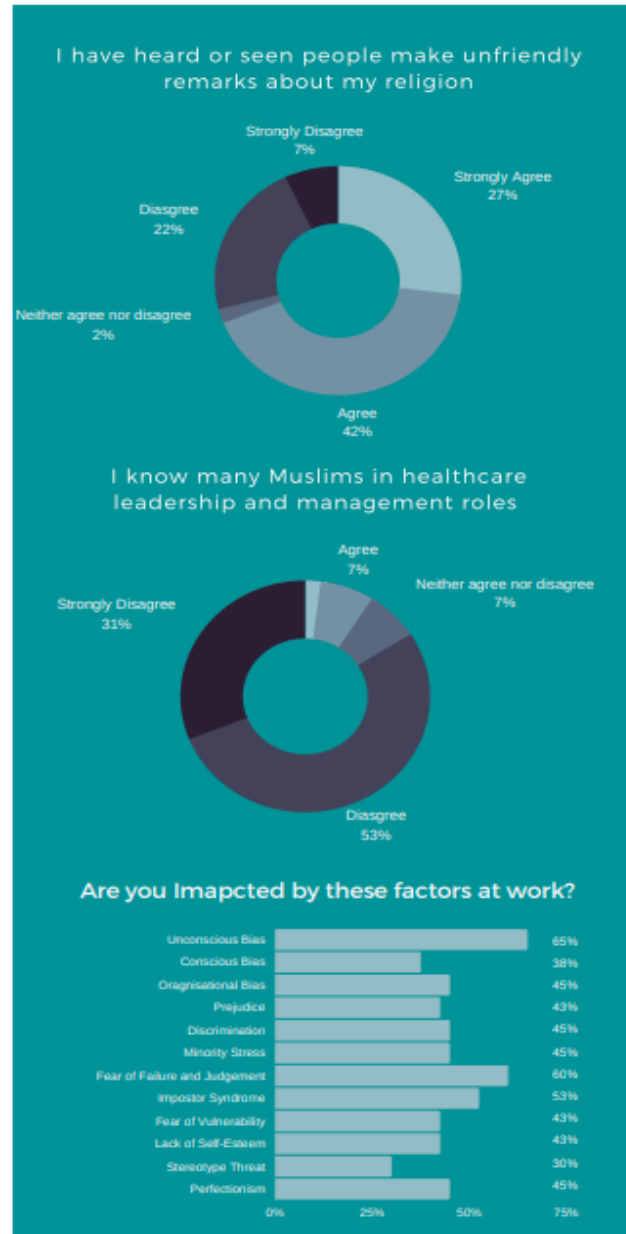
- Almost **8 in 10** experienced **negative assumptions** related to their religion.
- **7 in 10** reported **negative stereotypes** about Muslims either perceived or through comments heard in the workplace.
- **6 in 10** reported being impacted by **unconscious bias**.
- **Almost half** have experienced **discrimination**.

MENTORING AND LEADERSHIP

- **Two-thirds** felt there is a **lack of senior representation** and Muslim **role models**.
- **Two-thirds** report a lack of **access to mentors**.
- Almost **9 in 10 Muslim** healthcare professionals **do not know many Muslim colleagues in leadership and management positions**.

IMPACT

- Almost **half** have been impacted by **organisational bias, discrimination, and minority stress**.
- Almost **half** reported that sometimes they want to **leave healthcare**.
- Over **1 in 5** reported that they have felt **disrespected** because of their faith.
- **1 in 4** reported they have felt **socially avoided**
- **1 in 4** have **felt ignored** because of their religion



IsP140622-UK: Report reveals shocking extent of Islamophobia in UK healthcare system—

A new report detailed the shocking extent of Islamophobia and marginalization faced by Muslim members of staff in the UK’s National Health Service. A survey of dozens of Muslim healthcare workers, conducted jointly by the Muslim Doctors Association and campaign group The Grey Area, found evidence “of discrimination, racism and Islamophobia” in the nation’s cherished public healthcare system. According the report, which was published earlier in the week, “Muslim HCPs (Healthcare Professionals) experience bias at work from both colleagues and patients.” It added that almost four in 10 workers had experienced verbal abuse about their faith from colleagues. In addition, “the majority of Muslim HCPs have experienced othering and stereotype threat associated with identity concealment and inability to bring their full selves to work,” the report said, and “two-thirds do not feel comfortable raising concerns at work.” Aside from outright abuse, Muslims also face softer barriers to advancement in their NHS careers, the researchers found. “Almost nine in 10 Muslim HCPs do not know Muslims in leadership and management

positions and over two-thirds can not identify role models whom they can relate to and give them confidence in career progression.... Almost half have reported they have had thoughts of leaving their profession,” according to the report.

See: Arab News entry, in: <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1984771/world>, Full Report: https://0b8dd418-35aa-40af-9b7e-116a6e5420ee.filesusr.com/ugd/a09727_7b144cbc0a4b497b814d6f96302808e1.pdf, retrieved on 14.12.2021

IsP140623-UK: Woman called a “Muslim b**” and told she had “dirty hair” on London bus**— A Muslim woman travelling on an evening bus towards Clapham described being called a “Muslim b****” by a female passenger who continued to abuse and swear at her throughout their journey. The perpetrator also told her: “look at you with your dirty hair, you sl*g, you sl*t.” A Spanish man, disturbed by the ongoing abuse, approached the driver to intervene, who, according to the Muslim woman, dismissively declined to intervene, and claimed that the perpetrator had ‘mental health issues’. See: Tell Mama UK News entry, in: <https://tellmamauk.org/woman-called-a-muslim-b-and-told-she-had-dirty-hair-on-london-bus/>, retrieved on 15.11.2021

IsP140624-UK: Muslim girls assaulted by group of women who tried to yank their hijabs off— South Yorkshire Police were investigating an Islamophobic hate crime in the Attercliffe area of Sheffield following the assaults on two Muslim girls. A police appeal, published on November 22, detailed how the two girls, aged 14 and 13, had left the mosque on Staniforth Road when four women of unknown description approached them before assaulting them. The anti-Muslim assault occurred on October 14. South Yorkshire Police confirmed that the perpetrators had, during the attack, sought to remove their hijabs and other religious clothing, the statement added that both girls suffered minor injuries. See: Tell Mama UK News entry, in: <https://tellmamauk.org/muslim-girls-assaulted-by-group-of-women-who-tried-to-yank-their-hijabs-off/>, retrieved on 30.11.2021

Bias

Articles assessed as ‘Biased’ or ‘Very Biased’ (14%)

Publications whose articles had the highest proportion of ‘Very Biased’ rating were: Christian Today (11.3%), The Spectator (10.9%) and Daily Mail Australia (10%)

21% of all articles assessed were categorised as ‘Antagonistic’ and only 3% were categorised as ‘Supportive’

Publication with the highest proportion of ‘Antagonistic’ articles was The Spectator (37.3%), whilst New Statesman had the highest proportion of ‘Supportive’ articles (16.1%)

The themes which are the worst in terms of bias, are Religion, Terrorism and Extremism,

Misrepresentation

Almost 1 in 10 articles misrepresent Muslims and/or Islam

The majority of misrepresentation came via news reporting (82%)

Right-leaning and religious publications have the highest proportion of articles which misrepresent Muslim behaviours or beliefs

The Spectator magazine had the highest proportion of articles (1 in 4) which misrepresent Muslims and/or Islam. Daily Mail Australia and Christian Today followed with at least one in five articles

The worst cases of misrepresentation, all found in right leaning publications, led to libel cases by Muslims

Negative Aspects & Behaviours

Almost 60% of articles across all publications were identified as associating negative aspects and behaviour with Muslims or Islam.

Top 3 offenders were AFP, Reuters and Associated Press (AP).

Generalisations

7% per cent of all articles analysed included one or more generalisations about Muslims and/or Islam with the worst offenders being right-leaning or religious outlets

1 in 10 opinion pieces (10%) generalise about Muslims and/or Islam, despite the fact that only 6% of all articles were categorised under opinion

The percentage of generalisations are highest in the topics of Terrorism/Extremism (25%), Politics (18%), Middle East (17%) and Religion (15%)

Images & Headlines

Just over 2 per cent of headlines and images were misleading or inaccurate, whilst just under two per cent of all images were considered to be ‘Biased’

71% of biased images were found in articles concerning international events

Right-leaning tabloids and religious publications have the greatest number of ‘Irrelevant’ and ‘Misleading’ headlines

Daily Mail Australia has the highest percentage of ‘Irrelevant’ and ‘Misleading’ headlines (14%), followed by The Sun (6%)

IsP140625-UK: Coverage of Muslims and Islam in UK media is mostly negative, study finds— A report into media coverage of Muslims and Islam in the UK had found the majority of

articles had a negative slant, a study had found. The report by the Centre for Media Monitoring analysed more than 48,000 online articles and 5,500 broadcast clips from 34 media organisations that mentioned Islam and Muslims between 2018 and 2019. The study, commissioned by the Muslim Council of Britain and published on November 30, found that almost 60 per cent of articles portrayed Islam negatively and one in five associated the faith with terrorism or extremism. The 162-page study had been welcomed by editors of publications which included The Mirror and The Sunday Times, who said news outlets had a “duty” of accuracy and fairness to their audiences. The report revealed that 59 per cent of online media outlets associated Muslims and Islam with negative aspects or behaviour, with right-leaning newspapers and wire services been most likely to do so. It also found that 47 per cent of all broadcast clips analysed showed Islam and Muslims in a negative light, and one in 10 articles misrepresented the faith. Other key findings were that seven per cent of articles analysed included generalisations, with most made on the topics of terrorism and extremism (25 per cent), followed by politics (18 per cent) and the Middle East (17 per cent). The study also provided recommendations for media publications, such as to avoid linking ordinary Muslims to crime, terrorism or extremism unless there was a justifiable reason to do so, encouraged more diversity in newsrooms and for reporters to be aware of and reflect on potential biases.

See: The Independent newspaper entry, in: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/british-media-muslims-islam-islamophobia-b1976742.html>, Full Report: <https://cfmm.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/CfMM-Annual-Report-2018-2020-digital.pdf>, retrieved on 16.12.2021

IsP140626-UK: Lifesaving paramedic told 'I don't want to be touched by a filthy Muslim'—

A lifesaving paramedic had opened up about the abuse she had faced on the front lines - just because she was a Muslim. Mahdiyah Bandali, from Kings Norton, had revealed some of the shocking abuse hurled in her direction including being told by a patient 'I don't want to be touched by a filthy muslim.' Mahdiyah posted a viral tweet earlier this year about been called a f****ing p*aki multiple times on her last ambulance shift. The social media post led to an outpouring of support. But the medic said more needs to be done to tackle the issue of Islamophobia in our society -including among some colleagues.

See: Birmingham Mail News entry, in: <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/lifesaving-paramedic-told-i-dont-22343969>, retrieved on 20.12.2021

IsP140627-UK: London Underground: Muslim man told 'this is a Christian country' by passenger in racist attack for reading Quran on Tube—

On November 27, A London Underground passenger was left shocked after a stranger started shouting at him for reading the Quran. In the video, you could hear the stranger said: "Let me tell you, this is a Christian country. You behave in our manners and the way we do things". According to the passenger, he was reciting the Quran softly. The man also said: "That's your problem, you have no respect ... I was here and you didn't even have the decency to ask if you could do it."



See: My London News entry, in: <https://www.mylondon.news/news/zone-1-news/london-underground-muslim-man-told-22315961>, Image Source: https://i.dailymail.co.uk/1s/2021/11/30/15/51139935-10257575-The-commuter-goes-on-to-tell-him-this-is-a-Christian-country-as-a-37_1638286204393.jpg, retrieved on 01.12.2021

IsP140628-UK: Far-right lures recruits using COVID-19 conspiracy theories, alongside misogyny, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia, says study— A new study had found that the far-right had extended their reach through messaging app Telegram and COVID-19 conspiracy theories. The London-based Institute for Strategic Dialogue study had found that the far-right had been using COVID-19 conspiracy theories to recruit people into their extremist views. It found

that 90% of the most viewed posts from far-right groups contained misinformation regarding COVID-19 vaccines or the pharmaceutical companies manufacturing them. Furthermore, much of the COVID-19 misinformation spread by far-right groups was underpinned by white supremacist ideologies, including extreme misogyny, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, the study found. "COVID-19 has served as a catalyst for radicalization," Ciaran O'Connor, an analyst at the London-based Institute for Strategic Dialogue and leader of the study, writes. "It allows conspiracy theorists or extremists to create simple narratives, framing it as us versus them, good versus evil." Of the 239 channels, 167 actively discussed COVID-19 between January 2020 and June 2021, included 133 white supremacist channels that mobilized anger and fear around restrictions to curb the spread of COVID-19.

See: Yahoo News entry, in: <https://news.yahoo.com/far-lures-recruits-using-covid-134548878.html>, retrieved on 24.12.2021

IsP140629-UK: Police hunt suspects after gun fired at car near city mosque— West Midlands Police were hunting a gunman who fired at a car outside a mosque in the city of Birmingham. The shocking shooting happened outside Maarif-e-Islam, also known as the Hussainia Mosque, on Herbert Road, in Small Heath, on December 12. Police said occupants of another car and a van were involved in the shooting.

See: Birmingham Mail News entry, in: <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/small-heath-mosque-shooting-police-22445040>, retrieved on 15.12.2021

IsP140630-Denmark: Denmark pledges to protect teachers from threats against free speech— Denmark said it would take measures to protect teachers' freedom of expression and prevent the risks of "self-censorship". The Danish government had stated that teachers should be able to speak about certain subjects, including cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed, the Holocaust, and women's rights issues. The ruling Socialist party said it would begin discussions in parliament on "freedom of expression" in January 2022. The week before, Denmark's opposition had a majority support its proposal for school teaching on cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed.

See: EuroNews entry, in: <https://www.euronews.com/2021/12/17/denmark-pledges-to-protect-teachers-from-threats-against-free-speech>, retrieved on 19.12.2021



IsP140631-Germany: Windows at German mosque damaged, unclear if it was targeted— On December 14, a shattered window of the DITIB Eyup Sultan Mosque was seen in east Leipzig, Germany. The mosque was damaged on the evening of December 13. Four window panes were smashed, according to a police spokesman. Police told news agency dpa that a group of about 80 people had marched nearby and thrown paint and stones at a police patrol car. Police estimated the

total value of the damage caused during the incident was \$34,000. The mosque appeared to be the only building that was damaged, but police didn't say whether that was on purpose and there was no word on whether there was any political motive.

See: The Washington Post newspaper entry, in: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/windows-at-german-mosque-damaged-unclear-if-it-was-targeted/2021/12/14/7a2123c4-5cd2-11ec-b1ef-cb78be717f0e_story.html, retrieved on 20.12.2021

IsP140632-Germany: German Police Probe Far-Right Politicians Over Telegram Chats - Spiegel— German police searched the homes of two politicians from the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party, Der Spiegel magazine reported on December 21, part of a probe into messages in a Telegram chat group that reportedly called for revolution and civil war. Police searched two residences in Bavaria and confiscated mobile phones as part of an investigation into the "Alternative Message Group Bavaria" on the Telegram messaging service, prosecutors said in a statement seen by Reuters. The two people whose homes were searched are believed to have made statements in the 200-member Telegram group in December 2020 and were suspected of public incitement, the statement said.

See: US NEWS entry, in: <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2021-12-21/german-police-probe-far-right-politicians-over-telegram-chats-spiegel>, retrieved on 22.12.2021

IsP140633-France: France's Eric Zemmour announces presidential candidacy— On November 30, Eric Zemmour announced on social media that he was running in the French presidential election in April 2022. Zemmour. POLITICO's poll of polls suggested that Zemmour would get 14 percent of the vote in a presidential election, behind Emmanuel Macron on 24 percent and Marine Le Pen on 18 percent. See: Politico News entry, in: <https://www.politico.eu/article/frances-eric-zemmour-announces-presidential-candidacy/>, retrieved on 01.12.2021



IsP140634-France: Muslim Cemetery Vandalized in Mulhouse— The Muslim community in France had again been stunned by yet another Islamophobic act as vandals defaced the Muslim cemetery in Mulhouse, a commune in the Haut-Rhin department in eastern France. Mayor of Mulhouse Michele Lutz condemned the acts of vandalism that took place on Sunday evening December 12, in the Muslim section of the city's cemetery. The mayor said authorities found

elements of decoration of tombs, flowers, vases, and statuettes, scatted on the ground in the Muslim section of the cemetery.

See: Morocco World News entry, in: <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2021/12/345993/islamophobia-muslim-cemetery-vandalized-in-mulhouse-france>, Image Source: <https://i1.wp.com/img.youm7.com/ArticleImgs/2021/12/12/152128-%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%A8-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%AA%D8%AF%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%B3-%D9%85%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%85%D9%8A.jpg?w=708&is-pending-load=1#038;ssl=1>, retrieved on 15.12.2021

ASIA

IsP140635-India: Bengaluru cop suspended for allegedly assaulting Muslim youth, making him drink urine

— Tausif Pasha was allegedly assaulted in a Bengaluru police station on December 2. The Bengaluru city police had suspended a police sub-inspector for allegedly assaulting a Muslim youth in a police station and where he forced him to drink urine. The suspended police sub-inspector, Harish K N, was attached to the Byatarayanapura police station. Tausif Pasha was taken to the police station over a quarrel with a neighbour. Tausif’s father Aslam Pasha said his son was assaulted, and the cops demanded money for Tausif’s release. “But we never knew that Tausif was subject to brutal torture till he came out of the police station,” said the father. Tausif said Harish and two other police constables, hit him in the abdomen with a bat, forcibly cut his beard and forced him to drink urine. “They hit me with cricket bat at least 30 times and when I asked them for water to drink, they made me drink urine. They also cut my beard. I begged them not to do so as it was part of my faith, but they said this (police station) was not a religious centre. They also made me clean the police station,” he said. Aslam said Tausif was released after the intervention of MLA BZ Zameer Ahmed Khan. The victim’s family said Tausif was admitted to Victoria Hospital and was discharged on December 6.



See: Indian Express News entry, in: <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/bangalore/bengaluru-muslim-youth-police-assault-7660030/>, retrieved on 10.12.2021

IsP140636-India: Muslims only know how to produce children: Uttar Pradesh Minister Baldev Singh Aulakh

— Uttar Pradesh Minister Baldev Singh Aulakh had stoked a huge controversy with his comments on the Muslim community. While speaking to the media, the Jal Shakti Minister in the Yogi Adityanath Cabinet said that “people of the Muslim community only know how to produce children”. The BJP MLA from Uttar Pradesh’s Bilaspur said, “The people of the Muslim community only eat and drink and produce children...Education, or upliftment of their children have never been their priority”. He condemned the statement of political leaders who had raised voices against the proposal to increase the age of women from 18 to 21.



See: Times Now News entry, in: <https://www.timesnownews.com/india/article/muslims-only-know-how-to-produce-children-uttar-pradesh-minister-baldev-singh-aulakh/842351>, retrieved on 22.12.2021



A photo of the Krishna temple in Mathura and the mosque next to it

IsP140637-India: Hindutva outfit files plea to stop namaz at Mathura's Shahi Idgah mosque— A Hindutva outfit had filed an application before a Mathura court where they applied for an order to stop namaz inside the city's Shahi Idgah mosque and on the road adjacent to it, Bar and Bench reported on December 17. The petitioner body Sri Krishna Janmabhumi Mukti Aandolan Samiti, which had filed the petition, was also pushing for the razing down of the mosque, located next to the Shri Krishna Temple Complex. Mahendra Pratap Singh, the president of the outfit, had contended that earlier, people did not use to offer namaz inside the mosque. He claimed that in the past few years, Muslims have been offering prayers at the site, and that the prayers should be stopped.

See: Scroll News entry, in: <https://scroll.in/latest/1013075/hindutva-outfit-files-plea-to-stop-namaz-at-mathuras-shahi-idgah-mosque>, retrieved on 19.12.2021

IsP140638-India: Haridwar: Police case after outrage over anti-Muslim hate speech— Police in the northern Indian state of Uttarakhand had registered a case after a meeting of Hindu leaders called for violence against Muslims. Videos from the meeting had shown provocative speeches by Hindu religious leaders which went viral earlier in the week, which also sparked outrage. The event took place in the holy town of Haridwar between 17 and 19 December. But the police said they did not open a case until December 23 because there were no official complaints before that. There have been no arrests yet, and the police case only mentions one man by name - Waseem Rizvi, a Muslim who said he had converted to Hinduism and since then he had been known as Jitendra Narayan Tyagi. Police said that a case had been registered against Mr Tyagi and unnamed "others" under charges of "promoting hatred between religious groups". Social media users, however, had identified many of the speakers in the videos who were important religious leaders often seen in the company of ministers and members from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

See: BBC News entry, in: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-5977842>, retrieved on 25.12.2021

IsP140639-India: New city, old schism: Hindu groups target Gurgaon's Muslim prayer sites— For more than a decade, a car park outside sector 37 police station in Gurgaon, a satellite city to India's capital, Delhi had been one of hundreds of sites that the Muslims of Gurgaon had been using as a makeshift prayer ground on Fridays. Usually such prayers were held in mosques but Gurgaon, a city that rose in the 1990s from the brushland on the outskirts of Delhi to serve

India's new middle class, had a severe shortage, with around 13 to cater for a city of more than 1.5 million people. Attempts to build more mosques in the area, even on Muslim-owned land, had been met with resistance and hostility. Instead, the thousands of Muslim labourers who had flocked to this expanding metropolis for construction work on Gurgaon's corporate skyscrapers and luxury high-rise apartments found another option. Unable to travel for miles to a mosque to offer namaz, they began praying on empty patches of land. They even sought permission from the administration and by 2018 the Muslim community had been granted permission for outdoor prayers in 108 places across the district. "People are forced to pray out in the open because we have no other choice," said Altaf Ahmad, a co-founder of the Gurgaon Muslim council. But in 2018, rumblings of discontent began, as Hindu vigilante groups realised that Muslims were praying on public land. They began to hold protests, sometimes with more than 100 people, disrupting dozens of Friday prayers and fracturing the modern metropolis along an age-old schism. In response, the Gurgaon administration reduced the number of namaz sites from 108 to 37, to the dismay of the Muslim leaders who felt the administration was bowing to the demands of fanatics. "They told us it was temporary and just to cool the situation down," said Ahmad. But this year, after a lull due to Covid, the objections came back with a vengeance. Every Friday for months, members of Hindu vigilante groups alongside local residents had been gathering, occasionally armed with axes and wooden rods, at the sites of namaz to try to stop them happening. Slogans including "shoot the traitors" have been shouted and Hindu prayers and songs read out to try to drown out Qur'an readings. The month before, an umbrella organisation of Hindu groups called the Sanyukt Hindu Sangharsh Samiti told police that they were ready to use weapons and go to jail if the namaz was not stopped. At the forefront of the fight is Dinesh Thakur, who goes by the name Dinesh Bharti, a nod to his devotion to Bharat, meaning mother India. Thakur, who had set up his own one-man Hindu nationalist army called Bharat Mata Vahini, had been detained more than 10 times and arrested and charged three times for his communal actions. On December 3, Thakur sprinted towards Shehzad Khan, the Muslim leader who was there to lead the prayer, and began confronting him, getting within inches of his face shouting "no namaz here", until he was dragged away by five police officers. As the Muslims filed silently into the area for namaz, heads down and clutching their prayer mats, a line of armed police held back the Hindu nationalist mob. Seven were detained by police. "Conducting namaz in the open is land jihad," Thakur said before being arrested. "It's an international conspiracy. They do namaz outside, then they build a shrine, then they build a mosque and then inside the mosque they are harbouring terrorists and weapons and they are a threat to the nation. I will not stop my fight until this becomes illegal."

See: The Guardian newspaper entry, in: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/dec/04/hindu-groups-target-muslim-sites-india-gurgaon>, retrieved on 05.12.2021

IsP140640-The Occupied Palestinian Territory: Settlers attack Palestinian homes as Israelis shout 'Death to Arabs'— Tensions across the occupied Palestinian territories had been flared up again, with dozens of right-wing Israelis held demonstrations in Jerusalem under the slogan "Death to Arabs" and orchestrated numerous attacks on Palestinian homes. "Death to Arabs. May your village burn" chants resonated in Jerusalem on December 18 as protesters denounced the Israeli government for its response to the attack that claimed the life of a yeshiva student. According to The Times of Israel, some 13 Israeli settlers were arrested during demonstrations, including one person possessing a number of "weapons." In a series of footage from the protest Saturday, Israeli settlers could be heard yelling "death to Arabs" while waving Israeli flags.

See: Daily Sabah newspaper entry, in: <https://www.dailysabah.com/world/mid-east/settlers-attack-palestinian-homes-as-israelis-shout-death-to-arabs>, retrieved on 20.12.2021

IsP140641-The Occupied Palestinian Territory: Settlers storm Al-Aqsa Mosque— On December 19, Dozens of Jewish radical settlers broke into the Al-Aqsa Mosque / Haram al-Sharif compound in occupied East Jerusalem. Eyewitnesses told Petra's reporter in Ramallah that the

settlers stormed the Mosque through the al-Magharebah gate in groups under tight protection by the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF).

See: Roya News entry, in: <https://en.royanews.tv/news/33313/2021-12-19>, retrieved on 24.12.2021



IsP140642-The Occupied Palestinian Territory: Right-wing Israeli spray racist graffiti on mosque in Arab town— On December 8, A group of right-wing Israelis sprayed racist slogans on the walls of a mosque in Umm Al-Fahm city. Local sources confirmed that the saboteurs had entered the Arab city of Umm Al-Fahm and sprayed anti-Arab slogans on the Qatayeen Al-Shomar Mosque's walls. Videos on social media showed the Star of David and the Israeli flag spray-painted on the mosque walls.

See: Middle East Monitor News entry, in: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20211208-right-wing-israeli-spray-racist-graffiti-on-mosque-in-arab-town/>, Video Source: https://twitter.com/AlmakdesyMedia/status/1468471445143572480?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw, retrieved on 10.12.2021

POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

IsP140643-EU: Tackling hate speech, discrimination important objective: EU official— On December 5, Marija Pejcinovic Buric, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, said in response to a letter by Turkey's Parliament Speaker Mustafa Şentop that Tackling hate speech and ending discrimination remained an important objective. Buric added she had "no intention" of ending the council's campaign to promote women's diversity and their right to wear headscarves or hijabs, which came under immediate attack from France after it launched the month before. The council was forced to take down images of women in headscarves that were shared on the Twitter account of its Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination Division with the slogans "Freedom is in the headscarf," "Bring joy & accept hijabs," and "Beauty is in diversity as freedom is in the hijab."

See: Daily Sabah newspaper entry, in: <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/eu-affairs/tackling-hate-speech-discrimination-important-objective-eu-official>, retrieved on 07.12.2021

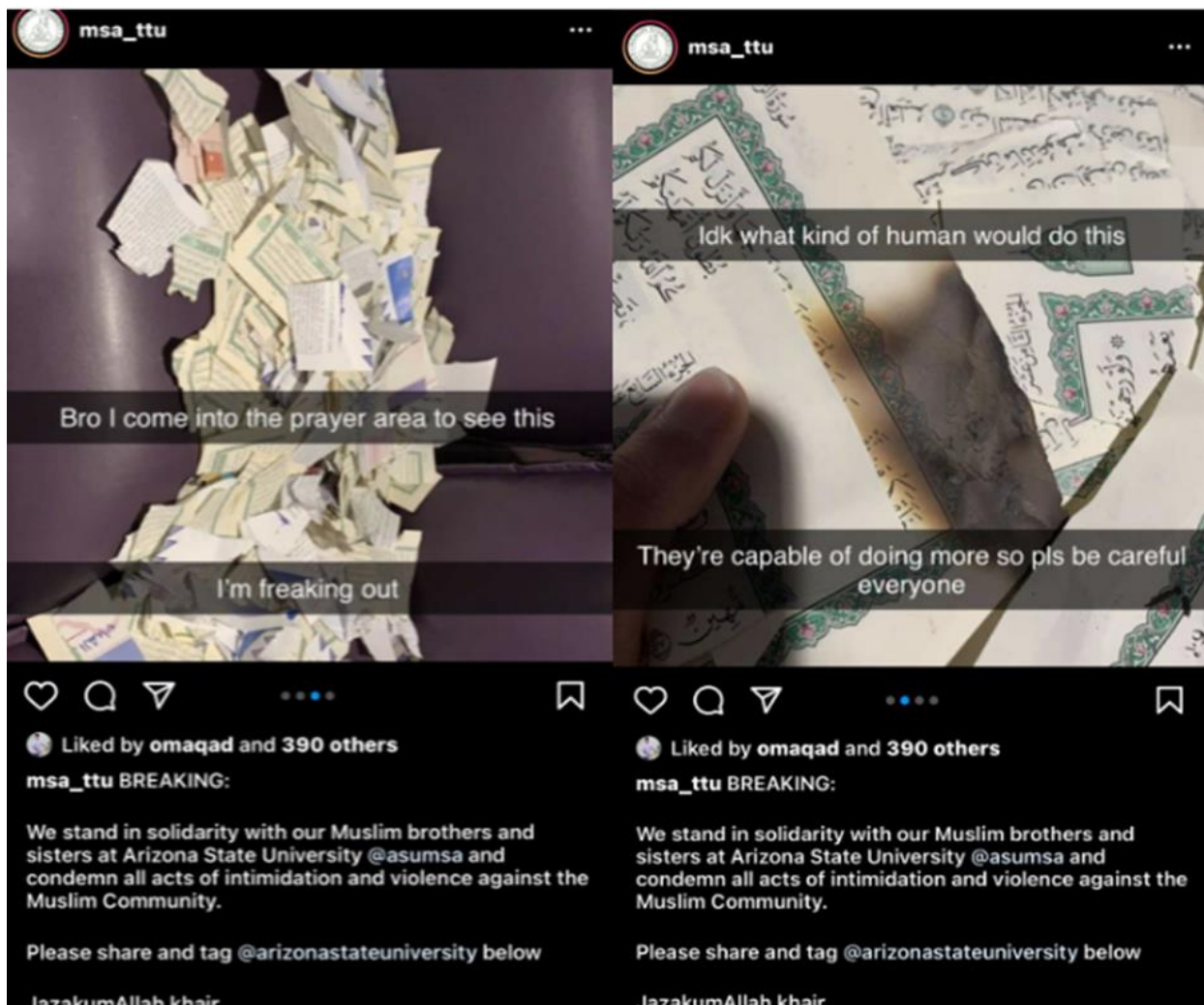
NORTH AMERICA

IsP140644-US: House Democrats pass bill to combat Islamophobia in support of Omar— On December 14, The United States House of Representatives had passed legislation to create a special office within the State Department to combat Islamophobia globally, as Democratic leaders sought to find a way to unify their party against anti-Muslim hatred while stopping short of progressives' calls to remove Rep. Lauren Boebert (R-Colo.) from committees for her attacks on Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.). Lawmakers passed the bill along party lines, 219-212. The furor that led to Tuesday's vote began when a video surfaced over the Thanksgiving weekend of Boebert recalling an incident – which Omar denied ever happened – when she saw the progressive lawmaker in a Capitol elevator. "I said, 'Well, she doesn't have a backpack. We should be fine,'" Boebert recalled, drawing laughs from the audience. "And I said, 'Oh, look. The jihad squad decided to show up for work today.'" Boebert later tweeted an apology "to anyone in the Muslim community I offended with my comment about Rep. Omar." Boebert and Omar then spoke over the phone a few days later in a conversation that both later said quickly went off the rails.

See: The Hill News entry, in: <https://thehill.com/homenews/house/585854-house-democrats-pass-bill-to-combat-islamophobia-in-support-of-omar>, retrieved on 16.12.2021

IsP140645-US: Fairfax High School students stage walkout to support student they say was target of Islamophobic attack— On December 17, Hundreds of students from Fairfax High School in Virginia walked out in protest to show their support for a student they said was attacked in an Islamophobic incident. A Change.org petition called on Fairfax school administrators to do more about the incident, which happened December 14, had garnered more than 3,600 signatures. Reagan Wise, a student at Fairfax High School, told WTOP that a male student pushed a female student to the ground, took off her hijab, beat her up, "and then the guy who did it did not face any trouble and is currently still threatening other students." The petition says that the female student was left exposed without her hijab and that "an ambulance was called into the school for a panic attack when they really should have been told this was an assault." A spokesperson for Fairfax County Public Schools told WTOP in a statement that FCPS was "conducting an investigation into the incident and no further details can be shared at this stage as administrators work to establish the facts."

See: WTOP NEWS entry, in: <https://wtop.com/fairfax-county/2021/12/fairfax-high-school-students-stage-walk-out-to-support-student-they-say-was-target-of-islamophobic-attack/>, retrieved on 17.12.2021



IsP140646-US: Man arrested, accused of damaging property, including Quran, at ASU's Hayden Library— Police had arrested a man accused of causing "significant damage" to property, including a Quran, at Hayden Library on the Tempe campus of Arizona State University. The Muslim Students Association of ASU reported that the Interfaith Room had been vandalized on December 8 and that "Islamic literature and copies of the Quran were torn and burned and the walls were damaged." According to ASU Police, Wesley Waggoner was arrested at on December 9 after a witness saw him tear up several magazines and books and reported it to library staff, according to court records and a statement from ASU police.

See: Fox10 Phoenix News entry, in: <https://www.fox10phoenix.com/news/man-arrested-accused-of-damaging-property-including-quran-at-asus-hayden-library>. Image Source: https://www.cair.com/press_releases/cair-arizona-calls-for-hate-crime-probe-of-asu-vandalism-targeting-qurans-in-interfaith-prayer-room/ retrieved on 11.12.2021

IsP140647-US: CAIR-SFBA Welcomes Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office Policy to Allow Muslim Women to Wear Headscarf While in Custody— On December 16, The San Francisco Bay Area office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-SFBA) welcomed the Santa Clara County (SCC) Sheriff's office new policy to allow Muslim women to wear headscarves, also known as hijabs, while in custody. The new policy states, "Inmates who practice a religion that requires particular modes of dress, garments, headgear, etc., other than standard-issue clothing, will be accommodated subject to the compelling government interest in maintaining facility security, including identifying inmates and detecting contraband." This policy change followed a complaint filed by CAIR-SFBA on behalf of a Muslim woman who was forced to remove her headscarf by the SCC Sheriff's office in early 2021. The woman initially contacted 9-1-1 to report

a domestic dispute but was taken into custody at Elmwood Correctional Facility in Milpitas. Once at the jail, SCC Sheriff's deputies forcibly removed her hijab during the process of obtaining booking photos. Despite stating that her headscarf was required for religious reasons, it was never returned to her, and she resorted to using a T-shirt to cover her head. CAIR-SFBA immediately urged the sheriff's department to change its policy to allow Muslim women to wear their hijabs while detained.

See: CAIR News entry, in: <https://ca.cair.com/sfba/news/cair-sfba-welcomes-santa-clara-county-sheriffs-office-policy-to-allow-muslim-women-to-wear-headscarf-while-in-custody>, retrieved on 17.12.2021

IsP140648-US: Tacoma's religious community gathers to denounce recent vandalism at places of worship— Faith leaders of different religions gathered together on Sunday, October 31, inside a Tacoma auditorium to denounce hate. The interfaith meeting was organized, in part, by the Muslim Association of Puget Sound after a rash of attacks on places of worship across western Washington. "When your place of worship is attacked, and it doesn't matter – it doesn't matter it could be a temple, a mosque, a church – we are all attacked," said Masjid Umar Al-Farooq, of a mosque in Mountlake Terrace. Event organizers point to eight instances in the past three months where religious organizations were vandalized from Seattle to Tacoma. Father Mike McDermott's church offices were set on fire on October 31. "How do we help them show that there is a way to move forward in hope, in peace, so we can dream about a path to a better future," said McDermott. In Tacoma, cellphone video captured members of the Islamic Center of Tacoma praying in the parking lot as fire crews worked to knock down flames at a mosque. Investigators untimely arrested a man who was accused of purposely starting the fire.

See: king5 News entry, in: <https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/tacoma/religious-community-denounce-vandalism-places-of-worship/281-225becf3-d87d-49ae-a0a7-15813602a21b>, retrieved on 02.11.2021

IsP140649-US: Over 17,000 Christians Condemn Lauren Boebert's Islamophobic Remarks, Demand Censure— More than 17,000 Christians signed an online petition which condemned GOP Representative Lauren Boebert's Islamophobic remarks targeting Democratic Representatives Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib. Videos of Boebert described Omar, who is Muslim, as a potential suicide bomber at events with constituents began to circulate online in late November and drew swift condemnation from Democrats and some Republicans. Although Boebert issued an apology to the Muslim community, she did not apologize to Omar directly. "Conservative Christian and Republican Rep. Lauren Boebert is continuing to smear Rep. Ilhan Omar for Omar's Muslim faith. It's a disgusting pattern of dangerous religious bigotry that cannot be allowed to continue," the petition, launched by progressive Christian group Faithful America, says. The petition was first posted on December 2 and had gathered 17,284 signatures as of the time of this writing. "Boebert was recently caught on tape telling a made-up story about riding a Capitol elevator with Omar in order to call her a terrorist: 'I said, well, lookee there, it's the Jihad Squad.... She doesn't have a backpack...so we're good,'" the petition said.

See: Newsweek Magazine entry, in: <https://www.newsweek.com/over-17000-christians-condemn-lauren-boeberts-islamophobic-remarks-demand-censure-1657734>, retrieved on 10.12.2021

IsP140650-US: Michigan city gets ready to inaugurate all-Muslim government— In the 99 years since its incorporation, every mayor of Hamtramck had been Polish American. That ends January 2, 2022, in Hamtramck's centenary year, when Amer Ghalib will be inaugurated, along with an entirely Muslim city council. Hamtramck would become the first known city in the US with a government made up entirely of Muslims, according to the Muslim Public Affairs Council, which said it had no record of any other such administration. Hamtramck Mayor-elect Amer Ghalib will be the first non-Polish American leader in the city's history. Mayor-elect Ghalib was born in Yemen and came to the United States alone as a young man, with a smattering of broken English and little else.

See: CNN News entry, in: <https://www.cnn.com/2021/12/18/us/michigan-hamtramck-all-muslim-council/index.html>, retrieved on 19.12.2021

IsP140651-US: U.S. Senators Cory Booker, Ben Cardin, and Bernie Sanders Introduce Legislation to Create Special Envoy to Monitor and Address Islamophobia— On December 14, U.S. Senators Cory Booker and Ben Cardin, and Bernie Sanders introduced in the Senate, the Combating International Islamophobia Act, legislation that would require the Department of State to establish a Special Envoy for tracking and combatting Islamophobia globally. The creation of the Special Envoy would also help lawmakers and other government officials better understand anti-Muslim hatred and violence, which would allow for the development of a comprehensive strategy that will establish U.S. leadership in addressing Islamophobia worldwide.

See: Goldrushcam News entry, in: <https://goldrushcam.com/sierrasuntimes/index.php/news/local-news/35472-u-s-senators-cory-booker-ben-cardin-and-bernie-sanders-introduce-legislation-to-create-special-envoy-to-monitor-and-address-islamophobia>, retrieved on 19.12.2021

IsP140652-US: Senate appoints first Muslim American as religious freedom envoy— The U.S. Senate approved Muslim American Rashad Hussain as ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom, in a historic move. Hussain, who was nominated by President Joe Biden in July 2021, won Senate approval in an 85-5 vote Thursday (December 16). Hussain was the first American Muslim to hold the position. He served as U.S. special envoy to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), special envoy for strategic counterterrorism communications and was deputy associate White House counsel during the Barack Obama administration. On December 19, Dozens of Jewish radical settlers broke into the Al-Aqsa Mosque / Haram al-Sharif compound in occupied East Jerusalem. Eyewitnesses told Petra's reporter in Ramallah that the settlers stormed the Mosque through the al-Magharebah gate in groups under tight protection by the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF).



See: Daily Sabah newspaper entry, in: <https://www.dailysabah.com/world/americas/us-senate-appoints-first-muslim-american-as-religious-freedom-envoy>, Image Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/1/14/Rashad_hussain_official_photo.jpg/220px-Rashad_hussain_official_photo.jpg, retrieved on 24.12.2021

IsP140653-Canada: Canadian medical journal to retract letter calling hijabs 'an instrument of oppression'— On December 23, The interim editor-in-chief of the Canadian Medical Association Journal said the publication was formally retracting a letter it ran about hijabs that many had slammed as Islamophobic. Kirsten Patrick's announcement came days after she posted on Twitter, in which she apologized for the letter, which called the religious head scarf "an instrument of oppression." "I sincerely apologize on behalf of the CMAJ for my error in publishing the letter," Patrick said in a statement. "I take full responsibility for the inadequacy of editorial process." The letter in question, was written by pediatric surgeon Dr. Sherif Emil and published on December 20, argued that a recent CMAJ cover that featured a young girl in a hijab was misguided, and that it perpetuated an often traumatic and harmful practice. "Many of my trainees, colleagues and patients' parents (and some adolescent patients) wear the hijab ... I respect each woman I interact with, as well as any woman's choice to express her identity as she desires... But respect does not alter the fact that the hijab, the niqab and the burka are also instruments of oppression for millions of girls and women around the world who are not allowed to make a choice." wrote Emil.

See: CBC News entry, in: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/health/canadian-medical-association-journal-hijab-letter-1.6297149>, retrieved on 25.12.2021

IsP140654-Canada: Protest held in Montreal in support of Quebec teacher reassigned over hijab— Protest held in Montreal in support of Quebec teacher who was reassigned over hijab,

People gathered to show their support and denounce the law known as Bill 21. The Liberal government and Opposition Conservatives were facing calls from within to mount a more direct challenge to Quebec’s controversial secularism law after a teacher was removed from the classroom for wearing a hijab. Federal parties and their MPs had spent the week before reacting to the bill, which banned some public servants deemed to be in positions of authority such as teachers, judges and police officers from wearing religious symbols on the job.

See: Globalnews News entry, in: <https://globalnews.ca/news/8454524/protest-held-in-montreal-in-support-of-quebec-teacher-reassigned-over-hijab/>, retrieved on 17.12.2021

EUROPE

IsP140655-UK: ‘Muhammad’ becomes most popular boys’ name in UK— The name of the Islamic prophet, “Muhammad” had become the most popular boys’ name in the United Kingdom in 2021, a British website focused on pregnancy and baby care had said in a blog post. “There was a change at the top of the girls’ chart as Olivia reclaimed the top spot after falling back to second place last year. Muhammad held strong for another year in pole position as it proved to be the most popular boys name again with parents,” said Sophie Bell, a blog writer for BabyCentre which was a resource for moms-to-be and parents in Britain.

See: Daily Sabah newspaper entry, in: <https://www.dailysabah.com/world/europe/muhammad-becomes-most-popular-boys-name-in-uk>, retrieved on 07.12.2021



IsP140656-UK: School apologises after video showed Muslim students praying outside in the cold— The video showed male pupils at Oldham Academy North conducting their Jummah (Friday) prayers outside of the school because a teacher had “kicked them out of the classroom”, it had been claimed. Footage showed around eight boys kneeling with their heads bowed on the

pavement, while a member of the school's staff wearing a hi-visibility jacket appeared to watch over them. The footage had been met with widespread anger, with critics saying it was "distressing" and "disgusting" to watch. Oldham Academy North had since apologised and said the students had been unable to pray inside as severe flooding had caused serious damage, meaning 15 classrooms were not in use. In a statement issued after the clip went viral, the school issued a "wholehearted apology" and confirmed an investigation had been launched. They said: "Earlier this week photos on social media began to circulate of students at The Oldham Academy North praying outside. We would like to offer a sincere apology. We are proud of our diversity and have never, and would never, stop students from praying or ask them to pray outside.

See: The Standard News entry, in: <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/oldham-academ-north-apologises-muslim-students-praying-cold-weather-b970035.html>, Image Source:

<https://static.independent.co.uk/2021/12/07/13/Image%20from%20iOS%20%2813%29.jpg?width=990&auto=webp&quality=75&crop=982:726:smart>, retrieved on 05.12.2021

IsP140657-Germany: 11 arrested for attack on Turkish mosque in Germany— On December 14, Eleven people were arrested for attacking the Eyüp Sultan Mosque in Germany of the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (DITIB) in Germany's Leipzig province. The mosque was damaged when a far-left group of around 100-150 radicals on December 13 evening threw hard objects and fireworks at the mosque. The Head of the Eyüp Sultan Mosque Association, Ömer Mumcu, stated that four windows had been broken in addition to the damage to the building, and called on the police to create an end to such attacks.

See: Daily Sabah newspaper entry, in: <https://www.dailysabah.com/turkey/diaspora/11-arrested-for-attack-on-turkish-mosque-in-germany>, retrieved on 15.12.2021

IsP140658-Belgium: Belgium allows Muslim women to wear headscarves in court— Muslim women in Belgium no longer would have to take off their headscarves in the courtroom as the corresponding article of the law was overturned on December 13, media reports said. Most judges in Belgium had made exceptions to the wearing of the hijab in the past, but many judges had nevertheless called for a general ban on the wearing of the hijab. In 2018, a Muslim woman took her case to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) after she was denied access to a court hearing – because she was wearing a headscarf. The ECtHR had condemned Belgium for banning the headscarf and ruled that the practice violated religious freedom. However, Belgium kept the headscarf law. In this regard, the Interfederal Center for Equal Opportunities applied in March 2019 to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, which monitors compliance with ECtHR judgments, to indicate that Article 759 of the judicial code would need to be amended so that such a ban could be lifted. Amendments had been made to the Law on the Constitution of Courts.

See: Daily Sabah newspaper entry, in: <https://www.dailysabah.com/world/europe/belgium-allows-muslim-women-to-wear-headscarves-in-court>, retrieved on 15.12.2021

IsP140659-France: France seeks to ban ultra-right group suspected of attacking anti-racists— France's interior minister was seeking to dissolve an "ultra right" group suspected of attacking anti-racism protesters who entered a campaign rally held by the far-right presidential candidate Éric Zemmour. On Sunday December 12, the interior minister, Gérald Darmanin, said he had begun legal action to outlaw the Zouaves movement and hoped the State Council would agree to the ban. "I have initiated the procedure to dissolve this de facto grouping that are the Zouaves, which is a group of people who come from either the GUD [a former far-right student union] or Action Française, that is to say, well-known ultra right movements," Darmanin told French media. The Zouaves, who support Zemmour's anti-immigration and anti-Islam ideology, were thought to be behind the brawl, which happened on December 5.

See: The Guardian newspaper entry, in: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/dec/13/france-seeks-to-ban-ultra-right-group-suspected-of-attacking-anti-racists>, retrieved on 15.12.2021

ASIA

IsP140660-Russia: Putin: Disrespecting Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is not freedom of expression— On December 23, Russian President Vladimir Putin had said that disrespecting Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not count as the “expression of artistic freedom”. Blasphemy of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was a "violation of religious freedom and the violation of the sacred feelings of people who profess Islam," he said while he addressed his annual news conference. Putin said these acts would give rise to extremist reprisals, and he cited as an example the attack on the editorial office of Charlie Hebdo magazine in Paris after it published blasphemous sketches of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), Russia’s TASS news agency reported.

See: Tribune News entry, in: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2335477/disrespecting-prophet-muhammad-pbuh-is-not-freedom-of-expression-putin>, retrieved on 25.12.2021



IsP140661-India: ‘This country belongs to us equally’: Sikh leader to Muslims prevented from praying in Gurgaon— Daya Singh of the Gurudwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha questioned why attempts were made to alienate Muslims and Sikhs.

See: Scroll News entry, in: <https://scroll.in/video/1012586/this-country-belongs-to-us-equally-sikh-leader-to-muslims-prevented-from-praying-in-gurgaon>, retrieved on 12.12.2021



AUSTRALIA



Naeem Rashid



Abdul Aziz (second from left) outside the Christchurch justice precinct for the final day of the terrorist's sentencing.

IsP140662-New Zealand: Bravery awards for 'incredibly brave' mosque shooting heroes— Naeem Rashid's fatal attempt to overpower the Christchurch mosque terrorist on March 15, 2019, had been recognised with New Zealand's highest bravery award. He was one of 10 people who had been honoured with an array of bravery awards for their courage and selflessness at two mosques when a terrorist caused the deaths of 51 people and injured 40 others. New Zealand's highest award, the New Zealand Cross, had been awarded to Rashid (posthumous) and Linwood Islamic Centre hero Abdul Aziz. Rashid and his son Tahla were at the Masjid An-Nur (Al Noor Mosque) on Deans Ave just before 1.40pm when a lone gunman, armed with semi-automatic

shotguns and assault rifles, entered and started shooting. Rashid ran to the side of a room where a large part of the congregation was trying to escape through a small window and door. Rashid, who was at the back of the group, turned and ran at the terrorist as he fired at the group and was hit in the shoulder. He collided with the terrorist, grabbed him and knocked him to the floor. The terrorist regained his feet and fatally shot Rashid, but due to Rashid's actions, at least seven people were able to escape while the gunman was diverted. Tahla was also killed. "In a situation of extreme danger, Dr Rashid displayed great courage and bravery in challenging the gunman, with complete disregard for his own safety. In so doing, he selflessly enabled others to escape, at the cost of his own life. Without Dr Rashid's brave actions, the loss of life would have been even greater," the citation said. Aziz was at afternoon prayers at the Linwood Islamic Centre on Linwood Ave with his four sons when the gunman attacked. He went to the mosque's door to investigate gunshots and saw the terrorist. He grabbed an eftpos machine and ran after the terrorist. As three shots were fired at him, Aziz ducked between parked cars and picked up the terrorist's discarded lever-action rifle. He then knew the terrorist had a new firearm. Hearing more shots from inside the mosque, Aziz took the discarded rifle and went towards the front of the mosque, yelling to get the terrorist's attention. When the terrorist saw Aziz with the rifle, he dropped his gun and ran to his car. Aziz ran after him and threw the rifle into the back window of the car as the terrorist drove off. "The situation in which Mr Aziz found himself was extremely dangerous. In challenging the gunman he displayed great courage and bravery, and complete disregard for his own safety. Mr Aziz's brave actions deterred the gunman from re-entering this mosque to kill and maim others and ultimately forced the gunman to flee," the citation said.

See: Stuff News entry, in: <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/127277303/bittersweet-bravery-awards-for-incredibly-brave-mosque-shooting-heroes>, retrieved on 20.12.2021