



**THIRD OIC OBSERVATORY
REPORT ON ISLAMOPHOBIA
(Intolerance & discrimination
against Muslims)**

May 2009 to April 2010



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REPORT ON
ISLAMOPHOBIA**

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PRESENTED TO THE
37TH COUNCIL OF FOREIGN MINISTERS

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FOREWORD

The *Third Annual Report on Islamophobia* by the OIC Observatory covers the period from May 2009 to April 2010. It was a turbulent period that witnessed an unprecedented surge in Islamophobia in the wake of a succession of high profile and far reaching events. It is indeed unfortunate that the reporting period, which commenced on a high and optimistic note with the land mark speech of US President Barak Obama in Cairo, was marred by events like the victory of far right political parties in the EU Parliamentary elections, brutal murder of the Egyptian lady Marwa Al Sharabini in a German courtroom, the continuing saga of insulting and provocative publications like the reprinting of the cartoons, the desecration of graves of the Senegalese soldiers who sacrificed their lives defending the French soil during the Second World War and above all the Swiss ban on construction of Minarets.

The OIC was deeply concerned and disappointed at the ban. It is indeed an ominous development and could lead to a situation wherein the agenda governing the relations between the Muslim world and the West is hijacked and dictated by radicals rather than moderates. It needs to be emphasized that, despite assurances to the contrary conveyed by the Swiss side during the dialogue process with the OIC, the ban signified a turning point with regard to Islamophobia particularly in Europe. It amounted to institutionalization and constitutionalization of Islamophobia with portentous implications in terms of a contagion effect in the wider Europe which, as observed subsequently, did not waste time to unfold. Instances of Islamophobia being used as an instrument of electoral politics in some important European countries are ascendant and must not be ignored.

Distortion of Islam geared towards denigrating and dehumanizing Muslims insults the deep seated religious feelings and violates their fundamental rights and dignity thus threatening the multicultural fabric of the societies. Such stereotyping leads to discrimination and violence defying justification on both political as well as economic grounds. It poses grave and multidimensional challenges to global as well as regional peace, security and stability. The situation merits a concerted effort on the part of the international community to evolve norms that would underwrite, promote and protect interfaith and inter-communal understanding, respect and harmony.

In presenting the Observatory's *Third Annual Report on Islamophobia*, the OIC reiterates its call as well as willingness for a constructive and result oriented engagement. We believe in engagement at all levels that would not be restricted to diplomats or the political elite but involve all stakeholders including media, academia and the civil society. Moving beyond event based calls for dialogue to a sustained and structured engagement, that accommodates all perspectives, constitutes an absolute imperative towards meeting the daunting challenges faced by our globalized world. The importance of combating Islamophobia as well as intolerance and discrimination against Muslims must not be discounted in that context.

Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The third Annual Report covers the period from May 2009 to April 2010. It was a most turbulent period during which steady rise of Islamophobia, threatening global as well as regional peace and security, continued to be a source of concern particularly in the Western Europe and North America. Fundamental rights of Muslims were violated and their freedom of religion restricted. The situation required serious consideration as stereotyping Muslims or Islam as “terrorist, violent or otherwise unfit”; biased media coverage; anti-Muslim political discourse-especially by the far right parties in Europe-; and attacks, abuses, harassments and violence directed against mosques, Muslims, and their properties and even cemeteries continued to unfold at an alarming proportion. The situation is further exasperated by unabated insulting publications of cartoons of the holy prophet (PBUH). The outcome of the referendum in Switzerland on November 29, 2009-that led to the amendment to the Swiss constitution banning construction of minarets in mosques-was the most blatant manifestation of Islamophobia that provided constitutional cover to the campaign against Islam.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN EUROPE AND THE USA

Surveys, including the one by EFRA, revealed that racist crime, harassment and discrimination against Muslims in Europe were grossly under-reported. Based, however, on the available reports and incidents monitored by the Islamophobia Observatory, the situation of Muslims in Europe aggravated particularly in the wake of events like the Swiss ban on minarets as well as the debate on the French identity. Various reports suggested that far right groups and some citizens in Britain, Spain, Switzerland, Greece and Italy launched protests, petitioned courts and proposed legislation to prevent the construction of mosques. The anti Muslim campaign of Geert Wilders was emulated by other right wing extremist politicians in Europe to gain political support. Incidents under the following categories increased:

a) Incidents related to mosques by 100%. b) Desecration of Muslim graves by 75%. c) Incidents related to hijab and burqah by 500%. d) Political and social campaigns against Islam and Muslims by five times. e) Intolerance against Islamic sacred symbols by more than 100%. f) Discrimination against Muslims in education, workplace, airports, etc. by 100%.

In the USA situation of Muslims did not improve and various studies found that among religious groups, Muslims faced more discrimination. Islamophobia in the US was essentially characterized by two trends, namely the continuation rather aggravation of the 9/11 racial profiling of the Muslims and an opportunism that inspired US based authors to capitalize on the surge in Islamophobia in Europe. In October, 2009 the U.S. State Department Annual Report on International Religious Freedom, was critical of the resolution on combating defamation of religion as well as the OIC for pushing such anti-defamation measures in U.N. bodies.

ISLAMOPHOBIA ACKNOWLEDGED BY SOME WESTERN SCHOLARS

The spate of Islamophobia was not only acknowledged by some western scholars but also some distortions and misperceptions regarding Islam and Muslims were addressed. Among these were; *John Esposito* who wrote about Islam and Muslims addressing issues like the rise of militant Islam, the veil, and democracy, *Karen Armstrong* who found in Prophet Muhammad’s teachings a theology of peace and tolerance, *Deepa Kumar* who argued that the Danish cartoon of the prophet Mohammed was nothing if not the visual depiction of the racist diatribe, and *Liz Fekete* who, re-established a link between racism and immigration controls and argued that ‘Europe’s Muslims were routinely represented in the media as untrustworthy citizens.

MANIFESTATIONS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

It was unfortunately noted that Islamophobia was gaining wide acceptance as part of the western landscape. Islamophobia manifested itself in various forms and emerged in different areas and fields of the society in the west. Following were observed as its main manifestations during the reporting period:

1. Media Manifestations of Islamophobia; The media which played an important role in shaping public opinion and public policy did not take part in addressing the issues related to Islamophobia. Moreover, it was noticed that some sections of the Western media disseminated incorrect and distorted versions of issues related to Islam or Muslims.

In the case of the assassination of Marwa al-Sherbini's in Dresden, Germany, on July 1st, 2009 the German media played Islamophobia card, as it informed the German public that a defendant had murdered a witness in the district court and the reason was a quarrel in a children's playground. It didn't mention the fact that the witness was a Muslim woman and that the playground quarrel had culminated in the defendant shouting at the woman 'Islamist', 'Muslim b****' and 'terrorist'. Similarly, media drew connections to Islam in the instances of the attack on Fort Hood, in the USA, and the cases of the Somalis and Nigerian terror plot.

2. Intellectual Manifestations of Islamophobia; The UN Special Rapporteur Mr. Doudou Diène, in his report to the Ninth Session of Human Rights Council had, inter alia, highlighted that the current political and ideological trend was strongly influenced by the intellectual and scientific legitimization of racism, xenophobia and intolerance. The trend was made conspicuous, during the reporting period, by a number of books published by some authors with a view to capitalizing on the opportunity afforded by the upsurge in Islamophobia and distorting images of Islam and Muslims.

To cite as examples, Christopher Caldwell's book, described Islam in Europe as an adversary culture and expressed alarm on the improving demographics pertaining to Muslims in the continent. Bat Ye'or in her book Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis contended that Europe has allowed itself to be taken over by Arab interests. Similarly Andrew Bostom in The legacy of Jihad described Islamic jihad as a destructive character, refuting the primacy of jihad being a "rich" concept. The titles of the books, "While Europe Slept: How Radical Islam is Destroying the West from Within", and "Muslim Mafia: Inside the Secret Underworld That's Conspiring to Islamize America" were self explanatory.

3. Political and legislative Manifestation of Islamophobia; The ban on the construction of Minarets in Mosques in Switzerland as a result of a vote on November 29, 2009 marked a turning point in the sense that it institutionalized and constitutionalized Islamophobia. It clearly violated the fundamental rights of the Muslims in Switzerland and gave way to the possibility of triggering a domino affect with adverse repercussions. The ban was subjected to widespread criticism. Governments and NGOs and global Human Rights outfits, including the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International criticized the ban.

There were various other examples of political Islamophobia manifested particularly in the far right politicians' campaigns including the Dutch anti-Muslim politician Geert Wilders etc.

4. Islamophobia in Cartoons; Two separate alleged murder attempts on the Danish and the Swedish cartoonists, respectively on January and March, 2010, prompted some Nordic

newspapers to reprint the cartoons, as an action in favour of freedom of speech. Meanwhile, in February, 2010, the Norwegian newspaper, *Dagbladet*, published a caricature of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) linked to the controversial cartoons on its *Facebook* page.

In terms of a positive development, on February 26, 2010, the Danish newspaper *Politiken* and the directors of 8 organizations from OIC Member States with 94,923 members, being descendents of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), represented by their attorney-at-law reached a settlement of the dispute that arose out of *Politiken's* reprinting of the cartoon drawing of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). The settlement obliged *Politiken* to issue a statement apologizing for printing the cartoons.

5. Structural Manifestations of Islamophobia; Muslims continued to face problems in accessing the basic needs such as employment, healthcare housing and education mainly on account of stereotyping.

Incidents such as consideration of BBC's appointment of a Muslim as the head of religion and ethics an 'insult' by Christians; calling Muslim cleaning woman 'security threat' in Italy by the Northern League's leader; German doctor's refusal to treat a teen named Jihad- the Arabic word attributed to holy struggle or holy war-and as a result termination of his elder sister's internship program by the management of the Supermarket; expulsion of Muslim woman from school in Canada for refusing to remove her veil; and attack on Muslims outside a Tooting mosques in UK, showed the gravity of the situation.

SOME POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

The British Foreign Secretary David Miliband in a speech delivered in Oxford on May 21, 2009 told that the West had to "show greater respect" for Muslims if it wanted to rebuild relations with the Islamic world. Miliband listed the Iraq war alongside the medieval Crusades and colonial-era division and subjugation of the Middle East as drivers of "bitterness, distrust and resentment" in the region. He added that relations had been damaged by the use of "lazy stereotypes" by Western officials.

On July 10, 2009, Ireland passed the Defamation Bill that made it illegal to criticize any religion with penalty of fines up to 25,000 Euros. The Czech Senate banned appearance by the Dutch politician Geert Wilders who wanted to show his movie *Fitna* in the Senate in November, 2009. Some other instances of legal action included charging of a boy by a court in Denmark for anti-Islamic posters; sentencing a person on October 2009 by a court in Netherlands for insulting Muslims; and the ban imposed by a court in France on leaflets attacking plans to build mosques.

Among the important developments was the Cairo speech by President Obama, promising a 'new beginning' to the Muslim world and issuing instructions to stop using derogatory concepts against Muslims such as "War on Terror". It was followed by the appointment of Rashad Hussain, as the Special Envoy to the OIC.

Some other noteworthy developments included the resolution to proclaim Sept. 24, 2009, as Islam Day in Hawaii that was passed by its Senate on May 2009; charging of a man in June, 2009 under Missouri hate crime law for vandalizing Islamic Center; passage of a resolution by the New York City Council Education Committee calling for adding Muslim holidays (*Eid Ul-Fitr and Eid Ul-Adha*) to the school calendar and passage of a law thereon; and the decision of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in August, 2009 that JBS Swift violated the civil

rights of more than 100 Somali Muslims it fired in 2008 after a walkout over religious differences at the height of Ramadan.

ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE OIC

The OIC General Secretariat was involved in various activities to effectively raise awareness of the adverse implications of Islamophobia on global peace and take the dialogue among civilizations forward. To that end, in addition to visits to important Western countries, the OIC Secretary General as well as the General Secretariat convened, co-sponsored or attended a number of international conferences and workshops. The Secretary General raised concerns on issues related to Islamophobia with Western leaders and officials on several occasions including meetings with the US Secretary of State, French and German Foreign Ministers and the President of the European Parliament and the 35th UNESCO General Conference. OIC Islamophobia Observatory continued to closely monitor Islamophobic acts issuing statements followed up with diplomatic demarches and bilateral meetings as and when required.

When the results of November 29, 2009's referendum were announced, the OIC was the first international organization to issue a statement of concern in this regard. Letters were written to the OIC Observer Missions in New York and Geneva with the request to keep the General Secretariat informed of all the developments. The OIC Secretary General, in December, 2009, addressed letters to his counterparts in the League of the Arab States and the Gulf Cooperation Council in order to seek their support in reaching a common position on the matter. The OIC Ambassadors' Groups in Geneva and New York also issued statements of condemnation. In a meeting with the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the UN in Geneva on December 10, 2009 the OIC Group after hearing the Swiss Government's explanation, expressed their disappointment over ban. On January 31, 2010, the OIC General Secretariat convened a meeting of the Permanent Representatives to the OIC in Jeddah, which underscored the racial character of the ban and strongly urged the Swiss Government to do the needful to reverse the decision. The OIC Secretary General followed this up with the Swiss Foreign Minister in Geneva during his visit to attend the High Level Segment of the 13th Session of the Human Rights Council, on March 3rd, 2010.

The OIC condemned the reprint of defamatory cartoons by Nordic Newspapers prompted by the alleged attempts on the Danish and Swedish cartoonists in January and March 2009.

The OIC sponsored resolution on 'Defamation of Religions' successfully passed at the Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly. The stance taken by the Western Group on the inadmissibility of the concept of defamation of religions (owing to a lack of legal persona) in the human rights framework continued to impede engagement.

During the reporting period, the OIC representatives attended important events related to Islamophobia including the preparatory meeting on "Historical Reconciliation" held in Cambridge University; the "Tolerance and Non-Discrimination" and "Freedom of Expression" sessions of the 2009 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) of the OSCE/ODIHR in Warsaw; Wilton Park Conference on "At Home in Europe? Muslims in EU Cities" in London; and First Meeting of the Joint Committee between the OIC and the Arab League on Islamophobia, in Cairo, Egypt. The OIC also attended many events related to Dialogue and understanding including the Secretary General's visits to the USA, Sweden; the Fifth Asia-Europe Interfaith Dialogue meeting in Korea; and Conference on Dialogue of Civilizations, organized jointly by Azerbaijani government and the OIC in Baku.

THE OIC VISION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the presence of pertinent laws and international covenants to protect and uphold human rights, Islamophobia continued to ward off and avoid the force of the laws by attacking Islam and portraying it as an abstract notion. The existing international legal infrastructure had failed to deal with this contemporary issue. It, therefore, needed to be evaluated and evolved in the interest of combating Islamophobia and defamation of all religions in an effective manner.

To contain Islamophobia and its dangers there was a need: (i) to raise global awareness of the basic tenets of moderation and modernization in Islam; (ii) to sensitize the international community on the dangerous implications of the phenomenon of Islamophobia; (iii) to issue rejoinders and rebuttals on Islamophobic publications; and (iv) to condemn Islamophobic acts calling on the governments and authorities to take appropriate actions.

The Observatory made the following recommendations to address Islamophobia in the West:

- a) The existing normative framework to combat intolerance and discrimination be implemented with a view to develop a strategy to avoid political exploitation of the issue;
- b) The war on terror must not become a war on Muslims;
- c) Muslims should enjoy material well-being, cultural acceptance and religious freedom, without political or social intimidation;
- d) Western governments, policy makers and civil society institutions must speak out swiftly, clearly and forcefully against Islamophobia and any manifestation of racism against Muslims. To that end, a more rapid response mechanism must be initiated;
- e) Western countries should prohibit by law, publishing or uttering of matters that grossly abuse or insult matters held sacred by any religion or stereotype its followers. Discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity, and religion should also be prohibited by law;
- f) Hate crimes should be defined broadly and the information deficit must be addressed;
- g) Younger generations should be provided with educational programs that would foster tolerance, understanding and respect to “the other”;
- h) Governments should assist or encourage creation of self-regulatory media bodies to deal with manifestations of discrimination and racism. The media, on the other hand, should conduct its functions in a responsible manner; and
- i) Sound integration policies must also be implemented.

INTRODUCTION

Islamophobia has been described as ‘fear or suspicion of Muslims and Islam and matters pertaining to them’, and as such Islamophobia is prejudice, intolerance and discrimination against Muslims and Islam. Academicians have also defined Islamophobia as ‘anti-Muslim or anti-Islamic racism’ and ‘hostility towards Muslims and Islam’. Regardless of the definition, Islamophobia constitutes an affront to the dignity and human rights of Muslims. It represents an unfounded fear that lends itself to irrational manifestations of discrimination, prejudice and hostility.

A Report by the Runnymede Trust¹ defines Islamophobia as a world view involving an unfounded dread or hatred of Islam and the subsequent fear and dislike of all Muslims. The same report also refers to the phenomenon as practice of discriminating against Muslims by excluding them from social, political and economic life. It needs to be appreciated that Islamophobia connotes a social anxiety about Islam -one of the three Abrahamic religions-and its followers that views Islam as a political ideology rather than as a religion.

In bringing out this *Third Annual Report on Islamophobia*, the OIC Observatory noted that the growth of the phenomenon continues unabated. It is manifest in the ongoing campaign-in the West and elsewhere geared towards distortion of the Islamic faith thereby causing Muslims to suffer varying degrees of discriminatory treatment, indignity and obstacles towards observation of their religious beliefs and cultural practices. The *Third Annual Report on Islamophobia*, covering the period from May 2009 to April 2010, is based on daily monitoring and gathering of incidents-available in the public domain-which indicated that Islamophobia was increasingly becoming deep rooted in the mainstream mindset in western societies.

Sensitizing the international community on the Islamophobia issue as well as raising awareness of the ensuing threat posed to inter-communal and interfaith harmony, at a global level, constitutes the primary objective of the OIC Islamophobia Observatory. The contents of the Report, including its recommendations and conclusions, are based on actual incidents of incitement to hatred on religious grounds, prejudice and discrimination against Muslims and Islam. Different chapters in this Report analyze some important aspects of Islamophobia including manifestations in the West, the Human Rights framework and some positive developments and acknowledgements in the light of events and trends monitored by the Observatory over the reporting period. The Report also took into account studies and research findings that were carried out by several institutions and think tanks. The Report seeks to sensitize the all the stakeholders, particularly in the West, of the growing malaise of Islamophobia and to take joint actions and adopt common strategies to address the issue. Annexes have been included to provide ready references with regard to the incidents and documents cited and used in preparing the Report.

The Observatory in its last Report had expressed a degree of optimism with regard to some encouraging developments emerging from the West to engage with the Muslim World to promote dialogue of understanding and tolerance aimed at containing the growth of Islamophobia including a Congressional hearing in the US. This optimism was enhanced by the June 4, 2009 speech by US President Barack Obama at Cairo University in which he reached out to the Muslim World by offering a “new beginning” in relations between the US and the Arab and Muslim World. The OIC Secretary General welcomed the positive statement of President Obama

¹ Runnymede Trust, *Islamophobia: A Challenge For All Of Us* 1997, In: <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/publications/pdfs/islamophobia.pdf> retrieved on November 24, 2007.

and those by leaders of European countries, institutions and opinion makers. The Organization continued to remain engaged with western governments, civil society, international organizations and the media in highlighting its concerns on Islamophobia and countering activities and initiatives of motivated groups and individuals aimed at stigmatizing Islam and subjecting Muslims to indignity through negative stereotyping and profiling, racial discrimination and violation of their basic human rights.

The optimism however was short-lived, diminished considerably and was overtaken by disappointment in the wake of a series of events that unraveled in a steady succession to shed light on the negative mindset against Islam and Muslims that appeared to be gaining ground among important sections, including the mainstream politics, particularly in Europe. Some of the developments are far reaching and ominous. It would need committed and sustained interventions by media as well as policy and opinion makers, at all levels, to stem this escalation. The worst fears of Islamophobia becoming institutionalized in western societies came true on November 29, 2009 when the Swiss people, in a nationwide referendum, voted to ban the construction of minarets in mosques in Switzerland. The vote took place despite the Swiss Government's assurances and assessment that the move initiated by the ultra right political parties in the country would not have the support of the Swiss people. The vote not only proved the Swiss Government wrong but provided a constitutional abode to Islamophobia denying the Swiss Muslim community its fundamental rights. The unfortunate outcome immediately brought an amendment in the Swiss Federal Constitution prohibiting the construction of minarets in the mosques-the place of worship of approximately half a million Swiss citizens.

A minaret is to a mosque what a steeple is to a church. It is the symbol of a mosque that can not in any way be construed to pose a threat to another culture or faith. Enacting a law to ban minarets in a country that for centuries was respected and admired for its commitment to human rights, peace, tolerance and embracement of diversity, came as a shock to the Muslim World. The fears that the Swiss action was most likely to be emulated in other European countries and societies also proved to be true. The campaign to collect one million signatures in Germany in March 2010 calling for a ban of minarets in mosques in Europe along with reports of the ban or obstruction of construction of mosques in some European countries are ominous developments that lend credence to the Observatory's concerns.

In France, the debate on French identity became a clear questioning of the Muslim presence and increase in the society. Statement emanating from anti-Islamic party in German state of North Rhine-Westphalia that mosques were symbol of "Muslim occupation of land"² aggravated the situation pertaining to Islamophobia in Central Europe. Two alleged assassination plots against the Danish cartoonist, Kurt Westegard, and Swedish cartoonist, Lars Vilks, respectively on January 1st, 2010 and March 7, 2010, prompted reprints of the insulting cartoons in Norway and Sweden thus opening the issue all over again. The Observatory considered these developments as dangerous moves posing a potent threat to the process of dialogue and rapprochement of cultures and civilizations between the West and the Muslim world.

The Observatory's concern over Islamophobia gradually taking an institutionalized form was vindicated when it took note of other manifestations of the phenomenon. In the USA when the new President outstretched his hand towards engagement with the Muslim world, a number of authors took upon themselves to bring out books slandering Islam by distortions and falsehood with the clear intention of corrupting the society's mindset against Islam and Muslims. One such

² See: German newspaper *Der Spiegel's* article "German Group Hopes for EU Referendum on Minarets", available in <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,667158,00.html> retrieved on December 16, 2009

book “Reflections on the Revolution in Europe: Immigration, Islam and the West” authored by Chris Caldwell contended that Europe was succumbing to an “Islamic culture” incompatible with its “core” political and cultural values. It was, however, encouraging that scholarly and sober assessments could detect and flag the opportunism that formed the motivating force behind such publications. Noted Harvard scholar Jocelyne Cesaire in her review emphasized that Caldwell’s book was “nothing more than a patchwork of clichés and stereotypes about Islam and Muslims; exploiting the fear of, and insecurity about, Islam (...)”³.

The Report takes stock of trends and developments that vindicated the Observatory’s contention of Islamophobia having emerged as a contemporary form of racism and xenophobia seeking to divide civilizations and create a culture of confrontation rather than engagement. The situation bears testimony to the concerns expressed by the former UN Special Rapporteur Doudou Diène. In his Report⁴ to the Ninth Session of Human Rights Council he noted that the “current political and ideological context is also strongly influenced by the intellectual and scientific legitimization of racism, xenophobia and intolerance that is illustrated by a growing number of so-called scientific publications and declarations whose stock-in-trade is historical stereotypes underlying prejudice and racist and xenophobic theories and manifesting themselves in an ethnic, racial or religious interpretation of current problems”.

³ J. Cesari, *Rarefied Islamophobia: When Americans Duplicate the European Cultural Talk*, in: <http://www.religiondispatches.org/archive/rdbook/1784/>, retrieved on August 30, 2009

⁴ See UN Human Rights Council Report Number A/HRC/9/12, dated September 2nd, 2008

2: MANIFESTATIONS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA, INTOLERANCE AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MUSLIMS

An estimated 1.57 billion Muslims constitute 23% percent of world's population. This total number may be overwhelming and would stand out in any statistical analysis. Some other figures, however, are overblown and misquoted and, more often than not, misinterpreted in an Islamophobic discourse on the prospective impact of the growing population of Muslims worldwide- The West in particular. Canadian newspaper *'The Star'*⁵ compiled a comprehensive map of the size and distribution of the world's Muslim population with data from 232 countries and territories. The results sink some stereotypes. More than 60% of Muslims are in Asia, with only 20% in the Middle East and North Africa. Largest percentage of Muslims in North America is in Canada where they represent a mere 2% of the population.

It is disturbing to note that anti-Islam discourse and expression of anti-Muslim sentiments is becoming widely accepted as part of the western landscape. V.A Mohamad Ashrof, a professional columnist and author, contends⁶ that "even organizations and individuals, known for their liberalism and anti-racism, most often express prejudice against Islam and Muslims." The consequences of Islamophobia as argued in Ashrof's article may be summarized as follows:

It inhibits the development of a just society, characterized by social inclusion and cultural diversity. For it is a constant source of threat and distress to Western Muslims and implies that they do not have the same rights as other citizens. Islamophobia increases the likelihood of serious social disorder, with consequent high cost for the economy and for the justice system. Islamophobia prevents Muslims and non-Muslims from cooperating appropriately on the joint diagnosis and solution of major shared problems, for example problems relating to urban poverty and deprivation. Islamophobia means that much talent is wasted...[it] makes more difficult for mainstream voices and influences within Muslim communities to be expressed and heard. Further, it prevents non-Muslims from appreciating and benefiting from Islam's cultural, artistic and intellectual heritage, and from its moral teachings. Likewise it inhibits Muslim appreciation of cultural achievements in the non-Muslim world and thereby endangering pluralism. Relentless Islamophobia in the media means that young Muslims develop a sense of cultural inferiority and lose confidence both in themselves and in their parents.

2.1. Islamophobia in USA

The overall situation of Muslims in the USA did not improve. For instance, on January 1st, 2010 two anti-Islam hate incidents were reported as targeting the local Muslim community of the Greater Los Angeles area, basically at the Islamic Educational Center of Orange County in Costa Mesa, California, where a burned copy of the Qur'an was found at the back entrance of the mosque during Friday prayers, and vandals defaced the Muslim component of an interfaith holiday display. A piece of paper stuck to the display stated: "*No Islamic Lighthouses in the U.S.A.*"⁷

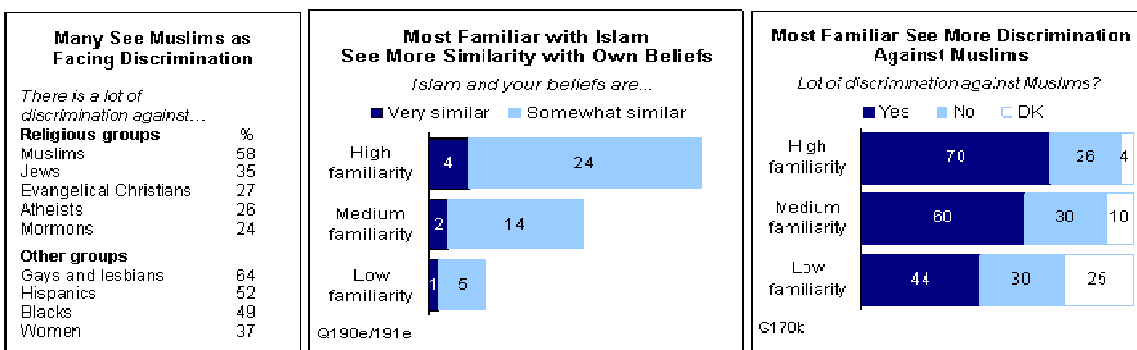
In fact, the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life released a survey on September 09, 2009 titled *Views of Religious Similarities and Differences: Muslims Widely Seen as Facing*

⁵ See Canadian newspaper *The Star's* article "Study dispels myths on Muslim population", in: <http://www.thestar.com/news/world/article/711744--study-dispels-> retrieved on October 18, 2009.

⁶ V.A. Mohamad Ashrof, "The Myths of Islamophobia", in: *The Muslim World League Journal*, Vol.34, No.5, June 2006, pp. 21-25.

⁷ See: <http://makkah.wordpress.com/2010/01/01/muslim-holiday-display-vandalized-in-mission-viejo-california/> retrieved on January 02, 2010

*Discrimination*⁸, had found that among U.S. religious groups, and eight years after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, Americans saw Muslims as facing more discrimination inside the U.S. than other major religious groups. Nearly six-in-ten adults (58%) said that Muslims were subject to a lot of discrimination, as attested in the following chart:



It was noteworthy, in terms of the Observatory's monitoring over the reporting period, that Islamophobia in the US was essentially characterized by two distinct trends, namely the continuation rather aggravation of the post 9/11 racial profiling of the Muslims based in or heading to the US and an opportunism reflected in a mercenary zeal that appeared to have inspired US based authors to capitalize on the surge in Islamophobia emanating from Europe. An overwhelming majority of Muslim countries-in the list of 14- being at the receiving end of the special measures taken at US airports with regard to flights and passengers originating from their soil was a case in point in terms of the first of the aforementioned trend. As for the second, it may suffice to quote an article in *The Star*⁹. It stated that "The growing strength of Muslim communities has led to arguments – often spearheaded by American writers – that Europe has lost its sense of identity, and is allowing itself to be taken over by a minority that could eventually overwhelm it, if not the Western world". A more detailed description of this emerging trend follows later in this Chapter.

At the policy level – with more substantive implications in terms of the international discourse on combating Islamophobia – the criticism leveled by the US Administration on the OIC proposed legally binding instrument was not in line with the expectations raised by promise of engagement in the Cairo speech by President Obama. In October 26, 2009 the U.S. State Department released its *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom*. It was critical of what it said were international efforts to limit free speech in the name of combating defamation of religion, criticizing the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) for pushing such anti-defamation measures in U.N. bodies. It said the broad anti-defamation measures being sought by the OIC would have the effect of curbing debate about religious issues and should be discarded in favor of outreach and government defense of religious freedom and free speech. In its Executive Summary¹⁰, the Report stated: "...the wide spectrum of efforts to undermine the right to religious freedom extends to multilateral, regional, and global fora. For instance, over the past decade, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)...has worked through the United Nations (UN) to advance the concept of "defamation of religions" ...the United States...do not agree with the "defamation of religions" concept because it is inconsistent with the freedoms of religion and expression."

⁸ Available in: <http://pewforum.org/newassets/images/reports/summer09/survey0909.pdf> retrieved on September 10, 2009

⁹ See Canadian newspaper *The Star's* article "Study dispels myths on Muslim population", in: <http://www.thestar.com/news/world/article/711744--study-dispels> retrieved on October 18, 2009.

¹⁰ Available in: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127215.htm> retrieved on October 27, 2009.

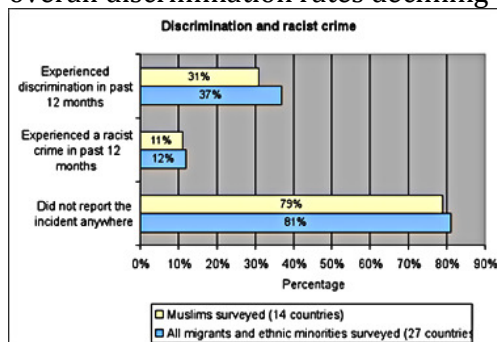
A positive response by the US to the OIC's call for engagement towards evaluating and evolving norms towards combating Islamophobia – with particular reference to defamation of religions – would constitute a positive step forward in terms of backing President Obama's words with action.

2.2. Islamophobia in Europe

It may be concluded – based on the reports and incidents monitored by the Islamophobia Observatory during the review period – that the situation of Muslims in Europe did not improve. It was in fact worsened in the wake of events like the Swiss ban on minarets as well as the rather extended debate on the French identity sparked by and centered on 'burkah'.

A comprehensive Report by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) presented on May 28, 2009 titled *Data Report Focus 2: Muslims*¹¹, confirmed the Observatory's concerns. The *European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey* (EU-MIDIS) report on Muslims provided data on discrimination and victimization experienced by Muslims across the EU. It covered Muslim respondents with diverse ethnic origins in 14 EU Member States. The Report, inter alia revealed that:

- *Racist crime, harassment and discrimination grossly under-reported:* 1 in 3 Muslim respondents were discriminated against in the past 12 months and 11% experienced a racist crime. The highest levels of discrimination occurred in employment (when looking for work 18%; at work 13%), and in private services (at a bar restaurant, shop, by a landlord; total 14%). In comparison, of all ethnic groups surveyed within EU-MIDIS, 37% experienced discrimination, and 12% had been a victim of a racist crime. Muslims aged 16-24 experienced more discrimination in comparison with other age groups, with overall discrimination rates declining with age increase.



- *Lower discrimination of Muslims with citizenship and longer period of residence:* The length of stay in the country also affected levels of discrimination experienced. Those who have lived in a country for longer experienced less discrimination. On average 45% of those who lived in the country for 1-4 years experienced discrimination in contrast to 25% of those born in the country. 29% of youths aged 16-24 who are citizens of the Member States in question experienced discrimination, in contrast to 48% of youths who are not citizens. On the whole, there are only small differences between Muslim men and women's experiences of discrimination.

What FRA reported was nothing new. Based on the survey conducted, the value added was the fact that it documented how Muslims were being marginalized in Europe where a good portion

¹¹ The Report is available in: http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/EU-MIDIS_MUSLIMS_EN.pdf

of politicians—mainly from the extreme right policy makers—had been supporting ultra-nationalist policies designed to demonstrate that Muslims were incompatible with and unwelcome in Europe. In an article titled “Europe hostile to new mosques”, Elizabeth Bryant, correspondent to the religion news service of the *timesunion.com*, reported¹² that “In Britain, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, Greece and Italy, local residents and far-right groups have launched protests, petitioned courts and proposed legislation to prevent mosque construction. The reasons range from fears of religious extremism to arguments that minarets have no place in historically Christian — albeit increasingly secular — Europe. Yet efforts to build mosques have also helped unify local communities and integrate their largely immigrant Muslim populations. The mosques are one measure of whether Europe’s second-largest faith can shape a democratic and multicultural brand of Islam”. Signs of such practices yielding the desired results for the extreme right were inferred in a survey by a Dutch TV program *NCRV Netwerk*. It reported that more than a third of Turkish and Moroccan Muslims (36%) in the Netherlands wanted to emigrate due to the increasing popularity of Geert Wilders. Additionally, 75% had a feeling they were judged more negatively than in the past. 40% said they were more often discriminated, and 24% said they were regularly discriminated against in the Netherlands.¹³ Additionally, Dutch people believed that Wilders boosted fear of Islam because according to another poll¹⁴ (November 2009) of 1,500 people by *Maurice de Hond*, some 50% of the Dutch think Geert Wilders’ anti-immigration party PVV was on the extreme right of the political spectrum and 66% thought that Wilders was stimulating a fear of Islam.

Unfortunately, “Wilders style” was being followed by some other politicians in Europe. For instance, speaking to *YLE’s Ykkösaamu* (Finnish newspaper) discussion programme on December 12, 2009, Päivi Räsänen, chairperson of the Christian Democrats, said that the spread of Islam in Europe was a “real cause for concern.” She added that Islamisation should be taken seriously because the religion seemed to include expansionist aspirations, and that Finns should hold on to their values and Christian cultural heritage—also in schools¹⁵.

It was evident that symbols related to Islam were not just being portrayed but increasingly seen as a threat to European culture. Even the al-Sherbini tragedy did not help in sensitizing the Germans on the need for a better relationship with Muslims. A poll by *Infratest dimap* for the German public broadcaster *ARD* showed a third of those asked expressed great concern that Islam was growing too quickly in Germany. 39% were worried about Islam’s impact on society to a lesser degree. Only 22% said they had no problem with the religion¹⁶.

A study released on March 25, 2010 by French and American researchers titled *Are French Muslims Discriminated Against in Their Own Country?*, found that French Muslims faced considerable discrimination based purely on their religion instead of their country of origin. The study also found that Muslims sending out resumes in hopes of a job interview had 2.5 times less chance than Christians of a positive response to their applications. It also showed that

¹² Elizabeth Bryant, “Europe Hostile to New Mosques”, in:

<http://www.timesunion.com/AspStories/story.asp?storyID=803197&category=REGION> retrieved on May 25, 2009

¹³ See *Islam in Europe Blog’s* entry “Netherlands: 51% of Muslims considering leaving”, In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2009/06/netherlands-51-of-muslims-considering.html> retrieved on June 30, 2009

¹⁴ See *Dutch News’* Article “Wilders does boost fear of Islam: poll”: In:

http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2009/11/wilders_does_boost_fear_of_isl.php retrieved on November 05, 2009

¹⁵ See Finish newspaper *YLE’s* article “Räsänen: Spread of Islam ‘Cause for Concern’”:

http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/news/2009/12/rasanen_spread_of_islam_cause_for_concern_1268945.html retrieved on December 13, 2009

¹⁶ See: In: <http://www.thelocal.de/society/20091211-23879.html> retrieved on December 12, 2009

monthly salaries of Muslims were, on average, EURO 400 less than Christians. The study inferred that, “The discrimination Muslim candidates endure in the French labor market therefore seems to have concrete repercussions on their standard of living.”¹⁷

In terms of the daily monitoring work of the manifestations of Islamophobia by the Observatory, in the period under review is the fact that the figures on increase in incidents in the following categories compared to 2009 were disturbingly significant:

- a) *Incidents related to mosques*¹⁸: a 100% increase, perhaps due to “Swiss minaret ban”.
- b) *Desecration of Muslim graves*: 75% increase.
- c) *Incidents related to hijab (veil) and burqah*: A staggering 500% increase caused mainly by the French debate on banning the burqah. It created a spillover effect. In Canada, for instance, Quebec passed legislation against the veil on March 24, 2010. This law covers all garments ranging from the face veil to the burqa.
- d) *Political and social campaigns against Islam and Muslims*: A five times increase from the year during the period under review.
- e) *Intolerance against Islamic sacred symbols*: More than a 100% increase.
- f) *Discrimination against Muslim individuals in educational institutions, workplace, airports, etc.*: An increase of 100% observed in the period under review.

2.3. Media Manifestations of Islamophobia

Misrepresentation of issues related to Islam or Muslim in some sections of the Western media continued to be a source of concern. Marwa al-Sherbini’s assassination in Dresden, Germany, on July 1st, 2009 could be cited as a case in point. Sherbini was the wife of Egyptian academic Elwi Ali Okaz who was also hurt in the incident, which left him in critical condition in hospital because German police, according to some reports¹⁹, had mistaken him with the attacker—typical of the misperception created and sustained in the Western mindset of the Europeans not only by the print and electronic media including the films being produced that would have depicted an Arab as the attacker and the Caucasian as the victim. The German media also played Islamophobia card, as pointed out by Anja Seeliger, a German journalist: “The first news agency reports on the murder of Marwa al-Sherbini informed the German public that a defendant had murdered a witness in the district court of Dresden. The reason was a quarrel in a children’s playground. *No mention that the witness was a Muslim woman. No mention that the playground quarrel had culminated in the defendant shouting at the woman ‘Islamist’, ‘Muslim b****’ and ‘terrorist’.* The German press reported on the case on the back page and fell asleep. A few days later it was awakened by thousands of Egyptians who protested vociferously against the ‘Islamophobia’ of the Germans.”²⁰

¹⁷ See: “Study shows French Muslims hit by religious bias”, in:

http://www.etaiwannews.com/etn/news_content.php?id=1212366&lang=eng_news retrieved on March 27, 2010

¹⁸ *The American Muslim* website has a compilation on “Mosques in U.S. That Have Experienced Violent, Prejudiced, or Racist Incidents” prepared by Sheila Musaji, available in:

http://www.theamericanmuslim.org/tam.php/features/articles/mosques_in_us_that_have_experienced_violent_or_racist_incidents1/0012120

¹⁹ See for example *Islam in Europe Blog’s* entry “Germany: Facts on ‘hijab martyr’”, in: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2009/07/germany-facts-on-hijab-martyr.html> retrieved on July 08, 2009.

²⁰ See *The Guardian’s* post “A murder that Germany ignored”, in:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/jul/10/germany-murder-marwa-sherbini> retrieved on July 14, 2009, emphasis added.

Sheila B. Lalwani, an American Graduate student at the Kennedy School of Government and human rights activist, in an analysis of U.S. newspaper coverage²¹ of the Attack at Fort Hood, Somali Plot and the attempted Northwest Airline Plot reported that:

...sheds light on the conflicted terrain journalists face regarding the identity of Muslims in America and the connection of religion to criminal activity. The attacks on Fort Hood drew a complicated response from elected officials and the news media. Some politicians were reluctant to call the tragedy “an act of terrorism,” and one Islamic organization quickly condemned the attack. On the other hand, coverage of the Somalis with strong ties to Minnesota and the Nigerian terror attempt inherently connected the perpetrators’ Muslim identity to their terrorist activities and actions.

These assumptions on part of journalists lend themselves to shaping the prism in which to report stories and articles about Islam and Muslims in America. The media play an incredible role in shaping public opinion and public policy. To paraphrase an oft-repeated maxim, the media often tell the public what and how to think about a certain issue, and stories about Islam and Muslims in America are not the exception. In the instance of the attack on Fort Hood, the initial reporting contained information of the assailant’s religion and connections were drawn; but in cases of the Somalis and Nigerian terror plot, identity as a Muslim plays a foundational role. These instances illustrate the complicated confluence of Islam, Muslims and American security.

Therefore,

It has become trite to say that the 9/11 attacks changed America. However, the full extent of that reality with regard to the Muslim community has yet to unfold. Newspapers employ varying paradigms in which to report on Islam and Muslims in America. The overarching theme that violent acts can be tied to Islam jihad was proven false in the case of the Fort Hood attacks. However, news organizations connected identity as Muslims to terrorist activity regarding the Somali plot and terror plot on a Northwest flight. Elected leaders and religious organizations were quick to condemn the attacks, while also distancing Islam and Muslims in America from the criminals. It remains unclear if the practice will continue.

The explanation on the part of the Swiss Government to the results of the November 29 referendum that, “Swiss voters have reacted to a negative, yet abstract perception of Islam and international media coverage”, highlights the importance of media literacy towards combating Islamophobia.

2.4. Intellectual Islamophobia-Stigmatization, Alienation, Intolerance and Bias

The then UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, Mr. Doudou Diène, in his report to the Ninth Session of Human Rights Council²² on *The Manifestations of Defamation of Religions and in Particular on the Serious Implications of Islamophobia on the Enjoyment of All Rights*, inter alia, articulated the intellectual aspects of contemporary Islamophobia by highlighting the following important and noteworthy aspects:

²¹ See *Euro-Islam website’s* entry “Muslims in the Media: An Analysis of U.S. Newspaper Coverage of the Attack at Fort Hood, Somali Plot and the attempted Northwest Airline Plot”, in: <http://www.euro-islam.info/2010/03/26/muslims-in-the-media-an-analysis-of-us-newspaper-coverage-of-the-attack-at-fort-hood-somali-plot-and-the-attempted-northwest-airline-plot/> retrieved on March 28, 2010.

²² See UN Human Rights Council Report Number *A/HRC/9/12*, dated September 2nd, 2008

- a) The current political and ideological context is also strongly influenced by the intellectual and scientific legitimization of racism, xenophobia and intolerance that is illustrated by a growing number of so-called scientific publications and declarations whose stock-in-trade is historical stereotypes underlying prejudice and racist and xenophobic theories and manifesting themselves in an ethnic, racial or religious interpretation of current problems.
- b) Recent illustrations of this phenomenon include: the claims by Nobel Laureate in Medicine, James Watson, that persons of African descent are intellectually inferior, reviving historical stereotypes at the basis of anti-Black racism; the invitation to the negationist David Irving to speak at the Oxford Union Debating Society; the association of Islam with violence; the reductive association of Judaism with domination and power; and the identification of Christianity with Western domination.
- c) This process involving the intellectual legitimization of racism, xenophobia and religious hatred springs from a deep-rooted rejection of multiculturalism and diversity, which is one of the main sources of the resurgence of racist, xenophobic and antireligious violence worldwide.
- d) In ideological terms, the Manichean concept of the clash of civilizations and religions - the implicit hierarchization of cultures, races, civilizations and the mistrust of religions - represents the new ideological foundation for political and intellectual elites.
- e) The new international context of the fight against terrorism has further strengthened the trend towards ideological polarization and the retreat into separate identities.

Christopher Caldwell's book, *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe: Immigration, Islam, and the West* bore an alarming testimony to the aforementioned points made by the UN Special Rapporteur. The book represented an emerging trend of intellectual opportunism, in the West - the US in particular - wherein capitalizing on the opportunity afforded by the rise of the political right in Europe by distorting images related to Islam and Muslims through literature, whether scientific or fiction was seen as convenient an commercially expedient. Jocelyne Cesare, in her review of Caldwell's book, noted that:

Caldwell tries, though, to sound the alarm by repeating the common refrain that Muslim families in Europe tend to maintain a very high level of fertility. Once again, this statement contains a partial truth and misses the big picture. Population growth indeed tends to be high in Muslim countries compared to their European counterparts. Still, birth rates within many Islamic countries have declined drastically over the past 20 years. A more accurate assessment of demographic trends among Muslims would reveal that high variations in fertility occur throughout the Muslim world; from Egypt to Morocco and Indonesia. Such analysis would attribute variation in fertility rates not to Islam, but to the specific cultural and political conditions within each locality. It is certainly true that immigrant communities often exhibit higher fertility rates than host populations overall. But over time these rates usually fall in line with those of the indigenous population, as shown by serious demographers for second- and third-generation Algerian immigrants in France.

The second main point of Caldwell's book concerns the supposed incompatibility of Islam with European political and cultural principles. The author defends the assertion by stating that Islam in Europe constitutes an "adversary culture" whose religious leaders intimidate critics and display scant loyalty to the countries in which they reside.

...Caldwell ignores surveys and research conducted on Muslims in Europe that have tried to deconstruct a false perception that related questions are a uniquely “Muslim problem.” And by simply duplicating for the American audience the “cultural talk” of Europe, the author ignores the unique situation which exists in Europe among Muslims. He also fails to see that the real conflict occurring is not one between a mythified Europe and a frozen unhistorical Islam, but among Muslims themselves who are struggling to redefine their religious identities in the European context.²³

The trend was made conspicuous by a steady stream of books published by a number of authors with a view to capitalizing on the opportunity afforded by the upsurge in Islamophobia—particularly in Europe. Some of these books are listed below:

- a) *Bat Ye’or* in her book *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis* had the main thesis based in the assumption that Europe has allowed itself to be taken over by Arab interests. The need for oil, Europe’s predilection for accommodation, and their desire to act as a counterweight to America are the roots of anti-Zionism, antisemitism, and hatred of America in Europe. The threat, says Bat Ye’or, is not just to the existence of Israel, but to the survival of Europe as we know it. The future, should current trends continue, could be one of ‘dhimmitude’, or subservience to the Muslim masters, contends *Bat Ye’or*.
- b) *Andrew Bostom* in *The legacy of Jihad* conducted a motivated analysis of the concept and practice of. The author described Islamic jihad as a destructive character, refuting the primacy of jihad being a “rich” concept and maligning it in terms of war, bloodshed, subjugation and expansion of the faith by violence.
- c) *Bruce Bawer* in his book, *While Europe Slept: How Radical Islam is Destroying the West from Within*, contended that, “a swarming menace called radical Islam rings Europe’s cities in smoldering Muslim ghettos, provoking everything from so-called honor killings and political assassinations to the Madrid subway bombings and the massacre of school children in Beslan”. Bawer somehow noticed Taliban-like theocracy looming inside backward immigrant populations resistant to integration flourishes under the protective wing of Western Europe’s America-bashing, multicultural, liberal establishment. The latter corresponded, in his view, to the appeasers of Nazi Germany since he believed that radical Islamism was every bit the threat to Western civilization that Nazism was²⁴.
- d) *Bruce Bawer’s Surrender: Appeasing Islam, Sacrificing Freedom* focused on the so called ‘Islamist threat’ phenomenon in Europe and USA. Consistent with his established credentials as an Islamophobe, Bawer sought to show, among other things, that the United States was becoming as culpable as Europe with its liberal news media and college campuses willfully refusing to acknowledge the danger posed by radical Islam and opening their pages and seminars to those who sought the undoing of the very tenets that allowed liberals — and everyone else — their freedoms. Bawer devoted much of his book to an attack on *The New York Times* for refusing to highlight the Islamist threat.
- e) P. David Gaubatz and Paul Sperry wrote a book called *Muslim Mafia: Inside the Secret Underworld That’s Conspiring to Islamize America*, where they, inter alia, illustrated Islam as a “Mafia”, and warn of the supposed “Islamizing” of America.

²³ Jocelyne Cesare, *op. cit.*

²⁴ Review available in: http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0767920058/qid=1136578428/sr=8-1/ref=pd_bbs_1?n=507846&s=books&v=glance retrieved on December 29, 2009

2.5. Political Manifestation of Islamophobia – the Case of Swiss Anti-Minaret

The ban on the construction of Minarets in Mosques in Switzerland imposed as a result of a popular vote on November 29, 2009 marked a turning point in the sense that it institutionalized and constitutionalized Islamophobia that was previously restricted to acts of misguided or motivated individuals and groups. It fueled the ongoing trend of Islamophobia in the West lending it ominous proportions as a contemporary manifestation of racism. The ban not only violated the fundamental rights of the Muslim community in Switzerland but also gave way to the possibility of triggering a domino affect with unintended and unforeseen adverse repercussions in the wider Europe. Most importantly, it threatens to jeopardize the international efforts aimed at interfaith harmony in view of its ever increasing importance for global peace and security. It was indeed an unfortunate development widely characterized as being discriminatory and divisive thereby underscoring the urgent need for a concerted and constructive effort on the part of the international community towards seeking an expeditious removal of the ban while averting an international crisis.

It is important to note that the ban was subjected to widespread criticism with particular reference to Switzerland's obligations towards upholding respect for diversity, freedom of religion and human rights. Even before the referendum, the UN Committee on Human Rights had clearly pronounced its concern on the ban as a discriminatory practice that violated fundamental human rights including the freedom of religion. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights criticized the ban as a discriminative, deeply divisive and thoroughly unfortunate step that risked putting the country on a collusion course with its human rights obligations. Governments and NGOs and global Human Rights outfits, including the Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, joined the chorus of criticism. Some commentators rightly pointed out that the very wisdom of referring such matters to the public opinion was required to be debated.

As indicated in the annex attached to this Report, The OIC had been active in warning against the adverse consequences of this ban vis-à-vis the right to religious freedom of Muslims in Switzerland and the wider Europe and was prompt in registering its disappointment on the results and impact of the referendum. The Secretary General addressed letters seeking support of important International Organizations, including the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), towards a peaceful settlement that would guarantee the fundamental rights of the Muslim community in Switzerland. The OIC Ambassadors Group in New York in a meeting with the Swiss Ambassador emphasized that the onus of remedial measures, that would guarantee the full enjoyment of rights of the Muslim community in Switzerland, without discrimination and in accordance with the Swiss Constitution, was on the Swiss Government. The OIC Ambassadors Group in Geneva addressed a letter to the Swiss Government describing the ban as contradictory to Switzerland's international human rights obligations concerning freedom of expression, conscience and religion. The Group expressed the hope that the Swiss Government would do all in its powers to rescind this decision through appropriate parliamentary and judicial measures. The OIC General Secretariat called for a meeting of the Permanent Representatives of the OIC in Jeddah on January 31, 2010. The Final Communiqué of the meeting²⁵, underscored the racial character of the ban and strongly urged the Swiss Government to do the needful to reverse the decision. The meeting agreed to remain seized of the matter and consider all the available options that would strengthen joint Islamic action geared towards seeking a reversal of the ban.

²⁵ Full copy available as Annex C.

The OIC Secretary General followed this up with a meeting with the Swiss Foreign Minister in Geneva during his visit to attend the *High Level Segment of the 13th Session of the Human Rights Council*, on March 3rd, 2010, where he reiterated and conveyed OIC's strong sentiment on the ban. The Secretary General conveyed OIC's deep concern and disappointment on the ban emphasizing that it marked the beginning of a new phase of relations between Islam and the West. He regretted that the dialogue process could not produce tangible results and had failed despite all the good intentions. He added that the ban had resulted in a situation wherein the agenda governing the relations between the Muslim world and the West had been hijacked and was being dictated by radicals rather than moderates. The Secretary General further emphasized that in the wake of assurances to the contrary conveyed by the Swiss side during the dialogue process, the ban had established three important points, namely, the futility of the dialogue process; opening of a new phase and a turning point on Islamophobia; and institutionalization and constitutionalization of Islamophobia.

In calling for a reversal of the ban the OIC has emphasized the importance of continuation of engagement that would necessitate openness, a clear agenda and political commitment.

2.6. The Cartoon Issue Revisited

Throughout the year of 2009, the cartoon issue was, somehow, absent from the main Islamophobic incidents. However, two separate alleged murder attempts on Kurt Westergard, the Danish cartoonist, and Lars Vilks, the Swedish cartoonist, respectively on January 1st, 2010 and March 9, 2010, prompted some Nordic newspapers to reprint the cartoons, as an action to take stance in favour of freedom of speech. The OIC Islamophobia Observatory condemned the action on the part of the newspapers, and emphasized that there were other options available for the Nordic media rather than resorting to an action that could potentially open a raw wound and incite avoidable unrest.

Meanwhile, on February 3rd, 2010, the Norwegian newspaper, *Dagbladet*, published a caricature of Prophet Muhammad on its front page, as an illustration to a story about the PST (Norwegian Police Security Service) linking to the controversial cartoons on its *Facebook* page. On this unfortunate development, close to a thousand Muslim taxi drivers in Oslo responded with protests on February 5, 2010 evening that proceeded peacefully and local police were content to call upon the drivers to ensure free passage for emergency vehicles. Rashad Munir, one of the taxi drivers who demonstrated, told the local press: "We're reacting to the abuse of freedom of speech. What we're doing isn't any violent planning, but we want to show that we're against our values being abused," adding that taxi drivers with an Islamic affiliation from both Oslo and Akershus participated in the protest²⁶.

In what was seen as a positive step forward, on February 26, 2010, the Danish national daily newspaper *Politiken* and the directors of 8 organizations in Egypt, Libya, Qatar, Australia, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Palestine, collectively the "Organisations", which have 94,923 members, who are descendents of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), represented by their attorney-at-law Mr Faisal A.Z. Yamani, reached an understanding and settlement of the dispute between the organisations and *Politiken* that arose out of *Politiken's* reprinting of the cartoon drawing of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) – the "Cartoon Drawing" – created by Mr. Kurt Westergaard, and originally published by the newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* on September 30, 2005

²⁶ See *Islam in Europe Blog's* entry "Oslo: 1000 taxi drivers protest Muhammed cartoon", In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2010/02/oslo-1000-taxi-drivers-protest-muhammed.html> retrieved on February 07, 2010

together with 11 other drawings of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) – the “Dispute”. The settlement obliged *Politiken* to issue a statement apologizing for printing the cartoons.

○ **Statement published by *Politiken*²⁷:**

As part of Politiken’s news coverage of Mr Kurt Westergaard’s cartoon drawing of the Prophet Mohammed (“the Cartoon Drawing”), first published in the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten in September 2005, Politiken reprinted the Cartoon Drawing.

Politiken has never intended to reprint the Cartoon Drawing as a statement of editorial opinion or values but merely as part of the newspaper’s news coverage. It was never Politiken’s intention to offend Muslims in Denmark or elsewhere with the reprinting of the Cartoon Drawing.

However, Politiken recognizes and deplors that our reprinting of the Cartoon Drawing of the Prophet Mohammed has offended Muslims in Denmark and in other countries around the world. We apologize to anyone who was offended by our decision to reprint the Cartoon Drawing.

With this statement, *Politiken* announced²⁸ that “the Organisations and clients represented by the Law Firm of Ahmed Zaki Yamani by attorney-at-law Mr. Faisal A. Z. Yamani, of Saudi Arabia, noting *Politiken*’s statement, confirm that the Dispute is settled, and agree not to pursue any legal or administrative action against *Politiken*. Both parties express their satisfaction with this amicable understanding and settlement, and express the hope that it may in some degree contribute to defusing the present tense situation. Both parties express their hope and conviction that the agreement may help improve the relationship between the Muslim world and Denmark and in particular the Danish media, and hope that other acts of dialogue and reconciliation may follow.”

2.7. Structural Discrimination (Housing, Education, Access to Employment or Health Services)

Muslims continue to face problems in accessing the basic needs such as employment, housing or education. This is, reportedly, caused by myths like Muslims being ‘bad people’, not fit to a given job and the perception of the extra effort required to accommodate their faith as, for example, having a place to pray or bathrooms designed to accommodate ablution before the prayer.

The following examples illustrate some of the problems faced by Muslims, with more detail in the Annexs:

- a) **Muslim BBC religion job considered ‘insult’ by Christians** – an Ulster Unionist assembly member has said the BBC’s appointment of a Muslim as head of religion and ethics is insulting to Christians. Retired Presbyterian minister Dr Robert Coulter said the appointment of Aaqil Ahmed was “a juvenile gimmick”. He stated: “According to the Church

²⁷ Available in *Politiken*’s website in: <http://politiken.dk/debat/fakta/article910939.ece>

²⁸ See *Politiken*’s “Joint press release” in: <http://politiken.dk/debat/fakta/article910932.ece> retrieved on February 27, 2010

of England 70% of the UK are Christian, 3% are Muslim yet the BBC for its head of religious broadcast appoints a Muslim”²⁹.

- b) **Muslim cleaning woman called ‘security threat’ in Italy** – Alessandro Savoi, the Northern League’s leader on the Trento provincial council was quoted as saying on January 8, 2010 that a Muslim cleaning woman employed in a provincial government office was a security threat and had to be sacked. He wrote in a letter to the council’s chairman, Giovanni Kessler: “Get these Islamists out of our offices. There is sensitive information on our desks and they can put their hands on anything.” He called on Kessler to change the company contracted to clean the offices to one that did not employ Muslims³⁰.
- c) **German doctor refuses to treat teen named Jihad** – the *Deutsche Presse-Agentur* (in German), citing a local magazine, reported that an orthodontist in southern Germany has refused to treat a 16-year-old whose first name is Jihad, which is Arabic for holy struggle or holy war, because she took offense at his name³¹. It was further reported that the discriminatory treatment that Cihad Celik faced, also affected his elder sister Nisa Celik. She was following a vocational training in bakery as an intern and encountered questions by the customers about the incident regarding her brother Cihad Celik thereby causing unease on the part of the Supermarket management. As a result her internship programme was terminated by the management of the Supermarket.
- d) **Canada: Muslim woman expelled from school in veil dispute** – A Muslim woman filed a human rights complaint after she was expelled from a Canadian college for refusing to remove her face veil. The Egyptian-born woman-a permanent resident of Canada-was enrolled in a government-sponsored French language class for new immigrants in Montreal, Quebec. The school, CGEP St. Laurent, expelled her after she refused to remove her niqab³².

2.8. Examples of Violence and Discrimination against Muslims

Under this item, the following are a few among exacerbating examples:

- a) **US: Anti-Islam Sign On Display Outside Florida Church** – A Gainesville, Florida church had a shocking anti-Islam sign on its front lawn and vowed to put up more. The sign at the Dove World Outreach Center read “*Islam is of the devil.*” Dr. Terry Jones, Dove World Outreach Center said: “We just use Islam because, at this time, they are making great in-roads into America and they’re trying to present themselves as a religion of peace”.
- b) **US: Man shot leaving Portland mosque** – Portland police are searching for two suspects involved in the shooting of a man as he left a Portland mosque Monday (August 31, 2009) night, sending him to the hospital with serious injuries. Police said the man, in his early 20s, was participating in Ramadan services prior to leaving 100 Anderson St. at 8 p.m. He was

²⁹ See BBC’s post “Muslim BBC religion job ‘insult’”, in:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/8047537.stm retrieved on 16.05.2009

³⁰ See *canada.com*’s entry “Muslim cleaning woman called ‘security threat’ in Italy”, in:

<http://www.canada.com/news/world/Muslim+cleaning+woman+called+security+threat+Italy+Report/2419908/story.html> retrieved on January 11, 2010

³¹ See *LA Times*’ post “German doctor refuses to treat teen named Jihad”, In: <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/babylonbeyond/2010/02/muslim-world-german-doctor-refuses-to-treat-kid-named-jihad.html> retrieved on February 07, 2010

³² See *The Huffington Post*’s entry “Muslim woman expelled from school in veil dispute”, in:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/03/12/muslim-woman-expelled-fro_n_495751.html retrieved on March 13, 2010

walking on Anderson Street when a suspect fired multiple shots, hitting him in the back. The two suspects, described only as a black man and a white man, were on foot and ran off³³.

- c) **UK: Second racist attack on Muslims outside a Tooting mosque** – A Muslim man was assaulted in a race-hate attack outside a Tooting mosque on Tuesday (September 8, 2010) night, just days after a Muslim pensioner was fatally attacked outside another nearby mosque. Both incidents involved attacks by groups of black youths on worshippers outside mosques less than a mile apart in Tooting.³⁴
- d) **French halal burger sparks appeal** – A French council lodged a complaint against a fast food chain that served only meat that conformed to Islamic dietary laws at a local branch. The mayor of Roubaix, in northern France, said the halal menu constituted “discrimination” against non-Muslims. The Roubaix branch was one of several restaurants at which the chain, *Quick*, took non-halal products and pork off the menu. The move triggered a row over France’s Muslim minority with Marine Le Pen, a vice-president of the far-right National Front, warning of “Islamisation”³⁵.
- e) **California Muslims Detained for Praying in Nevada** – police officers in Henderson, Nevada detained seven California Muslims for “suspicious behavior” after they prayed next to their vehicle in a parking lot as they traveled through the town.³⁶
- f) **Canada: Ann Coulter causes firestorm in Canada by telling Muslim to ‘take a camel’ as alternative to flying** – Firebrand conservative Ann Coulter’s lecture at a Canadian college was cancelled on March 23, 2010 night over fears that students would riot over racist remarks she made to Muslims. Security at the University of Ottawa scrapped the right-wing darling’s talk when more than 2,000 students showed up to protest her telling a Muslim student one day earlier to “take a camel” as an alternative to flying. Coulter’s comment came after she previously had, reportedly, told a gathering that Muslims shouldn’t be allowed on airplanes and should take “flying carpets”. The camel quip came when Muslim student Fatima Al-Dhaher challenged Coulter on the remark - and told her she didn’t have a flying carpet. “What mode of transportation?” Coulter responded. “Take a camel.”³⁷

3: THE HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK

The steady rise of Islamophobia continues to threaten global as well as regional peace, security and stability by impeding efforts to promote a multicultural approach founded understanding, respect and tolerance of religious diversity. Muslims in the west are going through a difficult time wherein their fundamental rights are being violated and eroded in the wake of an upsurge

³³ See *mainetoday.com*’s entry “Man shot leaving Portland mosque”, in: <http://blogs.mainetoday.com/updates/man-shot-leaving-portland-mosque> retrieved on September 02, 2009

³⁴ See *The Wandsworth Guardian*’s post “Second race attack on Muslims outside a Tooting mosque”, in: http://www.wandsworthguardian.co.uk/news/4590340.Second_race_attack_on_Muslims_outside_a_Tooting_mosque/ retrieved on September 12, 2009

³⁵ See BBC’s post “French halal burger sparks appeal”, in: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8524056.stm> retrieved on February 20, 2010

³⁶ See CAIR’s press release “California Muslims Detained for Praying in Nevada”, in: <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/cair-calif-muslims-detained-for-praying-in-nevada-86646502.html> retrieved on March 06, 2010

³⁷ See *New York Daily News*’ post “Ann Coulter causes firestorm in Canada by telling Muslim to ‘take a camel’ as alternative to flying”, in: <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/2010/03/24/2010-03-24-ann-coulter-causes-firestorm-by-telling-muslim-to-take-a-camel-as-alternative-to.html#ixzz0jAi20tNT> retrieved on March 25, 2010

in Islamophobia. It is indeed a contemporary form of racism whereby the faith and beliefs of Muslims are denigrated and demonized with all that it entails in terms of adverse impact on their dignity and identity. Muslim minorities- particularly in the West- are faced with a frequency of hate speech and discrimination, on the basis of their appearance and attire. It constricts their freedom of religion. Intensification of the overall campaign of defamation of Islam, including the ethnic and religious profiling of Muslim minorities particularly in the aftermath of the tragic events of September 11, 2001 is a matter of deep concern to the OIC.

OIC believes that the existing international legal infrastructure has failed to deal with this contemporary issue - as manifested in events like the Swiss ban on construction of minarets and other Islamophobic events that continue to unfold. Defamation of Islam as well as personalities and symbols sacred to Islam and Muslims as well as other religions is a matter of grave concern to the OIC. The existence of juridical gaps can be discerned as a message that comes to the fore even in a thorough and careful study of some documents originating from Europe like the EFRA Report cited in the previous chapter. The situation calls for a sustained effort on the part of the international community to evolve and foster a global dialogue for the promotion of a culture of tolerance and peace based on respect for human rights and diversity of religions and beliefs. The human rights framework provides with the most concrete basis of engagement geared towards dealing with the important issue of combating defamation of all religions in a manner that satisfies the concerns of all parties. Accordingly, the defamation of religions resolution has been successfully tabled by the OIC Group at the Human Rights Council as well as the Third Committee and the UN General Assembly, over the past decade. The safe-passage of the resolution, voted by a majority of states beyond the OIC membership, at each of the three venues lends international legitimacy to the concept of defamation of religions.

The stance taken by the Western Group on the inadmissibility of the concept of defamation of religions (owing to a lack of legal persona) in the human rights framework continues to impede engagement. In a gesture of goodwill and flexibility, the OIC Group agreed to a one-time waiver in terms of deletion of the concept of defamation of religions from the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference. A statement to that effect was appended to the Report of the Conference for the sake of record. The goodwill gesture remains to be reciprocated by the Western Group. The West has generally been evasive on this issue. However, some signs of progress are associated with the processes including the Ad Hoc Committee on Complementary Standards and the forthcoming Workshops, to be held as a follow up to the Durban Review, to examine legislation, judicial practices and national policies in different regions aimed at assessing approaches prohibiting incitement to hatred as stipulated in Article 20 of the ICCPR.

OIC believes that the International Human Rights Law is not static but evolutionary in nature. The existing international legal infrastructure, therefore, needs to be evaluated and evolved in the interest of combating Islamophobia and defamation of all religions in an effective manner. The Human Rights approach affords the opportunity of putting in place a structured and result oriented mechanism of engagement-dealing with all the inter-related issues, including defamation of religions, freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of religion and discrimination and incitement to hatred on religious grounds as a package-with a view to evolving a normative framework that would strengthen global as well as regional peace, security and stability in a sustainable fashion.

4: POSITIVE INITIATIVES AND DEVELOPMENTS

4.1. In Europe

Some weeks before the historical speech in Cairo by US President Obama, the British Foreign Secretary David Miliband said, in a speech delivered in Oxford³⁸ on May 21, 2009 that the West had to “show greater respect” for Muslims if it wanted to rebuild relations with the Islamic world. Miliband listed the Iraq war alongside the medieval Crusades and colonial-era division and subjugation of the Middle East as drivers of “bitterness, distrust and resentment” in the region. He added relations had been damaged by the use of “lazy stereotypes” by Western officials, and conceded that his own use of the labels “moderate” and “extremist” showed a lack of understanding that risked “undermining the force of our own argument,”.

In the same perspective, on July 21, 2009, the Swedish Foreign Minister, Carl Bildt, whose country was holding the EU Presidency at the time, called for better ties between the West and the Muslim world. Speaking at the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs, Bildt said: “[The] Muslim world is our immediate neighbour not only on the map but increasingly across the street back in our own respective EU member states. I believe there is a possibility for more positive relationship”³⁹.

On the other hand, Czech Senate banned appearance by the controversial Dutch politician Geert Wilders. He wanted to show his movie *Fitna* in the Czech Senate on November 30, 2009. He was invited by a Czech anti-Islamist website, *eurabia.cz*, and Civic Democrat Senator Jiří Oberfalzer, was also going to deliver an address entitled “Free Speech and the Islamization of Europe”. The news immediately sparked a huge controversy, and Senate leaders eventually banned Mr Wilders from appearing on the premises of the upper chamber. Civic Democrat Přemysl Sobotka, the Senate’s chair, said: “When I found out about the details, and when I learned about what he was going to talk about here in the Senate, I said clearly it was a problem that such a controversial politician should appear in one of the chambers of the Czech Parliament.” The Senate’s media commission, which originally approved the event, revoked its decision⁴⁰.

On July 10, 2009, **Ireland passed the Defamation Bill**. One of the aspects of this bill would make it illegal to criticize religion, any religion under penalty of fines up to 25,000 Euros. It was a most important development in conformity with OIC’s call for effective normative and legal frameworks to deal with the grave threat posed by Islamophobia.

The following are some excerpts from the Blasphemy Clause⁴¹:

Section 36

(1) A person who publishes or utters blasphemous matter shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable upon conviction on indictment to a fine not exceeding €100,000. [Amended to €25,000]

³⁸ See: *Arab News’ Post “West must show respect to gain muslim trust: Miliband”, in: <http://www.arabnews.com/?page=4§ion=0&article=122807&d=23&m=5&y=2009&pix=world.jpg&category=World> retrieved on May 23, 2009*

³⁹ See *Kuwait News Agency’s post “Swedish FM calls for positive ties with Muslim world”, in: <http://www.kuna.net.kw/NewsAgenciesPublicSite/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2015609&Language=en> retrieved on July 22, 2009*

⁴⁰ See *Radio Prague’s post “Czech Senate bans appearance by controversial Dutch politician Geert Wilders”, in: <http://www.radio.cz/en/print/article/122426> retrieved on November 21, 2009*

⁴¹ See *examiner.com’s entry “Ireland passes blasphemy law”, in: <http://www.examiner.com/x-8928-Philadelphia-Atheism-Examiner~y2009m7d11-Ireland-passes-blasphemy-law> retrieved on July 12, 2009*

(2) For the purposes of this section, a person publishes or utters blasphemous matter if (a) he or she publishes or utters matter that is grossly abusive or insulting in relation to matters held sacred by any religion, thereby causing outrage among a substantial number of the adherents of that religion, and (b) he or she intends, by the publication or utterance of the matter concerned, to cause such outrage.

The bill made it illegal to criticize any religion either verbally or in writing. Saying anything in which a “substantial number” of followers might find offensive would be a crime in the Ireland.

The following are some other instances of legal action taken in instances of Islamophobia:

- a) **Denmark: Boy charged for anti-Islamic posters** – A 15 year old boy from Rønne appeared in court as he was charged with trying to distribute racist posters. The Bornholm court said that the 15 year old was charged with having produced posters and fliers at home with the titles: “Denmark will be a Muslim country?”, “Denmark wake up”. The posters said: “Yes to an Islam-free country” and “Send the Pakis home”. The boy also wrote, for example, that Muslims “preach to renounce all our freedoms,” and that they advanced “devastating the cities with gangs and drugs.”⁴²
- b) **Netherlands: Community service for offending Muslims** – On October 30, 2009 a 60 year old from Nieuwegein (Utrecht) was sentenced for insulting Muslims. The court in Utrecht gave him forty (40) hours of community service and two weeks suspended sentence. In February 2009 the man turned his back on a Muslim woman who wanted to help him when he entered a pharmacy to get medicine. He said he thought it was revolting to look at ‘them’. According to the public prosecutor he meant Muslims. The court decided that ‘offending a group based on religion’ had been demonstrated in this case⁴³.
- c) **French court bans anti-mosque leaflets** – A court banned France’s anti-immigrant National Front party from giving out leaflets attacking plans to build a giant mosque because they used pictures of it without permission. According to a copy of the judgment, the Marseille court ordered the far-right party to destroy all leaflets on which it had reproduced designs for the planned Grand Mosque in the southern city, alongside the slogan “No to the mosque”. It also ordered the National Front to pay €1,500 in costs⁴⁴.

4.2. In the USA

The main important development was the Cairo speech by President Obama, who promised a ‘new beginning’ with the Muslim world. It was also remarkable the decision he took to close down the ‘Islamophobia prison’, Guantanamo, as well as the instructions to stop using derogatory concepts against Muslims such as “War on Terror”. It was followed by the appointment of Rashad Hussain, who was serving as White House deputy associate counsel, as

⁴² See *Islam in Europe Blog*’s entry “Denmark: Boy charged for anti-Islamic posters”, in: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2009/08/denmark-boy-charged-for-anti-islamic.html> retrieved on August 25, 2009

⁴³ See *Islam in Europe Blog*’s entry “Utrecht: Community service for offending Muslims”, in: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2009/11/utrecht-community-service-for-offending.html> retrieved on November 02, 2009

⁴⁴ See *The Times of Malta*’s article “French court bans anti-mosque leaflets”, in: <http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20091210/world-news/french-court-bans-anti-mosque-leaflets> retried on December 12, 2009

the Special Envoy to the Organization of the Islamic Conference, in an announcement made by the US President Obama in a video message to the 7th Annual U.S. Islamic World Forum, held in Doha, Qatar, last February. Mr. Rashad was introduced to the OIC Secretary General by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in the first ever visit by a US Secretary of State to the OIC headquarters in Jeddah on February 16, 2010.

Some other noteworthy developments are as follows:

- a) **Hawaii lawmakers create 'Islam Day'** – Hawaii is planning to celebrate "Islam Day" over the objections of state lawmakers who associate extremist Muslims with terrorism. The resolution to proclaim Sept. 24, 2009, as Islam Day passed the Senate on May 6 on a 22-3 vote.⁴⁵
- b) **US: Cape Girardeau man charged with hate crime in Islamic Center incident** – Nicholas T. Proffit, 31, was charged on June 1st, 2009 with two counts of felony property damage under Missouri's hate crime law, and faced hate crime charges for allegedly vandalizing the Islamic Center and a car parked near it late Sunday (May 31, 2009) night.
- c) **Vote on Muslim Holidays in Schools** – the passage of a resolution by a committee of the city council that calls for adding Muslim holidays to the school calendar. Resolution 1281, passed overwhelmingly by the New York City Council Education Committee, called on the "New York City Department of Education to incorporate the Muslim holidays of Eid Ul-Fitr and Eid Ul-Adha as observed school holidays in the school calendar for the city school district of the city of New York" and also asks that the state legislature "pass, and the Governor to sign into law, A.8108/S.5837, an Act to amend the education law, in relation to requiring that Eid Ul-Fitr and Eid Ul-Adha be school holidays in the city school district of the city of New York."⁴⁶
- d) **Teens Accused of Vandalizing Mosque** – Two Kendall teenagers accused of vandalizing a southwest Miami-Dade County Islamic school faced more serious charges because of evidence of prejudice. According to their arrest forms, Michael Lobo and Juan Carlos Gonzalez, both 17, admitted to police they had been planning the attack on the school for months and said they believe "all Muslims are terrorists". Police said that according to the arrest form, the boys confessed to planning the June 26, 2009 attack for months. They smashed two windows at the school with iron bars and slashed the tires of a van used to feed the homeless. The teens also planned to spray paint expletives against Muslims on the walls, but the spray paint can they bought was missing a nozzle. The Islamic School of Miami had been the target of several attacks in recent years.⁴⁷
- e) **The federal panel determines that JBS Swift acted with bias as Muslims were discriminated against** – A federal panel said on August 31, 2009 that it believed Greeley meatpacker *JBS Swift* violated the civil rights of more than 100 Somali Muslims it fired in 2008 after a walkout over religious differences at the height of Ramadan. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) determined *Swift* had violated a portion of the civil-rights act that forbids certain forms of discrimination in employment. Specifically, it

⁴⁵See *Fox News'* post "Hawaii Lawmakers Pass Bill to Create 'Islam Day'", in: <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2009/05/06/hawaii-lawmakers-pass-create-islam-day/> retrieved on May 07, 2009

⁴⁶ Full resolution found here: <http://webdocs.nyccouncil.info/textfiles/Res%201281-2008.htm?CFID=294062&CFTOKEN=72282634> retrieved on June 20, 2009

⁴⁷ See *justnews.com's* entry "Teens Accused Of Vandalizing Mosque", in: <http://www.justnews.com/news/19940450/detail.html> retrieved on July 04, 2009

said *Swift* engaged in a “pattern and practice of discrimination” that included harassment, a hostile work environment, discriminatory job assignments and discipline. It also said *Swift* denied religious accommodation and retaliated against workers who complained about it.⁴⁸

- f) **US: St. Louis U. canceled speech by Islamophobe David Horowitz** – Conservative activist and Islamophobe David Horowitz was not allowed to speak at St. Louis University (SLU) in October 2009 after school officials raised objections about the title and content of his speech, “Islam-Fascism Awareness and Civil Rights.” SLU said in a statement that the school was concerned that the event could be viewed as “attacking another faith and seeking to cause derision on campus.” SLU said it suggested students modify the proposed event to, for example, include scholars on Islam with different perspectives.⁴⁹
- g) **US mosque firebomber gets 15 year sentence** – Eric Ian Baker, an American man who pleaded guilty to firebombing a Tennessee mosque and daubing swastikas on part of the religious facility, was sentenced to more than 15 years in prison. He was sentenced on March 25, 2010 to 183 months in prison for an attack in which he and two other men painted swastikas and the phrase “White Power” on a mosque before throwing Molotov cocktails at the facility. The mosque was destroyed in the attack. The US Justice Department said in a statement that Baker’s co-defendant Michael Corey Golden was sentenced to 171 months for his role in the attack. A third attacker has been convicted but awaits sentencing. Thomas Perez, assistant attorney general for the Civil Rights Division, said: “The right to worship without fear of this kind of violent interference is among our most fundamental civil rights. We will aggressively prosecute anyone who seeks to intimidate or injure any congregation because of what they believe, how they worship, or who they are.”⁵⁰

5. ISLAMOPHOBIA ACKNOWLEDGED BY THE WEST

Despite the spate of anti-Islam and anti-Muslim tirade, some western scholars responded to the distortions and misperceptions contained in and created by the Islamophobic books. To name a few⁵¹:

- a) *John Esposito* has written many introductory texts on Islam and the Islamic world addressing issues like the rise of militant Islam, the veiling of women, and democracy. Esposito emphatically argues against what he calls the “pan-Islamic myth”. He wrote that “too often coverage of Islam and the Muslim world assumes the existence of a monolithic Islam in which all Muslims are the same.” To him, such a view was naive and unjustifiably obscured important divisions and differences in the Muslim world.
- b) *Karen Armstrong*, tracing what she believes to be the West’s long history of hostility toward Islam, found in Muhammad’s teachings a theology of peace and tolerance. Armstrong holds that the “holy war” urged by the Qur’an alludes to each Muslim’s duty to fight for a just, decent society.

⁴⁸ See *Denver Post*’s article “EEOC: Swift acted with bias” http://www.denverpost.com/business/ci_13242457 retrieved on September 02, 2009

⁴⁹ See *Inside Higher Ed*’s post “Saint Louis U. Blocks David Horowitz Event”, in: <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2009/09/29/slu> retrieved on October 04, 2009

⁵⁰ See *mysinchew.com*’s entry “US mosque firebomber gets 15 year sentence”, in: <http://www.mysinchew.com/node/36902> retrieved on March 27, 2010

⁵¹ Based on an article from *Wikipedia*, “Criticism of Islam”, in: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criticism_of_Islam retrieved on December 29, 2009

- c) *Cathy Young of Reason Magazine* claimed that the growing trend of anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim sentiment stemmed from an atmosphere where such criticism was popular. While stating that the terms “Islamphobia” and “anti-Muslim bigotry” were often used in response to legitimate criticism of fundamentalist Islam and problems within Muslim culture, she claimed “the real thing does exist, and it frequently takes the cover of anti-jihadism.”
- d) *Deepa Kumar*, speaking on the Danish Muhammad cartoon controversy in an article titled *‘Fighting Islamophobia: A Response to Critic’*, argued that “The Danish cartoon of the prophet Mohammed with a bomb on his head is nothing if not the visual depiction of the racist diatribe that Islam is inherently violent. To those who can’t understand why this argument is racist, let me be clear: when you take the actions of a few people and generalize it to an entire group -- all Muslims, all Arabs -- that's racism. When a whole group of people are discriminated against and demonized because of their religion or regional origin, that's racism." and "...Arabs and Muslims are being scapegoated and demonized to justify a war that is ruining the lives of millions.”
- e) *Liz Fekete's A Suitable Enemy: Racism, Migration and Islamophobia in Europe*⁵², with its focus on the racist policy and practice of European states, is a refreshing change from the usual condescending lectures from the sanctimonious guardians of institutional ‘anti-racism’. One of the strengths of this book is its highlighting of a shadow justice system for foreigners. The author, drawing a parallel between the ‘war on terror’ and a war on refugees noted that Britain’s detention centres, in which ‘migrants and failed asylum seekers are warehoused’ like the inmates at Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp, existed in a legal limbo. Fekete re-established a link between racism and immigration controls. She pointed to xeno-racism, a new form of racism which ‘is not just directed at people with darker skins, from the former colonial territories, but at the newer categories of the displaced, the dispossessed and the uprooted, who are beating at western Europe’s doors’. Fekete worked for the Institute for Race Relations (IRR) as the editor of its *European Race Bulletin*. In *A Suitable Enemy* she puts this experience to good use to provide an accessible outline of the extent and breadth of state-organised actions against people born outside the European Union (EU), and Muslims (both EU nationals and non-EU nationals) deemed as security risks. The sections of *A Suitable Enemy* focusing on state actions against Muslims covered more familiar ground. She argued that there had been ‘a general trend to shift the focus of anti-terrorist powers in the direction of criminalizing ideas’. Many of her criticisms of demonizing of Muslims were also well made. Her extensive knowledge of the European scene allowed her to provide less familiar examples of anti-Muslim policies from across the EU. Fekete argued that ‘Europe’s Muslims were routinely represented in the media as untrustworthy citizens, subject to foreign allegiance and divided loyalties’.

The existence of such lively debate in academic circles and on the media showed that Islam had become part of the Western landscape, and although an important portion of that part of the world wanted to get rid of Islam and its adherents, the other side was more engaged in writing books, articles and making statements on how to integrate and coexist with Muslims.

⁵² See the review provided by Chris Gilligan, a senior lecturer in sociology at the University of the West of Scotland, available in: http://www.spiked-online.com/index.php/site/reviewofbooks_article/7877/ retrieved on December 31, 2009

6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Manifested in the steady succession of ominous developments during the reporting period, the exacerbating trend of Islamophobia continues to be a major source of concern to the Muslim world. It also constitutes a major stumbling block with regard to the efforts on the part of the international community geared towards interfaith and inter-cultural harmony posing a threat to sustaining peace, security and stability at the regional as well as the global levels.

As Nurrohman, lecturer at Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University (UIN), Bandung (Indonesia), writing on *The Jakarta Post*⁵³, stated: “Tolerance is the fruit of mutual understanding, while mutual understanding can be achieved through intensive dialogue. In this regard, respecting what is universally accepted as human rights is very important for Muslims as well as non-Muslims, so that there are no more stories of oppressed religious adherents in conflict with minority groups. While we may agree that freedom of religion is not without limit, limitation of religious expression should be based on rational and indiscriminate consideration.”

The resurgence of intolerance and discrimination against Muslims, especially after September 11, coupled with related racist tendencies, challenge the exercise of fundamental human rights and freedoms of Muslims particularly in the Western countries. In spite of tangible progress in elimination of institutionalized and structured forms of discrimination, many countries still experience new and mounting waves of bias, exclusion and violence against Muslim groups and peoples.

Muslim communities in Western Europe and North America are experiencing an increasingly hostile environment. It is characterized by suspicion and prejudice attributable, inter alia, to history; ignorance; negative or patronizing imaging; discrimination including in education, housing and employment; stereotyping all Muslims or Islam in general as “terrorist, violent or otherwise unfit”; lack of provision, recognition and respect for Muslims in public institutions; and attacks, abuse, harassment and violence directed against person perceived to be Muslim and against mosques, Muslim property and cemeteries.

It also important to highlight that perceptual and behavioral root-causes, in the form of prejudice – even against persons perceived to be Muslim; negative sentiments and display of such sentiments; media coverage and misrepresentation through mass media; and finally political discourse, especially by the far right, but recently by moderates. As prominent observers have stressed, it has now become politically correct, convenient and expedient in the West to attack Islam and Muslims making it hard for moderates on both sides to remain reasonable.

Finally, discriminatory practices in housing, schooling and employment; restrictions on provision of proper places of worship and burial places; attitude of law enforcement authorities especially in search and arrest, and customs entry procedures; and harassment, vandalism and attacks that Muslims or persons perceived to be Muslim face are clear manifestations of Islamophobia. There is a gap in many countries in terms definition of hate crimes based on religion, prosecution as well as lack of reliable data and monitoring is also noteworthy.

⁵³ See: *The Lesson to draw from the Swiss ban on minarets* in: <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2009/12/15/a-lesson-draw-swiss-ban-minarets.html> retrieved on December 15, 2009

The situation calls for an inclusive engagement- beyond the diplomatic and political elite-involving all stake holders with a view to promoting a multicultural approach towards coexistence in a globalized world. Such an engagement, however, would merely constitute the necessary condition towards stemming the escalating trend of Islamophobia. The sufficient condition could be met by making the engagement result oriented by evaluating and evolving a normative framework that would address the juridical gaps in the existing international legal infrastructure towards combating Islamophobia as well as defamation of all religions. OIC stands for and would continue to strive towards evolving an international consensus that accommodates the concerns of all parties to that end.

Accordingly, the Observatory would like to draw attention to the following towards combating Islamophobia in the interest of inter-communal and interfaith harmony geared towards ensuring sustainable peace, security and stability:

- a) It is of foremost importance to recognize and acknowledge the problem of Islamophobia as well as discrimination and intolerance in terms of its historical, cultural and psychological depth and develop the essential willingness to adopt a multifaceted approach towards finding solutions.
- b) There is also a need for an intellectual and ethical strategy to avoid political exploitation of the issues related to discrimination and intolerance.
- c) Discrimination and intolerance against Muslims is not only a matter of discrimination against a specific religious group, but it also deeply affects international relations as well as the internal stability of Western societies. As such, it is a multifaceted question and must be addressed through a holistic approach.
- d) Various forms of intolerance and discrimination need not be subject to an artificial hierarchy. Within this framework, there should be complementarity between efforts dealing with different forms of discrimination.
- e) The quality of life of Muslim minorities- particularly those living in Western societies- must be improved. This will lead to better understanding and integration leading to a lessening of mutual mistrust.
- f) Muslim minorities should not be seen as second class citizens, must not be demonized, marginalized, feared or despised.
- g) The war on terror must not become a war on Muslims.
- h) It should be recognized that Muslims have the same basic needs and desires as others, which are material well-being, cultural acceptance and religious freedom, without political or social intimidation. In that vein, Muslim should not be marginalized or attempted to be assimilated, but should be accommodated. Accommodation is the best strategy for integration.
- i) Everybody and especially policy makers and opinion leaders must speak out swiftly, clearly and forcefully against Islamophobia, intolerance, discrimination and any manifestation of racism against Muslims. By doing so, they will be helping to protect their fellow citizens from hate-filled segments of society. They must also condemn those who discriminate in word or in action. Authorities in this respect have a special

responsibility to protect their citizens. They must see to it that tolerance and non-discrimination are not in short supply.

- j) Declaratory statements are needed and are welcome, but are not enough. All concerned must put into practice what they preach. In other words, they must not only share the same basic values, they must also act in line with this conviction.
- k) In this context, it has to be recognized that ethnic and religious identity is but only one element of societal structures and political cultures. On the other hand, the concept of identity is not static, but is changeable according to circumstances, as their content or the meaning attributed to them is subject to constant new evaluation and evolution.
- l) Uttering of matter that is grossly abusive or insulting in relation to matters held sacred by any religion and likely to cause outrage among a substantial number of the adherents of that religion should be prohibited by law.
- m) Legal prohibitions must be enacted on publication of material that negatively stereotypes, insults, or uses offensive language on matters regarded by followers of any religion or belief as sacred or inherent to their dignity as human beings, with a view to protecting their fundamental human rights.
- n) Public insults and defamation of religions, public incitement to violence, threat against a person or a grouping of persons on the ground of their race, colour, language, religion, nationality, or national or ethnic origin should be legally prohibited.
- o) Adequate protection against acts of hatred, discrimination, intimidation and coercion resulting from defamation of religious, and incitement to religious hatred in general, should be provide in the national legal and constitutional systems in addition to taking all possible measures to promote tolerance and respect for all religions and beliefs.
- p) All forms of discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity, and religion should be condemned, combated and prohibit by law, at both the national as well as the international levels.
- q) A more accurate assessment of Muslims-particularly in the West-should abandon the false precept of a monolithic Islam. Instead it should focus on the multiplicity of cultures belonging to Muslims around the world, and highlight results from surveys which regularly point to the important role played in an individual's relationship to Islam by acculturation, secularization, and individualization.⁵⁴
- r) To more effectively address critical issues of religious [discrimination], a more ad hoc, a rapid response mechanism must be initiated. Modern technology and communications can be used as a more powerful tool for major religious leaders and organizations of all faiths. They need more initiatives to join together, condemning all forms of discrimination, intolerance and oppression against ethnic and religious minorities. Together they can speak out whenever and wherever abuses occur,

⁵⁴ As presented by Jocelyne Cesare, *op. cit.*

whether it be their own religion or government or someone else's that is the oppressor or the victim.⁵⁵

The Observatory would also like to draw attention to some important recommendations contained in reports from European Institute for Fundamental Rights Agency (EFRA) and Open Society Institute (OSI) that form annexes to this report.

It is also essential to underline the importance of the following aspects in the context of public discourse related to Muslims and Islam:

- a) *Political rhetoric*: Responsible politicians, both of the government and of the opposition, must underline the importance of correct and unbiased discourse and should also refrain from hate speech and other manifestations of extremism and discrimination. A message of encouraging tolerance, non-discrimination, understanding and respect for all must be voiced.
- b) *The media*: The media can play a very positive role in promoting inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue, understanding and harmony. This is what is expected from responsible journalism. On the other hand, the media may also play a very negative and divisive role in projecting wrong and inaccurate messages. Therefore, with due respect to the freedom of expression, governments can assist or encourage creation of self-regulatory media bodies to deal with manifestations of discrimination and racism. The media, on the other hand, should conduct its functions in a responsible manner.

The existence and exacerbation of Islamophobia bears testimony to the fact that the West in general and Europe in particular have not been successful with regard to their integration policies. While the objective was to create multi-cultural and cohesive societies instead parallel, but mutually exclusive societies were born. This situation, which has been likened to collective punishment and cultural ghettos for Muslims, can only be remedied through civic and structural integration. The necessity of sound integration policies can not be overemphasized. The more the Muslim communities will be integrated into the Western societies they live in, the easier it would be to marginalize extremism, diffuse radicalism and overcome perceptions of being left out, stigmatized or rejected. Muslim migrants must have a sense of being part of the larger community in which they live, take part in all spheres of life and participate in the decision making process. In other words, creating cohesive societies, where mutual understanding between diverse groups will facilitate not only the promotion of tolerance, but more importantly mutual respect for divergent view points and different backgrounds.

The Observatory would like to conclude by highlighting what can be characterized as confusion in the minds of the Western Governments, politicians and the public in general on how to deal with Islamophobia and intolerance and discrimination against Muslims. It has to be acknowledged that there is a growing awareness of the existence of the problem and of the necessity to overcome it; but as yet a coherent and over-arching policy remains to be devised, let alone implemented.

Governments, at least at a rhetorical level, seem to accept notions such as respect to religious values, inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue and harmony, value of education and the need

⁵⁵ Borrowed from J.L. Esposito's article "Combating Muslim Intolerance", in: <http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/opinion/?id=36576> retrieved on January 11, 2010

for strong political leadership. It all, however, needs to be put into practice. It is time to move beyond event based calls for dialogue to a structured, inclusive and result oriented engagement

There are pertinent laws and international covenants to protect and uphold human rights, but Islamophobia tries to ward off and avoid the force of the laws through attacking Islam itself as a faith or as an abstract notion, thus escaping the force of law. The net result is that a rise in tone and frequency of the mental and physical abuses against Islam and Muslims in the West, a fact that does not bode well for the future of humanity as a whole. Islamophobia, aggravated by the present campaign of denigration and vilification of Islam at the hands of the warmongers and far right elements in the Western world, is, regrettably, feeding certain trends, groups or even officials who arrogated themselves the right to use derogatory expressions against Islam like "Islamic terrorism" or "fascism". This kind of provocation is presently permeating the psyche of large segments of the Western world and may result in incalculable consequences.

The European reports on intolerance and discrimination against Muslims in the European Union, cited in this Report, clearly indicate that "many Westerners started to see themselves on a collision course with Muslims and Islam". In the same line of thinking a well-known and high ranking senior American general in the USA armed forces gave a lecture at Harvard University a few months ago in which he said: "If we lack the courage to defeat Islamic extremist ideology, we will find ourselves involved in a third world war tomorrow. The dangers inherent in this matter are greater than we can conceive".

It needs to be appreciated that a person or a group of people can suffer real damage and profound distortion if they are surrounded by self deprecating images of themselves. The obtaining situation is, therefore, pregnant with the risk of confrontation and conflict. Islamophobia reflected in defamation, discrimination and incitement to hatred, if not restrained and left to foster, can unleash violent friction. In the last decade, Rwanda and Bosnia Inquiry Commissions and International Criminal Courts have compiled voluminous evidence that proved that expression of hate, spoken, written or in drawing were precursors to massive violence, conflicts and even genocide.

The international community needs to make concerted efforts seeking solutions to this multifaceted problem in a multicultural approach.

ANNEXES

A: Some Islamophobic Incidents

1. Incidents Related to Mosques

i) **France: Protests for Mosque Take over** – About 450 Muslims protested against the municipality for taking control of the mosque in the La Paillade neighborhood (Montpellier). According to Imam Mohammed Khattabi, the municipality did not interfere in the affairs of Christians and Jews and they wanted to be treated just like everybody else.

Source: Midi Libre (French) quoted by <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2009/05/mosque-grab-bag.html> retrieved on 06.05.2009

ii) **Bulgaria: Decision to Allocate a Plot to Build a Mosque Rescinded** – The Bourgas city council recently voted to rescind its decision to allocate a plot to build a mosque, due to a desire to preserve the ethnic and religious peace in the city, and pressure by the Ataka party, which controls the council. The Muslim community intends to file a complaint with the EU. Bulgaria's mufti, Mustafa Alish Hadzhi, says that the decision will arouse the wrath of Islamic groups and threaten the social peace.

Sources: Sofia News Agency (English), le blog laiciste (French) quoted by <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2009/05/mosque-grab-bag.html> retrieved on 06.05.2009

iii) **USA: Mosque Graffiti in LA May Be Hate Crime** – Police said that graffiti laced with threats and expletives found spray-painted on June 4, 2009 on a wall on the Islamic Center of Cypress is being investigated as a hate crime. Sgt. Tom Bruce of the Cypress Police Department said that the vandalism was discovered about 4 a.m. on the mosque at 5900 Ball Road by an officer on routine patrol. The paint was still wet when the officer discovered the vandalism, which stood out starkly against the white walls of the center and on a wooden door. Police would not say what the message was, other than to say it included expletives "and specifics that lead us to believe it is a hate crime," Bruce said. But in a statement released this afternoon, officials at the Council on American-Islamic Relations said the writing included, "(expletive) you," "we're going to kill you," and "US Military is going to kill you all." According to the statement, the writing was several feet high across a wall of 20 to 30 feet.

In: <http://www.myfoxla.com/dpp/news/local/Cypress-Islamic-Center-Graffiti-20090604> retrieved on 05.06.2009

iv) **Belgium: VB protest against planned mosque** – Vlaams Belang (VB) held a protest on June 5, 2009 against the mosque at the Sint-Bernardsesteenweg in Antwerp. According to the party, with an area of 4,000 sqm, this would be the biggest in Flanders and would also have a Qur'an school and imam training. In recent days the VB gave out 50,000 flyers against the mosque which according to them would be a symbol of the Islamization of Antwerp and Flanders. According to VB leader Filip Dewinter, the Jisr Al Amana mosque is everything but a good idea. He said: "Islam is like a cuckoo which lays its eggs in our European nest. We hatch them and will in the end be cast off." The party walked through the local market with three women dressed in a burka with the slogan "Islam can harm your freedom!".

In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2009/06/antwerp-vb-protest-against-planned.html> retrieved on 06.06.2009

v) **UK: Greenwich Islamic Centre petrol bombed twice in a week** – Mosque was targeted causing thousands of pounds in damage. A caretaker was injured and copies of the Holy Qur'an were burnt in the fire at the Greenwich Islamic Centre in Plumstead Road (London) at 12.15am on Tuesday, June 16, 2009. It is pertinent to note that the caretaker had also dealt with another

arson attack at the mosque which had been less serious but had taken place a week before at approximately the same time of night.

In: <http://www.ummah.com/forum/showthread.php?t=218165> retrieved on 23.06.2009

vi) **France: Vandals scrawl swastikas, insults on mosque** – Police in the Pas-de-Calais region said that vandals scrawled swastikas and racist insults across the doors and walls of a mosque in northern France. The source added that an imam discovered the inscriptions painted in red on the mosque in the town of Estevelles on Sunday June 21, 2009. Interior Minister Michele Alliot-Marie, in a statement, called the incident an “intolerable” attack on “religious freedom and the dignity of a place of worship”.



The graffiti included swastikas, “skinhead” and “Vive le cochon!” (long live the pig). Similar graffiti was also painted on several bus-station and the walls of an elementary school in the town. According to the Pas-de-Calais Police, the mosque was not recognizable on the outside, and therefore they suppose it was done by locals. The President of the CRCM (regional council of Muslims), Amar Lasfar, said he would lodge a complaint. Lasfar said that the mosque had been the target of such attacks several times. The CFCM (French Council of the Muslim Faith) put out a press release calling the public authorities to take the necessary steps to end these unspeakable acts which are detrimental to the serenity of religious practice in our country.

In: http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jvf_J5WE_rFiMdyI8Vij-sgHf9eQ retrieved on 23.06.2009

vii) **Netherlands: Racist slogans painted on Turkish association, mosque** – The building of the Turkish association *Turk Der* and the mosque in Veendam-Noord were covered with racist slogans on the night of June 27, 2009.



Source: (<http://parkstadveendam.nl/index.php?pagina=nieuws&id=6472>)

There was unrest within the Turkish community. There was fear from arson of the buildings because it was the third time that the *Turk Der's* premises, active in Veendam since 1980, had been covered with graffiti, and the perpetrators were never caught.

In: <http://islamieurope.blogspot.com/2009/06/netherlands-racist-slogans-painted-on.html> retrieved on 30.06.2009

viii) **Palestine: Israeli soldiers and security officers desecrate Al-Aqsa Mosque** – On July 2nd, 2009, Israeli soldiers and security men broke into the yard of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and Al-Marwani prayer area, and kidnapped three worshippers, including a reporter. Dozens of armed Israeli policemen broke into the yard as the Palestinians were holding a celebration honoring Palestinian children who won a portrait contest about the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The police initially attempted to bar 300 children from participating in the competition, but the organizers and the children continued their festival despite the Israeli attack, and the attempt to sabotage the activities.

In:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/News/2009/July/3%20n/Israeli%20soldiers%20and%20security%20officers%20desecrate%20Al-Aqsa%20Mosque.%20disrupt%20event.%20kidnap%20three%20worshippers.htm> retrieved on 05.07.2009

ix) **Scotland: Islamic charity fire ‘deliberate’** – The Glasgow branch of Islamic Relief was badly damaged by a fire, estimated to have cost up to £80,000 worth of damage, on July 2nd, 2009 which police said was started deliberately. Police were looking for two white males, aged between 18 and 25, in connection with the incident. Representatives from Scotland’s Muslim community have described the attack as “despicable” and have spoken of “the growing threat of Islamophobia”.

In: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/glasgow_and_west/8137021.stm retrieved on 07.07.2009

x) **Netherlands: Pig’s head left at mosque** – Unidentified people left a pig’s head by the Al Mouahidin mosque in Ede on August 2nd, 2009 night. The police confirmed the find on August 4, 2009. Images from security cameras showed two unidentified bicyclists left behind the head, which was packed in a bag. The mosque had opened its doors in May 2009. The mosque board spoke of a deliberate action against the mosque, and reported the find to the police. The last time that the mosque was the target of opponents was more than a year and a half ago. While it was being built, the windows were smashed.

In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2009/08/netherlands-pigs-head-left-at-mosque.html> retrieved on 06.08.2009

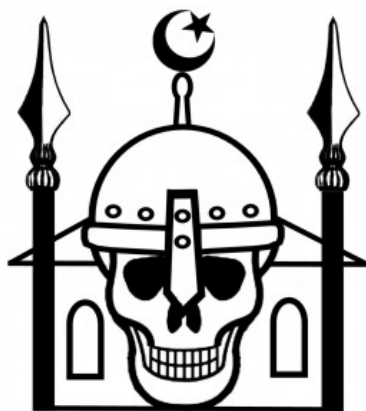
xi) **France: Pig’s head hung on defaced French mosque** – A French public prosecutor said on August 19, 2009 that a mosque in eastern France was sprayed with racist graffiti and defaced with pieces of pork overnight. The mosque in town of Toul was daubed with inscriptions saying “France for the French”, “Here it’s Nazi” and “Don’t touch my pig”, along with Nazi swastikas. Prosecutor Raymond Morey told *Reuters*: “These are unacceptable acts of vandalism and incitement to racial hate,” adding that the trotters and head of a pig had been hung on the doors and windows of the mosque. French television said that two youths in their 20s were arrested hours after the vandalism, giving no other information. Local Muslims said they were shocked by the attack, which came shortly before the start of the fasting month of Ramadan.

In: <http://in.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idINIndia-41847520090819> retrieved on 20.08.2009

xii) **US: Upstate Mosque Hit By Vandals** – In the Islamic Center in Taylors (South Carolina), worshipers found written on the floor ‘Death to Muslims’. It is believed that the anti-religious message was written sometime in the early morning hours of August 22, 2009. The FBI was investigating every possibility, but as the case involved anti-religious messages, they were considered hate crime. It was the Islamic Center’s 3rd incident in several years. Many years ago, someone tried to burn the center down.

In: http://www2.wspa.com/spa/news/local/article/upstate_mosque_hit_by_vandals_2nd_hate_crime_in_county_in_one_week/25635/ retrieved on 26.08.2009

xiii) **Denmark: SIOE Held Anti-Mosque Protest in Copenhagen** – *Stop Islamisation of Europe* (SIOE) organized a demonstration on August 28, 2009 outside the Denmark’s parliament buildings Christiansborg Slotsplads. Following is the banner promoting the protest:



In: <http://sioe.wordpress.com/2009/08/24/copenhagen-anti-mosque-demo-venue-change/> retrieved on 26.08.2009

xiv) **Denmark: DPP Asked for Referendum on Copenhagen Mosque** – The Mayor of Copenhagen, Mogens Lønborg, was shocked that the Danish People’s Party (DPP) on September 09, 2010 had published advertisements in several dailies in which the party called for a referendum on mosques in Copenhagen. He stated that it was an inappropriate attempt to undermine religious freedom. It happened after a majority of city hall, on August 27, 2009 agreed to have a draft prepared for a local plan for a mosque in Copenhagen’s northwest neighborhood.



The anti-mosque ad that had been published in several Danish dailies.

Mayor Mogens Lønborg believed that the ad showing the blue mosque in Istanbul with a manipulated image of a sword at the dome, was inappropriate.

In: <http://vladtepesblog.com/?p=12617> retrieved on 10.09.2009

xv) **Bulgaria: Mosque torched to the ground** – A hundred-year-old mosque was burnt to the ground on October 7, 2009 in the Bulgarian town of Nikopol. According to several eyewitnesses’ reports, firefighters arrived swiftly on the scene, but the blaze already had engulfed the entire structure. There were 110 attacks on mosques and Islamic places of worship in the country in 2008, according to Bulgaria’s Chief Mufti. He said that no one had been brought to justice. Authorities say that in 2000 another mosque in Nikopol was torched, but the perpetrators were still at large.

In: http://www.sofiaecho.com/2009/10/08/796512_mosque-in-bulgaria-torched-to-the-ground retrieved on 10.10.2009

xvi) **France: Mosque defaced with insults and Jewish symbols** – *La Depeche*, a French newspaper, said Racists in France attacked a mosque, defacing with anti-Islam insults and Jewish symbols. It added that racist graffiti as “death to the rats” and “dirty race get out” were written on the walls, and a symbol of Jewish stars of David was drawn with black paint on the walls of the mosque in the town of Tarbes, in Hautes-Pyrenees region of France.

In: http://www.worldbulletin.net/news_detail.php?id=48565 retrieved on 18.10.2009

xvii) **France: Another Mosque Defaced** – Islamophobic slogans, swastikas and Celtic crosses were discovered Sunday November 1st, 2009 morning by Muslims coming to pray at the Maubeuge mosque, by the Belgian border. The inscriptions included swastikas and inscriptions, including one saying "Islam out of Europe". This was the first time such incident had happened there.



In: http://www.lavoixdunord.fr/Region/actualite/Secteur_Region/2009/11/02/article_a-maubeuge-injures-islamophobes-et-croix.shtml retrieved on 03.11.2009

xviii) **US: Mosque vandalized in North Carolina** – Police and mosque officials said on November 4, 2009 that the Jamaat Ibad Ar-Rahman mosque at 3034 Fayetteville Street (Durham – North Carolina) was vandalized and burglarized late Sunday or early Monday (November 1-2, 2009). It marked the second attack on the mosque in three months. On July 27, 2009 doors and windows were also smashed.

http://www.heraldsun.com/pages/full_story/push?article-Mosque+vandalized-+reasons+unclear%20&id=4326399 retrieved on 07.11.2009

xix) **Netherlands: Mosque attacked** – A Molotov cocktail was thrown into the Al Quibla mosque in Zoetermeer. The mosque was similarly attacked half a year ago.

In: [http://www.rtl.nl/\(/actueel/rtlnieuws/binnenland/\)/components/actueel/rtlnieuws/2009/11_november/15/binnenland/brandstichting-in-moskee-zoetermeer.xml](http://www.rtl.nl/(/actueel/rtlnieuws/binnenland/)/components/actueel/rtlnieuws/2009/11_november/15/binnenland/brandstichting-in-moskee-zoetermeer.xml) retrieved on 21.11.2009

xx) **US: Oregon Mosque Targeted with Hate Graffiti** - A hate graffiti scrawled on the mailbox of a Eugene mosque, Abu-Bakr As-Siddiq Islamic Center. The insulting content of the graffiti was highly provocative towards fundamental tenants of Islamic belief. Local police said that they viewed the graffiti as a bias crime.

In: <http://kezi.com/page/151114> retrieved on 03.12.2009

xxi) **UK: London Colney mosque refused** – A proposal to build a mosque in London Colney was rejected during the District Council’s planning meeting on November 30, 2009. Residents living close to Cemex House in Barnet Road, London Colney, opposed proposals to convert the building into an Islamic Centre. After hearing representations from both parties, councillors sitting on the district council's plans south committee refused the application, despite recommendations from an inspector to approve the proposals.

In: http://www.stalbansreview.co.uk/news/4768771.London_Colney_mosque_refused/ retrieved on 03.12.2009

xxii) **US: West Sacramento Mosque Vandalized** – Prayers had to be held outside on December 1st, 2009 at the West Sacramento Islamic Center because the inside of the mosque was trashed. Inside there was broken glass where windows were broken from the inside. Muslim religious icons were taken from the wall and thrown to the ground and a shelf filled with Qur’ans, the Muslim holy book was tipped over. West Sacramento police did not categorize the incident as a hate crime. There was none of the characteristic graffiti that is associated with hate crimes. But Adul Karim Yusufzai, president of Sacramento’s Afghan Community, which uses the mosque, disagreed while pointing at framed religious writings as they lay broken on the floor.

In: <http://www.fox40.com/news/headlines/ktxl-tv-mosquevandals.0.4679888.story> retrieved on 03.12.2009

xxiii) **Spain: Mosque desecrated** – A mosque in the Melilla enclave was desecrated on Constitution Day (December 6, 2009) with graffiti saying “Viva Franco”, “No Moors” and “One, Great and Free” (Franco motto) etc. This is the first time in years that a religious building has been attacked in Mellila.

In: <http://www.elfaroceutamelilla.es/content/view/42429/143/> retrieved on 09.12.2009

xxiv) **France: Anti-Muslim graffiti found in a mosque** – French police said assailants scrawled a Nazi slogan and hung pig feet on a mosque in southern France. It added that the swastika in black paint and slogans including Hitler salute “Sieg Heil” in German, “France to the French” in French, and “White Power” in English were scrawled on the mosque.



Pigs’ feet were also suspended on the handle of the portal and pig’s ears stapled on the door, where sheets of paper were plastered on which were painted French flags.

In: <http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5jpsrZrKYldfsDqg5mNG2btrR3QVwD9CIIJTGO> and <http://www.ennaharonline.com/en/international/2612.html> retrieved on 14.12.2009

xxv) **Germany: Rightist party campaigns against mosques** – Anti-Islamic party in German state of North Rhine-Westphalia said mosques are symbol of ‘Muslim occupation of land’. This rightist group became the first official European party to promote a ban on the construction of mosques. The group, Pro-North Rhine-Westphalia, was promoting the ban as part of its campaign against “Muslim occupation of land” ahead of the state elections in May 2010. Markus Wiener, secretary-general of Pro-North Rhine-Westphalia, said: “We will organize an elections campaign that clearly criticizes Islam. We will adopt slogans used by Switzerland. We see the construction of mosques as a violent symbol of Muslim occupation of our land.” Wiener stressed that the campaign was not aimed “directly against Islam”, but dealt with the issue of “non-European immigrants, most of whom come from Muslim culture”.

In: <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0.7340.L-3820190.00.html> and <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0.1518.667158.00.html> retrieved on 16.12.2009

Related: EU: Right-wingers to push for minaret-ban referendum – Extreme-right parties from all over Europe attended the *Anti-Minaret Conference* held in a castle, Horst Palace, a

Renaissance structure in the Ruhr Valley city of Gelsenkirchen on March 27, 2010. The gathering was called in order to look into the possibility of an EU-wide minaret ban. The hosts, an anti-Muslim German group, hope to use the gathering as a springboard to success in local elections. At the end of the Conference, the Extreme-right parties attending the event said they were going to begin a campaign for a European referendum imposing a minaret ban. The big supporters of the referendum campaign were the Flemish Vlaams Belang and the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ). Both parties were investing financially and organizationally in the small pro-NRW.

In: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,685896,00.html> and <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2010/03/eu-right-wingers-to-push-for-minaret.html> retrieved on 30.03.2010

xxvi) **UK: Mosque burned to the ground by arsonists** – The Cradley Heath Mosque and Islamic Centre in Plant Street, Cradley Heath, near Dudley in the West Midlands, were completely destroyed in an arson attack on Boxing Day (December 26, 2009). It was the second time the hall has been targeted in recent years. There was a similar attack four or five years ago.

In: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/6900129/Mosque-burned-to-the-ground-by-arsonists.html> retrieved on 29.12.2009

xxvii) **Sweden: Mosque Attacked** – Unknown assailant opened fire from small arms to Malmo's main mosque. The incident occurred at a time when a group of Muslims gathered at the mosque for prayers. The bullets did not hit the people, but the fragments of the crashed window injured the mosque's Imam. The police regarded the incident as "attempted murder". It is reported that the mosque has been object of attacks, particularly in 2005, when the building was burned down several times. According to the Imam, the Swedish authorities take no measures to protect the mosque, trying to write off such incidents as ordinary crimes. Some observers are inclined to regard the shelling of the mosque in the light of a trend – the ban on wearing Islamic head scarves in France, the construction of minarets in Switzerland, etc.

In: <http://cnobbi.com/4332.html> retrieved on 03.01.2009

xxviii) **Canada: Mosque firebombing sparks outrage** - Shock and anger had been spreading among Hamilton's 20,000 Muslims after the city's largest mosque was firebombed on January 4, 2010.

In: <http://www.thespec.com/News/Local/article/697876> retrieved on 06.01.2010

xxix) **France: Graffiti against minarets** – On January 11, 2010, a car parked at the residence of an official of the future Grand Mosque of Strasbourg was covered with swastikas and racist and anti-minaret graffiti, including three swastikas, a celtic cross, and the inscriptions "no minarets", "Islam out" and "Immigrants out". The residence of the Strasbourg mayor (Socialist Party) was similarly attacked 48 hours previously. Roland Ries, senator and mayor, had repeatedly said that if the Muslims wanted it, he saw 'no reason' to prevent them from building a minaret in the proposed mosque.

In: <http://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/2010/01/12/01011-20100112FILWWW00482-tags-contre-un-responsable-de-mosquee.php> retrieved on 13.01.2010

xxx) **Sweden: Pig's head drawn on mosque** – The Sabirin mosque in Eskilstuna, Sweden, was attacked on January 18), 2009 by somebody who drew a pig's head on the mosque's door with derogatory writings towards Prophet Mohammed. There have been several attacks against the Muslim community recently.

In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2010/01/sweden-pigs-head-drawn-on-mosque.html> retrieved on 19.01.2010

xxxii) **Palestine: Israel Issues Stop-Work Order for Nablus Mosque** – An Israeli government decision stopped construction of the Salman Al Farisi mosque in Burin village, south of the northern West Bank city of Nablus. The order was delivered by soldiers and attached to the front

gate of the mosque. Construction of this mosque began two years ago and it is now in its final stages. Soldiers also delivered orders to Hashim Al Najjar, a resident of Burin, demanding he stopped the construction of warehouses on his property.

In: http://www.imemc.org/index.php?obj_id=53&story_id=57762 retrieved on 27.01.2010

xxxii) **Pro-NRW Launches Poster Campaign against Construction of Mosques in Germany** – Pro NRW, an anti-Islam populist party based in Cologne (Germany) launched a campaign against construction of mosques in their country. They borrowed the poster that was used by the Swiss People's Party during the minaret ban campaign in Switzerland.



In: <http://www.nrhz.de/flyer/beitrag.php?id=14718> retrieved on 30.01.2010

xxxiii) **France: Mosques Desecrated** – On January 30, 2010 night local residents of Crépy-en-Valois suburb of Paris (Oise) discovered graffiti spray painted “Islam out of Europe”, “Islam out” on the walls of the hall and enclosure, together with the blue-white-red flag and a Celtic cross. An inscription “France to the French” was discovered on a wall in a nearby street where the worshippers usually park.

In: <http://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/2010/02/01/01011-20100201FILWWW00182-inscriptions-islamophobes-dans-l-oise.php> retrieved on 02.02.2010

xxxiv) **France: Mosque vandalized with swastikas** – The French Council of the Muslim Faith said that swastikas and racial slurs had been painted on the walls of a mosque in the town of Saint-Etienne, adding that the vandalism took place on February 8, 2010 morning at the mosque in the Loire region, in the latest example of rising Islamophobia. The Council said such vandalism has multiplied in France “in a very worrisome way” and repeated a demand for the government to create a parliamentary panel to study rising Islamophobia. Muslim leaders are among those saying that a debate in France on the face-covering veil and a national identity debate have stigmatised Muslims and fed anti-Muslim sentiment.

In: <http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-world/french-mosque-vandalised-with-swastikas-20100208-nnin.html> retrieved on 09.02.2010

xxxv) **US: ‘Muslims go home’ spray-painted on Nashville mosque** – State, local and federal officials in Tennessee were investigating vandalism discovered early hours of February 10, 2009 at the Al-Farooq Mosque on Fourth Avenue South as a possible hate crime. The words “Muslim go home” and several crosses were spray-painted in red on the exterior of the building, and an expletive and hate-speech filled note was left at the youth center, according to a board member of the mosque. Salaad Nur said the note contained the message that Islam is the enemy and that the religion is trying to destroy the United States and Israel.

In: <http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100211/NEWS03/2110343/+Muslims+go+home++spray-painted+on+Nashville+mosque> retrieved on 13.02.2010

xxxvi) **UK: Michael Gove opposes mosque at centre of ‘inflammatory’ campaign** – A British Conservative frontbench spokesman, Michael Gove, opposed plans to build a mosque in his constituency after it became the target of an “inflammatory and offensive” online campaign. The shadow schools secretary, who warned that the west was facing a “total war” from Islamists in his book Celsius 7/7, had initially refused to take sides in the dispute over proposals to build a mosque next to Sandhurst barracks in Camberley, Surrey. But he said that he had been convinced that the strength of feeling was threatening the area’s “good community relations” and called on local Muslims to withdraw the application.

In: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2010/feb/12/michael-gove-opposes-mosque> retrieved on 14.02.2010

xxxvii) **France: Racist Graffiti on Mosque for 6th Time** – France’s main Muslim group said a mosque had been defaced with racist graffiti in the sixth such incident in 2010. The head of the French Council of the Muslim Faith says racist words were painted over the weekend on the walls of the mosque in Sorgues, in Vaucluse region. It was the sixth time this year that a French mosque had been tarnished by racist graffiti. Mohammed Moussaoui noted that his group had called numerous times for a parliamentary inquiry into Islamophobia, to no avail.

In: http://www.etaiwannews.com/etn/news_content.php?id=1183349&lang=eng_news retrieved on 19.02.2010

xxxviii) **Netherlands: Mosque smeared with blood** – Dutch Police reported that a mosque in the Selwerd neighborhood of Groningen was smeared with blood on March 16, 2010 night. In addition to the blood, animal innards and the head of a wild boar were found by the mosque.

In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2010/03/netherlands-mosque-smeared-with-blood.html> retrieved on 20.03.2010

xxxix) **Italy: Genoa Vehemently Rejects Mosque Construction** – A referendum promoted by Lega Nord (a right-leaning party, part of the PDL coalition guided by Silvio Berlusconi and notoriously against immigrants) ruled against the construction of a mosque in Italian city of Genoa.

In: <http://technorati.com/politics/article/genoa-vehemently-rejects-mosque-construction/> retrieved on 25.03.2010

xl) **Poland: Polish group uses Swiss poster to protest new mosque** – A Polish group calling itself “Europe for the Future” has refashioned a Swiss poster against minarets to demand a halt in the construction of a new mosque in the capital of mainly Catholic Poland.



Source: <http://warszawa.gazeta.pl/warszawa/51.95194.7694628.html?i=2>

In the posters, seen in several parts of Warsaw on March 24, 2010, the Swiss flag is replaced with a Polish one and wording that translates into “stop the mosque of the radicals”.

In: <http://www.expatica.com/ch/news/swiss-rss-news/polish-group-uses-swiss-poster-to-protest-new-mosque-33140.html> retrieved on 25.03.2010

xli) **UK: Essex mosque attacked again** – Kamal Siddique, who was chairing the small mosque from a detached bungalow in Lessington Road, Romford, said his mosque had been a target of a series of Islamophobic attacks. He said the property had six windows smashed last February 12, 2010. The frames and floodlights were also damaged.

Speaking to *The Muslim News* Siddiqui said the latest attack was a part of a sustained far-right campaign to get the mosque closed. He added: “We are very peaceful and don’t bother anyone. There are far-right racists who want his mosque to close down...I am an old man now, I’ve just had enough of this. This will cost thousands to fix [windows]; it’s happened before there was an arson attack last year.” Siddique criticised the police for the continuous attacks on the mosque. “We’ve had burglaries and an arson attack the police have done nothing; they came and went but they haven’t actually done anything,” he alleged.

In: <http://www.muslimnews.co.uk/paper/index.php?article=4586> retrieved on 27.03.2010

2. Desecration of Muslim Graves

i) **Palestine: Illegal Israeli Settlers Desecrate Muslim Cemetery in Jerusalem** – On May 24, 2009, Muslim graveyards in Rahma cemetery in the occupied city of Jerusalem were cruelly attacked by fanatic Jewish Israeli settlers. The settlers, who were believed to be protected by the Israeli occupation forces (IOF), assaulted and destroyed many tombs in the graveyard in a clear act of desecration of the cemetery. The attack was part of a broader Israeli plan to Judaize Jerusalem, and to distort all Muslim milestones in it with the aim alter its Muslim identity.

In:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/News/2009/May/25%20n/Illegal%20Israeli%20Settlers%20Desecrate%20Palestinian%20Muslim%20Rahma%20Cemetery%20in%20Jerusalem.htm> retrieved on 26.05.2009

ii) **UK: Muslim graves targeted in hate attack** – Up to 20 Muslim graves at the Southern Cemetery (south Manchester) on Barlow Moor Road were vandalised in a racially motivated attack sometime overnight of October 1st, 2009. The attack was treated as racially motivated as only Muslim graves were targeted.

In: http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/s/1153293_muslim_graves_targeted_in_hate_attack retrieved on 04.10.2009

Related: UK: Muslim graves hit for third time – Sometime between the afternoon of November 20, 2009 and morning of November 23, 2010 vandals targeted Muslim graves at a south Manchester cemetery for the third time in two months. More than 20 headstones at the Southern Cemetery on Barlow Moor Road were pushed over in what Police were treating as a racially-motivated attack.

In: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/manchester/8378158.stm retrieved on 26.11.2009

iii) **France: 8 graves of Muslim soldiers desecrated** – Maurice Duhamel, mayor of Montjoie-Saint-Martin (France), said that eight graves of Muslim soldiers in France’s 2nd Armored Division who died for France in World War II were desecrated with Nazi symbols in a village cemetery on October 21, 2009. President Nicolas Sarkozy, on October 22, 2010, denounced the “particularly odious racist acts” and asked that those responsible be found and severely punished. Meanwhile, a week before, the French Council for the Muslim Faith complained that those responsible for the desecration in December of some 500 Muslim soldiers’ graves in Arras, in the north, have yet to be identified. It was the third time Muslim graves there had been desecrated.

In: <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1256150027151&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull> retrieved on 24.10.2009

3. Incidents Related to *Hijab* (Veil)

i) **Norway: FRP proposes ban on hijab in schools** – The FRP (Norwegian Progress Party) wanted to ban hijab in schools across Norway. If the law is introduced, it would send parents of small girls wearing hijab back to their original homelands. FRP deputy Per Sandberg said that people who come to Norway must drop their women-oppressive and children-oppressive culture which is wearing the hijab. In school it should be forbidden to wear the hijab and if the parents don't accept our democratic rights, they will be sent straight home.

In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2009/05/norway-frp-proposes-ban-on-hijab-in.html> retrieved on 25.05.2009

ii) **Netherlands: Poster of Muslim with headscarf Defaced** – The photo of the young Muslim woman with a headscarf, which was part of a publicity campaign for the Overijssel province for drawing attention to the qualities of the Overijssel landscape, was defaced by unknown people, who put stickers with anti-Islamic slogans. The stickers with the text 'Overijssel is not Islamic' covered the ad poster of the Overijssel province. Besides the woman with the headscarf, other residents of the province also figure in the campaign. Anonymous critics told *elsevier.nl* that the campaign was 'disrespectful'. One critic wrote in an e-mail: "What does Overijssel have to do with Islam? Particularly when it comes to the landscape and culture of Overijssel."

In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2009/05/netherlands-muslim-with-headscarf.html> retrieved on 31.05.2009

iii) **UK: Catholic school bars Muslim teacher** – A Muslim teacher was barred from a Roman Catholic college after refusing to remove her full-face veil so staff could identify her. The woman, who works at an Islamic school, opted to leave. Two female pupils, all of them wearing niqabs showing only their eyes, after they were asked to remove them to comply with college policy, the girls, thought to be aged 15, agreed but their. Earlier this year (2009), another Catholic college in his constituency, Our Lady and St John, turned away a Muslim mother from a parents' evening as she was wearing a full-face veil. The latest incident, at St Mary's College, is said to have left the visiting teacher 'shocked and upset'.

In: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1196261/Catholic-school-bars-Muslim-teacher-refused-remove-face-veil-staff-identify-her.html> retrieved on 30.06.2009

iv) **Australia: Muslim woman 'told to take off veil' by bus driver in Australia** – Khadijah Ouarahni-Grech has accused a Sydney bus driver of racism after he told her to take off her headscarf because it was against the law to wear it on board. The bus company, Hillsbus, said the driver was being questioned over the claims.

In: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/australiaandthepacific/australia/5900099/Muslim-woman-told-to-take-off-veil-by-bus-driver-in-Australia.html> retrieved on 25.07.2009

v) **France: Muslim woman wearing 'burkini' banned from Paris swimming pool** – France's struggle with Islamic dress moved into the swimming pool after a 35-year-old woman was banned from bathing in her "burkini", a head-to-toe swimsuit. The woman, identified only as Carole, was making her third outing in a burkini to the town pool at Emerainville, on the eastern outskirts of Paris, when the chief lifeguard ordered her to leave.

In: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article6793574.ece> retrieved on 13.08.2009

vi) **Italy: Mayor Bans Burkini** – Gianluca Buonanno, the mayor of Varallo Sesia in the northwestern region of Piedmon (north of Italy) town decided on August 19, 2009 to slap a hefty fine on women seen wearing the Islamic head-to-toe swimsuit or 'burkini' in local pools.

In: http://www.ansa.it/site/notizie/awnplus/english/news/2009-08-19_119401623.html retrieved on 20.08.2009

vii) **UK: Christian hoteliers asked guest in hijab if she was terrorist or killer** – A court in Liverpool heard on Dec 10 that a pair of Christian hoteliers insulted a Muslim guest by calling her a terrorist and comparing the Prophet Muhammad to a warlord.

In: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article6948816.ece> retrieved on 12.12.2009

viii) **France: Minister Wants to Deny Citizenship to Muslims Wearing Veils** – France's immigration minister said on December 16, 2009 that he wanted the wearing of Muslim veils that cover the face and body to be grounds for denying citizenship and long-term residence. Eric Besson said he planned to take “concrete measures” regarding such veils, which are worn by a small minority of women in France but have become the object of a parliamentary inquiry into whether a ban should be imposed.

In: <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,580405,00.html> retrieved on 19.12.2009

Related: French Parliamentary Report Backs Burqa Ban – A French parliamentary committee's much-awaited report on a partial ban of the burqa, or full Islamic veil, was made public on January 26, 2009. The report, nearly 200-pages long, proposed to ban the burqa from public schools, hospitals and transport systems and government offices because, according to the Report, the burqa was an affront to French values.

The report released by a parliament commission said, inter alia, “The wearing of the full veil is a challenge to our republic. This is unacceptable. We must condemn this excess.” After six months of hearings, the panel of 32 lawmakers recommended a ban on the face-covering veil in all state-run institutions and offices, the broadest move yet to restrict Muslim dress in France. The commission called on parliament to adopt a formal resolution stating that the burqa was “contrary to the values of the republic” and proclaiming that “all of France is saying ‘no’ to the full veil.”

The report recommended that women who turn up at government offices wearing the full veil should be denied services such as a work visa, residency papers or French citizenship. The panel however stopped short of proposing broad legislation to outlaw the burqa on the streets or in shopping centres after cautioning that such a move would have to be reviewed by the courts to establish its legality.

In: <http://www.france24.com/en/20100126-ban-burqa-gains-momentum-with-publication-parliamentary-report> retrieved on 27.01.2010

ix) **Netherlands: Doctor turns away burqa-wearing woman** – A 23 year old mother with a burka submitted a complain to the disciplinary tribunal because she was turned away by a family doctor on Christmas Day in Utrecht, she also lodged a complaint by the Equal Treatment Commission. The woman, who wears a niqab, was accompanied by her husband, who held their three month old baby. When they were called in to the see the doctor, the doctor told the father that only he could go in with the baby. When she insisted that she should enter as the baby's mother, the doctor replied that he did not want anybody wearing a burka helping or entering his consultation room because of his religious convictions.

In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2009/12/utrecht-doctor-turns-away-burqa-wearing.html> retrieved on 30.12.2009

x) **France: No French citizenship for ‘burqa’ Muslims** – Justice Minister Michele Alliot-Marie said on December 10, 2009 that Muslim men who force their wives to wear the full Islamic veil should not be granted French citizenship. Wading into the debate over whether to ban the burqa, Alliot-Marie said the government would await the recommendations of a parliamentary panel considering possible legislation to bar Muslim women from wearing the full veil. But the minister went on to say that “there are a certain number of basics on which we must stand firm. For instance, someone who would be seeking French citizenship and whose wife wears the full veil is someone who would not appear to be sharing the values of our country. Therefore in a case like that one, we would reject his request”. The justice minister said the wearing of the

niqab or burqa was a "problem that affects our ability to live together, the values of the republic and in particular human dignity."

In: http://www.expatica.com/fr/news/local_news/No-French-citizenship-for-burqa-Muslims_58711.html
retrieved on 12.12.2009

xi) Austria: Women's Minister Proposed Burka Ban – Austrian Social Democratic (SPÖ) Women's Minister Gabriele Heinisch-Hosek said in several media interviews on December 23, 2009: "I consider the burka as a sign of the submission of women. It greatly hinders women from finding jobs in the labour market. If more women wearing burkas appear in Austria, I will test a ban on them and enact administrative fines for women wearing them in public buildings." She added that Islam was a danger to women's rights when it led to "politically fundamentalist-oriented policies" such as the mandatory wearing of burkas. The SPÖ had protested when People's Party Science Minister Johannes Hahn suggested a ban on burkas last year. Support of a ban on burkas has been growing in Germany, France, Italy and Switzerland.

In: http://www.austriantimes.at/news/General_News/2009-12-23/19123/Women%E2%80%99s_minister_considering_burka_ban retrieved on 26.12.2009

xii) UK: UKIP seeks ban on Burqa – Following recent European moves to ban certain Muslim practices, the UK Independence Party (UKIP) is seeking a ban on burqa and other face-covering veils worn by some Muslim women. The leader of UKIP's 13 lawmakers in the European Parliament, Nigel Farage, told the BBC's 'Politics Show' on Sunday (Jan 17) that his party was seeking the ban on the grounds that the burqa "oppressed" women, while symbolizing an "increasingly divided Britain."

In: <http://www.presstv.ir/detail.aspx?id=116391§ionid=351020601> retrieved on 19.01.2010

xiii) Denmark to curb use of Islamic veils – The Government of Denmark said on January 28, 2009 that it would limit the use in public of the face-covering burka and niqab veils worn by some Muslim women but stopped short of introducing a law banning the garments. Stating the veils had "no place in Danish society," the centre-right government said it would not enact a general ban but would allow schools, public authorities and companies to put in place their own restrictions. It also said it would present a bill shortly making it illegal to force a woman to wear a burka or niqab and another bill requiring witnesses in courtrooms to lift their veil to identify themselves.

A statement from the office of the Danish Prime Minister Lars Loekke Rasmussen read: "The burka and the niqab have no place in Danish society and the government is determined to combat this view of humanity and women". It urged authorities to restrict the use of the veils "as much as possible."

In: <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/world/30-denmark-to-curb-use-of-islamic-veils-so-03> retrieved on 30.01.2010

xiv) France: Newcomers should sign 'no-burqa' clause, says Families Minister – French Families Minister, Nadine Morano, said on February 7, 2010 that foreigners who come to live in France should sign a contract recognising that the wearing of the full Islamic veil is banned, adding that the "no burqa" clause and a second provision rejecting female genital mutilation should be added to the "integration contract" that newcomers have been asked to sign since 2007.

In: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/europe/Newcomers-to-France-should-sign-no-burqa-clause-says-Families-Minister/articleshow/5546615.cms> retrieved on 08.02.2010

xv) Canada: Muslim woman expelled from school in veil dispute – A Muslim woman filed a human rights complaint after she was expelled from a Canadian college for refusing to remove her face veil. The Egyptian-born woman, a permanent resident of Canada, was enrolled in a

government-sponsored French language class for new immigrants in Montreal, Quebec. The school, CGEP St. Laurent, expelled her last November after she refused to remove her niqab.

In: <http://pewforum.org/news/rss.php?NewsID=19806> retrieved on 13.03.2010

xvi) **Canada: Quebec passes law against veil** - The province of Quebec passed legislation on March 24, 2010 that stipulates Muslim women will need to uncover their faces when dealing with Quebec government services. The bill says people obtaining or delivering services at places such as health or auto insurance offices will need to do so with their faces in plain view. The law covers all garments ranging from the face veil to the burqa. It says people's face-coverings will not be tolerated if they hinder communication or visual identification.

Premier Jean Charest told a news conference that the province was drawing a line in defense of gender equality and secular public institutions. The Muslim Council of Montreal said there may be only around 25 Muslims in Quebec who actually wear face-coverings. Of the more than 118,000 visitors to the health board's Montreal office in 2008-09 only 10 people – or less than 0.00009 percent of cases – involved women who wear face veils. There were no cases among the 28,000 visitors to the Quebec City service center over the same time period.

In: <http://www.islamophobia-watch.com/islamophobia-watch/2010/3/24/quebec-passes-law-against-veil.html> retrieved on 29.03.2010

xvii) **Belgium moves to become first European country to ban the burka** – Belgium is set to become the first European country to impose a full ban on wearing a burkha. A parliamentary committee in Belgium unanimously voted to ban the wearing of full face-covering veils in public, paving the way for the first clampdown of its kind in Europe. Officials said that the draft law would probably be put to a vote of the full house on April 22, 2010. If passed, it would mean that burkhas, niqabs and other full face veils would be outlawed from the streets, parks, schools and all public buildings.

In: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/worldnews/article-1262545/Belgium-set-European-country-ban-burka.html> retrieved on 01.04.2010

4. Political and Social Campaigns against Islam and Muslims

i) **Germany: Anti-Islam Conference Held** – Far-right German organization Pro Köln organized an “Anti-Islam Conference” on May 9, 2009 only nine months since the last conference. The organization, which is against the mosques being built in Köln and Frankfurt, called far-rightist groups from all around Europe to participate in the conference. The group argued that society in Köln is gradually becoming Islamized. Some groups in Belgium and Austria responded positively to the call.

In: <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/domestic/11593532.asp?scr=1> retrieved on 07.05.2009

ii) **US: Florida House Republican Leader Hosts Anti-Islam Event** – On Monday April 27th, the Florida Security Council and the International Free Press Society hosted a “Free Speech Summit” in a Delray Beach synagogue. The event was assembled to highlight the anti-Islamic views of Dutch politician Geert Wilders, who was the featured speaker at the summit.

In: <http://jackofspades83.wordpress.com/2009/05/26/florida-house-republican-leader-hosts-anti-islam-event/> retrieved on 30.05.2009

iii) **Australia: Sydney Islamic school rejected** – The Land and Environment Court knocked back the Quranic Society's application to build a \$19 million school for 900 students in a rural area on the outskirts of the town south-west of Sydney. The case attracted international media attention when two pigs' heads were rammed onto metal stakes at the site, on the corner of Cawdor and Burragarong roads, in 2007. And at the hearing in April 2009, the council's evidence

included a letter signed by four Christian churches stating that Islam espoused views that were “incompatible with the Australian way of life”. The council’s legal team also presented a DVD featuring the views of concerned residents, one of whom said the school would be a “breeding ground for terrorists”.

In: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/sydney-islamic-school-rejected-20090602-btfo.html> retrieved on 02.06.2009

iv) **US: Anti-Islam Sign on Display Outside Florida Church** – A Gainesville, Florida church put a shocking anti-Islam sign on its front lawn and said it was going to put up more. The sign at the Dove World Outreach Center read “Islam is of the devil”.



In: <http://www.wftv.com/news/20001118/detail.html> retrieved on 11.07.2009

Related: **US: New Islamophobic sign erected outside Dove World ministry** – A new sign paraphrasing a quote from the Quran was placed in front of the Dove World Outreach Center in northwest Gainesville, where the placement of an earlier anti-Islamic sign had stirred protests. The new sign read “Qur’an 9:5 Kill the disbelievers wherever you find them”. It joined a series of signs that read “Islam is of the devil”, which were placed in front of the church recently.



In: <http://www.gainesville.com/article/20090731/ARTICLES/907319929/1002?Title=New-sign-erected-outside-Dove-World-ministry#> retrieved on 01.08.2009

v) **UK: Police arrested 8 after anti-Islam protest** – On September 11, 2009 supporters of a group calling itself *Stop Islamisation of Europe* gathered outside Harrow Central Mosque to demonstrate against Islam.

In: <http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSLB161189> retrieved on 12.09.2009

vi) **Austria: Mayor doesn’t want any Muslims** – German television station *ZDF* broadcasted a report on the mayor of Großkirchheim, a village in Austria, titled *Peter Suntinger and his anti-Muslim attitude*. Mayor Peter Suntinger, a former member of Haider's party, said that he wanted as few foreigners living in his village as possible. Muslims would not be able to get a residence there, and if they wanted to buy land, the village would prevent them from doing so.

In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2009/10/austria-mayor-doesnt-want-any-muslims.html> retrieved on 10.10.2009

vii) **US: GOP Congress Members start ‘witch hunt’ for Muslim interns** – On October 14, four right-wing Republican members of Congress launched an anti-Islamic book by P. David Gaubatz and Paul Sperry called *Muslim Mafia: Inside the Secret Underworld That's Conspiring to Islamize America*, and called for an investigation into Muslim interns in Congressional offices. Based on the new book, Reps. John Shadegg (R-AZ), Paul Broun (R-GA), Sue Myrick (R-NC) and Trent Franks (R-AZ) accused the non-profit civil rights organization CAIR (Council on American-Islamic Relations) of "infiltrating" Congress with Muslim intern "spies" engaged in promoting a terrorist agenda.

In: <http://www.examiner.com/x-18104-Sonoma-County-Civil-Rights-Examiner~y2009m11d2-GOP-Congressmembers-start-witch-hunt-for-Muslim-interns> retrieved on 04.11.2009

viii) **Karadzic regretted that some Bosnian Muslims escaped genocide** – In the United Nations war crimes tribunal, former Bosnian Serb president and genocide-accused Radovan Karadzic regretted that some Bosnian Muslims “got away” and were not killed in the Srebrenica massacre. The Srebrenica Massacre refers to the July 1995 killing of more than 8,000 Bosnian men and boys, as well as the ethnic cleansing of 25,000-30,000 refugees in Srebrenica in Bosnia and Herzegovina, by units of the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS) during the Bosnian War.

The UN has gathered evidence that the 64-year old defendant had "issued and signed" orders in March 1995, directing General Ratko Mladic's notorious Drina Corps to end all "hope of further survival or life" for Srebrenica's Muslims. Investigators said that less than three weeks after the Srebrenica massacre, Karadzic castigated his subordinates for failing to "finish" 9,000 Muslims who escaped capture.

In: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/bosnia/6487851/Radovan-Karadzic-regretted-that-not-all-Bosnian-Muslims-died-at-Srebrenica.html> retrieved on 04.11.2009

Related: Radovan Karadzic: war against “Islamist goals” of Muslims was ‘just’ – The wartime political leader of Bosnia’s Serbs on Mar 1st ended a previous boycott of his genocide and war crimes trial to open his own defence. He told the court in his opening statement: “I stand before you not to defend the mere mortal that I am but to defend the greatness of a small nation in Bosnia and Herzegovina which for 500 years has had to suffer and has demonstrated of modesty and perseverance to survive in freedom”. He accused a “conspiracy core” of fundamentalists of having tried to create an Islamic state with Western support. He said: “They had an Islamist goal. They wanted 100 per cent power as it was in the days of the Ottoman Empire. There were fundamental goals changing the destiny of a whole region. They want Islamic fundamentalism and wanted it from 1991 to 1995.”

In: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/bosnia/7344533/Radovan-Karadzic-war-against-Islamist-goals-of-Muslims-was-just.html> retrieved on 02.03.2010

ix) **Israeli rabbi describes Islam as “ugly”** – Israel’s top Rabbi, Shas party spiritual leader Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, harshly criticized Islam as a religion and described it as an “ugly” faith during a speech he delivered on Saturday night (December 12, 2009) for the occasion of *Hanukah*. The comments had left many in the Arab world questioning the role of religious leaders in the Jewish state. The Rabbi, according to a report by Egypt’s *al-Youm al-Saba’a* newspaper, who quoted the statements of the Rabbi from Israel’s *Ma’arev* daily newspaper, reportedly said: “Islam is the worst religion and a religion that disregards the rules of marriage and divorce among Muslims”. Israeli analyst Avi Cohen from Jerusalem said: “He often says these things about Islam and it is disgusting”.

In: <http://bikyamasr.com/?p=6795> retrieved on 16.12.2009

x) **US: Franklin Graham: ‘True Islam cannot be practiced in this country’** – Evangelical Christian leader Franklin Graham challenged President Obama’s statement in Norway that Islam

was a “great religion” and said Islam was “violent” and could not be practiced in the United States. Graham said on CNN December 10, 2009: “we have many Muslims that live in this country, but true Islam cannot be practiced in this country. You can’t beat your wife. You cannot murder your children if you think they’ve committed adultery or something like that, which they do practice in these other countries.”

In: http://www.worldtribune.com/worldtribune/WTARC/2009/ss_religion0973_12_18.asp retrieved on 19.12.2009

xi) **Denmark: "Muslim girls aren't human beings"** – Lars Hedegaard, head of the Free Speech Society, said in a recent interview that Muslim girls were raped by their family. In the interview Hedegaard said as follows: “Girls in Muslim families are raped by their uncles, their cousins or their father [...] They are not human beings. They have a function as a womb - they bear the offspring of the warriors and create new warriors, other than that... well, they can be used for sexual purposes, but they have no value.”

Søren Krarup of the Danish People’s Party (DPP) completely supported Lars Hedegaard’s criticism of Islam. Jette Dali of the Free Speech Society, who was also a candidate for parliament for the DPP, also agreed with the substance of Hedegaard’s statements.

In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2009/12/denmark-muslim-girls-arent-human-beings.html> retrieved on 23.12.2009

xii) **US: Larimer County Sheriff Jim Alderden made an Islamophobic statement** – In a recent speech to a U.S. Marine Corps event, Larimer County Sheriff Jim Alderden read off some bumper stickers to add humor to his message. Some of the bumper-sticker statements were:

- ✚ U.S. Marines are travel agents to Allah.
- ✚ U.S. Marines are certified counselors to the 72 virgins club.
- ✚ The only thing I feel when I kill a Muslim terrorist is a little recoil.

Muslims who heard the speech saw it as racist, bigoted and alarming.

In:

<http://www.coloradoan.com/article/20100121/OPINION03/1210333/1014/OPINION/Alderden+s+speech+racist++threatening> retrieved on 23.01.2010

xiii) **Belgium: Fascist Summit Meeting Held** – on February 24 some European far right groups met in a VB-sponsored event in the Belgian city of Ghent featuring Frank Vanhecke of the Vlaams Belang (a European party promoted by “anti-jihad” bloggers such as Pamela Geller, Gates of Vienna, and Brussels Journal), Nick Griffin of the BNP (British National Party), Bruno Gollnisch of the National Front, and Andreas Molzer of the Austrian FPÖ.

The poster announcing the meeting is self-explanatory on the contents of the discussions.



In: <http://trueslant.com/charlesjohnson/2010/02/25/a-fascist-summit-meeting-in-belgium/> retrieved on 27.02.2010

xiv) **France: Court authorizes Le Pen anti-Islamism posters** – A court in Marseille authorized campaign posters of the political party of Jean Marie Le Pen, National Front (FN) in the south of France, which undermined Islam and Muslims and incited hatred of Algeria and the Algerians. The verdict was rendered on Mar 8 in favor of Le Pen in the lawsuit filed by the *International League against Racism and Antisemitism*. The French court allowed the election posters of the Front National (extreme right) representing a fully veiled woman beside a map of France covered by the Algerian flag on which stand minarets shaped missiles, with the writing “not to Islamism”.



In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2010/03/marseille-court-authorizes-le-pen-anti.html> retrieved on 10.03.2010

xv) **US: St. Cloud church buys anti-Islam ad** – Granite City Baptist Church raised some eyebrows in the weekend of March 20, 2010 when it bought an ad in the *St. Cloud Times* that questioned whether Muslims are a “threat” to America. “How do Moslems seek to take control of a nation?” the ad, which features a photo of Pastor Dennis Campbell, asks. “Moslems seek to influence a nation by immigration, reproduction, education, the government, illegal drugs and by supporting the gay agenda.”

The ad is part of a string of incidents in St. Cloud that troubles human rights advocates. Within the last year, pornographic posters depicting the Prophet Muhammad were put up on St. Cloud telephone polls, and Muslim students in St. Cloud area high schools reported religious harassment. In the second week of March 2010, *MPR* reported on several racist *Facebook* groups that were created by St. Cloud high school students. “I hate the Somalians at Tech High,” was one such group. Kyle Adams, a former student at St. Cloud Technical High School who was kicked out for repeatedly using racial slurs, told *MPR*: “I was raised in believing that this country was founded upon a white Christian nation and the belief of racial separation.”

The Granite City Baptist Church ad seems to mirror some of that anti-Muslim sentiment. “What happens when Moslems take over a nation?” asks Campbell in the ad. “They will destroy the constitution and force the Moslem religion on the society, take freedom of religion away, and they will persecute all other religions.”

In: <http://minnesotaindependent.com/56757/st-cloud-church-buys-anti-islam-ad> retrieved on 27.03.2010

5. Intolerance against Islam and its Sacred Symbols

i) **‘Faith Fighters’ Developers Launch Sequel to Controversial Game** – A team of game developers put back on its website a video game that pit major religious figures such as Jesus, Muhammad and Buddha against one another in head-to-head combat. The unveiling of “Faith Fighters 2” took place just days after Italy-based Molleindustria took down “Faith Fighter” following a complaint from the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC).

In: <http://www.christianpost.com/Intl/Overseas/2009/05/-faith-fighters-developers-launch-sequel-to-controversial-game-01/> retrieved on 03.05.2009

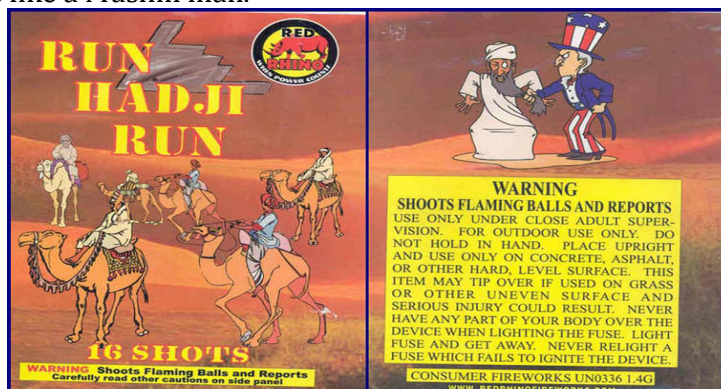
ii) **Czech Republic: Stickers against Qur'an displayed in Prague and Brno underground** – Stickers against the Qur'an appeared around the mosque in Brno and in the Prague underground probably with the aim to stir up conflicts and encourage prejudices. Vladimir Sanka, deputy head of the Muslim Communities Centre, said: "The quotes are taken out of the context". The *Brnensky denik* local daily reported on May 12, 2009 that similar stickers were displayed near the Brno mosque that became a target of an attack by unknown vandals in the past. Petra Edelmannova, chairwoman of the ultra-right extra-parliamentary National Party (NS), expressed support for displaying the stickers in the town.

In: <http://www.ceskenoviny.cz/news/zpravy/stickers-against-Qur'an-displayed-in-prague-underground-brno/376445> retrieved on 13.05.2009

iii) **US: Group linked to Israeli lobby, neocons releases another Islamophobic film** – A new documentary titled *The Third Jihad* was released by a shadowy non-profit group, the Clarion Fund, which has ties to groups widely accused of Islamophobia. A group called the International Free Press Society (IFPS), which attended the Washington premiere of the film and documented the screening on behalf of the production company on a social media website, has some dubious affiliations. Two months ago, IFPS heavily promoted Dutch parliamentarian Geert Wilders, a widely-known Islamophobe who has been tied to far-right European political parties.

In: <http://euraktiva786.wordpress.com/2009/05/23/group-linked-to-israeli-lobby-neocons-releases-another-islamophobic-film-islamophobia-comes-to-the-big-screen-%C2%AB-pak-alert-press/> retrieved on 25.05.2009

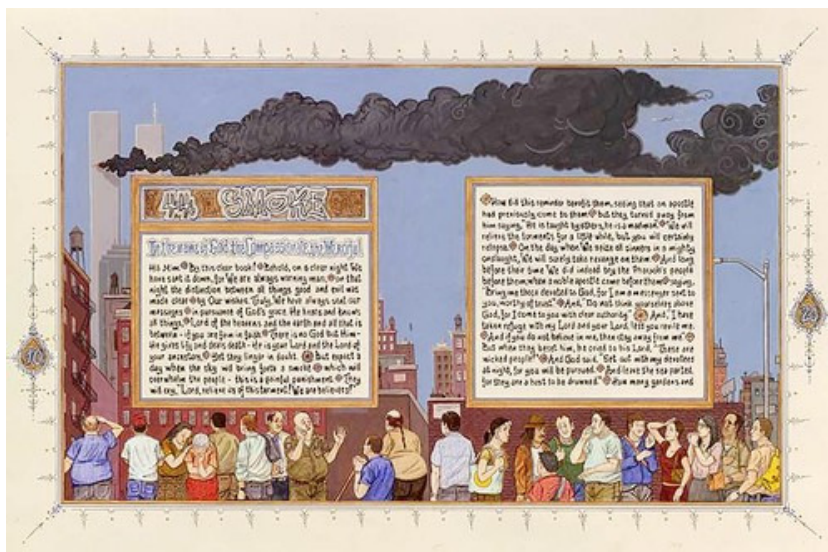
iv) **US: Racist Fireworks Found Being Sold in Wisconsin** – The product names of fireworks at one Wisconsin fireworks stand are nowhere near as benign. Some said they were more than inappropriate—they were racist. Some of the novelties sold at Fireworks City in Baldwin, Wisconsin were sparking controversy in the Arab and Muslim communities. On one side of the packaging for 'Run Hadji Run' fireworks, men of Middle Eastern descent are riding on camels with a bomber plane flying above them. On the other side is an angry-looking Uncle Sam yanking the beard of what looks like a Muslim man.



The Council of American-Islamic Relations of Minnesota issued a statement about the fireworks, explaining "Hadji is an honorific term for those who have completed the pilgrimage to Mecca, but has been often used as a derogatory term by U.S. Soldiers during the Iraq War."

In: <http://kstp.com/news/stories/S1011199.shtml?cat=206> retrieved on 04.07.2009

v) **US: Long Beach artist brought illustrations along with Qur'an** – Sandow Birk's "American Qur'an", heading to San Francisco and Culver City galleries, broke away from Islamic tradition to examine the faith through contemporary images.



TERROR: "Sura 44 (A--B)" shows the towers of the World Trade Center on Sept. 11.
(Sandow Birk / Catharine Clark Gallery / March 26)

His series of works on paper, "American Qur'an", is an English-language version of the central text of Islam, illustrated with scenes from contemporary American life. Executed in ink and gouache in an understated, realist style, many of the 16-by-24-inch works depict everyday sights -- urban street life, office workers in their cubicles, a pregnant couple in their frontyard. Others represent more historic moments, such as the smoking towers of the World Trade Center or a funeral with a casket draped in a U.S. flag. In the center of each image are two neatly framed boxes containing the text, hand-lettered in a font reminiscent of graffiti writing.

In: <http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/news/la-ca-birk23-2009aug23,0,5002675.story> retrieved on 24.08.2009

vi) **UK: Sebastian Faulks said Qur'an has 'no ethics'** – A British novelist, Sebastian Faulks, has courted controversy by saying the Qur'an has "no ethical dimension". In an interview with *Sunday Times Magazine* published on August 23, 2009, he added that the Islamic holy scripture was "a depressing book", was "very one-dimensional" and unlike the Christian New Testament had "no new plan for life".

He also criticised the "barrenness" of the Qur'an's message and the teachings of the prophet Muhammad, especially when compared with the Bible. He stated: "Jesus, unlike Muhammad, had interesting things to say", adding: "He proposed a revolutionary way of looking at the world: love your neighbour; love your enemy; the meek shall inherit the earth. Muhammad had nothing to say to the world other than, 'If you don't believe in God you will burn for ever.'"

In: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/faith/article6806488.ece> and <http://www.express.co.uk/posts/view/122388/Faulks-Qur'an-is-depressing> retrieved on 24.08.2009

vii) **US: Christmas Display Targets Islamic Faith, Lights display reads 'Islam Is of the Devil'**– A compilation of Christmas lights displayed in Gainesville, Florida, started off like any other. There was a nice selection of lights and houses decorated for the holidays. But the last display, from the controversial *Dove World Outreach Center*, had been causing a bit of a stir in the neighborhood. It read "Islam Is Of The Devil" and was clearly offensive to some residents.

In: <http://www.baltimoresun.com/sns-viral-dove-outreach-story.0.4268100.htmlstory> and <http://www.loonwatch.com/2009/12/christmas-display-targets-islam/> retrieved on 23.12.2009

viii) **US: Muslim holiday display vandalized in Mission Viejo, California** - The Greater Los Angeles Area office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-LA) on January 1st, 2010 reported two incidents of anti-Islam hate targeting the local Muslim community. An official of

the Islamic Educational Center of Orange County in Costa Mesa, Calif., reported that a burned copy of the Quran was found at the back entrance of the mosque during Friday prayers. Mosque officials told CAIR that another burned Quran had been left in the same spot one month ago and that the center had been vandalized within the last three weeks.

In: <http://makkah.wordpress.com/2010/01/01/muslim-holiday-display-vandalized-in-mission-viejo-california/> retrieved on 02.01.2010

6. Discrimination against Muslim Individuals in Educational Institutions, Workplaces, Airports, etc

i) **UK: Prisoners try to blow up Muslim inmates** – A bomb made by jail inmates to blow up Muslim prisoners came within moments of exploding outside a prayer meeting was put in a room where worshippers make ablution for Friday prayers. But a prison officer spotted it, picked it up and carried it into the middle of the playing field. A bomb disposal unit called to Ranby Prison in Retford, Notts, confirmed the bomb was a viable device primed to go off.

In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2009/05/uk-prisoners-try-to-blow-up-muslim.html> retrieved on 11.05.2009

ii) **UK: Muslim BBC religion job considered ‘insult’ by Christians** – An Ulster Unionist assembly member has said the BBC's appointment of a Muslim as head of religion and ethics is insulting to Christians. A BBC spokeswoman said Mr Ahmed was selected for the new joint role of Head of Religion and Ethics and Commissioning Editor for Religion TV because he was "simply the best candidate".

In: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/8047537.stm retrieved on 16.05.2009

iii) **Netherlands: Most insults on the net directed at Muslims** – According to the annual report of the *Meldpunt Discriminatie Internet* (MDI, Complaints Bureau for Discrimination on the Internet), insults on the internet mostly were related to Muslims. Of the 899 illegal insults which the MDI was tipped about on Dutch sites, 524 were directed at Muslims.

In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2009/06/netherlands-most-insults-on-net.html> retrieved on 13.06.2009

iv) **Sweden: City bans halal meat in schools** – On June 11, 2009 the politicians in the children and education committee adopted regulations banning halal meat served in the schools of Eskilstuna (Sweden). The new guidelines for meals in preschools and schools the municipality require that food and products will not be supplied based on ethical and religious grounds, such as halal meat.

In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2009/06/sweden-city-bans-halal-meat-in-schools.html> retrieved on 13.06.2009

v) **UK: Tooting pensioner dies after mosque race attack** – British Police have launched a murder investigation after a retired Muslim pensioner who was beaten unconscious in front of his three-year-old granddaughter in a racist attack died of his injuries. Former care worker of Indian origin, Ekram Haque, 67, was attacked by group of youths while he waited for a lift outside the Idara-e-Jafferiya mosque in Church Lane, Tooting, on bank holiday August 31, 2009, about 9.50pm. Two other men were also assaulted. He died on September 7, 2009 in hospital.

In: http://www.yourlocalguardian.co.uk/news/4584939.UPDATE_Tooting_pensioner_dies_after_mosque_race_attack/ retrieved on 08.09.2009

vi) **US: 5 teens attacked, injured Muslim girl on school bus in Ann Arbor** – A 16-year-old Muslim girl of Iraqi descent was attacked September 7, 2009 afternoon by a group of teenage students on a school bus. They allegedly uttered an expletive and said that Arabs were dirty, pulled off her Islamic head scarf, and dragged her to a nearby home. The girl suffered injuries that required six stitches.

In: <http://www.freep.com/article/20090909/NEWS06/90909093/1320/5-teens-attack--injure-Muslim-girl-on-school-bus> retrieved on 12.09.2009

vii) **Austria: Muslim girls and women with problems** – Austria’s Broadcasting Corporation reported that girls and women with a religious preference to the Islam had massive problems in Austria. Few days ago a Muslim schoolgirl was attacked by two schoolmates, who tried to set her on fire with a lighter. Now, Muslim associations in Austria claimed that such kinds of encroachments were no individual cases. Muslim women have to suffer sneer and discriminations day in, day out.

Roswitha Al Hussein, spokeswoman of the female Muslim club called “SOMM”, said that the case of the Muslim schoolgirl in Styria was extraordinary savage, including psychological violations. She said: “Teachers think that such things are just a dalliance but it’s bullying”. The spokeswoman claimed that there was not enough support for Muslim schoolgirls from teachers. “Sometimes nasty boys pull on the headscarves of the girls, and tell them that they should remove it”. Especially in times of election campaigns the situation is becoming worsen because people think that it’s socially acceptable to criticize Muslims in public. The two girls who wanted to set their Muslim classmate on fire were sent off from school. They did not want to apologize for their offence.

In: <http://www.austrianews.co.uk/2009/10/01/muslim-girls-and-women-with-problems-in-austria/> retrieved on 03.10.2009

viii) **UK: Royal Mail workers angry after vegetarian option contained meat** – British Muslim Royal Mail workers blasted the company for including pork in its seemingly meat-free Christmas lunch options. Staff at Birmingham’s Aston sorting office were treated to a festive buffet for their efforts throughout the year. But the gesture backfired when Muslim workers realised the scotch eggs contained pork. The party food favourite was one of the options available to vegetarians and those from religious backgrounds who were unable to eat meat. This included around 15 Muslims who were invited to the festive buffet.

In: http://www.birminghammail.net/news/top-stories//tm_headline=royal-mail-workers-angry-after-vegetarian-option-contained-meat&method=full&objectid=25478016&siteid=97319-name_page.html retrieved on 29.12.2009

ix) **Muslim cleaning woman called ‘security threat’ in Italy** – Alessandro Savoi, the Northern League’s leader on the Trento provincial council was quoted as saying on January 8, 2010 that a Muslim cleaning woman employed in a provincial government office was a security threat and had be sacked. The Italian daily *La Repubblica* reported that this official linked to this anti-immigrant political party made the demand in a letter to the council's chairman, Giovanni Kessler. The letter was quoted as saying: “Get these Islamists out of our offices. There is sensitive information on our desks and they can put their hands on anything.” He called on Kessler to change the company contracted to clean the offices to one that did not employ Muslims, but Kessler ruled out any discrimination in hiring staff.

In: <http://www.canada.com/news/world/Muslim+cleaning+woman+called+security+threat+Italy+Report/2419908/story.html> retrieved on 11.01.2010

x) **German doctor refuses to treat teen named Jihad** – The *Deutsche Presse-Agentur* (in German), citing a local magazine, reported that an orthodontist in southern Germany has refused to treat a 16-year-old whose first name is Jihad, which is Arabic for holy struggle or holy war, because she took offense at his name. The name, popular among Muslims worldwide and even used by some Christians in the Middle East, has become controversial because militant groups often incorporate it into their names and use it as a rally cry. In retrospect, the doctor said she regretted her decision. She was quoted as saying: “He can’t help it if his parents named him so.”

In: <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/babylonbeyond/2010/02/muslim-world-german-doctor-refuses-to-treat-kid-named-jihad.html> retrieved on 07.02.2010

Related: The **discriminatory treatment that Cihad Celik faced, also affected his elder sister Nisa Celik.** Nisa Celik was following a vocational training in bakery, and was at an internship (apprenticeship) programme in the bakery section of a supermarket. Nisa Celik encountered questions by the customers about the incident regarding her brother Cihad Celik and this situation caused unease on the part of the Supermarket management. As a result her internship programme was terminated by the management of the Supermarket.

xi) **US: Muslim Ethnic Cleansing Victims Called ‘Dogs’** – The Rev. Anton Kcira, pastor of St. Paul Albanian Catholic Church (Detroit), was seen in a 2007 videotape making offensive remarks in Albanian about people killed during the reign of former Serbian and Yugoslavian President Slobodan Milosevic, who was accused of genocide of Bosnian Muslims and Albanians in Kosovo. The videotape was recently released by an unidentified person who shot it at an event in Metro Detroit in 2007 attended by Albanian-Americans. In the video, Kcira says, with English subtitles, “Milosevic should have done to the 1,900,000 dogs in Kosovo what he did to the 260,000 dogs in Srebrenica.” Local Muslim activists said the remarks were references to crimes against the Muslim population of Bosnia and the majority Muslim population of Kosovo. Kcira was recorded shortly after the arrests of three ethnic Albanian men who were charged with and later convicted in a plot to attack the military base in Fort Dix, N.J. In the tape Kcira appears frustrated that the three men have betrayed the United States by planning a terrorist attack on a U.S. military base.

In: <http://detnews.com/article/20100313/METRO02/3130323/With-video--Catholic-priest-called-ethnic-war-victims--dogs-> retrieved on 14.03.2010

xii) **Ann Coulter causes firestorm in Canada by telling Muslim to ‘take a camel’ as alternative to flying** – Firebrand conservative Ann Coulter’s lecture at a Canadian college was cancelled Tuesday (March 23, 2010) night over fears students would riot over racist remarks she made to Muslims. Security at the University of Ottawa scrapped the right-wing darling’s talk when more than 2,000 students showed up to protest her telling a Muslim student Monday (Mar 22) to “take a camel” as an alternative to flying.

Coulter’s tasteless comment came after previously she told a gathering that Muslims shouldn’t be allowed on airplanes and should take “flying carpets”. The camel quip came when Muslim student Fatima Al-Dhaher challenged Coulter on the remark - and told her she didn’t have a flying carpet. “What mode of transportation?” Coulter responded. “Take a camel.” Students jeered Coulter’s remarks, and showed up in mass Tuesday (Mar 23) night let her know she was not welcome at the school. Coulter tried to explain away her comments Tuesday as “satire”. She told a Canadian TV news channel: “I can say it a lot quicker with a joke, and by the way, they wouldn’t be bringing me in here for a speech if I never told a joke, if I never used satire.”

In: <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/2010/03/24/2010-03-24-ann-coulter-causes-firestorm-by-telling-muslim-to-take-a-camel-as-alternative-to.html#ixzz0jAi2QtNT> retrieved on 25.03.2010

Last update: April 1st, 2010

B: ACTIVITIES OF THE OIC GENERAL SECRETARIAT

The OIC General Secretariat was involved in various activities to effectively raise awareness of the adverse implications of Islamophobia on global peace and take the dialogue among civilizations forward. To this end, in addition to visits to some Western countries, the OIC Secretary General as well as the General Secretariat convened, co-sponsored or attended a number of international conferences and workshops. An account of the major events is given below:

1. On Islamophobia

As mentioned in the introduction, Islamophobia continues to be a major challenge to the Ummah. I would like to report to you that the OIC Islamophobia Observatory since its inception, has been closely monitoring Islamophobic acts and these are reflected in the monthly reports posted in the OIC website. Our actions were not limited to just issuing statements⁵⁶ but were followed up with diplomatic demarches and bilateral meetings with the government leaders of European countries and other actors.

Our strategy in containing Islamophobia was: (i) to raise global awareness of the basic tenets of moderation and modernization in Islam; (ii) to sensitize the international community on the dangerous implications of the phenomenon of Islamophobia on the entire global community irrespective of religion, culture or state; (iii) to issue rejoinders and rebuttals on Islamophobic publications; and (iv) to condemn Islamophobic acts calling on the governments and authorities to take appropriate actions.

To implement this strategy effectively we took upon ourselves to engage with Western governments and institutions where Islamophobia is most visible and rampant.

During the period under review some major Islamophobic incidents took place. The Observatory followed them and took necessary actions thereupon. The followings are of major significance:

a) Swiss Anti-Minaret Referendum:

On November 29, 2009 Swiss people in a national referendum voted in favour of banning the construction of minarets in the Mosques in its territory. The OIC was the first international organization to denounce the outcome of the referendum. Letters were sent by the OIC General Secretariat to the OIC Groups in New York and Geneva. The OIC Secretary General addressed letters to the Secretaries General of the League of the Arab States and the Gulf Cooperation Council on December 9, 2009, in order to seek their support in reaching a common position while dealing with this sensitive and important matter.

Upon the request of Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations-Geneva, the OIC Group convened a special meeting on December 10, 2009 for hearing the Swiss Government's explanations on the subject. Following the explanations, representatives of the OIC Member States unanimously condemned the Islamophobic result of the voting and expressed their disappointments with the willingness of the Swiss Government for allowing the process of voting to take place while they could have legally stopped it on grounds of being illegal. In this context, they reminded the Swiss representative that the right wing extremist parties (Swiss Peoples party and Federal Democratic Union) during their campaigns illegally

⁵⁶ Available in the OIC's website: www.oic-oci.org

used several intimidating threats to convince the Swiss population to vote in favor of the initiative. In response, the representative of Swiss Government restated that they were also disappointed with the result of the voting which was a “defeat for the Swiss Government” as well.

The OIC Secretary General followed this up with a meeting with the Swiss Foreign Minister in Geneva during his visit to attend the *High Level Segment of the 13th Session of the Human Rights Council*, on March 3rd, 2010, where he reiterated OIC’s strong sentiments on the ban.

The OIC General Secretariat called for a meeting of the Permanent Representatives of the OIC in Jeddah on January 31, 2010. On its Final Declaration⁵⁷, the meeting underscored the racial character of the ban and strongly urged the Swiss Government to do the needful to reverse the decision. The OIC Groups in Geneva and New York have also issued statements of condemnation. The General Secretariat will remain seized with the matter by continuing to voice its concerns with the Swiss Government bilaterally, as well as in international forums.

The OIC was following the issue since its inception in November 2007 after the campaign was launched by a Swiss Parliamentarian to draft a law banning minarets in Switzerland. The General Secretariat noted with concern, and made a demarche to the Swiss Embassy in Riyadh requesting an explanation. In response, the Swiss Ambassador in Riyadh visited the General Secretariat on January 5, 2008 to explain the Swiss Government’s position. The Swiss Ambassador stated that four out of the seven members of the Federal Government, as well as a significant number of parties, associations and groups have criticized the initiative. He added that the Swiss Government was against such motives and would remain seized with the issue and would keep the OIC informed accordingly.

The Secretary General met the Swiss Foreign Minister Mrs. Micheline Calmy-Rey, upon her request, on 15th January 2008 in Madrid on the sidelines of the Alliance of Civilizations Annual Forum. The Secretary General conveyed the OIC’s concerns with regard to the initiative to ban building of minarets. The Swiss Minister confirmed that the Swiss Federal Government was not supporting the initiative. She explained that according to the unique system of the country, the issue would have to go to the public debate and be dealt with openly in the society. She conveyed the desire of the Swiss Government to maintain contacts with the OIC.

The issue merited a further meeting between the OIC Secretary General and Mrs. Micheline Calmy-Rey, Swiss Foreign Minister, which was held on the sidelines of the Second Alliance of Civilizations Forum in Istanbul on April 06, 2008. The Swiss Foreign Minister said that the initiative triggered a positive debate within Swiss society, and therefore, the Swiss people would have the opportunity to publicly show whether they followed the fear campaign or they were for understanding and accommodation. For her, the direction that the debate was taking indicated that there was a good chance of people voting NO in the referendum day, considering that even the media is not supportive of such a move.

Letters were written to the OIC Groups in New York and Geneva requesting the OIC Ambassadors to keep the Headquarters informed of all the developments, and to sensitize the Muslim groups in Switzerland.

⁵⁷ Full copy available as Annex C.

b) The Murder of Marwa el-Sherbini in Germany:

The murder of Marwa El-Sherbini on July 1st, 2009 perpetrated in a German courtroom, while the victim was testifying on discriminatory behaviour that she had previously been subjected to by the aggressor, sparked sentiments and protests in the Muslim world. The criminal act became even more significant in the light of the emerging trend of the increasing influence assumed by the far right in parts of Europe.

The OIC Islamophobia Observatory had been following the event and its aftermath with concern. It issued a press release condemning the crime and stated that the incident "...only underscores the importance of addressing the threat posed by the worrying trend of Islamophobia, as a contemporary form of racism, through sustained and constructive engagement based on the vision of a 'historical reconciliation' advocated by the OIC Secretary General". It added that it would be of particular importance for the political leadership in the West to pave the way by making positive statements and contributions.

c) On Cartoons of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH):

On August 13, 2009, the OIC Islamophobia Observatory issued a statement expressing concern over reports of an exhibition of blasphemous cartoon of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by caricaturist Kurt Westergaard at the Galleri Draupner in Skanderborg, Denmark, beginning on August 29, 2010. It urged the authorities of "Galleri Draupner" to show their responsibility and good judgment by removing the controversial cartoon from the exhibition.

At the beginning of the new year of 2010, the Danish caricaturist that had drawn the most provocative caricature of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in 2005 was attacked at his residence. On January 8, 2010, as a reaction to that attempted murder of the Danish caricaturist, a Norwegian newspaper, *Aftenposten*, reprinted six caricatures that have sparked protests in the Muslim world. The Observatory issued a press release condemning the reprint of the blasphemous caricatures of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Similarly, on March 11, 2010 a spokesman of the OIC Islamophobia Observatory condemned the reprint of the controversial drawing of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by Swedish artist Lars Vilks in three Swedish newspapers, namely *Dagens Nyheter*, *Expressen*, and *Sydsvenska Dagbladet*, and electronic media including radio and television broadcasts as reaction to an alleged plot to murder the cartoonist, which was uncovered in Ireland on March 9, 2010. The OIC Islamophobia Observatory condemned the action on the part of the newspapers, and mentioned that there were other options available for the Nordic media to show their protest instead of resorting to an action that could potentially open a raw wound and incite avoidable unrest. The spokesman said that the OIC had always spoken against violence including death threats against the originators of the blasphemous cartoons.

d) "Anti-Minaret Conference" in Germany:

On March 27, 2010, a spokesman of the OIC Islamophobia Observatory expressed deep concern on the news report, released by *SPIEGEL ONLINE*, that right wing political parties of a number of European countries was going to hold an "Anti Minaret Conference" at the Horst Palace in the city of Gelsenkirchen in Germany on March 27, 2010. It said that the conference would, inter alia, discuss "...whether a provision in the new Lisbon Treaty allowing for citizens' initiatives [through collecting 1 million signatures] could be used to push through a Europe-wide ban on the construction of minarets".

The spokesman stated that the holding of “Anti-Minaret Conference” vindicated the OIC’s concern of the spill-over effect of the Swiss ban on minarets to other parts of Europe. He added that the action of the right wing political parties would exacerbate the ongoing spread of hatred and intolerance of Islam and Muslims in Europe. The spokesman expressed hope that the concerned Government authorities in Germany and other European countries particularly Spain which is holding the current EU Presidency, as well as the European Commission and the European Parliament, would take into consideration the gravity and seriousness of the issue and take explicit positions and measures against the move undertaken by the right wing parties in accordance with the provisions of national and international laws and covenants, including the European Convention on Human Rights.

e) Other OIC activities related to Islamophobia:

The OIC raised its concerns on Islamophobia with European leaders and officials on several occasions including the French and German Foreign Ministers and the President of the European Parliament. The OIC Secretary General reiterated OIC’s concern in his statement to the 35th UNESCO General Conference in October 2009.

- On May 2009 the OIC Representative attended the preparatory meeting on “Historical Reconciliation”, held at the Centre of Islamic Studies of the Cambridge University. The main objective of this meeting was to discuss Oic Secretary General’s initiative of “Historical Reconciliation” and to help prepare a concept paper on putting this initiative into practice.
- The OIC Secretary General had a meeting with US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, on October 3rd, 2009 in Washington and discussed the issues related the Muslim world and the US.
- The OIC delegation participated in the “Tolerance and Non-Discrimination” and “Freedom of Expression” sessions of the 2009 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) of the OSCE/ODIHR held on 4-7 October 2009 in Warsaw.
- The OIC Secretary General’s Special Envoy, conducted extensive meetings in Vienna with the Secretary General of the OSCE Ambassador Marc Perrin de Brichambaut on 27 October 2009, and with the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the OSCE Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov, who chairs the Permanent Council of the OSCE, on 26 October 2009, in continuation of his consultations with the high officials of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).
- The OIC was represented at the Wilton Park Conference on “At Home in Europe? Muslims in EU Cities”, organized in collaboration with the Open Society Institute, held in London on 7-9 December 2009.
- The OIC General Secretariat participated in the *First Meeting of the Joint Committee between the OIC and the Arab League on Islamophobia*, held on 23-24 December 2009 in Cairo, Egypt.

f) Human Rights Framework:

The OIC General Secretariat was actively involved in monitoring wide ranging developments in the area of Human Rights with particular reference to the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), the Third Committee in New York and the establishment of an OIC Independent Permanent

Commission on Human Rights in accordance with article 15 of the OIC new Charter. The Human Rights framework provides with a concrete basis for engagement with the West on substantive issues of vital concern to the OIC including Islamophobia and its linkages to a variety of Rights including the freedom of religion, freedom of opinion and expression. Accordingly, the Human Rights mechanisms, the Human Rights Council in particular, continued to serve as the most important avenues of OIC's visibility in 2009/2010.

The Durban Review Conference held in Geneva from April 20-24, 2009, to evaluate progress with regard to the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA), adopted at the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban in 2001. The Conference ended with a consensual adoption of an outcome document. Negotiated in an intense and long drawn out process spanning over two years, the document, inter alia, reiterated the DDPA and recognized Islamophobia as a contemporary form of racism- two important issues from the OIC perspective.

The OIC Secretary General led the OIC delegation to the Conference and delivered a comprehensive statement on all issues of relevance to the OIC in the Durban Agenda. The OIC Secretary General's statement as well as the vision of reconciliation and dialogue between the Muslim world and the international community in all spheres including human rights was widely acknowledged at the Conference and the side events. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights made frequent references to the statement during her contacts at the Conference including at a joint press conference with the UN Secretary General. The demonstrated resolve on the part of the OIC to engage all stakeholders in a substantive and meaningful dialogue geared towards seeking an end to the contemporary manifestations of racism including Islamophobia, was widely acknowledged.

The non-existence of an international instrument with respect to defamation of religions and religious beliefs motivated the OIC to table a resolution before the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) and the UN General Assembly in their various sessions. The resolution on combating defamation of religions was designed to take resolute action to prohibit the dissemination of racist and xenophobic ideas and materials aimed at any religion or its followers.

During the year 2009 and 2010, OIC sponsored resolutions on the defamation of religions were successfully voted to adoption at the UNGA as well as the UN Human Rights Council. It however failed to obtain a consensus as most western States that included the EU Member States, the US and Canada voted against the resolution. The OIC Islamophobia Observatory not only monitored developments but also produced analyses of the evolving situations not only with regard to the two resolutions but on the whole range of issues pertaining to the ongoing international discourse on complementary international standards to deal with the various exponents of Islamophobia as a contemporary manifestation of racism.

The OIC's participation at the Human Rights Council Sessions and other meeting including the Regional Consultations at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg afforded opportunities to interact with Human Rights experts, practitioners and mandate holders that were optimally utilized to present the OIC's case and indicate the willingness on the part of the Organization to engage constructively with all stakeholders.

Establishment of an OIC Independent Permanent Commission on Human Rights must be viewed as a landmark in the history of OIC.

A group of intergovernmental experts held a meeting on April 12, 2009 at the OIC General Secretariat's headquarters in Jeddah to consider a document, prepared by the OIC General Secretariat, that laid out an initial vision for the proposed Human Rights Commission to be established within the OIC. Earlier in February 2009, following extensive studies and contacts with relevant international bodies in connection with the endeavor, an advisory panel of human rights experts and practitioners had outlined the conceptual framework for the Commission. The panel's suggestions were presented to the intergovernmental expert group to finalize a draft statute of this new OIC organ in order to be submitted for approval of Foreign Ministers in May 2009 but the same could not be finalized by the Council of Foreign Ministers in Damascus.

Accordingly, the Council of Foreign Ministers in Damascus, having considered the report of the Intergovernmental Experts Group, adopted resolution No. 3/36 requesting the Secretary General to hold additional meetings of intergovernmental experts in order to finalize the draft Statute of the Independent Permanent Commission of Human Rights before the 37th Session of CFM.

The expert group meeting was held on 15-17 February 2010, and conducted a comprehensive overview of the various components of the Commission including a description of its nature, appellation, principles, goals, functions, members, experts, recommendations and quorum in finalizing the statute of a credible Commission. The OIC is, therefore, working in a time bound framework for the Establishment of the Commission as a statutory body under the new Charter. This Commission of independent experts is expected to introduce a paradigm shift within OIC in the way universal human rights and freedoms flow together with Islamic values to offer a coherent and strong promotion and protection system aimed at facilitating the full enjoyment of all human rights in the Member States.

The OIC delegation attended the Lisbon Forum 2009 on "Creating a Culture of Human Rights through Education", held in Lisbon, Portugal on November 13-14, 2009. The meeting was organized by the mission of the European Centre for Global Interdependence and solidarity of the Council of Europe, also known as the North-South Centre (NSC), in cooperation with the Alliance of Civilizations (AoC). The Forum aimed at promoting the creation of a culture of human rights through "quadrilogue" action involving governments, parliamentarians, local and business authorities and civil society.

2. Activities Under Dialogue among Civilizations

The OIC has remained focused on strengthening dialogue among civilizations. The OIC Secretary General interacted personally with Heads of State and Government and Foreign Ministers of Western countries and sent his representatives to various Conferences and workshops on this subject. One of the most practical and positive actions taken by the OIC has been to initiate institutionalized bilateral consultations with western governments to sensitize them to the dangers of Islamophobia and to bring them on board for a developing and effective mechanism to address the issue including a historic reconciliation between Islam and Christianity.

Following are some of the meetings on dialogue that the OIC attended:

- An OIC delegation paid an official visit to Sweden on 14-17 April, 2009 as a means to foster dialogue with the would-be EU Presidency.
- On June 04, 2009, the OIC Secretary General attended the delivery of the "New Beginning" speech by US President, Barack Obama, held in Cairo.

- On June 22-23, 2009 the OIC Secretary General paid an official visit to the United States of America to foster dialogue and understanding and follow-up President's Obama Cairo Speech. He had further discussion with the US Secretary of State when she visited the OIC Headquarters in Jeddah on February 2010. She introduced the newly appointed US President's Special Envoy to the OIC. An announcement by the White House mentioned, "Appointing a special envoy to the OIC is an important part of the president's commitment to engaging Muslims around the world based on mutual respect and mutual interest".
- The OIC delegation also attended the *Third Congress of the Leaders of the World Traditional Religions* (CLWTR) held in Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan, on 1-2 July 2009.
- The OIC Secretary General participated in the usual Ministerial Meeting on the Group of Friends (GoF) held on the sidelines of the 64th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York in September 2009.
- The OIC was represented at *The Fifth ASEM (Asia-Europe) Interfaith Dialogue* meeting held on 23-25 September 2009 in Seoul. The meeting was co-organized by the Republic of Korea and Finland.
- The OIC organized jointly with Azerbaijani government a two-day conference on *Dialogue of Civilizations: A View from Azerbaijan*, held in Baku on November 11-12, 2009. The conference interalia discussed the impact of religion on conflict resolution.
- Within the framework of the celebration of the 2010 as the UN International Year for Rapprochement of Cultures, the OIC General Secretariat held an event on 3 February 2010 in its Headquarters in Jeddah in which the OIC Secretary General and Jorge Sampaio, AoC High Representative delivered lectures to the gathering under the title of *Organization of Islamic Conference and Alliance of Civilizations; Partners on Dialogue*.

3. Activities Under the Alliance of Civilizations

The Turkish and Spanish joint initiative for an Alliance of Civilizations (AoC) in 2005 has gained prominence in the international fora after it came under the UN auspices. Since then the AoC has come a long way with more than 100 countries and International Organizations as member of the Group of Friends.

The OIC Secretary General participated in the First and Second Annual Forums of the Alliance of Civilization, held respectively in Madrid, Spain on January 15-16, 2008 and in Istanbul, Turkey on 6-7 April 2009, and already confirmed participation at the Third Forum to be held in Rio de Janeiro on May 28-29, 2010. In his addresses to both Forums, he spoke in the context of intolerance towards Islam and discrimination against Muslims highlighting the peaceful nature of Islam and its democratic values and principles.

The OIC Secretary General also underscored the role of politicians and urged that they had responsibility not only to their local constituencies but also to the entire community. He reiterated the immediate need for a historical reconciliation, which could be a panacea for addressing intolerance for religious and cultural diversity that is causing unrest and instability in the world.

Events to be mentioned:

- Signing and follow-up of the MoU between the OIC and the UN Alliance of Civilizations at the 2nd AoC Annual Forum in Istanbul in April 2009 was a significant development.
- It is worth mentioning that currently the OIC is implementing with AoC and other partners, including the Council of Europe and Ana Lindh Foundation, the Project “*Restore Trust, Rebuild Bridges*” (RTRB) that was adopted in Istanbul.
- In June 2009, the OIC attended in Lisbon, Portugal, a roundtable to discuss the ways and means to implement the abovementioned project.
- The OIC delegation also participated in the *Third AoC Focal Points Meeting* held in Rabat on November 10-11, 2009.
- The OIC consecutively participated in the *First, Second and Third Preparatory Meetings for Drafting the Mediterranean Strategy on Alliance of Civilizations*, held respectively in Alexandria, Egypt on January 14-15, 2010, in Lisbon, Portugal, on February 19-20, 2010, and in Alexandria, Egypt on April 21, 2010.
- The visit of President Jorge Sampaio, High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations to the OIC General Secretariat on 2-3 February 2010 provided an opportunity to discuss the improvement of relations between the two organizations and other mutually concerned issues.
- The OIC and the AoC agreed and concluded an Action Plan for the next two years. The Action Plan includes several projects and initiatives to be jointly organized.
- Convening of the *1st Meeting of the AoC Focal Points of the OIC Member States*, OIC Headquarters, April 24-25, 2010

C. FINAL COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE MEETING OF THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES OF THE OIC MEMBER STATES TO EXAMINE THE DEVELOPMENTS PERTAINING TO THE SWISS BAN ON MINARETS

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia January 31, 2010

The meeting of the Permanent Representatives of the Member States to the OIC was held in Jeddah on January 31, 2010 to examine the developments pertaining to the ban imposed on the building of minarets in mosques in Switzerland. The meeting made the following recommendations:

1. The meeting expressed its deep concern and disappointment on the ban on the construction of minarets in the mosques in Switzerland imposed as a result of a referendum held on November 29, 2009 and expressed solidarity with the peaceful and law abiding Muslim community in Switzerland.
2. The meeting emphasized that the ban was an act of Islamophobia that was in sharp contradiction to Switzerland's International human rights obligations concerning freedom of expression, conscience and religion, and it found unacceptable and dangerous to put to referendum the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom to worship.
3. The meeting agreed that minarets, as important religious symbols to call Muslims to worship and venerate God, were an integral part and an expression of Muslim identity as well as time honoured cultural, architectural, and civilizational heritage and that the ban restricted the freedom to manifest religion and display Islamic heritage to the outside world.
4. The meeting stressed that the ban could fuel extremism, misunderstanding and misperception leading to polarisation and fragmentation with unintended and unforeseen consequences, particularly in Europe.
5. The meeting welcomed statements and declarations made by Governments, specialized human rights bodies, faith leaders as well as civil society organizations expressing their concerns and highlighting the adverse implications of the ban and calling for mutual understanding, respect of diversity and tolerance.
6. The meeting particularly welcomed the statement made by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights describing the ban as discriminatory, deeply divisive and thoroughly unfortunate step that risked putting Switzerland on a collision course with its human rights obligations. In this regard, the meeting urged the High Commissioner and other relevant mandate holders of the UN Human Rights Council to highlight the Human Rights implications of this ban in their respective reports and work closely with the parties concerned towards an expeditious removal of the ban.
7. The meeting warned against the potentially adverse consequences of some subsequent developments propelled by negative and irresponsible pronouncements by Islamophobes and far right elements, particularly in Europe, and reiterated the OIC's commitment to promoting inter-faith dialogue aimed at arresting such negative trends and forging a world order based on tolerance, respect for diversity and emphasis on promoting common values of different cultures.

8. The meeting expressed full support for the initiative, by the Custodian of the two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Ibn Abdulaziz, on Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue as well as the outcome of the conferences relevant to the initiative and emphasized the development of a practical programme, including clear objectives, to correct misperceptions about Islam and Muslims in the West.
9. The meeting expressed its profound appreciation for the positive efforts and the role played by H.E. the OIC Secretary General in promoting the faith and intercivilizational dialogue through sustained engagement within international political elite as well as important local and international actors and organizations.
10. The meeting commended the General Secretariat's efforts in engaging with the Swiss Government and other relevant actors and organizations, since the emergence of the issue of ban on building minarets, and also the supported OIC Islamophobia Observatory.
11. The meeting urged the Swiss Government and other relevant Swiss authorities to take necessary political and legal steps and adopt positions with a view to ensuring the reversal of the ban in a manner that would safeguard the rights of the Muslim community in Switzerland in accordance with the established principles of the Swiss Federal Constitution as well as the relevant international covenants, in particular the European Convention on Human Rights.
12. The meeting requested the General Secretariat to maintain a close contact with the Swiss Government, local institutions in Switzerland, and other relevant international actors, organizations and institutions towards seeking to reverse the ban on the construction of minarets in Switzerland while averting dangerous implications.
13. The meeting agreed on the importance of urging the Member States in jointly coordinating in raising the matter in the relevant international fora and seeking a resolution in view of its potentially grave implications.
14. The Meeting requested the Ambassadors of the OIC Member States in Berne to sustain a frequency of contacts, collectively as well as bilaterally, with the Swiss Government with a view to voicing their concerns on the ban and seeking its reversal. The meeting thanked the OIC Working Group on Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs and their Coordinators in Geneva and New York for their efforts and requested them to continue to raise and pursue the matter in the relevant international fora, including the Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly, in consonance with the relevant Resolutions of the OIC Summit and the Council of Foreign Ministers.
15. The meeting further requested the OIC Working Group on Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs in Geneva to work closely with the office of UN High Commissioner on Human Rights and other relevant mandate holders in the UN Human Rights Council.
16. The meeting reiterated OIC's concern at the ongoing trend of Islamophobia that formed a contemporary manifestation of racial discrimination, prejudice and xenophobia and urged the Member States for a concerted and result oriented effort with the international community, particularly the political and religious elite, towards evolving an agreed framework aimed at arresting this trend, discouraging particularly the organization of

popular referendums on sensitive subjects, which may harm the convictions and beliefs of religious communities.

17. The meeting commended the consistent efforts of the Secretary General and requested him to continue to monitor developments subsequent to the ban imposed on the building of the minarets in the Mosques in Switzerland and keep the Member States informed.
18. The meeting agreed to remain seized of the matter and consider all the available options that would strengthen joint Islamic action geared towards seeking a reversal of the ban. The Secretary General will submit a report on the subject to the next Council of Foreign Ministers.

At the end, the Meeting expressed its thanks to H.E. Ambassador Majduddin Nashid, Consul General of the Syrian Arab Republic in Jeddah and its Permanent Representative to the Organization of the Islamic Conference for his wise chairmanship of the meeting.

The participants also expressed their appreciation to H. E. Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, the Secretary General of the OIC for his visionary statement delivered at the opening session and for his consistent follow-up of the issue. They also expressed their appreciation to the OIC General Secretariat for the excellent preparations for the meeting.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN SOME RELEVANT REPORTS OF WESTERN INSTITUTIONS

1. EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA)

The EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) report *Data Report Focus 2: Muslims*⁵⁸ carried the following recommendations:

- a) The data from this survey could be used as a basis for developing targeted and evidence-based policy responses. In particular, discrimination in employment and in services must be addressed, and sanctions agreed and applied.
- b) The data also called for the introduction of adequate mechanisms for reporting and recording discrimination and racist crime to enhance evidence-based policy development.
- c) Invest resources to make those who are vulnerable to discrimination aware of where they can turn to for support and advice.
- d) Allocate resources to organizations that are tasked with offering assistance to people who have been discriminated against.
- e) Advise people on where and how to make complaints. Encourage those who have been discriminated against or harassed to report their experiences to a competent authority in the knowledge that their complaints will be taken seriously.
- f) Focus on implementing policies and follow-up mechanism that recognise the finding that ethnicity is the main ground for discrimination against.
- g) Further investigate the link between citizenship and lower discrimination rates.
- h) Assess whether ethnic profiling by law enforcement, immigration, customs and border control effectively increases the identification of criminal activity, or whether it alienates and discriminates against Muslim communities?

2. Open Society Institute

The **Open Society Institute** announced⁵⁹ in March 2010 the publication of a major new report on the level and nature of integration of Muslims in 11 cities across Western Europe. "Muslims in Europe: A Report on 11 EU Cities" is a comparative analysis of research undertaken by the *At Home in Europe Project*, a recently established initiative of the Open Society Institute. The project works to advance and promote sustainable social inclusion of minority and marginalised groups in Western Europe. Through its research and engagement with policymakers and communities, the *At Home in Europe* project is studying issues which explore the political, social, and economic participation of Muslims and other marginalized groups at the local level.

The Report carried the following recommendations:

a) To European Union policymakers:

11.1 Recognize that religion is not a barrier to integration for Muslims

11.2 Improve efforts to address discrimination – The OSI research suggests that religious discrimination against Muslims remains a critical barrier to full and equal participation in the society.

⁵⁸ The Report is available in: http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/EU-MIDIS_MUSLIMS_EN.pdf

⁵⁹ See Open Society Institute Report "Muslims in Europe: A Report on 11 EU Cities", available in: http://www.soros.org/initiatives/home/articles_publications/publications/muslims-europe-20091215, retrieved on March 16, 2010

The findings of the OSI survey, consistent with other researches, suggest religious discrimination directed towards Muslims is widespread and has increased in the past five years.

- a) European policymakers should encourage the adoption of principles of equal treatment to cover discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief in education, housing, transport and the provision of goods and services. These are all areas where the OSI research finds that Muslims continue to face discrimination.
- b) Equality bodies should include promoting good community relations as part of their mandates. The Commission and Council should support European organisations such as Equinet and the Fundamental Rights Agency in championing specific race relations and anti-discrimination work.
- c) Work on challenging racism and discrimination being carried out by the EU and by Member States should include a specific focus on challenging prejudice and stereotypes against Muslims. For measures to tackle prejudice and stereotypes to be effective it is important to ensure public support and commitment to the values underpinning the EU's commitment to equality and non-discrimination. This requires developing effective and alternative instruments alongside legislation in the areas of education, media, culture, arts and sports.

11.4 Address diversity and discrimination in the workplace – Evidence from the OSI research confirms the central role of labour market participation to integration and inclusion. Amongst Muslim respondents, higher levels of employment, (particularly full-time employment) correlate with cultural identification with the country. The workplace is also the space where Muslims are most likely to have meaningful contact with people from a different ethnic and religious group.

11.5 Make education more accessible and responsive to a diverse student body

b) To national and local policymakers:

11.6 Increase awareness of discrimination – Muslims continue to experience racial and religious discrimination. National governments should initiate and support campaigns that raise awareness about anti-discrimination laws. Where necessary they should also ensure legislation covers discrimination in education, housing, and access to goods and services. Awareness-raising must be accompanied by support (including access to legal advice) for those seeking redress against religious discrimination.

11.7 Recognise the benefits and challenges of ethnically mixed neighbourhoods – [there is] a need for a stronger focus on a shared local identity and policies (including urban regeneration) to encourage collective investment and upkeep of local neighbourhoods.

11.8 Recognising Muslim civil-society bodies as legitimate participants in community consultation and engagement – The OSI research finds recognition from local policymakers of Muslim community organisations to be a crucial part of the social fabric in their local areas. Engagement with Muslim civil society must occur while acknowledging the full diversity of Muslim communities and recognising that no single body or organisation can reflect that diversity.

11.9 Consider reform to definitions of nationality and voting rights for non-citizens – Naturalisation should be seen as the goal of settlement (as it is in the USA, Canada and Australia). Where necessary there should be a reform of nationality laws to ensure access to nationality for those who are long-term settled migrants and to those born in the country. At the same time, dual citizenship should be permitted.

11.10 Promote opportunities for interaction – There are evidences that increased interaction between varied ethnic and religious groups can lead to a reduction in prejudice and offer opportunities to decrease segregation. City and district councils can play a facilitating role by examining schools, businesses, and workplaces for opportunities to increase interaction between various ethnic and religious groups within the community.

11.11 Develop and promote inclusive civic identity – There exists some differences in terms of the strong sense of belonging to the local area and city. For Muslims, belonging to the local area is stronger than belonging to the city, while non-Muslims felt a more intense belonging to the city compared to the local area. Municipalities are urged to seek ways to replicate [best practices] and other interesting models outlined in [the OSI] report.

11.12 Engage with communities to ensure awareness of rights – Local policymakers and representatives from Muslim and other minority communities should work together to ensure that public sector agencies and enterprises have staff that reflect the diversity of their city.

*Prepared by:
The OIC Islamophobia Observatory
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