



ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION

Political Affairs Department

Islamophobia Observatory

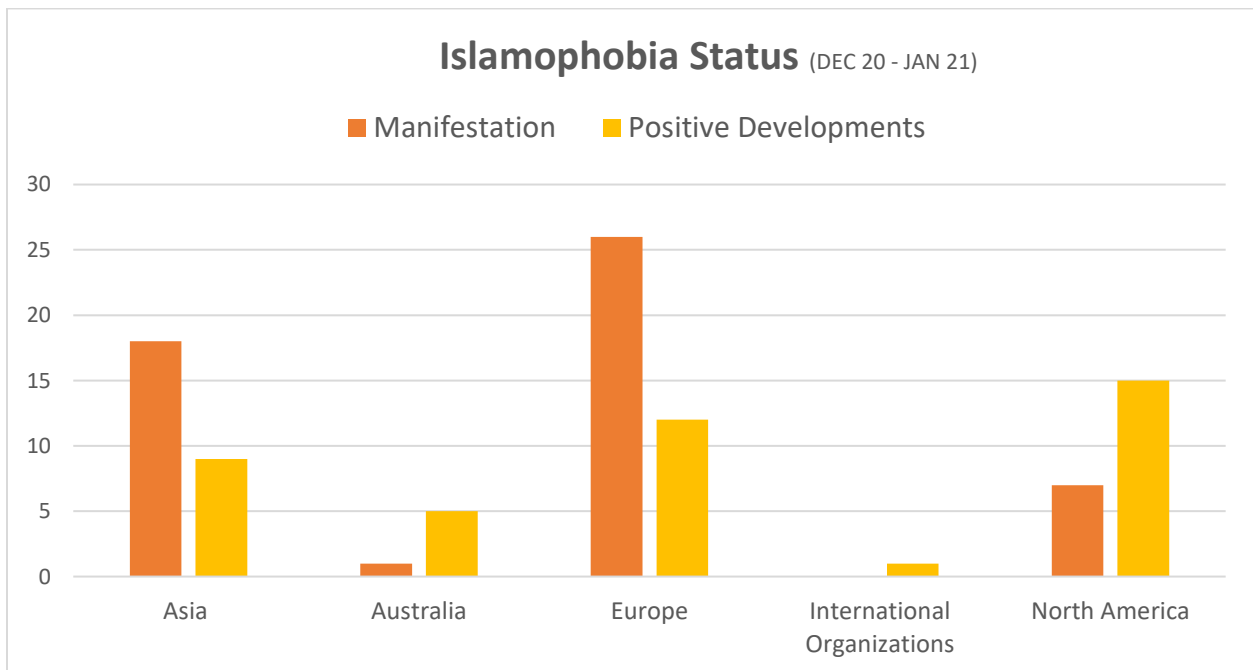
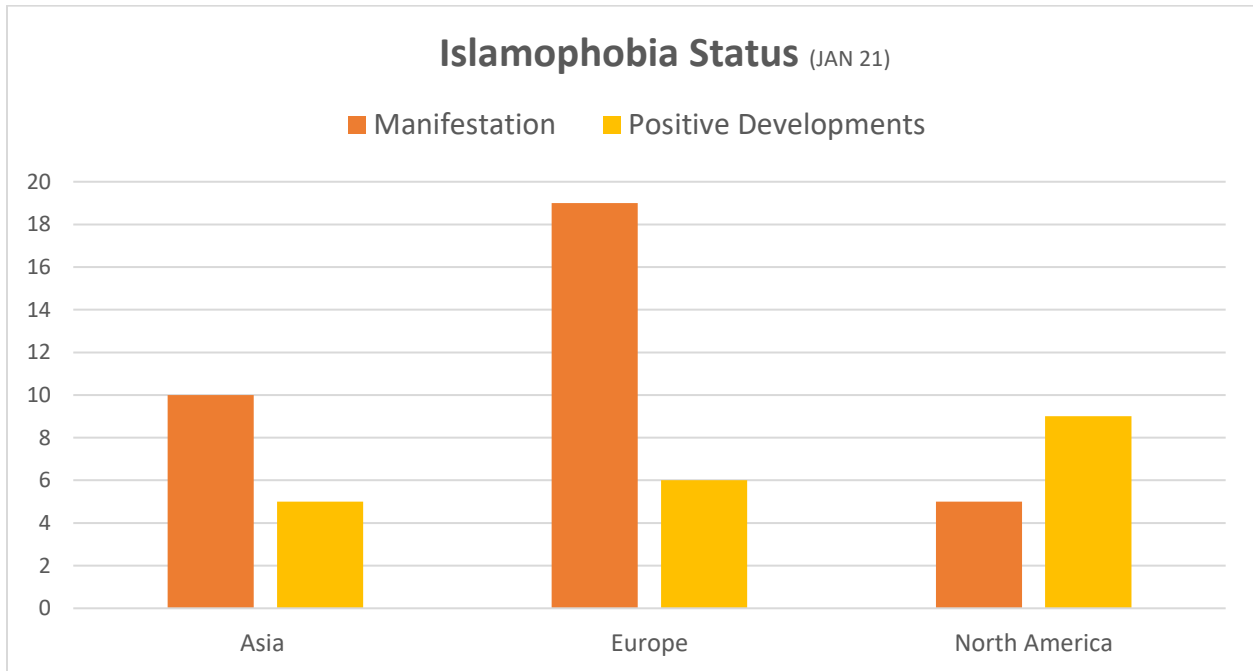
Islamophobia Monitoring

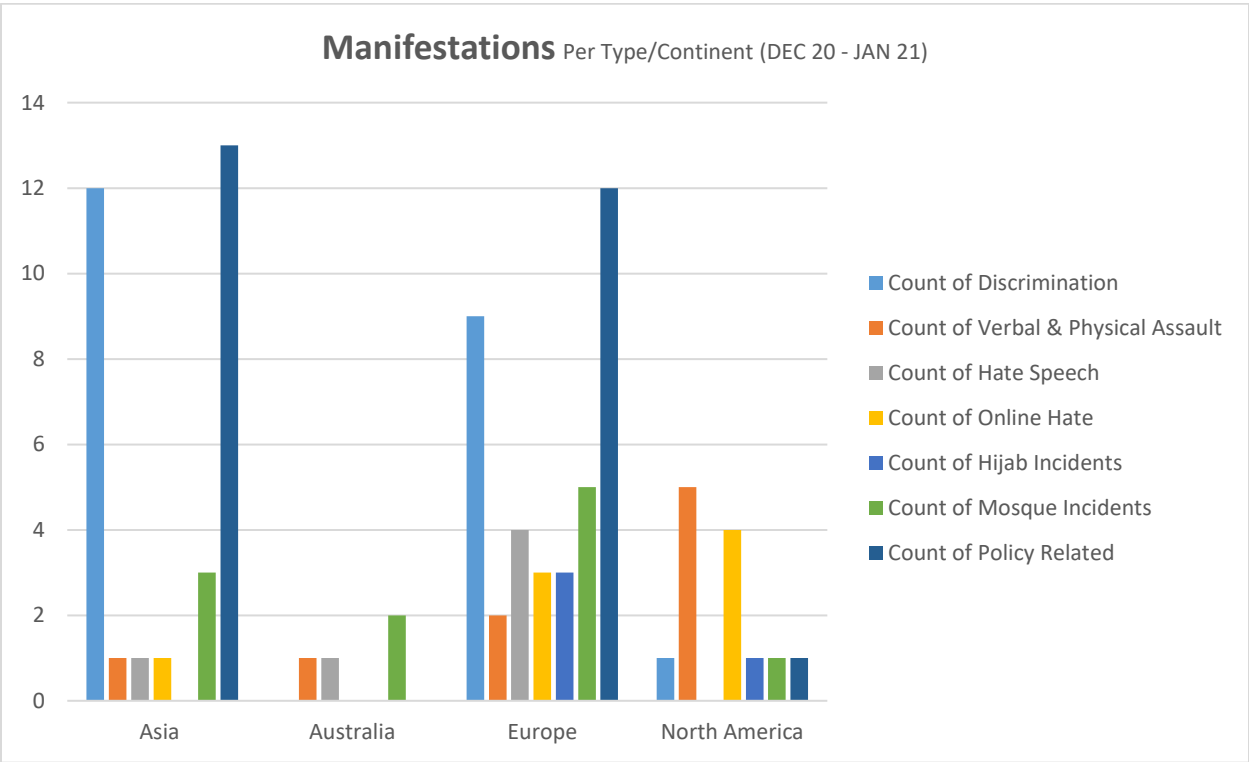
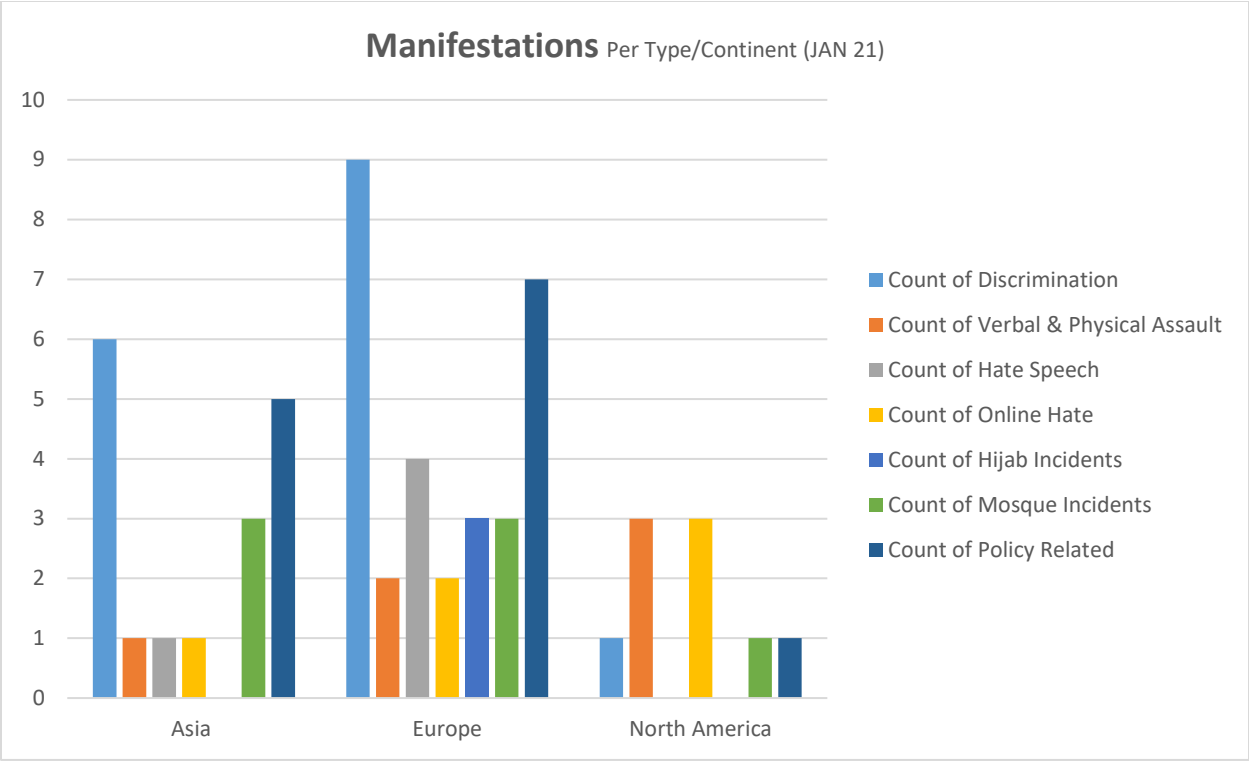
Month: January 2021



OIC Islamophobia Observatory

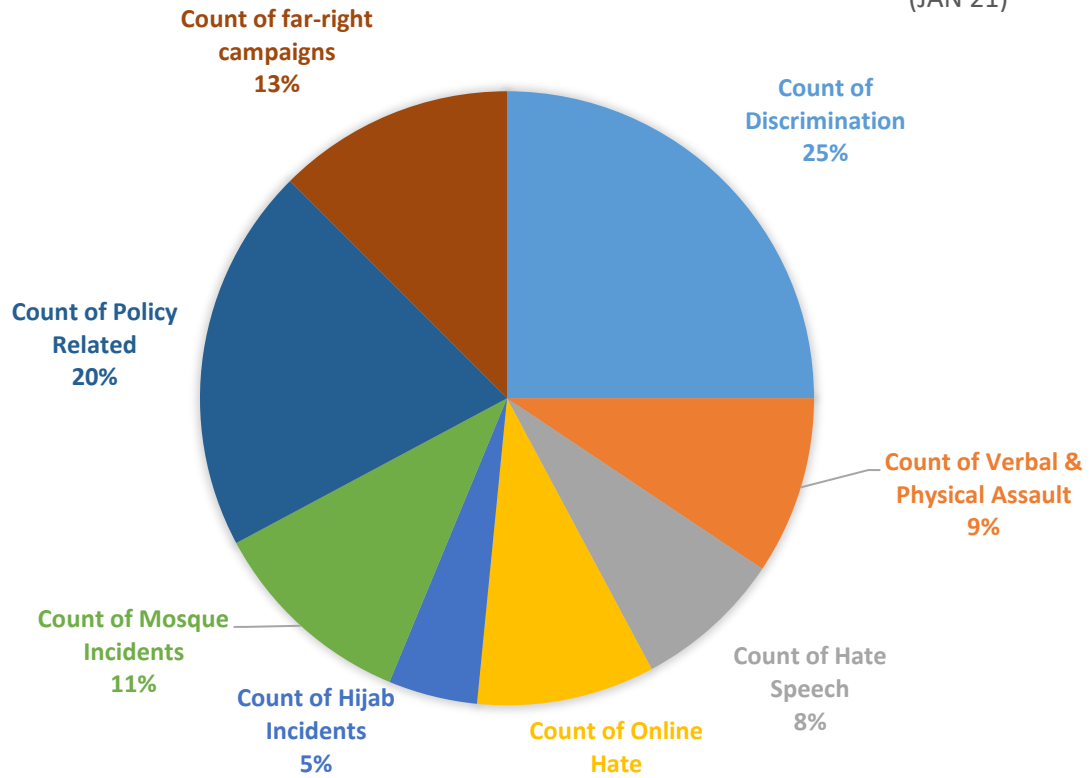
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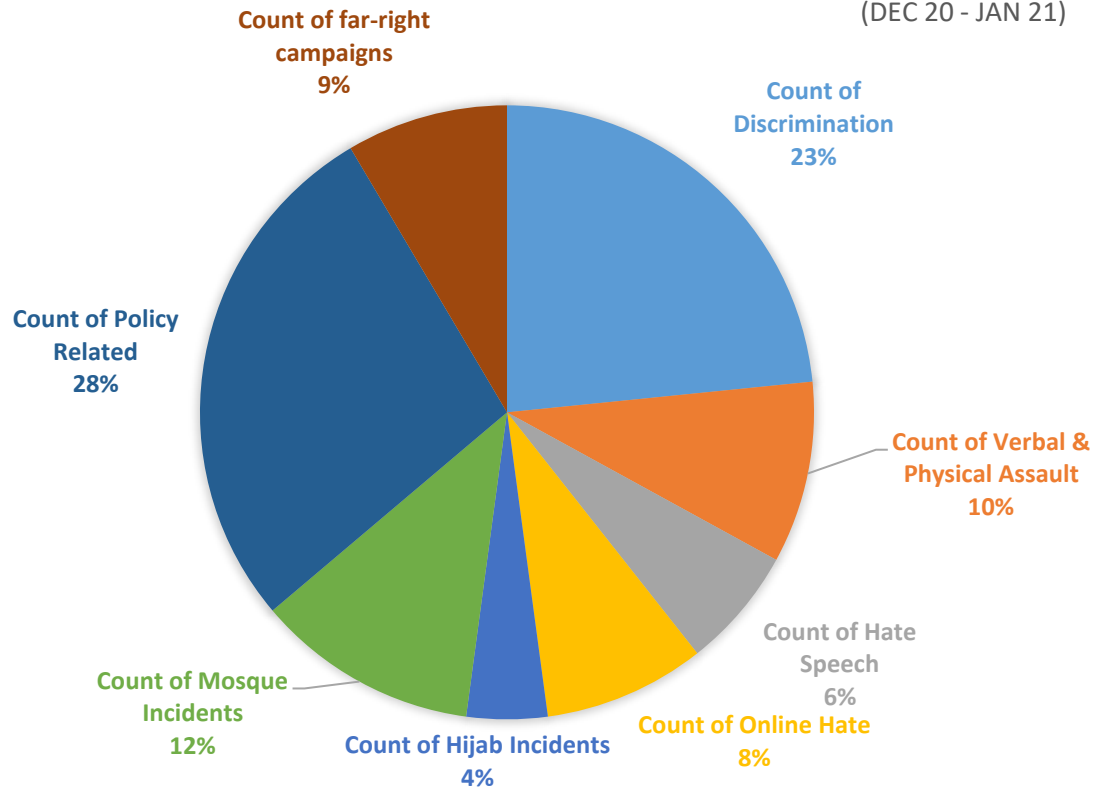
MANIFESTATION

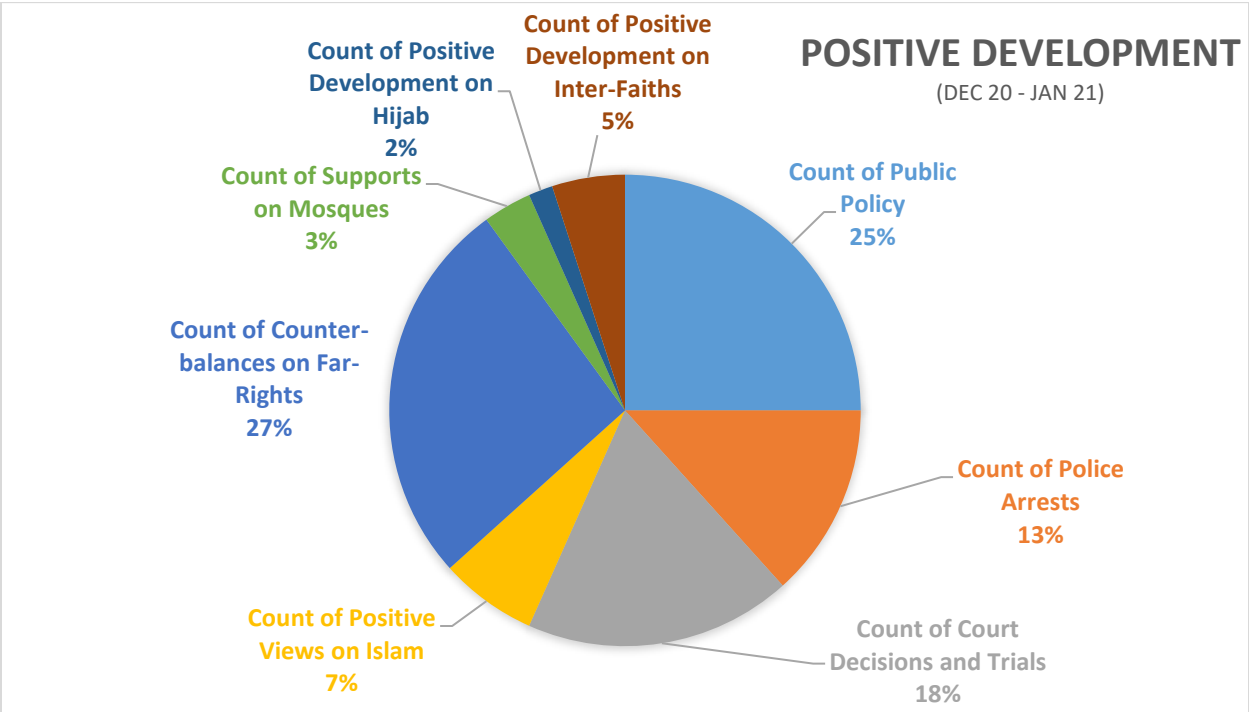
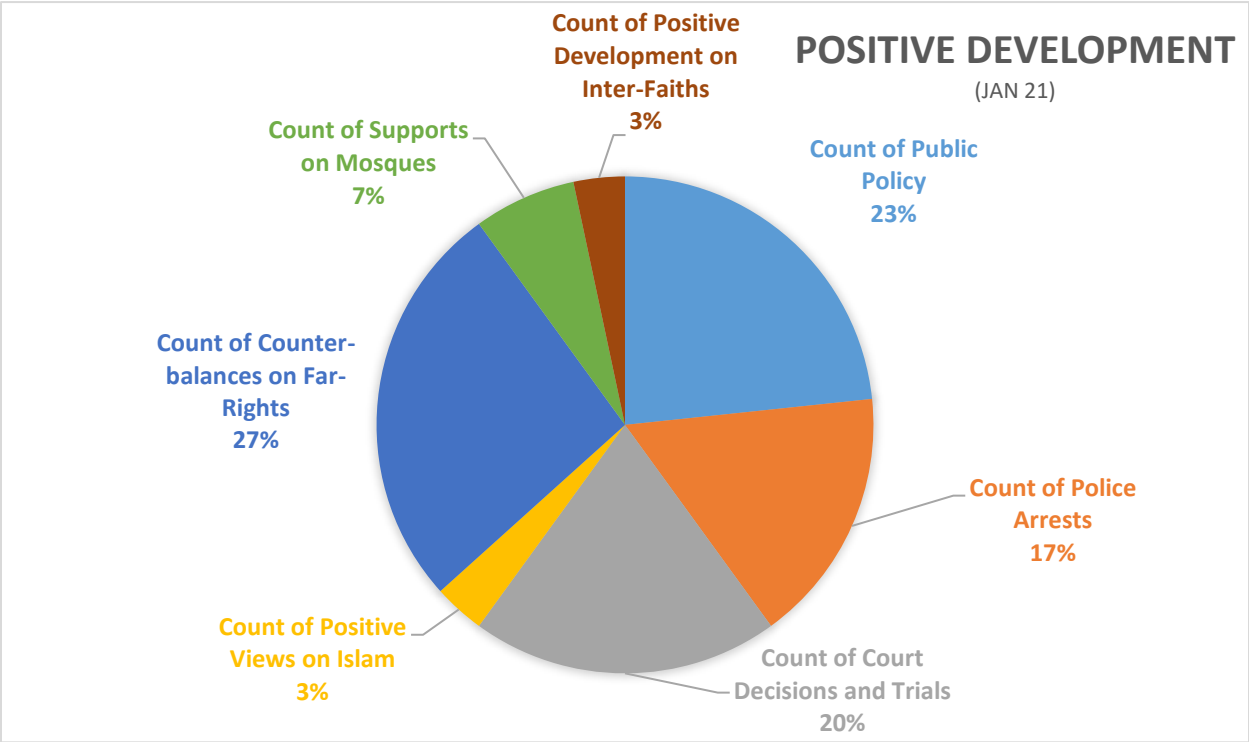
(JAN 21)



MANIFESTATION

(DEC 20 - JAN 21)





MANIFESTATIONS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

NORTH AMERICA



IsP140041-USA: Critics Say Nashville Police Could Have Done More with Tip about Bomber

— On December 25, 2020, Anthony Warner, a suicide bomber who died on the scene, had detonated a recreational vehicle (RV) bomb in downtown Nashville, Tennessee. The incident which had injured eight people and damaged dozens of buildings occurred in the early hours of Christmas day. Soon after the bombing, law enforcement officials said Warner had not had their attention before. However, a police incident report surfaced on December 29, 2020, had revealed that Warner’s girlfriend as well as her attorney had told the authorities of his bomb-making on August 2019. At the time, Police had closed the case following few days of inspections, where they were unable to make contact with Warner or enter his home or RV, according to the report. The police “saw no evidence of a crime and had no authority to enter his home or fenced property,” a department spokesman said. The rebuke by critics had extended beyond the Police Department’s initial handling of the tip. They had raised concerns about race, questioning whether the investigation into Warner, a white man, was being handled differently. Zulfat Suara, a member of the Nashville Metro Council, said: “If someone had broken into that R.V., they could have stopped the destruction ... If his name had been Mohammed or Jamaal, would they have kicked the doors down?” Suara, who, in 2019, became the first Muslim person elected to the Nashville Metro Council, added that it reflected a broader problem in law enforcement — “not just a Nashville one.”



See: New York Time newspaper entry, in: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/30/us/nashville-bomber-anthony-warner.html>, retrieved on 06.01.2021

IsP140042-US: CAIR Condemns Rahm Emanuel for Anti-Muslim ‘Sunnis and Shiites’ Trope, Says He is Unfit to Serve in Biden-Harris Administration— On January 6, The Council

on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), had condemned the former Chicago mayor, Rahm Emanuel, for “demeaning and Islamophobic comments” made about Sunni and Shia Muslims during election coverage on ABC News on January 5. Emanuel compared post-Trump relations between Republicans and Democrats to Shia and Sunni Muslims, he said: “It’s going to make the Sunnis and Shiites look like a very calm



YOUTUBE.COM
Video: Rahm Emanuel Smears 'Sunnis and Shiites' During ABC News Georgia Election Coverage

family gathering.” CAIR said the offensive comments represented another reason why Emanuel “should not be included in the Biden-Harris administration.” In a statement, CAIR Government Affairs Department Director Robert S. McCaw said: “Rahm Emanuel’s comments about Muslims were demeaning, uninformed and Islamophobic. In America and abroad, Sunni and Shia Muslims live as neighbors, co-workers, friends, and family members....Emanuel’s Islamophobic comments show a fundamentally flawed understanding of the Muslim community and perpetuate the false and harmful anti-Muslim trope that Sunni and Shia Muslims cannot peacefully co-exist.”

See: CAIR press release’s entry, in: https://www.cair.com/press_releases/cair-condemns-rahm-emanuel-for-anti-muslim-sunnis-and-shiites-trope-says-he-is-unfit-to-serve-in-biden-harris-administration/, retrieved on 07.01.2021

IsP140043-US: Clackamas County commission votes for one of its members to resign— On

January 14, A County in the U.S. state of Oregon, Clackamas County, had passed a resolution which censured Mark Shull, a Member of Board of Commissioners, and called on him to resign over Islamophobic social media posts. The vote was 5-0. The full commission joined its chair, Tootie Smith, who on January 13 had called for Commissioner Mark Shull to step down immediately. In their vote, commissioners referred to county Resolution No. 2015-96, passed in 2015, which committed the county to “valuing diversity.” In the resolution statement, Commissioners had called for Shull’s resignation, and referred to his online remarks, describing it as “derogatory, offensive, insensitive, and racist.” The resolution added, Shull’s comments “imputed to Clackamas County a reputation of racist, sexist, and religious insensitivity and intolerance.” Shull was elected to the county board in November. Other elected officials around the Portland region had criticized him recently for online writings dating from 2019 and 2020 that equated Islam to radical terrorism.



Anti-Muslim Comments

- Stop the enemy while the enemy's strength is still relatively weak in comparison to friendly forces...the most menacing threat to US national security is the incursion of Islam into our society...It is time for a new D-Day, one that is appropriate for the threat. (Nov. 3, 2019)
- Islam is in total conflict with America, with the Constitution and with the Christian values upon which the USA was founded. Islam is not here to become part of America. Islam is here to establish the Caliphate. Once the caliphate is established, YOU DIE...Go to any Islamic nation, preach the Bible, you die. (Aug. 26, 2019)
- Isis is Islam. Islam is ISIS. Just as every Ayatollah and Imam say, "there is no such thing as radical Islam. There is only Islam and Islam is radical." (Jan. 5, 2020)
- When you interact with a Muslim, you're being deceived. Period. End of sentence. (July 30, 2019)
- In the USA the moslem (note: offensive term used on purpose) imports that Obama brought to your state will cost you dearly in the future. (Oct. 2, 20119)
- There are only two ways Islam gives us to deal with it. Isolation in the lands of Islam or extermination outside the lands of Islam. The third option is Islam exterminates us. (June 25, 2019)
- As long as we allow Islam to grow in the USA we will have problems and conflicts...As we delude ourselves, Islam grows and the noose around the neck of our society tightens, and the threat to our children's future grows more ominous. Every Imam, every Muslim cleric, every Ayatollah agree with me. (July 17, 2019)
- Their [Muslim's] intent is takeover. Why is America complacent? Is it due to ignorance or cowardice or delusion? (Jan. 6, 2020)
- This is how it starts. The way it ends is you and yours are...dead. Not my idea, that would be the word from every Imam and every Ayatollah. (Dec. 15, 2019)
- The doctrine of Islam permeates the brain in a negative way. (Dec. 6, 2019)
- I visited the Mall of America with my mom last year. It was like walking into the Mall of Islam. I think we were the only two non muslims that day. Never got one smile that day from any Muslims...It was a horrifying experience...Not a friendly face in the crowd of Akbars. (Oct. 10, 2019)
- Obama is a Muslim. (Oct. 13, 2019)

See: Oregon Public Broadcasting News entry, in: <https://www.opb.org/article/2021/01/14/clackamas-county-commission-islamophobia-diversity/>, Also: Documenting Mark Shull's Racism Website, in: <https://sites.google.com/view/documenting-mark-shulls-racism/home>, retrieved on 18.01.2020

IsP140044-US: Connecticut AG investigating prison guard's anti-Muslim Facebook posts—

On January 11, The Correction Department and Attorney General's Office in Connecticut, a U.S. state in southern New England, had launched an investigations into the anti-Muslim social media posts of a state prison guard, Officer Anthony Marlak. The move came after the Connecticut Chapter of the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) called for the firing of Corrections Officer, citing posts on Facebook that included a meme depicting five apparently Muslim men hanging from nooses with the caption, "Islamic Wind Chimes." Farhan Memon, chairman of CAIR-CT said: "What's happening in Washington is showing us that there is a nexis between the far right-wing in this country that has morphed into terrorists and law enforcement and military folks who show some sympathy with that ideology," Marlak's Facebook page, under the alias Tony Mint, had a profile that reads "I am the prototype, infidel, veteran, boss. Stand back and I will handle it. Now walk away." Marlak was given a five-day suspension in December 2020 for his part in the confrontation with a Muslim correction officer and for making what were deemed inappropriate remarks toward the other guard. The Correction Department, said in a statement, its Security Division and Legal Affairs units were reviewing the information provided by CAIR to determine appropriate action. It said the department would not tolerate or condone discrimination.

See: Courant News' entry, in: <https://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-news-connecticut-prison-guard-facebook-posts-20210111-hcd2wmxmorh23hseim6qmdlpe-story.html>, retrieved on 19.01.2021

IsP140045-US: Police arrest 1, recover weapons after religious harassment—

The Albany Police Department in New York State said officers arrested James Davis, of Albany after they had investigated two separate incidents involving threatening behavior. In one incident, police reported that he threatened to kill a Muslim, and in the other, they said he chased a man with a firearm. On January 19, a man had reported to police that Davis threatened to kill him because he was Muslim. The victim of the threat said he was in the corner store near Clinton Avenue and Lark Street when Davis walked into the store to harass him. Police said that when he was arrested, Davis had a loaded Sig M400 rifle concealed in his coat. Besides the rifle, police said they recovered two other firearms during the course of the investigation. Davis was charged with: fourth-degree criminal possession of a weapon, second-degree menacing and second-degree aggravated harassment.

See: News10 entry, in: <https://www.news10.com/news/albany-county/police-arrest-1-recover-weapons-after-religious-harassment/>, retrieved on 25.01.2021

IsP140046-US: A man arrested after trashing store, spewing Islamophobic slurs seen in viral video

— On January 22, Brian Christopher Miller, from U.S. Oregon state, had trashed a convenience store and threatened to gun down its clerk in a confrontation captured on viral video, while he was spewing anti-Islamic slurs. Miller was arrested on suspicion of first-degree criminal mischief and third-degree robbery, both felonies, according to Multnomah County Sheriff's Office jail records. The Portland man was booked into jail on January 22, before being released on his own recognizance on the following day, jail records showed. Seemab Hussaini, vice chairman of the Oregon chapter of Council on American-Islamic Relations, said he's been in touch with the clerk's relatives,



who can't understand why Miller wasn't immediately charged with a bias crime. "When this man was arrested they (the clerk's family) were not aware this man was being released so quickly," Hussaini told NBC News. "And the charges do not acknowledge the violence the victim was subjected to. What truly upsets the family is the inability to acknowledge the true nature of the crime, at least for now." The clerk, a senior citizen and immigrant from Afghanistan, shot video of the incident before his son published it on YouTube, Hussaini said. Footage showed a maskless man bearing a strong resemblance to Miller toppling displays, damaging the cash register, ripping down Covid-protection barriers, throwing food at the clerk and yelling: "I'll f--king shoot you in the back ... Is that how we do things in America, Afghan? Al-Qaeda? Osama?" the menacing man said. "I don't want your f--king cigarettes now dude. But here let's call the the barter system. Five f--king dollars? You can owe me, you can owe me. You call the f--king cops. I'm an easy man to find." And he was, as police arrested Miller just outside the Chevron convenience store, officials said.

See: NBC News entry, in: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/oregon-man-arrested-after-trashing-store-spewing-islamophobic-slurs-seen-n1255550>, retrieved on 26.01.2021



IsP140047 US: U.S. appeals court upholds prison sentences for men who plotted to bomb Kansas Muslims— On January 25, a federal appeals court had upheld the convictions and prison sentences of three white men who in 2016 plotted to bomb a Kansas apartment complex which was home to Muslim immigrants and a mosque. Curtis Allen, Gavin Wright and Patrick Eugene Stein were found guilty by a jury in the Kansas U.S. district court in 2018 of conspiring to use a weapon of mass destruction and violating the civil rights of Muslims living in the Garden City housing complex. In January 2019, U.S. District Judge had sentenced Allen to 25 years in prison, Wright to 26 years and Stein to 30 years. Following their appeal, the court had rejected all the arguments raised by their attorneys and was not swayed by claims that the men were entrapped and the method of selecting jurors was flawed. The three-judge panel ruled that the men had not challenged the manner of jury selection within the seven-day period required under law, and would have anyway failed in that gambit if they had.

See: Reuters News' entry, in: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-kansas-crime-somalia-idUSKBN29U224>, retrieved on 27.01.2021

IsP140048 Canada: Outreach group captures anti-Muslim rant at Vancouver "Meet a Muslim" booth— On December 27, 2020, Bridging Gaps Foundation, a registered non-profit organization, had filmed an exchange during which a woman used derogatory language and anti-Muslim sentiments towards members at an information stand. The foundation, which had been active in bridging the gaps between Muslim and non-Muslim communities by using education, integration, and outreach programs, had explained the incident in a Facebook video, they said: “On a weekly basis, some of our team members set up a ‘Meet a Muslim’ booth to bridge the gap between Muslims and non-Muslims, and share information on Islam ... On Sunday, December 27, in downtown Vancouver, a lady walked up to our team and started abusing, swearing, and harassing the team as well as some bystanders.” The video included a six-minute exchange between the woman and three members at the outreach station. “Would you like a ride to the airport?” she said. The Bridging Gaps Foundation said it was sharing the video to highlight the importance of education, the severity of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim bigotry, and the general lack of understanding of Islam. Sergeant Steve Addison, from the Vancouver Police Department (VPD), said in an email: “VPD officers did respond and spoke to the person who called police, however, the subject of the complaint had left the area and could not be located.”

See: Daily Hive News' entry, in: <https://dailyhive.com/vancouver/woman-anti-muslim-rant-downtown-vancouver>, retrieved on 04.01.2021

IsP140049 Canada: Man accused in 'hate-motivated' assault arrested after failing to attend court— An Edmonton man accused of committing a “hate-motivated” assault against two Black Muslim women had been arrested after failing to attend court. According to Court records, Richard Bradley Stevens, had a scheduled court appearance on January 5. An arrest warrant was issued when he failed to show. Cheryl Voordenhout, Edmonton city police spokeswoman, said Stevens was arrested On January 6 and was accused of assaulting a mother and daughter outside Southgate Centre on Dec. 8, 2020. He faces two charges of assault and a charge of mischief for damage to the car window.

See: Hiiraan News’ entry, in:

https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2021/jan/181281/man_accused_in_hate_motivated_assault_arrested_after_failing_to_attend_court.aspx, retrieved on 10.01.2021



IsP140050 Canada: Canada considers adding Proud Boys to terrorist list alongside Isis and al-Qaida— Canadian officials had been considering designating the Proud Boys, a far-right organization that had promoted and engaged in political violence in the United States and Canada, as a terrorist organization alongside groups like Boko Haram, Isis and al-Qaida. This development came following the role the group, founded in 2016 by the Canadian Gavin McInnes, had in the mob attack on the US Capitol on January 6. Bill Blair, Canada’s public safety minister, said his office was closely watching the Proud Boys and the “ideologically-motivated violent extremists” within the group. Blair told CTV News “They are white supremacists, antisemitics, Islamophobic, misogynist groups. They’re all hateful, they’re all dangerous ... We’re working very diligently to ensure that where the evidence is available, where we have the intelligence, that we’ll deal appropriately with those organizations.” Calls for a terrorist designation were first made the week before by Jagmeet Singh, leader of the New Democratic party, who accused the Proud Boys of helping to execute “an act of domestic terrorism” when members of the group stormed the Capitol. “Their founder is Canadian. They operate in Canada, right now,” tweeted Singh.

See: The Guardian Newspaper entry, in: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/11/canada-considers-adding-proud-boys-terrorist-list-alongside-isis-al-qaida#Echobox=1610400402/>, retrieved on 14.01.2021

IsP140051-Austria: Austria calls for European register of Muslim imams— Austrian government had called for the registration of Imams in Europe after adopting the measure at home. The mandate was one of several new measures Chancellor Sebastian Kurz's government adopted after a November 2, 2020, terror attack in Vienna. Karoline Edtstadler, Austria's Minister for European Affairs, said Imam registration was key for "the fight against political Islam ... Most imams move through many EU countries, so the security authorities need to know who is preaching what in which mosque at any given time," Edtstadler told *Die Welt*, German newspaper, on January 2 edition. Edtstadler, a member of Kurz's conservative Austrian People's Party, believed that EU funds should be "so strictly controlled in the future that they do not go to organizations and associations that advocate Islamist and anti-Semitic positions." she said.

See: DW News' entry, in: <https://www.dw.com/en/austria-calls-for-european-register-of-muslim-imams/a-56114597>, retrieved on 06.01.2021

IsP140052-France: French Muslim leaders sign charter pledging to combat political Islam— On January 18, State-approved French Muslim leaders had signed a charter in which they denounced accusations of racism against France, and pledged to recognise "equality between men and women" and to combat "political Islam." The French Council for Muslim Worship, which was approved by the state to represent Islam in France, formally approved a "charter of principles" for Islam in France. The text, demanded by President Emmanuel Macron in November 2020 as part of his offensive against "separatism," also affirms the compatibility of Islam with secularism. The text stated: "We reaffirm from the outset that neither our religious convictions nor any other reason can supplant the principles which found the law and the constitution of the Republic. No religious conviction can be invoked to escape the obligations of citizens ... From a religious and ethical point of view, Muslims, whether nationals or foreign residents, are bound to France by a pact. This commits them to respect national cohesion, public order and the laws of the Republic. Any signatory to this charter therefore undertakes, with respect and dignity, to work for civil peace and to fight against all forms of violence and hatred." The charter also pledged to reject foreign funding of religious institutions and condemned accusations of racism against France. Mr. Macron said the charter offers "a clarification of how the Muslim community is organised and would also provide a framework for a new National Council of Imams that will be responsible for vetting imams practicing in the country."

See: 5pillarsUK News' entry, in: <http://5pillarsuk.com/2021/01/19/french-muslim-leaders-sign-charter-pledging-to-combat-political-islam/>, retrieved on 21.01.2021

IsP140053-France: 3 organizations of French Council of Muslim Worship reject "charter of principles" of Islam— On January 20, The Coordination Committee of Turkish Muslims in France (CCMTF) and Milli Gorus Islamic Confederation (CMIG) along with the Faith and Practice movement, had denounced the "charter of principles" of Islam, which was approved and presented to President Emmanuel Macron. They demanded amendments to the text of the 10 point charter which Macron helmed as "foundational text for relations between the State, Islam and France." The joint statement, said: "We believe that certain passages and formulations of the submitted text are likely to weaken the bonds of trust between the Muslims of France and the Nation. In addition, certain statements undermine the honor of Muslims, with an accusatory and marginalizing character." The three organizations added, that the charter was approved without obtaining a full consensus of other integral components of the CFCM, including the regional and departmental councils, imams who would be affected by the decision. It cited the Great Mosque

of Saint Denis de la Réunion, which was one of the founding components of the CFCM, had refused to sign this charter.

See: AhlulBayt News' entry, in: <https://abna24.com/9Sjz>, retrieved on 26.01.2021

IsP140054-France: France's Le Pen, at record high in polls, proposes hijab ban— On January 29, French far-right leader Marine Le Pen had proposed a ban on Muslim headscarves in all public places. "I consider that the headscarf is an Islamist item of clothing," Le Pen told reporters at a press conference where she proposed a new law to ban "Islamist ideologies" which she called "totalitarian and murderous." Since taking over from her father, Le Pen had unsuccessfully run twice for the French presidency, However latest polls showed her closer than ever to the presidency. The poll conducted online by Harris Interactive suggested that if a final-round presidential run-off were held today Le Pen would secure 48 percent while Macron would be re-elected with 52 percent, Le Parisien newspaper reported. The margin, the narrowest ever recorded, had set off alarm bells in the French political mainstream as the dual health and economic crises caused by the coronavirus pandemic sweep across the country. Jean-Yves Camus, a French political scientist specialised in the far-right said Le Pen was benefiting from frustration and anger over the pandemic, with France on the verge of a third lockdown, but also the beheading of a French school teacher by an Islamist in October 2020. "It had a major impact on public opinion," the expert from the Jean-Jaures Foundation told AFP. "And in this area, Marine Le Pen has an advantage: her party is well known for its position denouncing Islamism."

See: France24 News' entry, in: <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20210129-france-s-le-pen-at-record-high-in-polls-proposes-hijab-ban>, retrieved on 31.01.2021

IsP140055-Germany: German police handcuff Muslim woman for not wearing mask— On the last week of December 2020, police officers in Wuppertal, a western German city, had handcuffed a woman in a Muslim headscarf in front of her toddler and put her on the ground for not wearing a mask, as seen in video that recently went viral. According to the video taken by eyewitnesses, there were seven police officers outside of the building the woman left after she had visited a dentist. The video had showed two police officers handcuffing the woman in front of her toddler, putting her on the ground, and pressing on her body while she screamed for help. When police tried to stop bystanders from filming, one said: "You have no right to stop me from shooting this video. The phone is mine. I can give my lawyer's number." When bystanders in the video made their opposition to the scene clear, the police removed the woman's handcuffs and release her and left as if nothing had happened. The unidentified woman, who was born in Germany and converted to Islam, would file a criminal complaint against the police, according to anadolu agency.

See: Eumuslims News' entry, in: <http://eumuslims.org/en/media-centre/news/german-police-handcuff-muslim-woman-not-wearing-mask>, retrieved on 03.01.2021

IsP140056 Germany: Mosque attacked twice in 2 weeks in Germany's southwest— On January 1, a mosque in Germany's southwestern Baden-Wurtemberg city was attacked for the second time in two weeks, according to an official. Ali Ozdemir, chairman of the Fatih Mosque in the town of Sontheim, said "In the recent two weeks, this has been the second attack on our mosque," Ozdemir added that the community of the mosque and foundation's members were worried. The attack had caused material damages. The window and a wooden bank outside the mosque, run by the Turkish-Muslim umbrella group DITIB, were broken, Ozdemir said. The incident had been shared with the police who launched an investigation. Earlier in another act of vandalism, a cross was drawn on the wall of the mosque.

See: Anadolu Agency News' entry, in: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/mosque-attacked-twice-in-2-weeks-in-germanys-southwest/2095894>, retrieved on 05.01.2021

IsP140057 Germany: Neo-Nazi sentenced to life in prison— On January 4, Stephan Balliet, a German far-right extremist, was sentenced to life in prison for attempting to storm a synagogue and killing two people in the eastern German city of Halle in 2019. The Higher Regional Court in Naumburg had found Balliet guilty of two murders and more than 50 counts of attempted murder, and sentenced him to life in prison. Balliet had originally planned a mass shooting at a mosque but later changed his mind, according to a manifesto he posted online before the attack on October 2019. The neo-Nazi had failed to enter the synagogue in Halle due to tight security, fired randomly at people on the street, and later stormed a nearby Turkish doner restaurant. He fled the scene in a car but was arrested a few hours later after he got involved in a road accident.

See: Anadolu Agency News' entry, in: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/germany-neo-nazi-sentenced-to-life-in-prison/2084426>, retrieved on 06.01.2021

IsP140058 Germany: Germany Expected To Put Right-Wing AfD Under Surveillance For Violating Constitution— Germany's Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, which had been constantly on the lookout for potential threats to Germany's democratic constitutional system, and it had wide-ranging powers when it finds them. The agency had completed a two-year investigation into Germany's largest right-wing opposition party, the Alternative for Germany, or AfD, and was expected to announce on January 2021, that it will place the entire party under surveillance for posing a threat to Germany's political system and violating the constitution. The unprecedented move would mean that all AfD lawmakers, including several dozen in Germany's parliament, would be put under state surveillance. Melanie Amann of the German newsmagazine Der Spiegel and the author of a book about the AfD, said the agency had identified instances of AfD politicians denigrating Muslim migrants to Germany. "They were all treated as potential terrorists," she said. "They were dehumanized in the speeches. They were compared to animals. The [agency] report made it quite clear that these people had crossed a line." Some AfD politicians had also trivialized Germany's Nazi past. In 2017, the leader of the Flügel wing, Bjorn Höcke, called the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin a "monument of shame." Thomas Hitschler, a Social Democrat parliamentarian and a member of the parliamentary committee that reviews Germany's intelligence agencies, said: "If you look at how the AfD has been behaving for some time now, it's clear it's acting against our democracy and our constitution." says. Hitschler said the Verfassungsschutz agency had spent two years gathering evidence to inform the decision that is expected to put the entire AfD under watch. The AfD was already preparing for the decision. The party had published a position paper that represents a U-turn in how it sees immigrants, insisting that it was a party for all German citizens, even naturalized citizens.

See: National Public Radio (NPR) News' entry, in: <https://www.npr.org/2021/01/22/959264440/germany-expected-to-put-right-wing-afd-under-surveillance-for-violating-constitu>, retrieved on 25.01.2021

IsP140059 Greece: Archbishop of Athens: Islam is not a religion but a political party— On January 14 the Head of Greek Church since 2008, Archbishop Ieronymos, stated during historical series about the Greek War of Independence 1821 that "Islam, its citizens, is not a religion, it is a political party, it is a political pursuit and it is the people of war, the people of the spread, that is a characteristic of Islam, as Muhammad's teaching says,". The Archbishop added: "They are the people who spread, this is characteristic of Islam," referring to the Mehmed the Conqueror who captured Constantinople. Mr. Ieronymos, spoke on the Greek television station OPEN, and it was uploaded to the TV's YouTube channel on January 14.

See: Greek city times News' entry, in: <https://greekcitytimes.com/2021/01/15/ieronymos-islam-political-movement/>, Also: See: orthodox Times News' entry, in <https://orthodoxtimes.com/archbishop-of-athens-islam-is-not-a-religion-but-a-political-party/>, retrieved on 19.01.2021,



IsP140060 Greece: Archbishop Ieronymos clarifies his controversial statement about Islam— On January 17, The Head of Greek Church, Archbishop Ieronymos, had clarified his controversial statement about Islam through a spokesperson, following wide criticism. “The Archbishop and our Church respect in practice all the known religions,” said the press office of the Holy Archdiocese of Athens. “With everything that the Blessed Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, Mr. Ieronymos, said about Islam, in the context of his recent television interview about the contribution of our Church to the Revolution of 1821, he meant nothing more than the perversion of the Muslim religion itself by extreme fundamentalists, who sow terror and death throughout the Universe,” the statement said. The announcement continued: “These are exactly the people the Archbishop was referring to, people who are instrumentalising Islam and turning it into a deadly weapon against all those who have a different opinion from them.” Finally, as it is emphasized: “both the Archbishop himself and all the metropolitans of the Church of Greece, respect in practice all the known religions and treat all their faithful with Christian love and solidarity, which knows no discrimination, through all their actions and initiatives, especially in the social and charitable fields.”

See: Greek city times News’ entry, in: <https://greekcitytimes.com/2021/01/18/archbishop-ieronymos-islam/>, retrieved on 21.01.2021,

IsP140061-Georgia: Muslims attacked over new prayer space in western Georgia— A dispute between two communities in the Buknari village in the southwestern Georgian region of Guria had escalated when local Christians protested local Muslims using a house they had purchased as a place to gather and pray. On January 12, the disagreement descended into the physical violence, which had resulted in at least three injured members of the Muslim community. The authorities confirmed that two young men, including one minor, were hospitalised with non-life-threatening head injuries after they were hit with a stone in Buknari. “This is a secular state. No one’s religious rights can be curtailed. However, all this should be organised in a religious building with an agreement and in line with the law”, Chokhatauri Mayor Irakli Kuchava told Muslim protesters in Buknari on 12 January. After the mayor’s comments, Tbilisi-based rights group EMC reminded authorities in Guria that believers did not have to hold prayers in a specially designated building and were free to congregate and hold religious rituals in a private home and it did not need an additional permit as long as related construction was not planned. In their 13 January statement,

the Georgian Muslims' Union called the recent attack in the village of Buknari 'extremely alarming' adding that it 'reflected the government's attitude towards religious minorities'. 'The sense of impunity encourages more crime', the statement warned. Georgian Public Defender Nino Lomjaria agreed with the sentiment, noting on 12 January that the 'very unfortunate' incident in Buknari was a 'vivid example' of the discriminatory treatment of Muslims in Georgia. In recent years, Georgia had witnessed at least seven high-profile Christian-Muslim disputes and anti-Muslim incidents throughout the country.

See: Open Caucasus Media News' entry, in: <https://oc-media.org/muslims-attacked-over-new-prayer-space-in-western-georgia/>, retrieved on 21.01.2021

IsP140062 Luxembourg: Issue of Islamophobia in Luxembourg— On January 7, The Observatory of Islamophobia in Luxembourg (OIL), had published the second survey dealing with discrimination and violence against Muslims in the Luxembourg. The 2019 report, which were commissioned by OIL said Islamophobia frequently were unreported in Luxembourg, with just 7% of cases formally or informally reported. 314 men and women of Muslim faith had participated in the survey, detailing their experiences with Islamophobia in Luxembourg. The participants consisted of 182 men and 132 women, almost half of whom were aged between 31 and 40 years of age. 20% were aged 21-30, with another 20% aged 41 to 50. 54% of participants have Luxembourgish citizenship, and 35% live in the country. Almost 76% of participants said they felt they had integrated well into Luxembourgish society. 75% said in their experience, those of Islamic faith were less likely to face discrimination in Luxembourg than in its neighboring countries. The OIL, which was founded in January 2018, was shown to have had a positive impact through the report. Islamophobic acts reduced by 8% between 2017 and 2019. In spite of this, almost 28% of participants said they had witnessed a case of Islamophobia which did not concern them directly in 2019. Around 18% had been subjected to discrimination based on their religion, in a slight increase on 2018. 13% said they had been both witness and victim of Islamophobia in 2019. The OIL reported a significant phenomenon of non-declaration, confirmed by the survey's findings. Islamophobic acts were frequently not reported, with just 7% reported in 2019.

See: RTL Today News' entry, in: <https://today.rtl.lu/news/luxembourg/a/1642284.html>. Also: See: Observatory of Islamophobia in Luxembourg (OIL) Report, in: <https://islamophobie.lu/Rapport%202019.pdf>, retrieved on 12.01.2021

IsP140063 Poland: Anti-Muslim Polish duo plotted to 'BOMB MOSQUE' and 'POISON' people after writing Breivik-like manifesto against Islam — On January 4, State prosecutors in Poland charged two men with conspiring to attack a mosque with explosives. The suspects were also accused of planning poisonings, while one wrote a manifesto on the need to "exterminate religious groups." The two men were arrested in November 2019, the day before a large nationalist march in Warsaw. Police seized guns, drugs, explosives and chemicals, and an investigation began. A government spokesman told Onet that the men targeted "a specific religious object of the Islamic community," believed to be a mosque. The spokesman added that the conspirators had also planned to "spread poisonous substances to certain people," in a campaign aimed at preventing what they had described as "Islamization" of Poland. A third man was also charged with possessing chemical precursors to explosives. The Prosecutors said one of the would-be attackers had prepared a manifesto "incited hatred on the basis of ethnic and religious differences." The two bomb plotters face up to 10 years in prison if convicted, while the third man faces two years behind bars for possessing illegal chemicals.



See: Russia Today News' entry, in: <https://www.rt.com/news/511510-poland-mosque-bombing-poison-plot/>, retrieved on 07.01.2021 and an additional Source: <https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/szczecin/dwaj-mezczyzni-chcieli-zatrzymac-islamizacje-polski-i-planowali-atak-na-meczet/vqdfzdh>

IsP140064 Netherlands: Geert Wilders Party (PVV) releases election program: "country without headscarfs, but with traditional Dutch coziness"— On January 9, The Freedom Party (PVV) had presented its program for the country's general election scheduled for March 17. The party's points of view were explained in over 50 pages. In the preface, the party leader Geert Wilders wrote that he would like to return to "a country without headscarves, but with traditional Dutch coziness, such as the Sinterklaas tradition with Zwarte Piet." The PVV manifesto said it would "de-Islamize" the Netherlands. Among other things, PVV election program said it would stop the spread of "Islamic ideology." The party would close the borders to "fortune seekers and immigrants from Islamic countries." There would be a "Ministry of Immigration, Remigration, and De-Islamization," and people with dual nationality would no longer have the right to vote, argued the election program. Temporary asylum permits for Syrian refugees would be withdrawn. The party also said it would "take control of our own money" and leave the European Union. Public broadcasting would also be abolished, said the party.

See: NL Times News' entry, in: <https://nltimes.nl/2021/01/09/pvv-releases-election-program-country-without-headscarfs-traditional-dutch-coziness>, retrieved on 18.01.2021

IsP140065 Switzerland: Swiss government urges voters to reject burqa ban in March referendum — On January 19, The Swiss government had recommended voters to reject a proposal in a planned March 7 referendum to ban full facial coverings such as burqas and niqabs worn by some Muslim women, the government said the move would hurt tourism. Under Switzerland's system of direct democracy, any proposal to change the constitution would go to a popular vote if supporters were able to raise more than 100,000 signatures. The government said in a statement: "Very few people in Switzerland wear a full facial covering. A nationwide ban would undermine the sovereignty of the cantons, damage tourism and be unhelpful for certain groups of women". The group which had been behind the burqa ban proposal - the "Egerkingen Komitee" had included members of the right-wing Swiss People's Party (SVP). The group was also behind the 2009 move to ban minarets, which was approved by nearly 60% of voters.

See: Reuters News' entry, in: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-swiss-referendum-face-coverings-idUSKBN2900V7>, retrieved on 24.01.2021

IsP140066 Switzerland: Majority of Swiss want a burqa ban, poll showed ahead of referendum in March— On January 22, a voter survey had revealed that, majority of Swiss voters favored the introduction of "burqa ban", ahead of a referendum on the issue in March. Tamedia

poll of 15,000 eligible voters showed that 63 percent of those questioned would vote yes or were considering voting yes in an upcoming popular vote on the ban, the Tages Anzeiger daily reported. The Swiss were set to vote on whether they want to ban face coverings in public on March 7, as part of the country's famous direct democratic system. The text, which had not mention Muslim veils explicitly, stated that 'no one shall cover their face in public, nor in areas accessible to the public or in areas where services are ordinarily accessible to all.' However, the proposed ban, which had been opposed by the Swiss government, was widely seen as targeting burqas and other face-covering Muslim veils.

See: Daily Mail Newspaper entry, in: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9176235/Majority-Swiss-want-burqa-ban-poll-shows-ahead-referendum-March.html>, retrieved on 26.01.2021



IsP140067 Spain: Vox Party Account Suspended for Tweet Violating Hate Speech Rules—

On January 30, Twitter announced that it had suspended the official account of Spanish right-wing Vox party due to a tweet that violated the policy of hate speech. The ban on Twitter came after the party warned in one of its tweets about what it described as “the dangerous Islamization of the region of Catalonia”, in the north of the country, and denounced the increasing number of Muslims residing in the second-largest multicultural region in Spain after Madrid. Vox’s post claimed that Muslims “account for approximately 0.2% (of the population) and are responsible for 93% of (police) complaints. Most are from the Maghreb.” They added that in the face of this “imported crime”, which they claimed that it had been ignored by other parties, “only Vox remains!”. Twitter, stated that they deemed the post to be “Inciting fear against a group of people because of their origin or nationality”, which they assert “has no place in our service.”

See: Euro Weekly News entry, in: <https://www.euroweeklynews.com/2021/01/29/vox-party-account-suspended-for-tweet-violating-hate-speech-rules/>, retrieved on 31.01.2021

IsP140068 UK: South Asian Man Compared to 'Bomber' by Woman on Bus—

On December 20, 2020, Ali Imdad, a former contestant on the Great British Bake Off program, was compared to a bomber by another passenger on a bus and he was saddened that no one came to his defense and appalled that the driver threatened to throw him off after he spoke out to defend himself. Imdad,

was on his way home in Birmingham when a woman told him that Asians were "everywhere" and blamed "people like him" for "all these bombings." According to the footage of the incident which had been uploaded to social media, the woman can be heard telling Imdad: "50 years ago - there was no Asians. Now it's everywhere. Imdad told Newsweek that he had felt disappointed nobody came to his aid and that the only other passenger to speak out at the time of the incident, was another man who told him off for the way he spoke to the woman.

See: Newsweek entry, in: <https://www.newsweek.com/racism-islam-islamophobia-birmingham-bus-1556622>, retrieved on 03.01.2021

IsP140069 UK: Watchdog finds newspapers falsely said Pakistan imported COVID cases to UK— On December 22, 2020, the Daily Telegraph and Daily Mail, British newspapers, had accepted the ruling of the UK Independent Press Standards Organization (IPSO) that they had published misleading headlines which falsely accused Pakistan of importing Corona cases to the UK and been responsible to half of the cases. The story was first published on July 26, 2020, by the Telegraph newspaper headlined “Exclusive: Half of Britain’s imported coronavirus cases originate from Pakistan” and the republished by Daily Mail (Pakistan was the origin for HALF of Britain’s imported corn cases), and several other papers. The IPSO decision came following a complaint filed by the Centre for Media Monitoring (CfMM), associated with the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), that Mail Online, Daily Telegraph breached Clause 1 (Accuracy) of the Editors’ Code of Practice in the articles falsely accusing Pakistan of importing Corona cases to the UK. These articles had called for “tougher quarantine checks on arrivals from 'high-risk' countries” such as Pakistan. The papers claimed that half the incidents of imported infections were understood to had come from Pakistan since June 4, 2020, as data from Public Health England showed 30 cases. In the IPSO detailed decision published on November 26, 2020, the Committee found that the headline gave the strong and misleading impression that half of all Britain’s imported coronavirus cases for the pandemic as a whole had originated in Pakistan. The publication of the headline, said the IPSO, “amounted to a clear failure by the newspaper to take care not to publish misleading or distorted information, raising a breach of Clause 1(Accuracy) of the Editors Code.” In compliance to the decision, Mail Online said: “The headline to this article has been amended since publication to make clear that the number of imported cases of COVID-19 from Pakistan into Britain related to the month of June.” Also, Daily Telegraph tweeted: “Our tweets 26/6 “Pakistan origin of half of Britain’s imported virus cases was misleading as it suggested that half of all the UK imported cases originated in Pakistan, in fact, the figures only related to the period 4-26/6”.

See: The News International newspaper entry, in: <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/763634-watchdog-finds-newspapers-falsely-said-pakistan-imported-covid-cases-to-uk>, retrieved on 04.01.2021

IsP140070 UK: Scottish mother who converted to Islam 'stopped wearing her Hijab' due to sickening Islamophobia— Dawn Maqsood, a Scottish mother, who converted to Islam 12 years ago, had told Dailyrecord how she stopped wearing her Hijab headscarf due to everyday Islamophobia. Mrs Maqsood said she was “mentally worn down” by people’s attitude to her and the fear that her daughters would be affected. She said: “I wore hijab for two years and in that time I was mentally worn down by the way people treated me... I was anxious for my daughters that something would happen when I was out with them and it started to wear on my mental health. Hijab was not created to be a burden upon us so I decided after a lot of soul searching to stop wearing it although I hope to go back to it one day”. Immediately after she had started wearing hijab she had noticed a change in people’s behavior toward her, she described how “People don’t hold the door for you, they don’t help you in the supermarket when you’ve dropped something on the floor, you don’t get the same friendly customer service as the non-Muslim person in front of

you in the queue.” She also observed the negative “assumptions that my husband had forced me to wear it and I must somehow be oppressed”.

See: Daily Record News’ entry, in: <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/scots-muslim-mum-stopped-wearing-23286296>, retrieved on 11.01.2021

IsP140071 UK: Parents threatened with legal action after Muslim schoolgirl refuses to wear

shorter skirt— The parents of Siham Hamud, a 12 Year old Muslim girl, had been threatened with court action because their daughter had refused to wear a knee-length skirt to school. Siham had been wearing an ankle-length skirt to school for years but teachers allegedly told her it was incorrect school uniform on December 2020. Her father Idris Hamud, said she was sent home from Uxbridge High School, in London, to change every day in December 2020, and told to come back wearing the correct uniform. But she refused because it was “against her religious beliefs,” he said. The School



said girls should wear black trousers or a black pleated skirt from official uniform suppliers - which the family claims falls above the knee. The school had sent Mr. Hamud a letter threatening legal action over “unauthorised absences” as a result of Siham being sent home from school. Siham, who had been studying from home because of coronavirus lockdown restrictions, said: "It feels like bullying because of what I believe ... I feel confused and annoyed that I can't wear what I want for my religion. Mr. Hamud said the issue would be discussed by a complaints panel with school governors. The school's principal, Nigel Clemens, said: "This matter is currently subject to examination through the formal school complaints policy. It would therefore not be appropriate to comment further at this time."

See: The Independent Newspaper entry, in: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/school-uniform-row-uxbridge-hillingdon-skirt-muslim-b1785943.html>, retrieved on 18.01.2021

IsP140072 UK: Universities are failing to recognise and tackle Islamophobia, London Met Study finds

— On January 13, The London Metropolitan university’s Centre for Equity and Inclusion published a report with the conclusion that the Universities in the UK were failing to acknowledge the growth of Islamophobia on their campuses and had done little more than offer ‘empty platitudes’ in their efforts to tackle discrimination against Muslim students. The report, *Institutionalised: The Growth of Islamophobia in Higher Education*, combined data-informed insights and research into the experience of Muslim students in higher education across the UK with vivid personal accounts from students and staff at London Met. Sofia Akel, London Met’s Race Equity Lead within its Centre for Equity and Inclusion, and the report’s author said: “The Institutionalised study builds on past Muslim scholarship and research and adds the experiences of Muslim students at London Met to present a compelling case for urgent action. “Universities have failed to see the multifaceted and insidious nature of racism, despite the body of evidence which points towards the institutionalised form that racial oppression takes. What this looks like in practice, is a lack of appropriate responsiveness and decisive action against racism in its many forms. Institutions must charge themselves with the responsibility of understanding Islamophobia beyond the superficial - from how it operates through to its potential impact on recruitment

processes, the psycho-social environment and to complaints procedures.” The 5 (five) key recommendations of the report included: (a) ‘Islamophobia’ must become part of the institutional vocabulary, embedded in all codes of conduct, and related behavioural policies; (b) Human Resources and hiring managers must assess their recruitment practices and existing positions of Muslim staff in relation to this report’s findings; (c) The university should accommodate staff and students participating in religious practices and holidays such as Ramadan, (d) Overhauling and centralising complaints procedures to reflect subtle forms of racial and religious discrimination such; (e) Offering prospective students financial support on how to access Shar’iah compliant student loans and bank accounts.

See: London Metropolitan University Press Release, in: <https://www.londonmet.ac.uk/news/articles/universities-are-failing-to-recognise-and-tackle-islamophobia-london-met-study-finds/>, Also: See: The Full report, in: <https://www.londonmet.ac.uk/media/london-metropolitan-university/london-met-documents/professional-service-departments/centre-for-equity-and-inclusion/research-reports/Institutionalised--%C3%82%C2%A0The-Rise-of-Islamophobia-in-Higher-Education.pdf>, retrieved on 19.01.2021

IsP140073 UK: Security company wrote ‘Allahu Akbar’ on fake bomb in Heathrow exercise— On December 2020, Anis Ali, a train driver for Heathrow Express, took one of the UK’s biggest security firms to a tribunal hearing for a religious discrimination over an incident in 2017. Redline Assured Security, had planted a fake bomb at a Heathrow airport train station with the words “Allahu Akbar” written in Arabic on it during a training exercise in 2017. The company defended the decision at the employment tribunal, where they said, it was used to make the package look “suspicious”. Since then, the company had stopped using the phrase following the Ali’s complain. The tribunal found that the practice did not constitute direct discrimination but called the decision to no longer make the association between Islam and terrorism in exercises as “sensible”. The tribunal also heard that a train driver, duty station manager and Mr Ali’s then-employer, Heathrow Express, unlawfully harassed him, related to religion and belief, after colleagues told him that Muslims “groom and rape Sikh and white women”. They were ordered to pay compensation totaling £4,000. The complaint against the pair and Heathrow Express was upheld, and according to the judgment statement the tribunal said that the actions created a “hostile and degrading environment”. A Heathrow Express spokesperson said: “We apologise that we didn’t live up to that commitment on this occasion but we will review and fully address and implement the findings of the tribunal.”

See: Belfast Telegraph News’ entry, in: <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/security-company-wrote-allahu-akbar-on-fake-bomb-in-heathrow-exercise-39969839.html>, retrieved on 24.01.2021

IsP140074 UK: William Shawcross's selection for Prevent role strongly criticised— On January 26, the UK government had announced the appointment of William Shawcross, as the new Independent Reviewer of Prevent. Shawcross, the former head of the charity watchdog, who had made controversial comments about Islam, was to lead a programme which was part of the UK’s counter-terrorism strategy and aimed to safeguard vulnerable people from being radicalised. The Prevent strategy included a statutory duty for schools, NHS trusts, prisons and local authorities to report any concerns they had about people who may be at risk of turning to extremism. The independent review of the program was supposed to consider the strategy, delivery and future of the Prevent



programme. Civil liberties and human rights organisations such as Amnesty International had been calling for an independent review of Prevent for some time, they said it fosters discrimination against people of Muslim faith or background and inhibits legitimate expression. The appointment of Shawcross, chair of the Charity Commission between 2012 and 2018, was met instantly with criticism over previous remarks he had made about Islam. In 2012, as a director at neoconservative thinktank the Henry Jackson Society, he said: "Europe and Islam is one of the greatest, most terrifying problems of our future. I think all European countries have vastly, very quickly growing Islamic populations." Dal Babu, a former senior Muslim officer in the Metropolitan police, condemned the appointment, and said: "Shawcross is a man who has demonstrated lack of independence in matters involving the Muslim community and sadly this is a missed opportunity to develop an effective [programme] that safeguards our children." A spokesperson for the Muslim Council of Britain said: "the government is making it clear it has no interest in truly reviewing the policy. William Shawcross is singularly unfit to be a neutral and fair assessor of this government policy, which has been criticised for unfairly targeting British Muslims, given his frightening views about Islam and Muslims ... It is ironic that a policy supposedly charged with preventing extremism is to be scrutinised by a person who holds hostile views on Islam and Muslims, who has links to people with extreme views on us, and who defends the worst excesses of the so-called 'War on Terror'."

See: The Guardian Newspaper entry, in: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jan/26/william-shawcross-selection-for-prevent-role-strongly-criticised>, retrieved on 28.01.2021

ASIA

IsP140075 China: Chinese Embassy tweet about Uighurs and birth rate draws instant condemnation— In a tweet, on January 5, the Chinese Embassy in the U.S. had shared a state media report, which claimed that Muslim women in Xinjiang province were "no longer baby-making machines" and that the decrease in population growth throughout the province had led to a drop in terrorism. The tweet, which was later deleted by Twitter, garnered instead blowback, given the Chinese government's campaign against Uighurs and other Muslim ethnic minorities. "Decreases in the birthrate and natural population growth rate in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region in 2018 resulted from the eradication of religious extremism," according to the article published by China Daily, the largest Chinese Communist Party-owned English language newspaper with circulation worldwide. The study and press releases from the Chinese government attributed the decrease in population growth to family planning programs and increased education, which religious extremism "incited people to resist," according to another press release from the embassy. However, according to experts, Uighur women in Xinjiang were been sterilized. Adrian Zenz, senior fellow in China Studies at the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, research back in June 2020 provided substantial evidence for a "forced mass sterilization" campaign taking place in Xinjiang. "We first thought that internment and strict enforcement of family planning was greatly depressing population growth rates in Uighur regions ... But then the shocker came when I dug deep and found plans to reduce natural birth or natural population growth to near zero by 2020." China had strongly denied any claims of forced sterilization.

See: ABC News' entry, in: <https://abcnews.go.com/International/chinese-embassy-tweet-uighurs-birth-rate-draws-instant/story?id=75118569>, retrieved on 13.01.2021

IsP140076 India: Indian Muslims fled their homes after Love Jihad laws left them in fear of Hindu neighbours — On January 1, the Telegraph newspaper had reported that nearly 40 Muslim families in the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh were planning to flee their village after saying

they had been subjected to a campaign of harassment by a Hindu nationalist group, one month after laws were passed criminalising marriage between Hindus and Muslims. According to the report, Mavi Meera village which had been home to approximately 600 families, and tensions between its Hindu and Muslim residents had existed since 2013. But since the “Love Jihad” laws were passed in November, the Bajrang Dal group had stepped up its regular sermons in the village and described Muslims as outsiders. Sartaj Alam, was the first to flee with his family, saying they no longer felt safe. “The Hindu community wants us to vacate the village. They have been attacking us and harassing us for a long time Earlier, there would have been scuffles between the two communities and Hindus would beat us with canes, but now they feel confident to have fired bullets. It is better to leave this village before it turns ugly,” Alam told the Telegraph. When Muslims approached the local police to register the shootings, some Hindu officers allegedly told them to drop the claims or face charges themselves, according to the report.

See: The Telegraph News’ entry, in: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/01/01/indian-muslims-flee-homes-love-jihad-laws-leave-fear-hindu-neighbours/>, retrieved on 05.01.2021

IsP140077 India: Indian state banned government-run Islamic schools from teaching religious scripture— Assam, a state in northeastern India ruled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), had passed a law to convert all Islamic schools to regular education institutions. Every government-run Islamic school in Assam, locally known as madrassas, would be converted by April, the state's Education Minister, Himanta Biswa Sarma, confirmed on Twitter on December 30, 2020. In the new law, the madrassas would become "secular schools" and it would not teach students about the Quran, officials said. Opposition politicians had criticized the move, alleging it was a reflection of hardening anti-Muslim attitudes in the Hindu-majority country. Senior state opposition leader Debabrata Saikia claimed the new law was passed by the BJP to "consolidate more Hindu votes ... It is a polarization tactic ... (The BJP) is trying to do it in an official capacity. There is no such need for a law." Saikia said. According to the chairman of Assam's Madrassa Education Board, Imran Hussain, about 700 schools would be impacted.

See: CNN News’ entry, in: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/12/31/india/islamic-schools-assam-india-intl-hnk/index.html>, retrieved on 05.01.2021

IsP140078 India: Indian state brings in law against religious conversion— On January 3, The Madhya Pradesh, an Indian state, had passed a bill to stop Hindu women from converting to Islam. The bill to curb so-called “Love Jihad”, a term used by right-wing Hindu groups alleging that Muslim men target Hindu women for conversion to Islam by pretending that they love them, would be presented in the state assembly. Narottam Mishra, home minister of the state, said: “The bill includes a maximum punishment of up to 10 years in jail and up to 100,000 Indian rupees (\$1358) in fine, with the burden of proof virtually falling on the accused and those associated with the accused, including organizations and institutions,”. An official statement said: “Those looking to change their religion will have to notify two months ahead, failing which the marriage will be considered null and void under the new law.” The move by the Madhya Pradesh government came almost one month after a similar law was passed by the Uttar Pradesh government.

See: Anadolu Agency News’ entry, in: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/indian-state-brings-in-law-against-religious-conversion/2089511>, retrieved on 07.01.2021

IsP140079 India: Clashes break out in Indore village as rally by Hindu outfits chants slogans outside mosque—

On December 29, 2020, Clashes had erupted in a Muslim-dominated village in Indore district when members of right-wing Hindu groups, who were participating in a rally to collect donations for the construction of Ram Temple, had stopped in front of a mosque and chanted slogans. The confrontation came only



three days after similar clashes erupted in Muslim-dominated Begum Bagh neighbourhood of Ujjain when a rally been taken out by Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha chanted slogans, led to stone pelting. The December 29, clash took place in Chandankhedi village under Gautampura police station when the rally of around 200 people stopped outside the mosque and chanted slogans. Senior police officials said this resulted in heated exchanges between members of the two communities leading to stone pelting. Some local residents claimed that those participating in the rally chanted Hanuman Chalisa outside the mosque while prayers were being offered inside. The situation turned violent when some of them – holding saffron flags and chanting “Jai Shri Ram” slogans – climbed atop the mosque and tried to damage the minaret. A total of 15 people had been arrested, of whom five had been booked of under National Security Act and 10 others had been booked for attempt to murder and rioting. All the 15 arrested were residents of Begum Bagh. No one from among those who took out the rally had been arrested.

See: Indian Express News’ entry, in: <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/clashes-break-out-in-indore-village-as-rally-by-hindu-outfits-chants-slogans-outside-mosque-7125515/>, retrieved on 13.01.2021

IsP140080 India: 'Muslims Being Targeted during Fund-raising for Ram Temple': Digvijaya Demands Inquiry, Compensation—

On January 8, Congress Rajya Sabha MP Digvijaya Singh said Muslim localities in Madhya Pradesh were being targeted during fund-raising rallies for construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya and sought an inquiry by a retired chief secretary or director general of police into the violence. "I am saddened today at the manner in which (violent) incidents are taking place. During fund-raising, weapons, lathis



(sticks) and swords are on display, inflammatory slogans are being shouted, particularly targeting Muslim localities," Singh told reporters. His statement came after he and Congress MLA Arif Masood met Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains and Director General of Police VK Johri on this issue. Singh Said: "Incidents of Ujjain, Mandsaur and Indore should be investigated thoroughly. The collectors and SPs should be held responsible and must be removed. Why have they given permission for the rallies? It is strange that police cases are being registered against people whose

houses were torched, tractors and vehicles damaged, and who sustained bullet wounds." He called for an inquiry into the violence and said it should be carried out by a "retired CS or DG with an unblemished track record" and those who had sustained losses must be compensated.

See: News18 entry, in: <https://www.news18.com/news/politics/muslims-being-targeted-during-fund-raising-for-ram-temple-digvijaya-singh-demands-inquiry-compensation-3263501.html>, retrieved on 13.01.2021

IsP140081 India: Uttar Pradesh: Shahi Idgah Committee Raises Objections Over Plea Seeking Removal Of Mathura Mosque — On January 7, the Management Trust Committee of Shahi Idgah in Mathura moved an application in the district court objecting to the admission of an appeal filed against the dismissal of a civil suit seeking ownership of 13.37-acre land near the Krishna Janmasthan temple and removal of Shahi Idgah mosque. The suit, filed by Lucknow resident Ranjana Agnihotri and five others, had claimed that the Shahi Idgah mosque was exactly where Krishna was born and they had sought the ownership of the entire 13.37 acre land. It also sought cancellation of a compromise decree between the governing body of the temple complex and the management trust of the mosque in 1968. In its plea, the committee stated that the appeal was non- maintainable. The next hearing was set for mid-January.

See: The Times of India News' entry, in: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/agra/uttar-pradesh-shahi-idgah-committee-raises-objections-over-plea-seeking-removal-of-mathura-mosque/articleshow/80158504.cms>, retrieved on 14.01.2021

IsP140082 India: Mood of the Nation poll: 54% see a 'love jihad' conspiracy to convert Hindu women to Islam— On January 2021, the India Today Group-Karvy Insights Mood of the Nation (MOTN), had conducted a poll regarding the issue of "love jihad" and the anti-conversion laws which had passed in several BJP-ruled states. The survey had revealed, that there was a strong belief among respondents (54 per cent) in a widespread "love jihad" conspiracy to convert Hindu women to Islam. Only 36 per cent said there was no such conspiracy. Besides, 58 per cent of those surveyed had backed laws passed to discourage inter-faith marriages. The survey showed that while more than 60 per cent Hindus supported such laws, 51 per cent Muslims opposed it. BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand had passed laws prohibiting religious conversion for the purpose of marriage in last few months while two other states -- Haryana and Karnataka -- were mulling similar legislations. The laws by UP and Uttarakhand had been challenged in the Supreme Court. In Uttar Pradesh, for instance, the police had, till mid-January, lodged at least 17 cases under the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance, 2020. While 14 of them related to inter-personal relationships, marriages and elopement involving Hindu women and Muslim men, in at least three cases the ordinance had been slapped against Hindus and Christians on charges of the latter allegedly luring people into converting to Christianity. In two such cases, the complainants were directly linked to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the BJP. More than half of the respondents (54 per cent) were opposed to inter-faith marriages while 41 per cent were in its favor, the MOTN survey showed.

See: India Today News' entry, in: <https://www.indiatoday.in/mood-of-the-nation/story/majority-of-indians-see-love-jihad-conspiracy-to-convert-hindu-women-to-islam-mood-of-the-nation-poll-1761707-2021-01-22>, retrieved on 25.01.2021

IsP140083-Myanmar: Activists accuse Israeli firm of abetting military's Rohingya atrocities

— On December 20, 2020, Justice for Myanmar, a Myanmar human rights group, had accused a publicly traded Israeli company, Gilat Satellite Networks, of selling its technology to Myanmar's military, saying in a report that Gilat was complicit in the regime's alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity. The published report, aimed to name and



shame global businesses that it claims had transacted with Mytel, a Myanmar mobile network part-owned by the Myanmar military. The report included allegations regarding business deals made by Petah Tikva-based Gilat that predate a September 2017 Israeli High Court decision to stop all military exports to Myanmar. According to the report, in June 2016, Gilat Satellite Networks, working in partnership with SkyNet, a Myanmar satellite television station, won a bid to provide cellular backhaul for one of Myanmar's four mobile operators, most likely a venture between several Myanmar firms with Vietnam's Viettel that launched in 2018 as Mytel. Viettel, controlled by the Vietnamese defense ministry and Myanmar's Star High Public Co., had owned a 28% stake in Mytel, which reportedly belonged to the country's military. At the time that Gilat had announced the partnership, SkyNet, a government joint venture owned by allies of the military regime, was broadcasting messages disparaging the Rohingya Muslim minority, the report alleges. A spokesperson for Justice for Myanmar told The Times of Israel that SkyNet frequently incites hatred against Myanmar's Rohingya minority through its broadcasts of the Myawaddy television network, which was under the army's Directorate of Psychological Warfare and Public Relations. "For instance, the military denies Rohingya identity, saying they're Bengali, which implies that they're illegal migrants and don't belong in Myanmar. It calls them terrorists and dehumanizes them to justify their crime of genocide," said Justice for Myanmar spokesperson Yadanar Maung.

See: The Times of Israel News' entry, in: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/myanmar-activists-accuse-israeli-firm-of-abetting-militarys-rohingya-atrocities/>, retrieved on 04.01.2021

IsP140084 Myanmar: Rohingya Arrested in Myanmar Just for Traveling— On January 7, The Human Rights Watch (HRW) had called on the Myanmar authorities to release two groups of Rohingya who were arrested for allegedly traveling without documentation. The HRW said: "On January 6, Myanmar police had detained 99 ethnic Rohingya in Yangon for traveling without documentation in the country where they were born and lived all their lives." They had reported that most of the arrested were women and children as young as 5 years old who were traveling to Malaysia. According to the right group "They sought to escape Myanmar's longstanding oppression of the group ... All 99 Rohingya were being held in government quarantine on the outskirts of Yangon, after which they would likely be transferred to immigration detention to await criminal charges." In a separate incident, the right group had reported the arrest of 13 Rohingya in

the Bago Region on December 24, 2020, after they left Maungdaw township. Following their detention, they would be transferred to an immigration police cell to await charges, according to the HRW. “Both groups of Rohingya should be released, allowed to self-isolate until their quarantine is over and they test negative, and permitted to travel freely, subject to Covid-19 restrictions applicable to everyone in Myanmar. Criminal charges should not be brought against them for simply being Rohingya and trying to move from one place to another.” the statement read.

See: Human Rights Watch Press Release entry, in: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/01/07/rohingya-arrested-myanmar-just-traveling>, retrieved on 12.01.2021

IsP140085-Sri Lanka: Expert committee recommends both burial and cremation— The expert committee appointed by Sri Lanka’s Health Ministry to study the issue of the disposal of the bodies of coronavirus victims, had recommended both burial and cremation. The committee had been appointed after Muslims objected to the forced cremation of Muslim coronavirus victims. In its report leaked on social media, the committee noted that it firmly stands by on the previous recommendation and guidelines on exclusive cremations of dead bodies as the most appropriate method of disposal which was based on the understanding at the time. However, the expert committee said it had revised the recommendations on disposal of bodies to include both cremation and burial, while adhering to the specified safety precautions. The committee said the body should be buried within 24-hours and placed in a double-layered body bag prior to being placed in a coffin. The committee also said there was no evidence to prove the virus could transmit through water contamination after burial.

See: MENAFN News’ entry, in: <https://menafn.com/1101372060/Sri-Lanka-Expert-committee-recommends-both-burial-and-cremation>, retrieved on 10.01.2021



IsP140086-Sri Lanka: Sri Lanka can bury COVID-19 victims: SLMA — On January 1, The Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA) had issued a statement in response to the issue of COVID

19 death management in Sri Lanka. The association had concluded that burial of COVID-19 victims could be permitted in Sri Lanka based on available scientific data, according to the statement published on twitter. SLMA said: “A positive PCR found post-mortem does not necessarily mean that the dead body is infectious.” It added that the COVID-19 virus could be transmitted only the respiratory route. “The virus itself can thrive only inside a living cell. It is unlikely that it could remain infectious within a dead body for any significant period of time,” the statement read. The SLMA also dismissed concerns raised on the burial of humans citing environmental issues that arose due to the massive burial of minks culled in Denmark. The medical association pointed out that the burial of corpses had been practiced even in the case of severe waterborne diseases like Cholera.

See: Newsfirst entry, in: <https://www.newsfirst.lk/2021/01/03/sri-lanka-can-bury-covid-19-victims-slma/>, retrieved on 11.01.2021

Response of the SLMA to the issue of COVID 19 death management in Sri Lanka

The ongoing COVID-19 outbreak had many an adverse impact on the world population and the global economy. As of 25th December 2020, over 79.5 million people have been infected with more than 1.74 million deaths worldwide. Sri Lanka has reported over 43,000 cases with over 200 deaths. Since the virus was first identified in December 2019, the number of deaths has been increasing exponentially, causing countries across the world, including Sri Lanka, to develop and enhance emergency measures to combat the virus.

Since the recent past, disposal of COVID-19 dead bodies has affected ethnic harmony in Sri Lanka. In view of the cultural diversity of Sri Lanka, it is essential to have a proper policy for disposal of the dead which is acceptable to all.

Based on the limited scientific evidence available at the initial stages, a decision was made by the Director General of Health Services of the Ministry of Health to cremate all dead bodies of COVID-19 positive patients. Since then, there has been significant unrest among some communities regarding the government's decision to impose compulsory cremation as the only avenue of disposal of COVID-19 deaths. This has the potential to cause much civil unrest. As a result, it was also found that people were generally reluctant to cooperate with the COVID control measures implemented by the Government. Many of them avoided seeing doctors and hence there were several deaths occurring at home without seeking medical attention or treatment.

In view of all these considerations, the SLMA decided to review the situation as a matter of urgency, taking into account some new scientific knowledge available now regarding the COVID-19 disease. It was noted that good health means physical, mental, social, and spiritual wellbeing. The significant adverse impact currently experienced by close family members and loved ones of COVID deaths and the disposal of bodies were also considered.

SLMA had a meeting of the medical experts in all relevant fields on 31st December 2020. After extensive deliberations the following observations were made based solely on the currently available scientific evidence.

1. COVID infection occurs only through respiratory route. There are no reported infections through any other routes, including the gastro-intestinal portal.
2. Virus itself can thrive only inside a living cell. As such, it is unlikely that it could remain infectious within a dead body for any significant period of time.
3. A positive PCR found post-mortem does not necessarily mean that the dead body is infectious.
4. Contamination of water supply by sewage, consisting of excretions and secretions of COVID-19 infected patients could be much worse than any possible contamination from buried corpses.
5. Although there are a few instances reported where viral particles have been isolated from ground water, there are no reports of them being infective. There are no records of such

infection even with older viruses like influenza and SARS-CoV-I, which have been studied in much greater detail.

6. The reported planned exhumation and cremation of large numbers of minks culled in Denmark was not due to any possible contamination of water resources by the virus. It was due to a large amount of nitrogenous waste from these decomposing mink carcasses contaminating the nearby water sources and polluting the environment.
7. Even in the case of severe waterborne diseases like Cholera, burial of corpses was one of the practices of disposal of infected dead bodies.

Based on these observations made, relying on currently available scientific information, the council of the Sri Lanka Medical Association is with the view that burial of COVID-19 dead bodies could be permitted in Sri Lanka.



IsP140087-Sri Lanka: Sri Lanka sticks to cremation of Muslim Covid-19 victims despite uproar—

On January 8, the Sri Lanka's government insisted on the cremation of all coronavirus victims, and had rejected international pleas and recommendations from its own experts to allow the Muslim minority to bury their dead in line with Islamic custom. The government first banned burials in April 2020 amid concerns -- which experts had said it were baseless -- by influential Buddhist monks that burying bodies could contaminate groundwater and spread the virus. The World Health Organisation had said that there was no such risk, recommending both burials and cremations of virus victims, but the Sri Lankan government had refused. Sri Lanka's Health Minister, Pavithra Wanniarachchi, said: "This decision will not be changed for social, religious, political or any other personal reason," according to ministry officials. The announcement came despite a government-appointed expert committee had noted that while it felt cremations were safest, burials could be allowed under strict conditions. Sri Lanka's Muslim Council (SLMC) had accused the government of trying to provoke Muslim youths into doing "something rash" with its decision on cremations.



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See: France24 News' entry, in: <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20210108-sri-lanka-sticks-to-cremation-of-muslim-covid-19-victims-despite-uproar>, retrieved on 11.01.2021

IsP140088-Sri Lanka: Sri Lanka's cremation of COVID-19 deceased, including Muslims, a human rights violation, UN said—

On January 25, The United Nations had condemned the Sri Lankan Government's policy of forced cremation of deceased COVID-19 patients, especially in the case of Muslims and other minorities in the country. UN human rights experts said the practice could foment existing prejudices, intolerance and violence. "The imposition of cremation as the only option for handling the bodies confirmed or suspected of COVID-19 amounts to a human rights violation," they said in a statement. According to figures from Johns Hopkins University, more than 280 people had died of COVID-19, and a significant number of those deaths were from Muslim minorities, according to the UN. The Sri Lankan Government said the decision to make cremations mandatory was made based on expert advice. However, the World Health Organization had said there was no evidence to suggest that cremation prevents the spread of the disease. The College of Community Physicians of Sri Lanka and the Sri Lanka Medical Association had also issued statements clarifying that there had been no proof that burial of COVID-19 dead bodies constitutes a public health hazard. "We strongly urge the Government of Sri Lanka to stop the forced cremation of COVID-19 bodies, to take all necessary measures to combat disinformation, hate speech and stigmatization of the Muslims and other minorities as a vector of the pandemic, and to provide remedy and ensure accountability for cremations that were carried out by error ... We deplore the implementation of such public health decisions based on discrimination, aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism amounting to persecution of Muslims and other minorities in the country." the UN said.

See: ABC News' entry, in: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-01-26/sri-lanka-cremating-covid-19-dead-un-human-rights-violation/13091420>, retrieved on 27.01.2021

IsP140089-Sri Lanka: Sri Lankan government rejected UN demand to stop forced COVID cremations

— On January 26, The Sri Lankan government had said it would not comply with a United Nations report on Sri Lanka which had demanded the country to stop the cremation of Muslim COVID-19 victims. In response the U.N. statement, Cabinet Spokesman and Mass Media Minister, Keheliya Rambukwella said the cremation rule was not meant to discriminate against any group. They can't point the finger at us and say that. We reject it. We do things only on expert advice and we can't take ad-hoc decisions, he said. Rambukwella added that Colombo was not prepared to take any steps which would harm the sovereignty of the nation. The Minister told reporters: “The government is following the methodology given by the health authorities in this regard. The government will have to take responsibility for the dangers in the country and it cannot deviate from the current methodology recommended by the experts in the medical field. We cannot take arbitrary decisions.” On January 25, UN human rights experts said the policy of forced cremations ran contrary to the beliefs of Muslims and other minorities in the country, and could foment existing prejudices, intolerance and violence.

See: 5pillars News' entry, in: <https://5pillarsuk.com/2021/01/26/sri-lankan-govt-rejects-un-demand-to-stop-forced-covid-cremations/>, Also: business-standard News's entry, in: https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/un-group-says-sri-lanka-s-covid-19-cremation-rule-violates-rights-121012601051_1.html, Also: The Morning News' entry, in: <http://www.themorning.lk/no-change-in-policy-of-cremation-of-covid-victims-bodies-keheliya/>, Also: UN Human Rights Experts Statement, in: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26686&LangID=E>, retrieved on 28.01.2021

POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

NORTH AMERICA

IsP140090-US: Biden Said Rioters Who Stormed Capitol Were Domestic Terrorists and Promised New Domestic Terror Laws— On January 6, US President-elect Joe Biden had characterized the mob that stormed the U.S. Capitol as domestic terrorists. Mr. Biden said in remarks from Wilmington, Del. “Don’t dare call them protesters ... they were a riotous mob, Insurrectionists, Domestic terrorists.” Mr. Biden said he had planned to make a priority of passing a law against domestic terrorism, and he had been urged to create a White House post overseeing the fight against ideologically inspired violent extremists and increasing funding to combat them. Federal law had defined domestic terrorism as dangerous and illegal acts intended to coerce a population or influence the government. While domestic terrorism could be charged in some states, no generic federal crime exists. Domestic terrorism spans extremist ideologies, but it had been predominantly a far-right phenomenon in recent decades, according to researchers. On January 7, Mr. Biden said, during remarks in which he formally introduced his pick for attorney general, Merrick Garland that, that his incoming Justice Department team would be independent. He added, law enforcement handled the Trump supporters who breached and vandalized the Capitol in a way that was different from how the Black Lives Matters protesters who demonstrated against racial injustice across American cities over the summer 2020 were treated. He said: “We all know that’s true.... And it’s unacceptable. Totally unacceptable.”

See: The Wall Street Journal News’ entry, in: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/biden-says-mob-that-stormed-capitol-were-domestic-terrorists-11610046962>, retrieved on 12.01.2021

IsP140091 US: Lewiston Schools Recognize Muslim Holidays—The city of Lewiston, the second-largest city in Maine State, had added two holidays to the school calendar to mark the Muslim holiday known as Eid, which would be effective from 2021. The School Committee voted 8-1 to recognize two festivals - Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha -as significant events for the city’s Muslim community. “We will no longer have to ask kids to choose between their school and their faith,” Superintendent Jake Langlais told the Sun Journal. Kiernan Majerus-Collins, school committee member, had praised the committee’s vote and said: “This makes Lewiston a welcoming place where people will feel ownership, dignity and respect.” Ayesha Hall, equity resource officer for Lewiston Public Schools, said the change was not about days off. “It’s about celebrating the diversity of (Lewiston Public Schools). We have to make sure we are honoring diversity with action,” she said.

See: The Associated Press News’ entry, in: <https://apnews.com/article/lewiston-maine-ramadan-holidays-dfa0f57dd1d184acdc3a6f264ca1793b>, retrieved on 14.01.2021

IsP140092 US: Biden signs executive order repealing Trump's 'Muslim ban'— On January 20, President Joe Biden had reversed multiple immigration policies that formed the cornerstone of his predecessor's time in the White House, including the 2017 travel ban on people from several predominantly Muslim countries. Mr. Biden had signed an executive order ending the travel ban on citizens from more than a dozen countries, including Eritrea, Yemen, Nigeria and Sudan. The ban which was criticized as a "Muslim ban" when it was first revealed, it went on to eventually include some non majority-Muslim nations. The incoming president had referred to the policy as discriminatory. The move to repeal the ban had been hailed by several civil rights organization,

including the American Civil Liberties Union, which called the policy a "cruel Muslim ban that targeted Africans."

See: DW News' entry, in: <https://www.dw.com/en/biden-signs-executive-order-repealing-trumps-muslim-ban/a-56296866>, retrieved on 24.01.2021

IsP140093-Canada: Victims of mosque attack to be honoured with national day of remembrance, action— On January 28, The Canadian Heritage Minister Steven Guilbeault had announced that the federal government would make January 29 a day to honour victims of the deadly 2017 attack on a Quebec City mosque. The attack which killed six people and seriously injured 19, took place when a gunman went into the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec City. The day would be officially called the National Day of Remembrance of the Quebec City Mosque Attack and Action Against Islamophobia. Guilbeault said Canadians had an obligation to remember the victims and a responsibility to combat discrimination. "This tragedy reminds us of the urgency to stand up against these hateful acts and online radicalization," he said. The National Council of Canadian Muslims, said it would stand as a reminder of the lives lost and the work ahead to dismantle hate and racism. The shooter, Alexandre Bissonnette, had pleaded guilty to six counts of first-degree murder and six of attempted murder, and was sentenced originally to 40 years in prison without the possibility of parole. In November 2020, that time before parole was reduced to 25 years.

See: Halifax Today News' entry, in: <https://www.halifaxtoday.ca/national-news/victims-of-mosque-attack-to-be-honoured-with-national-day-of-remembrance-action-3303472>, retrieved on 31.01.2021

EUROPE

IsP140094 UK: £20,000 Fine on Republic Bharat TV Channel for 'Hate Speech Against Pakistanis'— Ofcom, the British TV regulatory authority, had imposed a £20,000 fine on Republic Bharat, Republic TV's Hindi channel, for hate speech against Pakistani people in a programme broadcast on 2019. In a statement released on December 22, 2020, the TV regulator said that Republic Bharat's *Poochta Hai Bharat* programme – the evening primetime show hosted by Arnab Goswami – had failed to comply with its broadcasting rules. According to Ofcom, an episode, shown on September 6, 2019, featured “comments made by the host and some of his guests that amounted to hate speech against Pakistani people, and derogatory and abusive treatment of Pakistani people. The content was also potentially offensive and was not sufficiently justified by the context.” The show under the scanner was a 35-minute discussion that hinged upon India's Chandrayaan mission but sought to encompass a larger narrative on how India was advanced in space science and its neighbour Pakistan, was not. Among participants were Major Gaurav Arya, [Maj General K.K. Sinha](#), [Prem Shukla](#) of the BJP, and Omar Inam and Omar Altaf from Pakistan. “The host and the Indian guests dominated the discussion, with the Pakistani guests attempting to respond but largely being shouted down by the presenter and Indian guests,” Ofcom's note says. The statements made in the show by guests, and including the host Goswami, said Ofcom, “conveyed the view that all Pakistani people are terrorists, including that: “their scientists, doctors, their leaders, politicians all are terrorists. Even their sports people”; “every child is a terrorist over there. Every child is a terrorist. You are dealing with a terrorist entity”. One guest also described Pakistani scientists as “thieves”, while another described Pakistani people as “beggars”. The content “spread, incited, promoted and justified such intolerance towards Pakistani people among viewers,” found the body. As such, it said, the show violated three rules of its Broadcasting Code.

Among them Rule 3.2, which stated that: “Material which contains hate speech must not be included in television... programmes... except where it is justified by the context”.

See: The Wire News’ entry, in: <https://thewire.in/media/uk-govt-body-slaps-20000-fine-on-republic-bharat-for-hate-speech-against-pakistan>, retrieved on 03.01.2021