



FOURTH OIC OBSERVATORY REPORT ON ISLAMOPHOBIA

(Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims)

May 2010 to April 2011

Presented to the

38th COUNCIL OF FOREIGN MINISTERS

Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan

June 28 - 30, 2011



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FOREWORD

In the fifth year since its establishment, the OIC Observatory on Islamophobia has brought out its 4th annual report covering a particularly tumultuous period punctuated by some alarming developments. The scourge of Islamophobia continued unabated, despite all efforts to raise awareness of its dangers and the need to contain it. Rather it acquired an expansive dimension with some of the most shocking manifestations of the anti-Islam tirade. Islamophobia is already acute in Europe and in recent time it has unfolded in the US – a nation essentially premised on, and long admired as an exponent of, cultural and religious diversity. The unfortunate and outrageous episode of burning the Holy Quran was one of the most blatant examples of extremism that the international community has been consistent and unanimous in condemning since the 9/11 tragedy. Beyond the confines of electoral politics in the West, some important revelations during the reporting period suggested Islamophobia factoring as a variable in the conduct of international relations. Despite the UN resolutions reflecting international community's loud and clear stance against conflation of any religion with terrorism, the tendency, on the part of media and motivated individuals and groups, of inflicting the psyche of over 1.5 billion Muslims by manipulating the portrayal of 'collective guilt' was unrelenting.

The escalation in Islamophobia is indeed portentous. It accentuates the gravity of the issue and validates the OIC's concerns with regard to adverse implications towards multicultural fabric of societies and peaceful coexistence, underwritten by interfaith harmony, as articulated in preceding reports of the Observatory as well as a host of resolutions and communiqués. Fortunately, a sustained frequency and intensity of Islamophobic incidents in this eventful year did not escape the attention of the international political and religious elite. OIC appreciates the stance taken by many Western leaders against the proponents of religious hatred and discrimination against Muslims.

It was during my address to the 15th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva that I outlined a new approach towards evolving a consensus against incitement to violence and intolerance on religious ground that could plague peaceful coexistence and as such was antithetical to the very notion of a globalized world. I am glad that the eight points in the proposed approach found resonance with all the negotiating partners and formed the basis of the consensus reflected in HRC resolution 16/18. The importance of this resolution as a triumph of multilateralism must not be discounted. It could yield a considerable amount of positive energy. It would now be important to translate this potential energy into the kinetic form by taking action to implement the resolution in letter and spirit.

Islamophobia remains a matter of transcendental priority for the OIC. From a futuristic perspective, events during the period covered by this report clearly establish that combating incitement to hatred and violence on religious grounds must figure into the strategic calculations of the international community. Encouraged by the experience of the Observatory in the General Secretariat, OIC has proposed a similar mechanism at the international level as a first concrete step towards concerted action at both monitoring as well as combating Islamophobia, Christianophobia, Judeophobia and other manifestations intolerance, incitement to violence and discrimination on religious grounds.

Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu
Secretary General

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fourth Annual report of the OIC Islamophobia Observatory covers the period from May 2010 to April 2011. Building on the pattern followed in earlier reports, the current trends of intolerance and discrimination against Muslims have been catalogued and examined. In terms of the overall analysis, the observatory noted a rise in Islamophobic discourse within both the public and political domains. Based on the Observatory's daily monitoring during the reporting period, motivated individuals and groups in the West, including right wing political movements and parties, were taking advantage of peoples ignorance with regard to the true Islamic values and building upon Islam's distorted image, depicted by the media since the tragic events of September 11, in fueling Islamophobia.

An upsurge in Islamophobia, whether emanating from the social sphere or stoked by public figures and institutionalized policies, was witnessed both in Europe and more recently in the United States. The trend manifested itself in various forms, including direct attacks and desecration of Muslim places of worship, cemeteries and other Islamic centres; a growing public perception that Muslims constituted a threat both to the culture and well being of "Western society", and that Islamic religious symbols, particularly the headscarf, should be strictly limited, or even completely banned. A frequency of such events was monitored by various surveys and, in the European case, led the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon and US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, to speak out against the dangers of intolerance and the worrying state of religious freedom in the continent.

The second Chapter of the report deals with various manifestations of Islamophobia in the West. Concerning the US, the OIC Observatory noted several incidents, the most shocking and outrageous being the episode pertaining to the Burning of the Holy Quran that unfolded over the period of nine months from September 2010 to April 2011. In the "Ground Zero Mosque" controversy, a fierce opposition led by right wing parties and politicians serving their own political agenda fomented a false debate in which the legitimacy of building an Islamic centre near to ground zero was publically put into question. The debate was manifestly prejudicial to the image of Muslims by playing on the devious logic of "guilt by association" suggesting that Muslims, and by extension Islam, were responsible for ground zero and, therefore, had to be "exiled" from the perimeter.

Other instances of Islamophobia in the US recorded in the report include the agenda of the Tea Party Movement, which openly advocated hatred against Muslims, the proposed "ban on Sharia" which succeeded within the State of Oklahoma, and the congressional hearings on the "radicalization of the American Muslim Community" initiated by Rep. Peter King, Chairman of the US House Committee on Homeland Security. The hearings launched a debate built on prejudiced and biased premises that Muslims were potential terrorists who, in his opinion, ostensibly refused to cooperate with the Nation's "war on terror". Such a debate, regardless of the outcome, would contribute to a climate of fear and distrust towards the Muslim community.

With regard to Islamophobia in Europe, various studies and surveys by recognized institutions revealed a myth that Islam promoted intolerance and that Muslim immigrants posed a threat to European national identity as well as an economic and social burden, was taking roots. Such a myth was exacerbated in many countries where leading politicians initiated an unhealthy debate predicated, in what could become a self-fulfilling prophecy, the utter failure of multiculturalism, i.e. the incapacity of Europe to harmoniously absorb and live along with Muslims. Other individuals who contributed to cultivate the debate against Muslim presence included Danish

editor Fleming Rose, by publishing a book entitled the "*Tyranny of Silence*" and Thilo Sarrazin, a German politician and former member of the Executive Board of the *Deutsche Bundesbank*, who wrote another book titled "*Germany Abolishes Itself*". Both the authors argued that Islam posed a real "national" threat. Geert Wilders announced his intent to present yet another short film on the Prophet Mohammed. Both these trends of the high profile discourse against multiculturalism and the freedom, with which radical views against Islam were allowed to be expressed, rendered intolerance against Muslims socially acceptable and morally and intellectually justifiable.

The Observatory also noted that a key role in promoting and disseminating an Anti- Muslim culture was assumed by Western Media. For instance, studies have highlighted how often terms such as: "terrorism", "terrorist", "extremist", "fanatic", "radical" and "fundamentalist" were associated with Islam and Muslims in general. This was in line with a consistent disinformation campaign using the basic technique of repetition in order to anchor in people's mind, both consciously and subconsciously, the idea that Islam was a threat that all need to stand to against and ultimately eradicate. Another serious prejudice commonly suffered by Muslims was discrimination in employment. Studies and complaints received by competent bodies left no doubt that, statistically speaking, Muslim were discriminated against both in terms of equal access to job opportunity and ill treatment within their work environment.

Chapter 3 of the Report outlines positives developments with regard to combating Islamophobia. Among those were the Resolution by the Council of Europe on "Islam, Islamism and Islamophobia in Europe", which, *inter alia*, denounced the full ban of the nikab in France, urged on distinguishing free speech from hate speech, and called on Switzerland to repeal its ban on minarets. It was also noted that several leaders from German speaking countries spoke in favour of Muslim immigration, and that in the United Kingdom, an All Party Parliamentary Group on Islamophobia was launched in the House of Commons. Other commendable positions were the refusal, by British authorities, to allow Pastor Terry Jones from entering the Country stating that Britain opposed extremism, as well as the rejection, by a US federal agency to confer a trademark to the organization "Stop Islamization of America" on the grounds that it denigrated Muslims. The City Council of Los Angeles pronouncing itself favorable to any legislation aiming at combating Islamophobia and acts of violence against Muslims was also noteworthy.

The Chapter on the Human Rights framework presents a chronology, over the reporting period, on the operational aspect of OIC's engagement on the issue of Islamophobia anchored firmly in international law and placing a premium on seeking consensus while according priority to multilateral diplomacy. In this regard, and in accordance with its relevant mandate, the OIC held an expert meeting in Istanbul aiming, *inter alia*, at identifying the legal foundations of the concept of "defamation of religions" and at assessing the needs and means of evolving the present applicable legal framework.

Following the Istanbul meeting, the OIC Secretary General, Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, in his statement to the 15th Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, laid down an eight point proposal for action to be taken, at both national and international level, with a view to combating religious intolerance. The Secretary General also called for the establishment of an Observatory within the UN system to monitor acts of religious intolerance from around the world. Based on the eight points approach outlined by the Secretary General, the OIC - in a spirit of compromise and determined at consensus building – sponsored a new resolution on "combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons based on their religion or belief" which was adopted by consensus during the 16th Session of the Human Rights Council, in Geneva. The resolution, while

creating a new consensual platform, was quite substantive and provided for a multi- pronged approach calling for various administrative, political and legislative actions to be taken at both national and international levels.

In the fifth chapter, the report describes various steps and actions taken by the OIC, in coordination and cooperation with relevant stakeholders, to combat Islamophobia. Such actions aimed at raising awareness, engaging in vigorous diplomatic efforts to sensitize the international community and addressing critical cases of religious intolerance while responding to Islamophobic acts or publications. Among the events the OIC either sponsored or participated in were: the Roundtable on Islamophobia, held during the 3rd Alliance of Civilizations Global Forum, in Rio de Janeiro; an event on the normative approach to Islamophobia, organized on sideline of the OSCE High Level Conference on Tolerance and Discrimination; a lecture by the OIC Secretary General entitled, "Building Bridges –Intercultural Dialogue, Identities and Migrations", as part of the Geneva Lecture Series, organized by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and a host of other events at various regional and international foras.

The report ends with a set of recommendations, outlining a strategy to combat Islamophobia and growing intolerance and prejudice against Muslims through concerted international action, which merits particular attention.

INTRODUCTION

The Fourth Annual Report of the OIC Islamophobia Observatory covers the period from May 2010 to April 2011. It was the most turbulent period compared to the three previous reports that witnessed a most perturbing increase in the scourge of Islamophobia particularly in the West. The report is based on subject wise analyses of the monitoring conducted by the Observatory on a daily basis during the reporting period contained in different chapters. In essence, the upsurge in Islamophobia during the reporting period was essentially characterized by three significant developments:

- (i). A continuation rather than reversal of trends from the preceding period reflected in events like the ban on construction of mosques and use of Islamophobia as an instrument of electoral politics in the context EU Parliamentary elections;
- (ii) An exacerbation of these trends reflected in events like Islamophobia driven legislative action, high profile statements against multiculturalism and the reprinting of the infamous caricatures observed in Europe; and
- (iii). A new, most disconcerting and expansive element that lend an unprecedented level to Islamophobia - resulting in both violence and condemnatory statements from international political elite - reflected in the outrageous and extremist episode of burning of the Holy Quran in the US as well as some other revelations during the reporting period widely covered by the international media.

Islamophobia has been described as a contemporary form of racism and xenophobia motivated by unfounded fear, mistrust and hatred of Muslims and Islam. Islamophobia is also manifested through intolerance, discrimination, hostility and adverse public discourse. Differentiating from classical racism and xenophobia, Islamophobia is mainly based on stigmatization of a religion and its followers. As such, Islamophobia is an affront to the human rights and dignity of Muslims.

In the present Fourth Report, the Observatory has collated and catalogued various incidents of hatred and racial discrimination against Muslims falling within the purview of Islamophobia. The report has largely drawn on the reports, data & information available in the public domain that substantiate the Observatory's finding of Islamophobia gradually taking an institutionalized entrenchment particularly in Western societies. Highlighted in the report is the frustration that the phenomenon of Islamophobia - acknowledged as a threat to global peace and security - continued unabated. A set of recommendations in the concluding part, while endorsing those made in the previous editions, constitute a substantive contribution from a strategic standpoint and geared towards addressing the phenomenon of Islamophobia, in the current scenario.

The Observatory is particularly concerned that Islamophobia has not only exacerbated but is gradually permeating the grass-root levels of western societies causing the ordinary people to subscribe to a distorted view of Islam leading to suspicion and varying degrees of discriminatory treatment directed towards Muslim minorities, particularly in the Western societies. This concern primarily expressed following the results of the Swiss referendum continued to be substantiated by reports of the rising popularity of rightwing politicians in Europe, and more recently in the USA, in the wake of an ascendant capitalization of anti Islam and anti-Muslim themes into electoral gains.

The induced perception of Muslims of being “a threat” to the Western civilization not only lead some European Governments to impose restrictions and ban on Muslim cultural traits but also inspired statements against multiculturalism by prominent European Union (EU) leaders including some Heads of State and Government. These developments served as an impetus to Islamophobia in parts of Europe leading to increase in attacks on Mosques and general hostility towards both the indigenous and immigrant Muslim population in Europe. As mentioned in earlier reports of the Observatory, misperceptions including Islam seen as a monolithic bloc, static and unresponsive to change; lack of commonality of values particularly with those in the West; the portrayal of being inferior, barbaric, irrational and somewhat primitive in comparison with the Western civilization; and the false projection of Islam as a political ideology out to invade the Western politics and the way of life continue to fan the flames of Islamophobia.

The United States of America – a country long admired for its embracement of diversity – recorded the highest intensity of hostility and prejudice towards Muslims during the period under review. The infamous “Burn A Quran Day” by a hitherto non-entity Florida Pastor Terry Jones and his subsequent actions at hate mongering, the Congressional hearings by the Chairman of the US House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security on the “radicalization of American Muslims” in Washington DC on March 11, 2011 and his statement that “We (the US) are under siege by Muslim terrorists”¹ along with other anti Muslim events, were ominous signs of Islamophobia taking roots in the USA. The fact that such incidents cast a shadow on the US image of tolerance frustrating the optimism generated, throughout the Muslim world, by President Obama’s speech in Cairo in June 2009, may not be discounted.

Intolerance of religious diversity and acts of incitement reflected in hate speech, provocative publications and discriminations targeting a particular faith were too frequent to escape attention of important European institutions and stakeholders. The Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly in its 2010 report, inter-alia, noted that, “in many Council of Europe member states, Muslims feel socially excluded, stigmatized and discriminated against; they become victim of stereotypes, social marginalization and political extremism because of their different religious and cultural traditions. At the same time, Islam radicalism and manipulation of religious beliefs for political reasons oppose human rights and democratic values. Both phenomena in fact reinforce each other. The Assembly is deeply concerned about Islam extremism as well as about extremism against Muslim communities in Europe”².

The OIC Secretary General, Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, upheld the OIC’s deep concern that despite some goodwill gestures emanating from Western political leaders and opinion makers, Islamophobia was far from being resolved. He strongly and consistently emphasized the need to take more effective measures at the political level. He proposed that the issue of Islamophobia be included in the agenda of official bilateral meetings of the OIC Member States with Western countries, highlighting Muslim world’s vital concern on the issue

The OIC has been frequently advocating that Islam formed an integral and indispensable part of Abrahamic faiths accordingly establishing that the commonalities outweighed the differences. The OIC Member States adhered to the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other UN conventions such as the ICCPR that underpinned its commitment to Human Rights,

¹ See *Politico*’s entry “Incoming House Homeland Security Chair Plans Hearings on Muslim Radicalization” in: <http://politics.blogs.foxnews.com/2010/12/20/incoming-house-homeland-security-chair-plans-hearings-muslim-radicalization>, retrieved on 22 December 2010

² Cf: <http://assembly.coe.int/Mainf.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta10/ERES1743.htm> accessed on 28 June 2010.

and other basic freedoms including the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression. The OIC at the same time had been underscoring the urgency and importance of defining limits to this freedom in the light of article 19(3) and article 20 of the ICCPR with a view to combating incitement to violence or hatred not only against Islam but all faiths. The OIC position that commitment to freedom of expression could not and must not form a pretext or a license to incite religious hatred and intolerance was vindicated with particular reference to the extremist act of burning the Holy and the ensuing violence.

The above notwithstanding, the Observatory would not like to undermine the sincerity shown by some Western political leaders to disassociate their Government's position from the perpetrators of Islamophobia. The OIC's initiative with the US and European Governments in drafting UN Human Rights Council Resolution 16/18 and its unanimous adoption on March 21, 2011, broke the myth that a meeting of minds on the issue of intolerance was not possible. It was indeed a triumph of sustained, structured and serious engagement that the OIC had long been advocating and promoting. The Observatory considered public statements of some western leaders as being both positive and constructive. Former British Foreign Secretary David Milliband's analysis in his article³ in *The International Herald Tribune* of November 2010 underscoring the need for cooperation and dialogue to address religious intolerance was a case in point in line with the OIC position to develop a culture of tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

US Secretary of State Hilary Rodham Clinton's remarks at the Council of Foreign Relations deploring the plan to burn the holy Quran as "outrageous", and "aberrational" and "that it did not represent America" were constructive and widely appreciated. The statements from the Dutch government disassociating from Geert Wilders and the Danish Foreign Minister's interaction with the OIC Secretary General expressing Government's disapproval of the reprint of the caricatures in a Book entitled "The Tyranny of Silence" indicated that the OIC's concerns found resonance and the acts of Islamophobia were taken seriously and not condoned by Governments. The participants at the Islamophobia Roundtable held on the sidelines of the Third Forum of the UN Alliance of Civilization held in Rio de Janeiro in 2010 also shared the concerns of the Muslims on the rise of Islamophobia and the urgent need to combat it. These positive and constructive remarks regrettably did not deter the perpetrators of hatred and animosity against Islam and Muslims.

The OIC believed in sustaining and building on the same spirit while implementing consensually evolved initiatives – like the HRC resolution 16/18 – with a view to effectively addressing Islamophobia, Christianophobia, Judeophobia and other exponents of incitement to hatred and violence on religious grounds that continue to threaten multicultural fabric of societies jeopardizing efforts at global peace, security and stability underwritten by interfaith harmony.

³ A version of this op-ed appeared in print on November 6, 2010, in *The International Herald Tribune*, available online in: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/06/opinion/06iht-edmilliband.html> accessed on 10 November 2010

1: ISLAMOPHOBIA, INTOLERANCE AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MUSLIMS

The Observatory noted that the period under review was characterized not only by continuation but exacerbation of Islamophobia manifested in a systematic and consistent pattern of intolerance, discrimination and marginalization directed against Islam and Muslims in different parts of the world- the West in particular. The two most disconcerting element were the emergence of new theaters as well as the evidence suggesting continuation of instrumentalization of Islamophobia for political mileage at the regional and even the global levels. This 'new face of Islamophobia' is indeed ominous and could yield significantly adverse implication in the light of the argument that "when political and public figures use xenophobic and racist images and language, the impact is far-reaching, such actions foster similar sentiments on the part of the public by perpetuating misconceptions and stereotypes about the communities being targeted. They can also influence support for policies and practices that harm colored people and immigrants. In addition, they can contribute to feelings of marginalization and alienation by minority communities as well as hamper political and civic participation."⁴

The trend is evidently manifest in the increasing popularity and electoral gains for the far-right political movements or political parties in many parts of the West that caused leaning on the part of even the seasoned and sober political actors and factions to far-right agenda for political gains. The subsequent emergence of a competitive atmosphere is worrying with, "Populist politicians constantly talk[ing] about Islam, declaring that 'they', which is to say Muslims, do not share 'our' values, do not appreciate 'our' culture and have a religious obligation to conquer the West."⁵ As pointed out by Cherif Bassiouni, the resulting situation stokes the flame of Islamophobia in the post 9/11 world most significantly in terms of feeding the "...notion of guilt by association or collective guilt. Their assumption is that if 19 Muslims committed the 9/11 crimes, then all Muslims are tainted by it because they share the same faith as the criminals"⁶.

In fact, this notion of "guilt by association or collective guilt" is also used, mostly in USA, by Muslim-bashers for fund raising by spreading fear. For example, a nonprofit charity called *Investigative Project on Terrorism Foundation*, "...which solicits money by telling donors they are in imminent danger from Muslims...collected [3,390,000 dollars] in 2008 for researching alleged ties between American Muslims and overseas terrorism... The President of this organization is a leading member of a multimillion-dollar industry of self-proclaimed experts who spread hate toward Muslims in books and movies, on websites and through speaking appearances. Leaders of the so-called "anti-jihad" movement portray themselves as patriots, defending America against radical Islam. And they've found an eager audience in ultra-conservative Christians and mosque opponents..."⁷

⁴ See SAALT (South Asian in American Living Together), *From Macacas To Turban Toppers: The Rise In Xenophobic And Racist Rhetoric In American Political Discourse*, October 2010, p.1

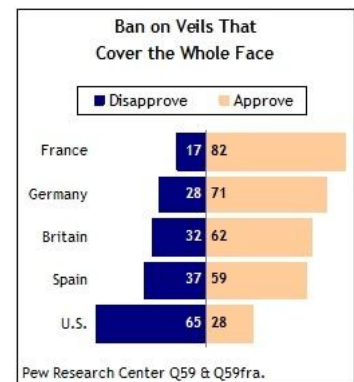
⁵ See Hendrik M. Vroom (2010), *Dialogue with Islam: Facing the Challenge of Muslim Integration in France, Netherlands, Germany*, Centre for European Studies, p.10, available online at: [http://www.thinkingeurope.eu/images/dbimages/docs/CESDialoguewithIslam\(Web\).pdf](http://www.thinkingeurope.eu/images/dbimages/docs/CESDialoguewithIslam(Web).pdf) retrieved on 23 February 2011

⁶ M. Cherif Bassiouni, *Islamophobia and the New York Mosque Controversy*, available in: <http://www.groverreport.org/2010/09/27/islamophobia-and-the-new-york-mosque-controversy/> accessed on 28 September 2010

⁷ See *The Tennessean's* entry "Anti-Muslim crusaders make millions spreading fear", In: <http://www.tennessean.com/article/20101024/NEWS01/10240374> retrieved on 31 October 2010

The release of US diplomatic cables by *Wikileaks* was another noteworthy event. An Islamophobic trend in the international politics was reviewed and argued by some commentators as being subliminal in the content and would not be easy to be discounted henceforth in the strategic calculations.

In Europe, Islamophobia was observed to be ascendant by the day with the presence of Muslims being perceived and portrayed as a threat; Islamic religious symbols such as mosques or cemeteries defaced; and even the attires attributed to Muslims - like the veil - banned in France, and other European countries. A survey by the *Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project*⁸, conducted April 7 to May 8, 2010, found that the French public overwhelmingly endorsed this measure; 82% approved the ban on Muslim women wearing full veils in public, including schools, hospitals and government offices, while just 17% disapproved. Majorities in Germany (71%), Britain (62%) and Spain (59%) would also support a similar ban in their own countries, as illustrated in the chart herewith.



This unabated increase in Islamophobia in Europe must, inter alia, be viewed in the light of the ascendant political activism and gains by the far-right. This was not only evident from the continued unraveling of an Islamophobic profiteering in the electoral politics - first seen in the European Parliamentary elections as mentioned in the last report of the Observatory- witnessed most conspicuously in the Dutch Parliamentary elections during the reporting period but also witnessed in demonstrations depicting early stages of electoral politics. For instance, the French right-wing *Bloc Identitaire* and the nominally Republican left-wing *Riposte Laïque* organized⁹ a gathering in Paris on 18 December 2010 attended by groups from across Europe to give voice to increasingly pronounced anti-Islam sentiments on the continent. Claiming to represent a wide range of political opinion, from Marxists and feminists to hardcore secularists and right-wing activists, the groups said they would coordinate their fight against what they call the Islamisation of Europe. Anti-Islam groups gained political momentum in several European countries. In Denmark and the Netherlands, the role of political parties with a strong anti-Islam element is crucial in supporting minority governments. And in Sweden, a similar party crossed the electoral threshold in September 2010 for the first time ever.

The UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on 19 October 2010 warned against a "dangerous trend" of intolerance toward Muslim immigrants in the continent. Addressing the European Parliament in Strasbourg, he said: "A dangerous trend is emerging, a new politics of polarization. Some play on people's fears. They accuse immigrants of violating European values. Europe's darkest chapters have been written in language such as this. Today the primary targets are immigrants of the Muslim faith. Europe cannot afford stereotyping that closes minds and breeds hatred, and the world cannot afford a Europe that does this."¹⁰

⁸ See *Islam in Europe Blog's* entry "Europe: Widespread support for burka ban", in: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2010/07/europe-widespread-support-for-burka-ban.html> retrieved on 10.07.2010

⁹ See *The National's* entry "Anti-Muslim groups descend on Paris", in: <http://www.thenational.ae/news/worldwide/europe/anti-muslim-groups-descend-on-paris> retrieved on 21.12.2010

¹⁰ See *Jerusalem Post's* entry "Ban warns against European intolerance of Muslims", in: <http://www.jpost.com/International/Article.aspx?id=192016> retrieved on 20 October 2010

The same was alluded to by the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on 17 November 2010, while presenting the US State Department's report on international religious freedom, she remarked: "Several European countries have placed harsh restrictions on religious expression."¹¹

The Observatory also monitored the continued exploitation of Media as a tool by Islamophobes to propagate the anti-Muslim sentiments during the reporting period. In the American media,

The Islamophobes artfully play on the notion of guilt by association or collective guilt...[Islam] is portrayed as violent, aimed at world domination and can only have peace when Muslims have subjected all others in the world. That is why they seek to impose the Shari'a (Islamic law) in the U.S. and elsewhere. Preposterous as it is, many believe this nonsense because it is shouted by well-known persons, and is frequently repeated by the media. Repetition tends to make the message stick, no matter how strange or misleading it may be. Most responsible media, such as Time Magazine, Newsweek, New York Times, the Christian-Science Monitor, MSNBC, CNN and others have reported on these general distortions as being part of an Islamophobic campaign or trend. But the pervasiveness and extensiveness of the media coverage created a perception that a legitimate controversy exists, even when there is no legitimacy to it.¹²

The scenario was not much different in Europe, as "...the mass media in Europe are concerned with Islam mainly in relation to topics such as radicalization, extremism, alienation, terrorism, ghettoization, poverty, gender inequalities and so on. But it is essential for social scientists to realize that this preoccupation with pressing problems does not give an accurate picture of most Muslims' daily experiences of life in Europe. We should not ignore the problems or the sensational ways in which they are presented in the media; but we need to be more objective and even-handed about Muslim experiences of life in Europe."¹³

Islamophobes continued to target mosques or Islamic centers, which they viewed as symbols of Islamic take over. The same was unfortunately true for cemeteries. Additionally, physical attacks against Muslim individuals continued. Muslims, particularly those in the West, continued to be denied jobs and employment because of their names, appearances or cultural/religious backgrounds, which contributed for their marginalization alienation in the respective polities and societies.

The US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) released a report¹⁴ in September 2010 stating, inter alia, that it had seen a measurable increase in discrimination complaints brought by Muslim workers against their employers by about 11% in 2009, although the "Title VII of the Civil Rights Act has prohibited employers with at least 15 employees from discriminating in employment based on race, color, religion, sex and national origin for almost 50 years." Mary Jo O'Neill, regional attorney of the E.E.O.C.'s Phoenix office told *The New York*

¹¹ See *Asiaone's* entry "Clinton critical of religious freedom in Europe", in: <http://news.asiaone.com/News/AsiaOne%2BNews/World/Story/A1Story20101118-247804.html> retrieved on 19 November 2010

¹² Cf. M. Cherif Bassiouni, *op cit*.

¹³ Cf. James A. Beckford, *Islam and European experiences*, University of Warwick, available in: http://www.ceradicrec.rnrt.tn/attachments/O68_Beckford%20Tunisia%2007.doc retrieved on 23 February 2011

¹⁴ Cf. Lauren Bloom, "Religious Discrimination in the Workplace: The Innovators", *The Street*, in: <http://www.thestreet.com/story/10861112/1/religious-discrimination-in-the-workplace-the-innovators.html> retrieved on 09 September 2010

Times: "There's a level of hatred and animosity that is shocking...I've been doing this for 31 years, and I've never seen such antipathy toward Muslim workers."¹⁵

A study carried out by researchers of Stanford University, Paris I Pantheon - Sorbonne University and University of California-San Diego, published by the Washington-based National Academy of Sciences, showed Muslims in France had a lower chance of being hired than Christians. The study also "...established a clear, albeit uncomfortable, finding [that] Muslims have faced barriers to economic integration in France that are higher than they would have been if everything about them were the same save for their religion."¹⁶

The following chapter sheds more light on the pervasive and diverse nature of Islamophobia and anti- Islamist events, trends and tendencies during the review period, in the West.

2: MANIFESTATIONS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

2.1. Islamophobia in USA

Manifestations of some of the grave acts of Islamophobia and anti- Islamism in the US were the most alarming aspect of the reporting period. Some of the most disconcerting in terms of not just regional but even global implications have been briefly mentioned in the following:

a) The Qur'an Burning:

In July 2010 the Observatory came across reports¹⁷ stating that a **US Church would Start "International Burn a Koran Day"**. It was stated that Pastor Terry Jones and his followers at Dove World Outreach Center, were one of the most outspoken groups against Islam, and they had created the "International Burn a Koran Day" *Facebook* page:

International Burn A Koran Day: On September 11th, 2010 we will burn the Koran on the property of Dove World Outreach Center in Gainesville, FL in remembrance of the fallen victims of 9/11 and to stand against the evil of Islam. Islam is of the devil!

Mission: To bring to awareness to the dangers of Islam and that the Koran is leading people to hell. Eternal fire is the only destination the Koran can lead people to so we want to put the Koran in it's place – the fire!¹⁸

The planned Qur'an desecration event was widely condemned¹⁹ by politicians and religious groups. The OIC Secretary General expressed²⁰ grave concern at the outrageous incident. The reports drew widespread condemnation from the US political and religious leadership including those by President Barack Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Attorney General Eric

¹⁵ Cf. Steven Greenhouse, "Muslims Report Rising Discrimination at Work", in:

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/24/business/24muslim.html?_r=1 retrieved on 25 September 2010

¹⁶ See *Bloomberg's* entry "Study shows that Muslims in France Are Facing Job Discrimination", in:

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-11-22/muslims-in-france-facing-job-discrimination-study-shows.html> retrieved on 23 November 2010

¹⁷ Cf. "US Church Starts International Burn a Koran Day", in: <http://loganswarning.com/2010/07/13/us-church-starts-international-burn-a-koran-day/> retrieved on 14 July 2010

¹⁸ Idem.

¹⁹ For a comprehensive report on the subject, please visit http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2010_Qur'an_burning_controversy

²⁰ See: "OIC Secretary General Expresses Concern on Plans To Burn Holy Quran", In: http://www.oic-oci.org/topic_detail.asp?t_id=4204&x_key=burning retrieved on 09 September 2010

Holder, the US State Department and US Embassies abroad, the US Military Commander in Afghanistan General David Petraeus. The planned action also drew condemnation of the international community including German Chancellor Angela Merkel, UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon and the Vatican.

It was later reported that the pastor gave up his idea because he had already achieved what he wanted: fame and notoriety. However, the seeds of his hateful idea - the worst form of anti-Islamism and religious extremism - had been planted in the minds of other Islamophobes, as demonstrated by related incidents elsewhere in the western societies:

- On 12 September 2010 a burnt Qur'an was found²¹ inside an emptied trash bin that was on the sidewalk outside the Islamic Society of San Francisco.
- In France, police arrested²² a man over an online video showed a man tearing off a page of the Koran, making a paper plane and throwing it onto two glasses representing the World Trade Center. The man then burns the page and urinates onto its ashes. In the footage, the man claims he was soiling the Koran in the "name of freedom".
- In the United Kingdom a man was held²³ in Koran burning inquiry. The man was reported to have stood on a street in Carlisle city centre on 19 January 2011 making pronouncements against Islam in front of a large crowd, and then allegedly set fire to the Qur'an he was holding before discarding it on the floor and hurrying away.

The restraint was short lived and on 20 March 2011 the controversial Florida Pastor Terry Jones oversaw²⁴ the burning of a copy of the Koran, carried out by Pastor Wayne Sapp, in his small church. The incident was presented as a trial of the book in which the Koran was found "guilty" and "executed". The event was open to the public. Fewer than 30 people attended but widespread media coverage attracted by the event somewhat served the nefarious designs and the extremist philosophy behind the outrageous act.

After the unfortunate incident, the OIC Secretary General issued a statement expressing his deep disappointment, and warned against unforeseen and volatile consequences of such outrageous and irresponsible acts that could hurt the deep seated religious sentiments of over 1.5 billion Muslims around the world. He characterized the unfortunate incident as "the worst example of extremism" that the international community had been consistent in condemning.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon strongly condemned²⁵ the act of desecration of the Quran in Florida, stressing that "such actions cannot be condoned by any religion." In a meeting with a

²¹ See: San Francisco Examiner's entry "Burnt Quran found outside Tenderloin mosque", in: <http://www.sfoxaminer.com/local/Burnt-Quran-found-outside-Tenderloin-mosque-103213924.html> retrieved on 18 September 2010

²² See: RFI's entry "French police arrest man over Koran-burning video", In: <http://www.english.rfi.fr/visiting-france/20101004-french-police-arrest-man-over-koran-burning-video> retrieved on 07 October 2010

²³ See: UK Press's entry "Man held in Koran burning inquiry" In: <http://www.google.com/hostednews/ukpress/article/ALeqM5jYzNWY7yqqIRvOIVkhGGIT7iMxFA?docId=N0265201295526804964A&safe=active> retrieved on 22 January 2011

²⁴ See AFP's entry "Koran burnt in Florida church", in: http://en.news.maktoob.com/20090000642332/Koran_burnt_in_Florida_church/Article.htm retrieved on 21 March 2011

²⁵ See Dawn's entry "Ban Ki-moon condemns desecration of Quran", in: <http://www.dawn.com/2011/04/06/ban-ki-moon-condemns-desecration-of-quran.html> retrieved on 07.04.2011

group of ambassadors representing Member States of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) to the United Nations, Ban said: "The recent burning of a copy of the Quran in the United States and similar actions anywhere else contradict the efforts of the United Nations to promote tolerance, intercultural understanding and mutual respect between cultures and religions." The Secretary General termed the despicable act of burning of Islam's Book as unacceptable and supported the UN High Representative of the Alliance of Civilizations, Jorge Sampaio, who had noted that the "desecration of the Qur'an as of any text should be vehemently repudiated."

In a statement on April 2nd, 2011, US President Barrack Obama condemned²⁶ the act stating that "the desecration of any holy text, including Quran, is an act of extreme intolerance and bigotry". The US official position was elaborated by White House spokesman Jay Carney in a press briefing in Washington DC on April 4, 2011 by saying²⁷ that the US "absolutely condemn the burning of the holy text. We think it's un-American and inappropriate." He added the act did not represent American values.

Later, a U.S. jury denied²⁸ a request by Terry Jones to protest at the Islamic Center of North America in Dearborn, in the northern state of Michigan, home to one of the country's largest Muslim communities ruling that such a protest was "likely to breach the peace". The Judge Mark Somers also ordered Jones and another pastor, Wayne Sapp, to stay away from the Islamic center for at least three years.

b) Opposition to Ground Zero Cultural Center and Other Mosques:

Wikipedia reported²⁹ that **Park51**, originally named **Cordoba House**, was a planned 13-story Muslim community center to be located two blocks from the World Trade Center site in Lower Manhattan. The majority of the center was planned to be open to the general public and its proponents held the view that the center would promote interfaith dialogue. It was proposed to contain a Muslim prayer space that was controversially referred to as the "Ground Zero mosque", though numerous commentators noted that it was neither a mosque nor at Ground Zero.

The opposition for the Park51 to be built substantiated the fact that politicians took advantage of the far-right movements' agenda because one of the most vocal oppositionists to the project was Pamela Geller, a blogger with ties with the Tea Party Movement³⁰ and one of the mentors of "Stop Islamization in America" (SIOA), which had been planning to organize protests against Park51 as early as May 2010³¹. However, with 2010 US midterm elections approaching,

²⁶ See *USA Today's* entry "Obama Condemns Quran Burning, Violence in Afghanistan", in: <http://content.usatoday.com/communities/theoval/post/2011/04/obama-condemns-quran-burning-violence-in-afghanistan/1> retrieved on 04 April 2011

²⁷ See *News24's* entry "Qur'an Burning is un-American: US", in: <http://www.news24.com/World/News/Quran-burning-is-un-American-US-20110404> retrieved on 05 April 2011

²⁸ See *VOANews's* entry "US Jury Bars Pastor from Protesting at Islamic Center", in: <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/usa/US-Jury-Bars-Pastor-From-Protesting-at-Islamic-Center-120524394.html> retrieved on 23 April 2011

²⁹ See *Wikipedia's* entry "Park51", available at: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Park51> retrieved on 23 February 2011

³⁰ "The Tea Party movement is a populist, conservative/libertarian, grassroots, political movement in the United States that emerged in 2009 through a series of locally and nationally coordinated protests." As defined in *Wikipedia's* entry "Tea Party Movement", available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tea_Party_movement retrieved on 31 October 2010

³¹ See *Weasel Zippers's* entry "US Government Rejects SIOA Trademark because it 'Implies Islam is Associated With Terrorism'", in: <http://weaselzippers.us/2010/05/17/us-government-rejects-sioa-trademark-because-it-implies-islam-is-associated-with-terrorism/> retrieved on 18.05.2010

American politicians took up the issue making it a divisive political campaign. Following were some of the American politicians who spoke out against the Park51 project, as summarized in *Wikipedia*³²:

...Republicans Senator John McCain (2008 presidential nominee) said that the planned mosque ; "would harm relations, rather than help"); Sarah Palin (2008 vice presidential nominee; posted to microblogging site *Twitter*, "Ground Zero Mosque supporters: doesn't it stab you in the heart, as it does ours throughout the heartland? Peaceful Muslims, pls refudiate" (*sic*));... Senator Johnny Isakson (Georgia); "could be totally insensitive", Senator Olympia Snowe (Maine): "insensitive to the families", Idaho Senators Jim Risch and Mike Crapo: not "proper", Idaho Congressman Mike Simpson: "inappropriate and insensitive", Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty, and North Carolina congressional candidate Ilario Pantano: "It is about ... territorial conquest. This mosque is a Martyr-Marker honoring the terrorists".

Former House Speaker Republican Newt Gingrich said: "It's not about religion, and is clearly an aggressive act that is offensive". Gingrich also decried the proposed Islamic center as a symbol of Muslim "triumphalism", and said that building the mosque near the site of the 9/11 attacks "would be like putting a Nazi sign next to the Holocaust Museum." ...New York Republicans who criticized the plan included former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani: a "desecration"; "Nobody would allow something like that at Pearl Harbor...Let's have some respect for who died there and why they died there.", former NY Governor George Pataki, Congressman Peter King (ranking Republican on the House Homeland Security Committee) characterized the plan as being; "offensive to so many people"...

The OIC Secretary General, in his statement at a Conference on "Islam and Muslims in America", held at the American Islamic College, Chicago – Illinois on 28-30 September 2010, referring³³ to the issue of "Ground Zero Cultural Center", said: "On the unfortunate Ground Zero Islamic Center controversy we considered this as an internal issue and refrained from expressing any view."

Understandably, the debate influenced the American public opinion to mostly be opposed to the proposed Park51. In August 2010 *the economist*³⁴ released a poll where, inter alia, asked Americans the following question:

Mosque-building and its discontents Do you think the Islamic cultural centre and mosque should be built near the World Trade Center site, or not?

	Party ID			
	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind
Should	17.5%	28.0%	1.7%	21.3%
Should not	57.9%	41.0%	88.3%	57.6%
No opinion	24.5%	30.9%	9.9%	21.1%

It was, however, encouraging to note that despite such pressure, the project was given approval by the concerned authorities in New York, and on August 13, 2010, in a speech at the annual White House *Iftar* dinner celebrating the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, President Barack

³² *Wikipedia*, op. cit.

³³ Available in: http://www.oic-oci.org/topic_print.asp?t_id=4361

³⁴ Available at:

http://www.economist.com/blogs/democracyinamerica/2010/08/islamic_cultural_centre_sorta_near_ground_zero
accessed on 22 August 2010

Obama acknowledged the right of Muslims to build the Islamic center³⁵. The New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, one of the strong supporters of the project, backed³⁶ Mr. Obama's statement, adding that it reminded him of George Washington.

Meanwhile, this incident ignited other protests against construction of mosques in USA, which were mostly led by Tea Party Movement. On 07 August 2010 *The New York Times* reported³⁷ on how Tea Party activists were protesting against mosque construction projects across USA:

In Murfreesboro, Tenn., Republican candidates have denounced plans for a large Muslim center proposed near a subdivision, and hundreds of protesters have turned out for a march and a county meeting. In late June [2010], in Temecula, Calif., members of a local **Tea Party group took dogs and picket signs to Friday prayers at a mosque that is seeking to build a new worship center on a vacant lot nearby.**

In Sheboygan, Wis., a few Christian ministers led a noisy fight against a Muslim group that sought permission to open a mosque in a former health food store bought by a Muslim doctor.

At one time, neighbors who did not want mosques in their backyards said their concerns were over traffic, parking and noise — the same reasons they might object to a church or a synagogue. But now the gloves are off.

In all of the recent conflicts, opponents have said their problem is Islam itself. They quote passages from the Koran and argue that even the most Americanized Muslim secretly wants to replace the Constitution with Islamic Shariah law. These local skirmishes make clear that there is now widespread debate about whether the best way to uphold America's democratic values is to allow Muslims the same religious freedom enjoyed by other Americans, or to pull away the welcome mat from a faith seen as a singular threat.

The reasons for opposing or targeting mosques in California, Tennessee, New York, Illinois, Wisconsin, Arizona, Louisiana, Kentucky, Texas, and Florida by hate incidents were challenged by a study mentioned in the same report of *The New York Times* which stated: "A two-year study by a group of academics on American Muslims and terrorism concluded that contemporary mosques are actually a deterrent to the spread of militant Islam and terrorism. The study was conducted by professors with Duke's Sanford School of Public Policy and the University of North Carolina. It disclosed that many mosque leaders had put significant effort into countering extremism by building youth programs, sponsoring antiviolenence forums and scrutinizing teachers and texts."

The aforementioned study could lead to the conclusion that the agenda behind the opposition of building mosques in USA was purely Islamophobic, which was confirmed during the campaign to the US mid-term elections when Judson Phillips, the head of the *Tea Party Nation* group, pointed³⁸ to Rep. Keith Ellison's worship of Islam as reason to vote against him.

³⁵ See *Time's* entry "Obama Backs Mosque Near Ground Zero", In:

<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,2010716,00.html> retrieved on 14 August 2010

³⁶ See *MSNBC's* entry "Obama slammed, praised for backing NYC mosque", In:

http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/38702141/ns/politics-white_house/ retrieved on 15 August 2010

³⁷ See *The New York Times'* entry "Across Nation, Mosque Projects Meet Opposition", in:

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/08/us/08mosque.html?_r=2 retrieved on 09 August 2010, emphasis added.

³⁸ See *New York Daily's* entry "Tea Party official points to Rep. Keith Ellison's worship of Islam as reason to vote against him", in: <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/2010/10/26/2010-10-26>

c) *The Tea Party Movement Role in Fanning Islamophobia:*

The ominous trend of Islamophobia and anti-Islamism being used as an instrument of electoral politics also surfaced in the US as evident from the Tea Party phenomenon during the US midterm elections in 2010. In this regard, Rami El-Amine, an Arab/Muslim activist, writer, and founder and former editor of *Left Turn* magazine, pointed out: "...the Tea Party has been key to fanning the flames of Islamophobia over the past year [2010]... The scary thing about those who identify with the Tea Party, and what distinguishes them from other Islamophobes, is not just their denial of Islam as a religion (and Muslims as humans), but the fact that they're ready, willing, and able to speak out and organize around such blatant racism. Unlike their more mainstream counterparts in the Republican Party, key leaders and candidates of the Tea Party movement have been very open and unapologetic about their Islamophobia. Mark Williams, the leader of the national Tea Party Express, said that Muslims "worship the terrorists' monkey-god." At a rally in October [2010], one of the most prominent Tea Party candidates, Sharron Angle, who narrowly lost to Senate Leader Harry Reid (D-NV), said we're facing a "militant terrorist situation" where Muslims are trying to pass Sharia law in Dearborn, MI and Frankford, TX..."³⁹

The same was supported in a *Special Report* by the Institute for Research & Education on Human Rights (IREHR), which, inter alia, stated: "...alongside racism, anti-Semitism, and nativism, the elements of Islamophobia have found their way into the Tea Party Movement. Tea Party leaders and members have employed anti-Muslim language. With strong Tea Party ties, Pamela Geller stands out in this regard...With leaders like Geller, it is not surprising to find language on a ResistNet Tea Party website that denigrates an entire grouping of people because of their faith. "We are at a point of having to take a stand against all Muslims. There is no good or bad Muslim. There is [sic] only Muslims and they are embedded in our government, military and other offices...What more must we wait for to take back this country of ours..."⁴⁰

d) *The Vote against Sharia Law:*

A campaign to ban the possibility of using Sharia law in some American states constituted another instance of manifestation of Islamophobia in USA during the midterm election. It succeeded in Oklahoma⁴¹ where voters approved a measure that would forbid judges from considering international law or Islamic law when deciding cases. Republican Rex Duncan, the sponsor of the measure, called it a "pre-emptive strike" designed to close the door on activist judges "legislating from the bench or using international law or Sharia law". The debate and the voting confirmed the findings by *Oklahoma Poll*⁴² that a majority of Oklahomans believed that Islam was a violent religion that was far removed from Christianity.

[26 tea party official points to rep keith ellisons worship of islam as reason to vo.html?r=news/politics](http://26-tea-party-official-points-to-rep-keith-ellisons-worship-of-islam-as-reason-to-vote.html?r=news/politics)
retrieved on 28 August 2010, emphasis added

³⁹ See Rami El-Amine, *Islamophobia, the Tea Party, and Endless War*, MR Zine, 06 January 2011

⁴⁰ See the Institute for Research & Education on Human Rights (IREHR)'s Special Report, *Tea Party Nationalism*, USA, Fall 2010, pp. 69-70, available online at: http://naacp.3cdn.net/36b2014e1dddfe3c81_v7m6bls07.pdf
accessed on 19 March 2011

⁴¹ See *Fox News'* entry "Oklahoma Voters Ban Judges from Using Islamic Law", In: <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2010/11/02/oklahoma-voters-ban-judges-using-islamic-law/> retrieved on 03 November 2010

⁴² See *Tulsa World's* entry "Oklahomans view Islam as violent", in: http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/article.aspx?subjectid=298&articleid=20101113_298_0_Amajor758807
retrieved on 14 November 2010

Members of the local Muslim community termed it as an attack on Islam and indicated at filing a lawsuit challenging the measure. The Oklahoma chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-OK) announced⁴³ suit challenging Oklahoma anti-Islam amendment, which prompted a temporary restraining order being issued⁴⁴ on 18 November 2010 by U.S. District Judge Vicki Miles-LaGrange to block the amendment. The judge, on 29 November 2010, issued⁴⁵ an order putting on hold the certification of a ballot measure that forbid state courts from considering or using international laws, as well as Sharia, or Islamic law.

As expected, the Oklahoma's proposed ban on Sharia law gained traction in more American states. The *Stateline*⁴⁶ carried news detailing that *The National Center on State Courts*, a US nonpartisan court research organization, reported that lawmakers in six states — Alaska, Arkansas, Indiana, Nebraska, South Carolina and Wyoming — had introduced legislation that would prevent courts from applying foreign law if it meant American rights guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution were violated. In another development, *The (Nashville) Tennessean*, quoted by *United Press International (UPI)*⁴⁷, reported that some Tennessee legislators wanted to make it a felony, punishable by 15 years in prison, to follow Muslim religious law. Republicans in both chambers introduced a bill in the week of 14 February 2011 that declared Shariah law a threat to the US nation and authorized the state attorney general to investigate complaints of people practicing it.

e) The Congressional Hearing on "Radicalization of the American Muslim community":

On 19 December 2010, Rep. Peter King, the incoming chairman of the US House Committee on Homeland Security, announced⁴⁸ that he would hold hearings on the "radicalization of the American Muslim community". In an op-ed piece in *Newsday*, quoted by *The Wall Street Journal*⁴⁹, Rep. Peter King said such hearings were critical because al-Qaida "is recruiting Muslims living legally in the United States — homegrown terrorists who have managed to stay under the anti-terror radar screen."

Mr. King had been known for his anti-Muslim sentiments. The *Wikipedia's* entry on his name, inter alia, reads:

In 2004, King claimed in an interview with conservative talk radio host Sean Hannity that "no American Muslim leaders are cooperating in the war on terror," and that "80-85 percent of mosques in this country are controlled by Islamic fundamentalists. . . . This is an enemy living amongst us."⁵⁰

⁴³ See: "CAIR Announced Suit Challenging Oklahoma Anti-Islam Amendment" In: <http://www.sys-con.com/node/1598088> retrieved on 06 November 2010

⁴⁴ See "Order blocks Oklahoma constitutional amendment", in: <http://www.ktul.com/Global/story.asp?S=13464038> retrieved on 09 November 2010

⁴⁵ See *CNN's* entry "Judge issues permanent injunction on Oklahoma Sharia law ban", in: <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/US/11/29/oklahoma.sharia.law/> retrieved on 30 November 2010

⁴⁶ See *Stateline's* entry "Oklahoma's ban on Sharia law gains traction in more states" in: <http://www.stateline.org/live/details/story?contentId=546070> retrieved on 30 January 2011

⁴⁷ See *United Press International's* entry "Ban on Muslim law proposed in Tennessee", in: http://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2011/02/23/Ban-on-Muslim-law-proposed-in-Tennessee/UPI-80651298502031/ retrieved on 26 February 2011

⁴⁸ See *The Wall Street Journal's* entry "NY Rep. King: I'll hold hearings on radical Islam", in: <http://online.wsj.com/article/APb39ecf1502744a1e9de2233d4f5fc747.html> retrieved on 21 December 2010

⁴⁹ Idem.

⁵⁰ See: *Wikipedia's* entry "Peter T. King", in: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_T._King accessed on 26 February 2011

In an article By David A. Fahrenthold and Michelle Boorstein published⁵¹ in *Washington Post* on March 9, 2011 categorized King's hearings as having "...opened the door for less-restrained commentary with his own comments about American Muslims and their mosques. There are "too many mosques in the country," he has said, and he has alleged that nearly all of them are run by radical extremists." The article also quoted Akbar Ahmed, a professor at American University, stating: "You can say things about this particular religion which you cannot say about any other religion in the United States of America."

The hearings took place on 10 March 2011 drawing a debate in the American media and Muslim opposition. A survey released on 17 February 2011 by *The Public Religion Research Institute and Religion News Service* (PPRI/RNS)⁵² concluded that Americans had not heard much about upcoming congressional hearings, yet more than half thought it was a good idea, and nearly as many believed Muslims in US had not done enough to fight extremists in their midst.

Peter King faced pressure from Muslim groups, *Amnesty International*, the *Interfaith Alliance* and others to cancel his planned hearings. For instance, Rabbi Arthur Waskow, director of the Philadelphia-based Shalom Center said⁵³: "He is doing precisely what President George Washington promised would not happen: he is sanctioning bigotry and assisting persecution toward the Muslim community." Waskow's progressive activists on 17 February 2011 launched a "Let Freedom Ring; Phone Congressman King" campaign urging the Long Island Republican to focus on the "real gaps in protecting homeland security". In the same day, a coalition of more than 80 religious leaders from Long Island urged King to cancel the hearings and open a dialogue with a variety of participants.

Analyzing the issue, Stephen Prothero, a Boston University religion scholar and a regular *CNN Belief Blog* contributor, wrote⁵⁴:

I have no problem with the U.S. Congress listening to testimony about the "radicalization" of Islam in America...The problem with King's approach is his refusal to listen to testimony about, for example, the "radicalization" of American Christianity. Throughout America's history Christian extremists (in the form of the Ku Klux Klan, for example) have posed a far greater threat to our nation's health than extremists of any other religion.

Only time will tell whether we are living in the midst of a new McCarthyism. I certainly hope we are not. But the proposed hearings are bigoted in design, and should be either canceled or reworked to avoid the appearance that the U.S. Congress - whose members are 90 percent Christian - is using its power, contrary to clear meaning of the establishment clause of the First Amendment, to promote Christianity at the expense of other religions.

⁵¹ See *Washington Post's* entry "Rep. Peter King's Muslim hearings: A key moment in an angry conversation", in: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/03/09/AR2011030902061.html?sid=ST2011031002070> retrieved on 10 March 2011

⁵² See *USA Today's* entry "Poll: Most support House look at radical Islam in USA", in: http://www.usatoday.com/news/religion/2011-02-17-muslim_hearings_16_ST_N.htm?csp=34news retrieved on 19 February 2011

⁵³ See *Blog Beliefnet's* entry "Grassroots Group Pressure King on Muslim Hearings" in: <http://blog.beliefnet.com/news/2011/02/grassroots-group-pressure-king.php> retrieved on 19 February 2011

⁵⁴ See *CNN Belief Blog's* entry: "My Take: Cancel bigoted hearings targeting U.S. Muslims", available in: <http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2011/02/21/my-take-cancel-bigoted-hearings-targeting-u-s-muslims/> retrieved on 22 February 2010

According to *New York Daily News*⁵⁵, the first Muslim member of Congress, Rep. Keith Ellison (D-Minn.) called the hearings “un-American”, invoking the memory of Cadet Mohammed Salman Hamdani, who died trying to rescue people after the Sept. 11 attacks - and was later smeared because of being Muslim. Mr. Ellison said that Hamdani’s life “...should not be defined as a member of an ethnic group or a member of a religion, but as an American who gave everything for his fellow citizens.” The top Democrat on the committee countered that the hearings “will stoke a climate of fear and distrust in the Muslim community.” Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.) said: “I cannot help but wonder how propaganda about this hearing’s focus on the American Muslim community will be used by those who to inspire a new generation of suicide bombers. For law enforcement officials, outreach and cooperation may become more difficult.” The other Democrats on the committee launched even fiercer assaults on King’s probe, with Texas Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee loudly branding the proceedings an “outrage” that sought to “demonize and castigate a whole broad base of human beings”. Rep. Laura Richardson of California, added: “The narrow scope of this hearing is discriminatory and an abuse of power.”

The hearing and the media attention it received are believed to contribute towards increasing anti-Muslims sentiments in the American society.

2.2. Islamophobia in Europe

A study on intolerance and prejudice in Europe titled “Intolerance, Prejudice and Discrimination” was published by the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation, in Germany. The section related to Muslims carried by the *Blog Islam in Europe*⁵⁶, inter alia, reported that “In most of the countries a majority believe Islam to be a religion of intolerance, with agreement just below 50% only in Great Britain and the Netherlands...The scale created from the first three statements clearly illustrates the extent of anti-Muslim attitudes in the studied countries. It is conspicuous that Europeans are largely united in their rejection of Muslims and Islam. The significantly most widespread anti-Muslim attitudes are found in Germany, Hungary, Italy and Poland, closely followed by France, Great Britain and the Netherlands. The extent of anti-Muslim attitudes is least in Portugal. In absolute terms, however, the eight countries differ little in their levels of prejudice towards Muslims.”

Following were some major manifestations of Islamophobia in Europe:

a) *The ‘Tyranny of Silence’:*

The editor of the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*, Fleming Rose, whose 2005 publication of cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad sparked the well known crisis, released⁵⁷ a book on 30 September 2010 that reprinted the cartoons and warned of a “Tyranny of Silence”. Rose said he

⁵⁵ See *New York Daily News*’ entry “Rep. Keith Ellison passionately defends Muslims, lashes out at Rep. Pete King in terror hearings”, in: http://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/2011/03/10/2011-03-10_rep_pete_king_muslim_radicalization_hearings_underway_amid_amid_controversy.html, retrieved on 12 March 2011

⁵⁶ See *Islam in Europe Blog*’s entry “EU: Half of Europeans say Islam is a religion of intolerance”, in: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2011/03/eu-half-of-europeans-say-islam-is.html> retrieved on 15 March 2011

⁵⁷ See *The Telegraph*’s entry “Danish editor reprints Prophet Mohammad cartoons”, in: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/denmark/8033098/Danish-editor-reprints-Prophet-Mohammad-cartoons.html> retrieved on 01 October 2010

did not regret initiating publication of the cartoons in 2005 to begin a debate on freedom of expression in Denmark, where 30% of its people see⁵⁸ Islam as a threat to country.

The OIC Secretary General condemned the publication of the book and expressed his dismay and disappointment at the release of the book despite the fact that he and some other leaders of the Muslim countries had personally addressed letters to the Foreign Minister of Denmark urging the intervention of the Danish government against the publication due to the highly provocative and inciting contents of the book.

In response, Denmark's Foreign Minister on 29 September 2010 met with ambassadors from 17 Muslim countries in a move to avoid tensions prior to the publication of the aforementioned book. Nonetheless, it stopped short of changing the stance rooted in the freedom of expression, as she said⁵⁹: "My key message is that we have freedom of speech in Denmark. Accordingly, anybody has the right to write and print books as long as the content is within the framework of the law. At the same time, I would like to make it very clear that Denmark wants to maintain and strengthen our good and friendly relations to the Muslim world."

b) The Debate against Multiculturalism:

When the German President, Christian Wulff, issued a statement⁶⁰ on October 3rd, 2010 during a speech celebrating two decades of the country's reunification urging his people to recognize Islam and its followers as having a legitimate place in Germany, he did not imagine that he was opening a 'Pandora box' that would inflate anti-Muslim sentiment in his country. It ultimately led to Chancellor Merkel telling⁶¹ an October 2010 gathering of her center-right Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party: "We are a country which at the beginning of the 1960s actually brought [Muslim] guest workers to Germany. Now they live with us and we lied to ourselves for a while, saying that they will not stay and that they will have disappeared again one day. That is not the reality. This multicultural approach -- saying that we simply live side by side and are happy about each other -- *this approach has failed, failed utterly.*"

This exchange of views between the highest German authorities opened the debate on multiculturalism and its failure in Europe. The German case linked to immigration of Muslims in Europe demonstrates how unwelcome they continue to be despite five decades of interface. Sharing Mrs. Merkel's view about the death of multiculturalism was Horst Seehofer, Bavarian state premier of the Christian Social Union, who said Germany did not need any more Turkish or Arabic immigrants because they did not integrate as well as others⁶².

⁵⁸ According to a survey on the attitude of the Danes to Islamophobia conducted by the Centre for Studies in Islamism and Radicalisation (CIR), Department of Political Science, Aarhus University in Denmark, and quoted by *Islam in Europe Blog* in its entry "Denmark: 30% see Islam as a threat to Denmark", in: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2011/01/denmark-30-see-islam-as-threat-to.html> retrieved on 05 January 2011

⁵⁹ See *CNSNews'* entry "Denmark seeks to avoid renewed cartoon uproar", in: <http://cnsnews.com/news/article/75966> retrieved on 30 September 2010

⁶⁰ See *Aljazeera English's* entry "German President: Muslims belong here", in: <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/europe/2010/10/20101031868870102.html> retrieved on 04 October 2010

⁶¹ See *The Hudson New York's* Entry "The Beginning of the End of European Multiculturalism", in: <http://www.hudson-ny.org/1612/european-multiculturalism-end> retrieved on 24 October 2010, emphasis added.

⁶² For more details, see *Islam in Europe Blog's* entry "Bavaria (Germany): Governor opposes additional Muslim immigration" in: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2010/10/bavaria-governor-opposes-additional.html> retrieved on 12 October 2010

This led to other important European leaders speaking against multiculturalism. The British Prime Minister, David Cameron on 05 February 2011 - the day the English Defense League was staging a huge protest against Islam in United Kingdom - pronounced his country's long-standing policy of multiculturalism a failure, calling for better integration of young Muslims to combat home-grown extremism.

Joining the debate, French President Nicolas Sarkozy in a televised interview⁶³ (10 February 2011) when asked "Is multiculturalism a failure in France?", replied: "My answer is clearly yes, it is a failure." He added: "We have been too concerned about the identity of the person who was arriving and not enough about the identity of the country that was receiving him."

Jose Maria Aznar, the Ex-Prime Minister of Spain also declared⁶⁴ multiculturalism a failure in Spain, contending it divided and debilitated Western societies. Another European leader to criticize multiculturalism was the Dutch Christian Democrat leader and Deputy Prime Minister Maxime Verhagen, who on 14 February 2011 asserted⁶⁵ that the multicultural society had failed.

It needs to be appreciated that the issue is more social than religious. As Pierre Deschamps, an American columnist pointed out: "...If young Muslims in England [or in other European countries] are turning to violence, it is not Islam's fault, but because they feel increasingly hemmed in. There is no chance for them to move up in the world...*Instead of taking the easy route and announcing the failure of multicultural policies, Europe's leaders need to find a repairman for their broken social ladder.*"⁶⁶

c) Anti-Muslim Sentiments in Parts of Europe:

The 'racialization' of Muslim minority aggravated to form a source of concern – in particular pockets of Europe - during the review period. According to a poll conducted by French pollster *IFOP* in December 2010 and published 04 January by French newspaper *Le Monde*⁶⁷, 4 in 10 French and German people saw Muslims living in their country as a "threat". 42% of French people and 40% of Germans said they considered the presence of a Muslim community in their country "a threat" to their national identity. The poll also found that 68% in France and 75% in Germany considered Muslims "not well integrated in society". Out of these, 61% of French and 67% of Germans blamed this perceived failure on "refusal" by Muslims to integrate.

The debate over the presence of Muslims in Germany was actually initiated by Thilo Sarrazin, a long-time member of the center-left Social Democratic Party (SPD). In August 2010, he published a controversial book, titled *Germany Abolishes Itself*, arguing that "Germany's Muslim population

⁶³ See *Expatica's* entry "French President: Multiculturalism has failed", in:

http://www.expatica.com/fr/news/local_news/multiculturalism-has-failed-says-french-president_129221.html retrieved on 15 February 2011

⁶⁴ Cf. "Multiculturalism 'a big failure' : Spain's ex-prime minister Aznar", in: <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1726950/posts> accessed on 20 February 2011

⁶⁵ See *Dutch News'* entry "Multiculturalism has failed: Verhagen", in:

http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2011/02/multiculturalism_has_failed_ve.php retrieved on 16 February 2011

⁶⁶ See *Student Life* (Washington University's newspaper)'s entry "Is Multiculturalism a Problem?", in:

<http://www.studlife.com/forum/staff-columnists/2011/02/16/is-multiculturalism-a-problem/> retrieved on 26 February 2011, emphasis added.

⁶⁷ Quoted by *Expatica*, in: http://www.expatica.com/fr/news/local_news/muslims-seen-as-threat-by-4-in-10-french-germans_121091.html retrieved on 05 January 2011

is intellectually inferior and unable or unwilling to learn the language or culture, and mass immigration is destroying the nation.”⁶⁸

As expected, the debate raised the interest of the whole German society inducing a rethinking about the presence of Muslims in their midst. On 30 September 2010, the Allensbach Institute released for the *Financial Times Deutschland* a poll⁶⁹ showing that a majority of Germans believed the country's roughly four million Muslims were an economic burden, while 55% of Germans thought Muslims “cost considerably more socially and financially than they produce economically”.

As part of the far-right gaining ground, a new political party, *Die Freiheit* (The Freedom), opposing political Islam was created⁷⁰ led by Rene Stadtkewitz, who was dropped by his former party for hosting controversial Dutch politician Geert Wilders. The party platform expressed particular concern over Islam, which, it said, “is not just a religion but also a political ideology with its own legal system.” Party founders also declared: “We oppose with all our force the Islamization of our country”. In a recent interview with the Emirati newspaper *The National*⁷¹, Rene Stadtkewitz said he wanted to stop the immigration of Muslims and described Islam as a “totalitarian system” bent on supplanting western liberal values, adding that Muslims were not integrating into German society as well as other immigrants and that authorities should become stricter banning headscarves in school, stopping public funding for teaching the Qur'an to young children and curbing the influence of Islamic organizations.

In this regard, Alexander Häusler, a social scientist and neo-Nazism expert at Düsseldorf's University of Applied Sciences noted⁷²: “The anti-immigration utterings of Sarrazin, backed up by the comments by Merkel and Seehofer, are like a gift to the far right. They have had a door opened to them that has previously been closed, because it is now socially acceptable to say things that before nobody dared to voice.”

The French Senate's passage, in September 2010, of the ban on veil⁷³ – mainly premised on the perception of attribution Muslims - confirmed penetration of anti-Muslim sentiments. In France's constitutional watchdog on 07 October 2010 endorsed⁷⁴ this divisive law forbidding face-covering Islamic veils anywhere in public, which drew criticism, particularly from Human Rights circles, within and outside France. For instance, Pope Benedict XVI in his statement remarked: “As far as the burqa is concerned, I do not see a reason for a general ban. Some

⁶⁸ Cf. <http://www.rense.com/general92/mtu.htm> accessed on 26 February 2011

⁶⁹ See *Islam in Europe Blog's* entry “Germany: Muslims ‘an economic burden’”, in: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2010/09/germany-muslims-economic-burden.html> retrieved on 02 October 2010

⁷⁰ See *Israel National News's* entry “New German Party Opposes Political Islam”, in: <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/news.aspx/140634> retrieved on 15 November 2010

⁷¹ See *The National's* entry “New German anti-Muslim party calls Islam ‘totalitarian’”, in: <http://www.thenational.ae/news/worldwide/europe/new-german-anti-muslim-party-calls-islam-totalitarian> retrieved on 08 August 2011

⁷² See *The Guardian's* entry “German far right emerges from shadows to join Cologne campaign against mosque”, in: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/oct/31/cologne-mosque-german-far-right> retrieved on 31 October 2010

⁷³ Cf. “French Senate passes ban on Burqa”, in: <http://4press.biz/french-senate-passes-ban-on-burqa/1462/> retrieved on 15 September 2010

⁷⁴ Cf. “France's constitutional watchdog endorses veil ban” In: <http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5jBLvcjYI38M5uHzhqIF2IV8WWOywD9INOB100?docId=D9INOB100&safe=active> retrieved on 09 October 2010

women do not wear the burqa entirely voluntarily and it is correct to talk of a violation against that woman. Of course one cannot agree with that. But if they want to wear it voluntarily, I don't know why one must ban them."⁷⁵

The contention on the part of some political analysts that the political position of Mr. Sarkozy defending anti-Muslim laws - such as the aforementioned burqa ban or by asking⁷⁶ what limits should be placed on Islam and its compatibility with the France's secular laws - has to do with his fears of losing 2012 presidential elections strengthens OIC's warnings against the use of Islamophobia as an instrument of electoral politics generating an unhealthy competition pregnant with grave consequences in the regional as well as the global context.⁷⁷

Dutch politician Geert Wilders announced⁷⁸ on April 01, 2011 that he would present a sequel to his short film *Fitna* in 2012. *Fitna 2* would be specifically about the Prophet, and was earlier announced for 2010, but postponed due to the early elections. The article entitled "Mainstreaming Hate"⁷⁹ by Ferry Biederman published in the *Foreign Policy Magazine* in October 2010 gave a lucid description of the hate mongering agenda of Geert Wilders arguing that he was "slowly but surely making Islamophobia an accepted element of political rhetoric in the Netherlands" and had got his eyes on the United States next.

d) Anti-Mosque Game:

The Austrian Freedom Party's website included⁸⁰ a link to an online video game called "*Bye Bye Mosque*", which gave players one minute to place targets in the image of cartoon muezzins calling for prayer over mosque minarets, and then click a "Stop" sign. The link to the controversial game was being used to encourage voters to elect Gerhard Kurzmann, the party's candidate in the region of Styria, in local elections scheduled in September 2010. "Game Over. Styria is now full of minarets and mosques!" the game said at the end of a session, before inviting players to vote for Kurzmann. However, there were no mosques with minarets in Styria. It was later reported⁸¹ that the Austrian Government had banned the online video game.

2.3. Media Islamophobic Discourse and Campaigns

A section of the western media continued to fan Islamophobic attitudes in the West emphasized the need and importance of media literacy towards combating intolerance and discrimination against Islam and Muslims. Appearing on *The View* on 14 October 2011, *Fox News* host Bill O'Reilly declared, "Muslims killed us on 9/11." Then on *Fox & Friends* on the following day, co-

⁷⁵ See *The Sunday Morning Herald's* entry "Pope criticises French burqa ban", in: <http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-world/pope-criticises-french-burqa-ban-20101121-18284.html> retrieved on 21 November 2010

⁷⁶ Cf. "Sarkozy wants law to rein in Islam", in: <http://www.connexionfrance.com/Sarkozy-Islam-multiculturalism-secular-republic-preachers-Le-Pen-LePen-UMP-dabate-12514-view-article.html> retrieved on 19 February 2011

⁷⁷ Cf. "Sarkozy wants law to rein in Islam", op. cit.

⁷⁸ See *NIS News Bulletin's* entry "Wilders to Present *Fitna* Sequel in 2012", in: http://www.nisnews.nl/public/020411_1.htm retrieved on 03 April 2011

⁷⁹ Available online in: http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/10/04/mainstreaming_hate, accessed on 05 October 2010

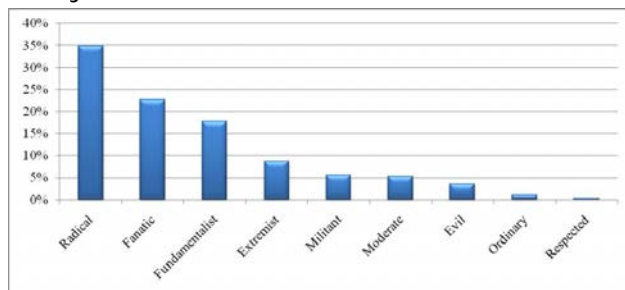
⁸⁰ See *YNetNews's* entry "Anti-mosque game sparks row in Austria", in: <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0.7340.L-3949033.00.html> retrieved on 03 September 2010

⁸¹ Cf. "Islamophobic" Flash Game Banned by Austrian Government, in: <http://beefjack.com/news/islamophobic-flash-game-banned-by-austrian-government/> accessed on 10 September 2010

host Brian Kilmeade said, "Not all Muslims are terrorists, all terrorists are Muslim."⁸² Similarly, a group vowing to fight "Islamofascism" launched a media blitz in Oklahoma supporting a state constitutional amendment that would prohibit the courts from considering Islamic or other international law when ruling on cases in Sooner State courtrooms. The campaign *Act! For America*, founded by Lebanese American journalist Brigitte Gabriel, included a radio ad that began airing 18 October 2010, opinion articles and robo-calls from former CIA director and Tulsa native James Woolsey urging residents to vote for the ballot initiative. The group said the constitutional amendment would prevent the takeover of Oklahoma by Islamic extremists who wanted to undo America from the inside out.⁸³ Another American talk show host, Glenn Beck, said he thought ten percent of all Muslims were terrorists. As *ThinkProgress* pointed out, Beck's estimate would mean that roughly 157 million Muslims in the world were terrorists.⁸⁴

During the launch of *Sun News Network*⁸⁵ on Monday 18 April, 2011, host Ezra Levant showed the cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad (that had sparked anger from Muslims worldwide after they were published in a Danish newspaper in 2005) in the TV station's first hour as part of a segment about freedom of speech on the premiere of his show, *The Source*. Levant, who published the cartoons in his now defunct magazine *The Western Standard* in 2006 expressed the view that other media should not have declined to publish the cartoons. Levant said on the show: "For that sin of showing people the news, we were prosecuted...Free speech is always under attack...I'm 100 per cent convinced this show will be attacked by the government too." The response online was fast. *Sun TV* and Levant himself became trending topics on *Twitter*, with some questioning why Levant chose to air the controversial cartoons. Chris Waddell, director of the school of journalism at Carleton University stated "It's hard to understand why it's important," adding that there was no reason to air the cartoons on television except to appeal to sensationalism because: "What can you say? It's like recycling a very old story."

Kerry Moore, Paul Mason and Justin Lewis, researchers at Cardiff University in UK, presented an



'Overview' in *Images of Islam in the UK: The Representation of British Muslims in the National Print News Media 2000-2008*⁸⁶, where it was showed how the British media was biased towards Islam and its followers. For instance, and shown below charts, they found out that "terrorism", "terrorist", and "extremist" were the most common nouns used in conjunction with

British Muslims. Furthermore, "radical", "fanatic", and "fundamentalist" were most common adjectives in conjunction with British Muslims, with very few positive nouns (such as 'scholar').

⁸² Cf: Fox's entry "Hosts: All Terrorists Are Muslims Who, Typically, "Killed Us On 9/11", in: http://gothamist.com/2010/10/15/fox_hosts_all_terrorists_are_muslim.php retrieved on 16.10.2010

⁸³ See: Fox News's entry "Group Launches Media Blitz in Oklahoma for Anti-Shariah Ballot Initiative", in: <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2010/10/20/anti-islamic-group-launches-media-blitz-oklahoma-anti-shariah-ballot-initiative/> retrieved on 23 October 2010

⁸⁴ See: *Huffingtonpost*'s entry "Glenn Beck Says Ten Percent of Muslims Are Terrorists", in: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/12/06/glenn-beck-ten-percent-muslims-terrorists_n_792726.html retrieved on 07 December 2010

⁸⁵ See Calgary Herald's entry "Ezra Levant brings back Muhammad cartoons during *Sun TV* launch", in: <http://www.calgaryherald.com/Ezra+Levant+brings+back+Muhammad+cartoons+during+launch/4650698/story.html> retrieved on 21 April 2011

⁸⁶ Available online in: <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/jomec/resources/08channel4-dispatches.pdf> retrieved on 22 February 2011

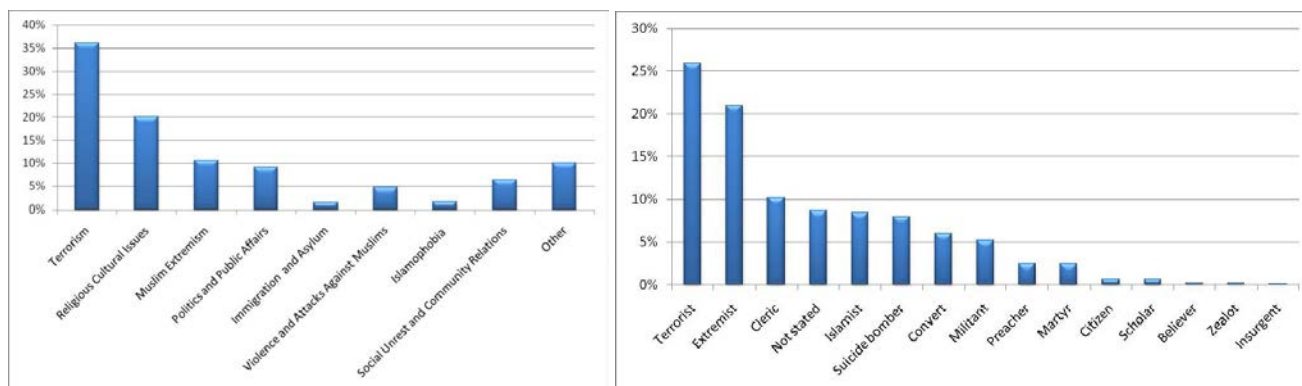


Figure 1: Most common nouns used in conjunction with British Muslims (n=796)

The study revealed that, “the language used about British Muslims reflects the negative or problematic contexts in which they tend to appear. Four of the five most common discourses used about Muslims in the British press associate Islam/Muslims with threats, problems or in opposition to dominant British values. So, for example, the idea that Islam is dangerous, backward or irrational is present in 26% of stories. By contrast, only 2% of stories contained the proposition that Muslims supported dominant moral values.”⁸⁷

In Sweden, “...after the September 11 attacks many Muslims held that media coverage had become worse and more biased towards Muslims. For example, in a study by Håkan Hvitfelt on Islam and Muslims in the Swedish television news, only 14% of coverage on Muslims did not involve violence.”⁸⁸ It may also be mentioned that “In Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, and Switzerland the anti-Islamic mood is not only to be felt in newspaper feature supplements, blogs and talk shows; it also influences party politics, election results, and special legislation on Islam.”⁸⁹

2.4. Discrimination of Muslims in Employment

Discrimination against Muslims in employment and workplace has always been a major obstacle in the integration of Muslims - particularly in the West -and must not be discounted as an operationalized and pervasive form of Islamophobia.

The New York Times reported⁹⁰ that Muslim workers had filled with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) a record of 803 religious discrimination claims in the year that ended in 30 September 2009, which “...was up 20% from the previous year and up nearly 60 percent from 2005, according to federal data...Islamic groups say they have received a surge in complaints recently, suggesting that 2010’s figure will set another record. Although Muslims make up less than 2 percent of the United States population, they accounted for about one-quarter of the 3,386 religious discrimination claims filed with the E.E.O.C. in [2009].”

⁸⁷ Cf. Kerry Moore, Paul Mason and Justin Lewis, *op.cit.*, p.3

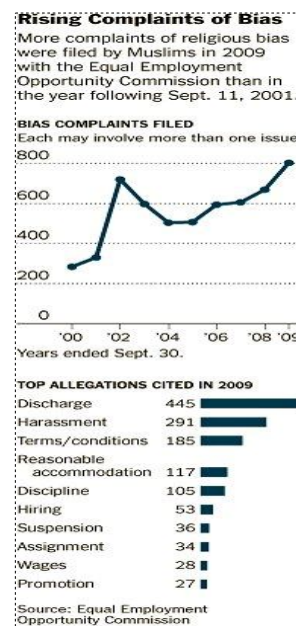
⁸⁸ See: *Islam in Sweden*, available in <http://www.euro-islam.info/country-profiles/sweden/> accessed on 28 February 2011

⁸⁹ Cf. Stefan Weidner, “Why the German Media are Courting the Anti-Islam Movement”, *Qantara.de*, in: http://en.qantara.de/webcom/show_article.php/c-476/nr-1399/i.html retrieved on 28 February 2011

⁹⁰ Cf. Steven Greenhouse, “Muslims Report Rising Discrimination at Work”, in: http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/24/business/24muslim.html?_r=1 retrieved on 25 September 2010

Some of lawsuits⁹¹ brought on behalf of Muslim workers to EEOC were as follows:

- In August 2010, the EEOC sued JBS Swift, a meatpacking company, on behalf of 160 Somali immigrants, saying supervisors and workers had cursed them for being Muslim; thrown blood, meat and bones at them; and interrupted their prayer breaks.
- On 1st September 2010, the EEOC filed a case against Abercrombie & Fitch, the fashionable clothing retailer, accusing it of discrimination for refusing to hire an 18-year-old Muslim because she was wearing a head scarf.
- And in June 2010, the agency sued a Four Points by Sheraton hotel in Phoenix, asserting that its management had illegally permitted a hostile work environment in which workers called an Iraqi immigrant a “camel jockey,” mocked him with Arab ululations and taunted him over news items about captured terrorists. (The hotel’s manager said many of the claims were untrue.)
- Mohammad Kaleemuddin, a Pakistani immigrant who drove trucks for the American war effort in Iraq for three years, said that while he was working for a construction company in Houston, his supervisor and several co-workers called him “Osama,” “al Qaeda,” “Taliban,” and “terrorist.” After he filed a complaint, the E.E.O.C. sued the company he worked for, Pace Services. The company agreed in April 2010 to pay him \$61,250 to settle the case.
- Imane Boudlal, a 26-year-old from Casablanca, Morocco, who had worked for two years as a hostess at the Storytellers Cafe at Disneyland in Anaheim, California, during Ramadan in August 2010 was told by her supervisors that if she insisted on wearing the scarf, she could work either in back or at a telephone job. She filed a complaint with the EEOC.



Meanwhile, France’s statistics office, *Insee*, showed⁹² in a 12 November 2010 study that the employment rate of French men of North African descent, of whom at least one of the parents was of immigrant origin, was 21% points lower than the average national rate of 86%. For North African women, the rate was 18% points lower.

In Sweden, the Equality Ombudsman (DO) filed⁹³ a lawsuit against parcel delivery company United Parcel Service (UPS) after the company dismissed a Muslim driver who refused to shave his beard. In the suit filed with Sweden’s Labour Court (Arbetsdomstolen) on 14 February 2011, the ombudsman argued that the company should pay the man, a resident of Spånga northeast of Stockholm, 150,000 kronor (\$23,000) in compensation plus 42,000 kronor in lost income, as well as interest on both amounts.

⁹¹ Quoted by Steven Greenhouse, *op. cit.*

⁹² *Idem.*

⁹³ See *The Local*’s entry “Sweden: UPS sued for demanding Muslim shave beard”, in: <http://www.thelocal.se/31960/20110210/> retrieved on 14 February 2011

In the United Kingdom, a Muslim airport worker accused⁹⁴ airline *Cathay Pacific* of racism after he was refused a job interview – only to be offered one when he applied two days later using a fake white British-sounding name. Algerian-born Salim Zakhrouf applied to *Cathay Pacific* for a job as a passenger services officer at Heathrow Airport. Mr Zakhrouf, 38, who had lived in Britain since 1991 as a UK citizen, was told by email that he had not been selected for interview. But applying 48 hours later as 'Ian Woodhouse' with an identical CV and home address, he was invited for an interview by the same personnel officer who had first refused him.

3: SOME POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

On 23 June 2010 the Parliament Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) adopted⁹⁵ the Resolution 1743⁹⁶ titled "Islam, Islamism and Islamophobia in Europe", inter alia, opposing the ban on the veil in France. The parliamentarians at the Council of Europe Commission said that a general ban would deny women "who freely want it" to cover their faces. They noted the French measures could "violate the right to freedom of religion which is enshrined by the European Convention on human rights". In addition, the Assembly recalled that Muslims in Europe often encountered stigma and discrimination for their customs and beliefs, and they were prey to religious radicalism. European governments were encouraged by the Council to find a balance, protecting the right to free worship, as long as it was compatible with common European values, yet also permitting criticism of Islam, provided it did not spill over into hate-speech. The Assembly, approving a report on Islam, Islamism and Islamophobia prepared by Mogens Jensen (Denmark, SOC), also called on Switzerland to repeal as soon as possible its general ban on the construction of minarets, which it described as discriminatory. In this regard, it said: "The construction of minarets should be possible, under the same status as is given to church towers, in accordance with public safety and town planning regulations."⁹⁷

Another development worth mentioning is related to the leaders of four German-speaking countries that on 1st November 2010 proclaimed Muslim immigrants as being welcome in their nations, as long as they would learn to speak the language and adapt to local customs. German President Christian Wulff, Austrian President Heinz Fischer, Swiss President Doris Leuthard and Prince Alois of Liechtenstein made the comments at the end of an informal annual meeting in Germany's Baltic port of Luebeck.⁹⁸

Meanwhile, in the United Kingdom, an All Party Parliamentary Group on Islamophobia was launched in the House of Commons. At its inaugural Annual General Meeting, members elected Keighley and Ilkley Conservative MP Kris Hopkins to serve as its Chair with Liberal Democrat Deputy Leader Simon Hughes and Labour peer Lord Janner of Braunstone as Vice-Chairs. The

⁹⁴ See *Daily Mail's* entry "Muslim 'refused job because of his name' accuses airline bosses of racism", in: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1358753/Muslim-refused-job-accuses-airline-bosses-racism.html> retrieved on 22 February 2011

⁹⁵ See PACE's Press Release titled "PACE unanimously opposed to a general ban on wearing of the burqa", in: http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/NewsManager/EMB_NewsManagerView.asp?ID=5731 retrieved on 28.06.2010

⁹⁶ Available online at: <http://assembly.coe.int/Mainf.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta10/ERES1743.htm>

⁹⁷ See *Swiss Info's* entry "Council of Europe urges end to minaret ban", in: http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/news_digest/Council_of_Europe_urges_end_to_minaret_ban.html?cid=9154764 retrieved on 25 June 2010

⁹⁸ See *Earth Times's* entry "Leaders of German-speaking countries say Muslims welcome", in: <http://www.earthtimes.org/articles/news/351392/german-speaking-countries-muslims-welcome.html> retrieved on 02 November 2010

Group initially attracted the interest of more than 20 MPs and peers from across both Houses of Parliament. *ENGAGE*, a Muslim NGO, would serve as the secretariat to the Group.⁹⁹

In an important gesture against Islamophobia, US pastor Terry Jones was banned from entering Britain by the Home Office. Mr. Jones had been invited by the *English Defence League* to attend a 5 February 2011 rally in Luton, Bedfordshire against the presence of Islam in Britain, but that invitation was withdrawn. A UK Home Office spokesman said: "The Government opposes extremism in all its forms which is why we have excluded Pastor Terry Jones from the UK."¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, an Austrian Islam-criticizing lecturer had been fined for vilification of religious theories. Elisabeth Sabaditsch-Wolff was in court on 15 February 2011 for calling Islam "hostile" and the Koran "evil" in a seminar held in a Viennese hotel in 2009. Sabaditsch-Wolff was ordered to pay a fine of 480 Euros over her statements as judges considered her claims as a vilification of religious theories.¹⁰¹

In the United States, a federal agency rejected a request for a trademark by the organization "Stop Islamization of America" (SIOA) trademark because it "Implies Islam is Associated with Terrorism", and because its name might "disparage" Muslims. The group launched by Atlas Shrugs blogger Pamela Geller and Robert Spencer of *Jihad Watch* had drawn US national attention for its bus-sign campaign offering support for Muslims who want to leave Islam. SIOA organized opposition to plans for an Islamic mosque at Ground Zero in New York City.¹⁰²

In Los Angeles, the City Council in December 2010 passed a resolution supporting "any legislation that would oppose Islamophobia and random acts of violence against Muslims."¹⁰³

4: THE HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK TO ADDRESS ISLAMOPHOBIA

The OIC's strategy toward combating Islamophobia is essentially composed of monitoring, diplomatic and operational aspects. The Islamophobia Observatory at the General Secretariat continues to monitor Islamophobic acts and events on a daily basis analyzing and cataloging them into Annual Reports presented to the Council of Foreign Ministers. On the diplomatic front, a conscious effort to remove misperceptions while portraying, promoting and projecting the true image of Islam as a religion that signifies 'peace' by its very nomenclature, has been sustained. For more than a decade, the OIC's sponsored resolution on 'defamation of religions' signified the operational aspects of the strategy towards combating Islamophobia. Based on the OIC's belief that the Human Rights framework provided with a concrete basis for engagement in this

⁹⁹ See *Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "Launch of All Party Parliamentary Group on Islamophobia", in: <http://www.islamophobia-watch.com/islamophobia-watch/2010/11/25/all-party-parliamentary-group-on-islamophobia-is-launched.html> retrieved on 27 November 2010

¹⁰⁰ See *The Telegraph's* entry "Koran-protest US pastor Terry Jones banned from UK" In: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/religion/8270367/Koran-protest-US-pastor-Terry-Jones-banned-from-UK.html> retrieved on 22 January 2011

¹⁰¹ See *Austrian Times's* entry "Lecturer fined for calling Koran 'evil'", in: http://www.austriantimes.at/news/General_News/2011-02-16/30644/Lecturer_fined_for_calling_Koran_%27evil%27 retrieved on 19 February 2011

¹⁰² See: "US Government Rejects SIOA Trademark because it "Implies Islam is Associated With Terrorism", in: <http://weaselzipper.us/2010/05/17/us-government-rejects-sioa-trademark-because-it-implies-islam-is-associated-with-terrorism/> retrieved on 18 May 2010

¹⁰³ See In: <http://www.newsrealblog.com/2011/01/28/islamophobia-or-islamonausa-los-angeles-still-doesn%E2%80%99t-get-it/> retrieved on 29 January 2011. The text of the resolution is available in this Report as Annex B.

important area and must be utilized in that context, the resolution was successfully tabled and adopted by a majority vote - beyond the OIC membership - both at the Human Rights Council in Geneva and the UN General Assembly in New York. The Durban Review Conference being a case in point, OIC is well equipped in this regard with a declared policy and a demonstrated ability for seeking consensual outcomes. This unblemished record of OIC in according primacy to multilateralism in addressing divergent views on important and sensitive issues was taken to a different level through an incremental approach during the reporting period. This chapter summarizes the important events and landmarks in that exercise.

4.1. Istanbul Brainstorming

In accordance with the relevant mandates from the 11th OIC Summit and the recent sessions of the CFMs, the OIC Secretary General took the initiative of convening a two day Brainstorming Session of a Panel of Eminent Persons at the IRCICA premises in Istanbul from July 4-5, 2010. The Session examined the various aspects of the Resolution with a view to evolving a common understanding on the way forward with particular reference to a legally sustainable stance and strategy for this issue of utmost importance to the OIC.

The Panel was tasked to engage in a thorough and result oriented discussion, inter alia, on the following *Terms of Reference*:

- a) The legality of the concept of defamation of religions in terms of the existing international law and the Human Rights framework;
- b) The presumed difficulty with regard to an objective assessment of defamation when it comes to religion as against the case of individuals or communities.
- c) The status of the concept of defamation with particular reference to the question whether it constitutes customary international law with reference to the decade long history of the resolutions passed at the UN in both New York and Geneva;
- d) The legal basis for considering defamation of Islam as well as its religious symbols and personalities as a contemporary manifestation of racism and with a view to seeking the same status for 1.5 billion Muslims as is available to a far lesser number of Jews;
- e) The need for standard setting with a view to evolving a normative framework to combat defamation of Religions along the lines of the protection available to the Jews for whom the law continuous to evolve to date; and
- f) Legally sound options with regard to the title as well as the content of the OIC's sponsored resolutions on combating defamation of religions with a view to maintaining as well as broadening the support base;

The Brainstorming Session instilled a legal confidence into the OIC's position and strategy on this matter of vital concern and transcendental priority to the Organization. The substantive discussions between the participating eminent Human Rights experts, practitioners and jurists from the Muslim World and yielded new ideas and approaches towards furthering a result oriented discourse on the issue which were then utilized in determining OIC positions during the 65th Session of UNGA and the 15th and 16th sessions of the Human Rights Council.

4.2. 15th Session of the UN Human Rights Council

Based on the outcome of the Istanbul, the Secretary General, in his statement at the Session of the UN Human Rights Council held in Geneva in September 2010, outlined eight points for action by states - at the both national and the international levels - with a view to creating the necessary environment conducive to prohibition of defamation of religions and incitement to hatred, violence and discrimination on religious grounds:

- Encouraging the creation of collaborative networks to build mutual understanding, promoting dialogue and inspiring constructive action toward shared policy goals and the pursuit of tangible outcomes, such as servicing projects in the fields of education, health, conflict prevention, employment, integration, and media education;
- Creating an appropriate mechanism within the government to, inter alia, identify and address potential areas of tension between members of different religious communities and assisting with conflict prevention and mediation;
- Encouraging training of government officials on effective outreach strategies;
- Encouraging efforts of community leaders to discuss within their communities causes of discrimination and evolving strategies to counter them;
- Speaking out against intolerance, including advocacy of religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence;
- Adopting measures to criminalize the incitement to imminent violence based on religion;
- underscoring the need to combat denigration or negative religious stereotyping and incitement to religious hatred in general by strategizing and harmonizing actions at the local, national, regional and international levels through, inter alia, education and awareness-building; and
- Recognizing that the open, constructive and respectful debate of ideas, as well as interfaith and intercultural dialogue at the local, national and international levels, can play a positive role in combating religious hatred, incitement and violence;

The Secretary General called for establishing an Observatory at the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights for documenting such acts which lead to incitement to religious hatred, hostility and violence that takes place around the world. He recalled that as a part of discussions during the Durban Review and the idea needed to be revived and materialized in the interest of developing an effective international monitoring mechanism as a first step in addressing this important matter. He emphasized the importance of creating and sustaining spaces for a meaningful and result oriented engagement towards evolving approaches to combat such acts of incitement to hatred on religious grounds could not and must not be discounted.

4.3. 65th Session of UNGA

Following Istanbul brainstorming, which instilled a legal confidence into the OIC's position on the defamation issue, 65th Session of UN General Assembly provided an important opportunity to test the new approach. The OIC Ambassadors Group in New York actively engaged - in

accordance with the strategy adopted at the Council of Foreign Ministers in Dushanbe with the US, the EU and other negotiating partners with a view to addressing their concerns by retaining the essentials of the OIC's position. Some important changes introduced in the text included replacement of the word 'defamation' by 'vilification' in some parts; addition of Christianophobia and Judeophobia to the reference to Islamophobia aimed at taking a clear position on defamation of all religions; and inclusion of reference to Article 27 of the ICCPR with a view to emphasizing the rights of the religious minorities.

It, however, was unfortunate that the flexibility shown by OIC group – which for the most part was in response to demands made by the interlocutors, the US in particular – could not lead to consensual adoption of the resolution. In fact the US delegation made a rather strong explanation of vote characterizing the new text as being more reflective of the divergent use than ever before. Despite the diminishing returns in terms of the voting pattern, the defamation resolution adopted at the 65th Session of UNGA helped further the defamation discourse affording the OIC group with the first opportunity to test the new ideas and approaches emanating from Istanbul brainstorming. Adoption of the resolution by a majority vote, beyond the OIC membership, constitute vindication of the OIC's position, approach and demonstrated ability and political will to address genuine concerns of the negotiating partners while protecting the core elements of its own position.

4.4. 16th Session of the UN Human Rights Council

In a letter addressed to the OIC Secretary General in February 2011, the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton indicated the US acceptance of the eight points approach outlined in the Secretary General's statement at the 15th Session of the UN Human Rights Council as the way forward in evolving a joint approach to the matter that would help, "overcome the false divide that pits religious sensitivities against freedom of expression and pursue a new approach based on concrete steps to fight intolerance wherever it occurs". Subsequently, the consensual adoption of the resolution entitled, "combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence, and violence against persons based on religion or belief" during the 16th Session of Human Rights Council in Geneva signified a major step forward in dealing with Islamophobia and the whole package of interrelated issues that continued to form a matter of vital concern for the OIC. The OIC Group showed unprecedented flexibility in this process of consensus building which did not mark the end of the road. It rather signified a beginning based on a new approach to deal with the whole set of interrelated issues.

It must be appreciated that the situation in achieving as well as retaining this consensus was most delicately poised within the OIC Member States. The OIC had yet again demonstrated its ability to engage in a result oriented fashion on important issues and it now remained to be seen if the vital concerns that the Organization sought to draw attention to, regardless of the title or content of one or the other resolution, were duly and verifiably addressed and monitored by the Human Rights Council. It would be most important to ensure that the eight points at the heart of the resolution were taken by the states in the interest of implementing the resolution.

Consensus building must be followed by building on the consensus. Effective measures must be taken by the international community aimed at putting an end to unfortunate and extremist practices like the burning of holy Quran - that could unnecessarily and undesirably vitiate the atmosphere of constructive engagement so hard to build. As mentioned in the resolution, steps

to end double standards and racial profiling need to be taken. Such acts must not be condoned by states but duly addressed through structured and sustained engagement.

The OIC remains ready and willing to continue to build on its demonstrated ability to sustain this discourse in a positive and constructive fashion. From the OIC's perspective and a substantive standpoint, the following elements would have to be considered in evolving a future course of action:

- Consistency would be required to be maintained at two levels, namely, between the different Human Rights i.e. ensuring that there was no hierarchy among these Rights whereby one would be preferred over the others; and secondly, an equal treatment with regard to the three elements of national, racial and religious hatred - in terms of both international law and practice – would be essential;
- It appeared that the situation with regard to the Articles 19 (3) and 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and political Rights (ICCPR) could be summed up by focusing on three gaps which may be characterized by cause-effect relationships:
 1. The first reflected itself in the 'implementation void' wherein the international law, as stipulated in ICCPR and ICERD, was rendered ineffective by the absence of enforcement mechanisms owed partly to the fact that national legislations were mostly inspired by colonial legacies or legal systems - that were respectively being followed - rather than being rooted in the international instruments;
 2. Secondly, there was an 'interpretation void' wherein the spirit or the essence of international instruments had not been adequately amplified for it to be translated into law and practice at the national level;
 3. Thirdly, there was an 'institutional void' characterized by a lack of monitoring that could be best filled by reviving the Durban Review proposal of an Observatory at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights that the OIC had been supporting;
- In moving towards filling these gaps, through sustained and structured engagement like the one offered by this series of workshops, the international community needed to aim at elaborating 'soft law' in the form of principles or guidelines that would steer the way out of the ominous situation wherein incitement to hatred, stereotyping and stigmatization on religious grounds had emerged as a contemporary manifestation of racism most pronounced in case of trends like 'racialization' of the Muslim minorities in the West;
- Approaches like applying the 'test of consequences' were useful and would have to be explored/refined further in an objective fashion towards evolving a consensus with regard to effectively addressing the matter; and
- As regards the issue of freedom of opinion and expression, the OIC could with the views of Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and expression with regard to making "very few exceptions" but the contours of such exceptions would have to be identified. OIC believed that unfortunate and outrageous episodes like the caricatures and the burning of holy Quran merited the grant of such exceptions;

It is sufficiently evident that the OIC would continue to engage in good faith with a view to addressing this matter of vital concern and import in an effective manner, within the Human Rights framework.

5. ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE OIC

The OIC is committed to address Islamophobia through various means and in coordination with other stakeholders. In this connection, OIC's strategy is based on

- i) combating this phenomenon comprehensively and collectively in coordination and cooperation with the Member States, the international community and the UN Human Rights mechanism by raising global awareness of the basic tenets of moderation and modernization;
- ii) initiating vigorous diplomatic efforts to sensitize the international community on the dangerous implications of the phenomenon of Islamophobia in the regional as well as the global context;
- iii) conducting public diplomacy awareness raising with a view to neutralizing the motivated and systematic campaign against Islam and Muslims by extremists in Western societies in particular; and
- iv) monitoring Islamophobic acts, events, publications and utterances on a daily basis with a view to removing misperceptions issuing rejoinders and rebuttals and calling on the governments and other authorities concerned to take appropriate remedial measures.

To implement this strategy effectively the OIC has been active in taking initiatives to engage with Western governments, institutions and International Organizations geared towards creating synergies towards combating Islamophobia in a coordinated and effective manner. The following is a brief description of major actions taken by the OIC General Secretariat during the reporting period:

The 37th Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers adopted the OIC Strategy to broaden support for its Resolution on "Combating Defamation of religions". The strategy mandated an active role on the part of the General Secretariat with regard to both the procedural as well as substantive aspects of the Resolution. In addition to the strategy the CFM adopted resolution 39/37-POL that requested the Secretary General to take appropriate steps to evolve and sustain an effective mechanism towards maintaining and broadening the support base for the OIC sponsored Resolution on Combating Defamation of Religions including through organizing coordination meetings on the sidelines of important and relevant international fora as well as contacts, in consultation and with the participation of Member States, in relevant capitals.

The General Secretariat also participated in the International Symposium on Cultural Diplomacy 2010 from 23rd to 30th May hosted by the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy in Berlin. The Symposium brought together a group of speakers consisting of over forty leading figures from international politics, academia, and civil society, and more than 150 participants. It provided a platform for discussions that explored the complex relationship between culture, international relations, and globalization, and the associated challenges that lie ahead over the next two decades. OIC actively participated in the various panel discussions that formed part of the Symposium's program that afforded an in depth analysis of the whole range of issues pertaining to "culture" and "identity" and how these terms were used and understood in international politics. The second part of the program built on these components, focusing on the role that culture played in contemporary international relations and the process of globalization. The

concepts of “cultural diplomacy” and “soft power” were also explored in more detail affording the opportunity to remove misperceptions and raise awareness by amplifying the historical and philosophical foundations of its stance and concern on Islamophobia as a potent threat to global as well as regional peace, security and stability.

An open Roundtable on *“Addressing Islamophobia: Building on unused opportunities for mutual respect and inclusion”* was held during the *Third Alliance of Civilizations (AoC) Global Forum* in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in May 2010. Co-organized by the UN AoC, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the Council of Europe (CoE) and the British Council, the aim of this Roundtable was to hold an informed debate on how to address Islamophobia from a result-oriented perspective.

The Roundtable¹⁰⁴, announced in advance via the AoC Forum’s website and open to public participation, attracted a large audience and brought together a high-level array of panelists who shared their different points of views during the debate. The OIC Secretary General underscored the dangerous implications of the growing trend of Islamophobia in the European context in particular stressing that Muslims were not aliens but had contributed to the evolution of the European identity. Advocating a constructive engagement rather than confrontation to tackle Islamophobia, he called upon Western countries to stop looking at the concept of defamation of religions with suspicion and mentioned a number of ongoing initiatives aimed at raising global awareness to the basic tenets of moderation in Islam such as a Conference that the OIC intended to organize aimed at bringing “historical reconciliation between Islam and Christianity”.

The OIC co-sponsored a Side Event organized by the European Muslim Initiative for Social Cohesion (EMISCO) on “Combating Discrimination against Muslims and Islamophobia – A Normative Approach” during the *OSCE High Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination*, held in Astana, Kazakhstan, in June 2010. The participants to the event, inter alia, agreed that Islamophobia was essentially based on intolerance and discrimination motivated by fear, mistrust and hatred of Islam and its adherents, which often manifested itself in combination with racism, xenophobia, anti-immigrant sentiments and discrimination on religious grounds. The participants concluded that manifestations of Islamophobia included hate speech, violent acts and discriminatory practices, which could be manifested by both non-state actors and state officials. It was also mentioned that Islamophobic rhetoric wrongly and deliberately associated Muslims with terrorism portraying them as an international and domestic threat while making stereotypical allegations about Muslims as a monolithic group of people whose culture was backward and incompatible with Human Rights and democracy.

On 16 September 2010, the OIC Secretary General travelled to Geneva upon an invitation by UNITAR (United Nations Institute for Training and Research) where as a guest speaker at the 5th Edition of the Geneva Lecture Series, he lent his perspective to a distinguished gathering of diplomats, academicians, intelligentsia and international civil servants on “Building Bridges – Intercultural Dialogue, Identities and Migrations” on, inter alia, the scourge of Islamophobia calling for intensive cultural diplomacy and multilateral efforts to combat Islamophobia. Focusing on the situation of Muslim migrants to Europe, Professor Ihsanoglu recalled the enlightening contributions made by Muslims during the ‘dark ages’ in Europe. Contending that Muslims’ contributions had helped evolve the contemporary European identity, he expressed concern at the Islamophobic campaign launched by motivated individuals and groups against Muslims and Islam.

¹⁰⁴ The “Overview” is available as Annex C of this Report.

On 24 September 2010, the Foreign Ministers of OIC Member States, at the Annual Coordination Meeting on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, issued a *Declaration on Countering Islamophobia*¹⁰⁵. The Meeting condemned the mounting trend of Islamophobia and systematic defamation of Islam as well as discrimination against Muslims including measures like the ban on constructions of minarets, and other discriminatory measures that incited religious hatred. The Meeting called upon the international community to exert efforts to prevent incitement to hatred and discrimination against Muslims and to take effective measures to combat the defamation of religions and negative stereotyping of people on the basis of religion, faith or race. The Meeting requested the Secretary-General to continue the OIC initiatives in order to effectively counter Islamophobia through discussions and deliberations in various international fora. The Meeting called for a global awareness on the dangerous implications of the rise of Islamophobia on world peace and security and called upon the international community to demonstrate its collective political will to address the issue with all urgency.

On the occasion of the Conference on *Muslim-Christian Fraternity*, held on 15 December 2010 in Damascus, Syria, the OIC Secretary General called for establishing a culture of co-existence among the followers of Christianity and Islam for creating a world where the values of truth, justice, cooperation and mutual respect prevail. He also noted that the OIC had actually adopted the notion based on dialogue among civilizations, in response to those propagating the prophecy of clash of civilizations. He recalled that the OIC had launched an initiative for a historical reconciliation between Islam and Christianity in preparation for creating a more peaceful and prosperous universal environment, adding that the OIC had been advocating such approaches in contacts with a number of Western leaders and at the international fora. He underlined the need to unite the efforts of the followers of the two religions all over the world against the incidents of intolerance, discrimination and defamation of religions and religious symbols, by approving well-planned programs for examining the causes of intolerance, racism, marginalization and violence aimed at addressing them before they turned into international crises.

On 8 December 2010 the OIC Secretary General inaugurated the *2nd Symposium on Muslim Minorities and Communities in Central and Eastern Europe: Reality and Perspectives* in Warsaw, Poland. In his opening speech he, inter alia, stated that Muslim minorities needed to strive for the protection of their religious, cultural, civil, political, economic and social rights without neglecting the framework of respect for the sovereignty and domestic rule of law of their countries of residence. He also stressed that Europe was a home for Islam and not a host. He underlined concern with regards the situation of Muslim minorities and communities in Europe, mostly because of the rise of Islamophobia, as well as intolerance and discrimination against Muslims. In this regard, he equated such phenomenon with an affront to the human rights and the dignity of Muslims.

Following the Swiss ban on the construction of minarets through a referendum in November 2009, the OIC joined COJEP International, EMISCO, ISESCO, Council of Europe DG4, British Council and the University of Hacettepe in spearheading the initiative of challenging this dangerous trend by launching a pan-European photo competition to find the most beautiful minaret. An eminent jury of architects, scholars and NGO representatives selected the minaret of Madni Jamia Masjid in Bradford as the most beautiful minaret out of over 200 minarets in Europe. On 19 January 2011, representatives of various organizations from Europe as well as UK attended the award ceremony held at the Madni Mosque to present a plaque to the administration of the mosque.

¹⁰⁵ The Declaration is available as Annex D of this Report

6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The three previous reports of the Observatory catalogued evidence of a steady and systematic increase in Islamophobia sustained pattern of motivated intolerance and discrimination against Islam and Muslims. The reporting period of the fourth report was characterized by a higher frequency as well as intensity of Islamophobic events, acts and utterances on an even larger scale. Outrageous acts like the burning of Holy Quran, by a hitherto unknown Pastor, and the ensuing media attention signified the new extremist face of anti-Islam and anti Muslims campaign that constitutes a contemporary manifestation of racism. It was encouraging to note, during the review period, that such acts evoked global concern owing to adverse impact on global peace and security as indicated by consequences like the condemnable act on the UN Compound in Afghanistan. It would take sustained engagement and concerted efforts on the part of the international community to deal with the increasing manifestations of Islamophobia in the West based on inadequate knowledge about nations and cultures with an Islamic background.

It underscores the need and urgency for forging a new relationship and understanding through respect for cultural diversity. The OIC has been consistent at emphasizing the importance of cultural and interfaith dialogue to promote world peace and stability, seeking a historic reconciliation between the Muslim world and the West with a view to curbing the ascendancy of Islamophobia in particular and intolerance and incitement to hatred and violence on religious grounds in general. The call, over the past decade, induced a multiplicity of event based agreements reflecting expressions of good intent. It would, however, be important to move beyond this stage towards translating words into action by evolving, on a consensual basis, a normative solution to deal with the threat posed to peaceful coexistence.

Tolerance, stability and prosperity can only be ensured in an atmosphere mutual respect and trust. In a globalized world, diverse cultures should complement and not compete each other. It was based on the same realization and the vision of 'moderation and modernization', the OIC Ten-Year Program of Action (TYPOA) accorded primacy to cultural diplomacy as an important element on the OIC Agenda. In implementing the Programme the Organization has been consistent in demonstrating ability to forge consensus on even the most sensitive issues of cultural and interfaith significance within multilateral frameworks- the consensual adoption of the OIC sponsored resolution 16/18 entitled, "combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence, and violence against persons based on religion or belief" being yet another case in point. OIC has a principled position against defamation of any religion, dehumanization of the followers, denigration of symbols sacred all religions or incitement to hatred or violence on national, racial or religious grounds. The OIC position in this regard is duly entrenched in provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) and other international laws on incitement to hatred or violence.

Reaffirming the validity of the recommendations made in the three preceding reports - as part of the strategy to combating Islamophobia and anti-Islam and Muslims tendencies and trends in the Western mind and media in particular – the Observatory would like to reiterate as well as propose the following elements:

- a) **Enhancing and broadening the knowledge and understanding of Islam in non-Muslim societies**, as outright ignorance, insufficient knowledge and motivated disinformation have contributed to the somewhat general misperception in various strata of public opinion in the West and non-Muslim societies at large that Islam was a religion that *"lived by the sword"*, preached hatred and violence towards non-believers, and stood to challenge the Western way life.
- b) **Improving the dissemination of information about Muslim countries** being victims of the contemporary manifestations of terrorism and extremism more than the rest of the world. The lack of both dissemination and coverage of the firm rejection of terrorism and extremism by the Muslim world's political and religious elite, including the leadership of OIC Member States as well as the mainstream public opinion coupled with the misrepresentation and incorrect interpretation of Islam at various levels have contributed significantly to the growth of Islamophobia. Western public opinion, media and civil society must be made to realize that Islam and Muslims had simultaneously been the prime target of both terrorism and association with terrorism.
- c) **To tackle the media misrepresentation** that remained one of the main causes for the hurt and insult that Muslims were suffering at the hands of prejudice and discrimination. The imperative of media literacy formed a point of convergence in an otherwise polarized discourse on the need and means to combat Islamophobia between Islam and the West and must be realized as a first step towards concerted action and confidence building.
- d) **Ensuring swift and effective implementation of the new approach signified by the consensual adoption of HRC Resolution 16/18**, entitled "combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence, and violence against persons based on religion or belief" , by, inter alia, removing the gaps in implementation and interpretation of international legal instruments and criminalizing acts of incitement to hatred and violence on religious grounds with a view to curbing the double standards and racial profiling that continue to feed religious strife detrimental to peace, security and stability.
- e) **Constructively engaging to bridge divergent views on the limits to the right to freedom of opinion and expression**, in a structured multilateral framework, and in the light of events like the burning of Quran geared towards filling the 'interpretation void' with regard to the interface between articles 19 (3) and 20 of the ICCPR based on emerging approaches like applying the 'test of consequence'.
- f) **Effectively reversing the exacerbation of Anti Muslim sentiments after 9/11**, which intensified stereotypes, generalizations about Muslims, and the ongoing infliction of 'collective punishment' on all Muslims through a frequency of assertions and reassertions on the part of international political and religious elite that the Muslim world did not condone and must not be associated with the acts and utterances of marginal and misguided individuals.
- g) **Engaging with the West in order to build a political will and commitment** to entering into a serious and action and result oriented discourse that would generate reconciliation between faiths, cultures and civilizations. OIC has been reiterating its availability as a credible partner in that endeavor and would encourage the civil society in Member States to join.

- h) **Reaching out to other international organizations** with a view to benefiting from existing mechanisms mandated to combat religious intolerance, including UN treaty bodies. The approach aims at both keeping all relevant counterparts fully aware of new forms and manifestations of Islamophobia, by providing them with clear material evidence and highlighting emblematic cases while at the same time enhancing cooperation and creating synergies to unite efforts in dealing with such issues.
- i) **Encouraging Muslim community members living in western societies** to monitor and counter anti- Islam and Muslim incidents in the respective societies while exercising restraint and enhancing participation in local political and social life. Some European Muslim civil society organizations like EMISCO have made important contributions like the recommendations to combat Islamophobia, as put forth by EMISCO at the Warsaw OSCE Review Meeting on 8 October 2010 that needs to be acknowledged, replicated and build on.¹⁰⁶

These aforementioned elements will have to be put in practice through a comprehensive political engagement and sustained political will in order to eradicate all manifestations of Islamophobia and discrimination against Muslims. Such an agenda should aim rejecting self fulfilling prophecies like clash of civilizations while identifying, fostering and safeguarding the moral values common to all religions. OIC believes that the current situation with regard to Islamophobia, though deteriorating, is based on temporary and surmountable differences emanating from cultural misperceptions and diverse social backgrounds rather than lasting or irreconcilable variance in moral and ethical values.

¹⁰⁶ Available EMISCO's website which, inter alia, states that "This proposal is supported by: European Muslim Initiative for Social Cohesion (Denmark-France), Jewish-Muslim Cooperation Platform (Belgium), Austrian Muslim Initiative, Collectif Contre l'Islamophobie en France (CCIF), JPL MONDE (France), Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe (ABTTF - Germany), Ethnic Debate Forum and Fair Play (Denmark), The National Association of Muslim Police (NAMP-UK), Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association (Greece), Muslim Community of Bulgaria, Muslim Committee on Human Rights in Central Asia (Kazakhstan), Turkish Community in Germany (TGD)." in: <http://www.emisco.com/warsaw.html> accessed on 2nd March 2011.

ANNEXES

A: Some Islamophobic Incidents

1. Incidents Related to Mosques:

i) **Scotland: Racist attack on Islamic centre** - A frightening attack by a gang of hooded thugs on an Islamic centre was on the night of 11 May 2010 being treated by Scottish police as racist. The group of nerds in their late teens and early 20s who hurled eggs into the building while prayers were being held in the afternoon. The alarming incident happened on Friday, May 7, at the Dar-UI-Quran Islamic Centre in Paisley Road, Renfrew.

In: <http://www.paisleydailyexpress.co.uk/2010/05/12/racist-attack-on-islamic-centre-87085-26424413/>
retrieved on 15.05.2010

ii) **Netherlands: Dead sheep in protest of mosque** – The chairman of the Moroccan mosque in Roosendaal, Karim Ahlalouch, responded in anger to the hanging of a dead sheep at the place where a new mosque was to be built.



Local police said on 14 May 2010 that unknowns had hung a dead sheep at the demolition site at Burgemeester Schneiderlaan in Roosendaal. "No mosk" (no mosque) was painted in green on the fleece. There were plans to build one of the biggest mosques in South-Netherlands at the site, 2200 sqm in area.

In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2010/05/netherlands-dead-sheep-in-protest-of.html> retrieved on 18.05.2010

iii) **US: Vandals hit Downriver mosque twice within a week** – Windows were broken and doors were smashed at the Masjid Umar-bin-Khattab Mosque in Detroit on 9 May and again on 16 May 2010 with the second attack caught on videotape, said spokesman Muhammad Khan, adding: "You can see five young persons on the recording. They broke a number of windows. We think it might be the same people who attacked the mosque earlier in the week. This is the first time we've had a problem in 10 or 15 years. We made a report to the police and they told us that 10 cars in another subdivision had their windows broken out the same night the mosque was attacked."

In: <http://www.detnews.com/article/20100516/METRO/5160333/1361/Vandals-hit-Downriver-mosque-twice-within-a-week#ixzz0oFzLHqc7> retrieved on 18.05.2010

iv) **US: Tennessee: Murfreesboro mosque opponents pack commission meeting** – Hundreds of residents packed 16 June 2010's Rutherford County Commission meeting where dozens voiced opposition to a planned Islamic center off Bradyville Pike in southeast Murfreesboro. Allen Jackson, pastor of World Outreach Church in Murfreesboro, said: "We have a duty to investigate anyone under the banner of Islam." Some of the speakers said they didn't trust anyone who practices Islam while others said the county needed to investigate those behind the proposed center. A few speakers said they were afraid their property values would go down or that the impact on traffic needs to be examined.

In: <http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100618/NEWS01/6180332/Murfreesboro+mosque+opponents+pack+commission+meeting> retrieved on 19.06.2010

v) **US: Priest Changes Mind in Sale of Convent to Muslims** – The sale of a Catholic convent to a Muslim group has hit a major snag. After the surrounding Staten Island community screamed and shouted against the deal it seemed the priest in charge had had a change of heart. Muslim American Society board member Ayman Hammous did not mince words when explaining why the deal to turn the deserted Staten Island Catholic convent into a Muslim mosque might fall through. He said: "It is a sort of racism. The community in Midland Beach has been hijacked by Islamaphobes." He pointed to the raucous meeting a week before, where hundreds packed the hall and denounced the deal, linking the Muslim American Society to terrorists.

In: <http://wcbstv.com/topstories/staten.island.mosque.2.1760381.html> retrieved on 19.06.2010

vi) **UK: Arrest after 'Missile Thrown at Brierfield Mosque'** – British Police arrested a man after a side door was damaged at the Jamia Sultania mosque, in Oxford Street.



Damage Attack: A police officer stands outside the damaged door to the mosque

In: [http://www.burnleycitizen.co.uk/news/8231592.Arrest after missile thrown at Brierfield mosque /](http://www.burnleycitizen.co.uk/news/8231592.Arrest%20after%20missile%20thrown%20at%20Brierfield%20mosque/) retrieved on 23.06.2010

vi) **Normandy: Mosque defaced** – Inscriptions reading "Islam get out of Europe", "No to Islam and to burkas", along with swastikas, were discovered on 15 July 2010 in Herouville-Saint-Clair, a suburb of the city of Caen in Normandy (France).



The incident came a day after French lawmakers passed on first reading a bill banning women from wearing the full-face Islamic veil in public.

In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2010/07/normandy-mosque-defaced.html> retrieved on 16.07.2010

vii) **Spanish Mayor Closes 'Too Popular' Mosque** – Angel Ros, the socialist mayor of Lleida, in the northeastern region of Catalonia, complained that the mosque was too full and closed it on 21 July 2010 until further notice. Mr. Ros said in response to complaints from the town's Muslim population over the closure: "The municipality has no obligation to provide places of worship. Those that wish can pray at home, as I do."

In: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/spain/7906970/Spanish-mayor-closes-too-popular-mosque.html> retrieved on 24.07.2010

viii) **UK: Colne Woman Spat at Mosque Worshippers** – Brothers Quaram and Asim Majid were leaving a mosque in Colne (Burnley) on 21 July 2010 when they were confronted by Emma Woods, 24, of Laithe Street, Colne, who hurled abuse at the pair and repeatedly spat at them, as their 14-year-old nephew looked on said. The brothers tried to walk away but Woods pursued them across the Pendle town, in scenes which were described in the court hearing the case as 'disgraceful'. It was said that the defendant continued to pursue the pair, as one of the brothers attempted to guide their 14-year-old nephew to safety. Woods shouted: "No-one wants you here. Get out of our country. This is our town." Woods admitted two offences of racially aggravated

assault and breaching a suspended prison sentence order, also imposed for assault. Magistrates jailed her for 146 days.

In:

http://www.lancashiretelegraph.co.uk/news/pendle/8290488.Colne_woman_spat_at_mosque_worshippers/?ref=rs retrieved on 25.07.2010

ix) **US: Conservative Protestors Target Temecula Islamic Center** – Protestors demonstrated



outside an Islamic cultural center in Temecula (Los Angeles) on the afternoon of 30 July 2010. The protestors were trying to block the planned construction of new Islamic mosque and cultural center near a local Baptist church. The demonstration purposely coincided with afternoon prayers at the Islamic Center of Temecula Valley. Organizers were a fringe conservative group called *Concerned Community Citizens*. It encouraged protestors to show up with "guns, bibles and dogs."

In: <http://www.scpr.org/news/2010/07/30/mosque-protest/> retrieved on 31.07.2010

x) **US: Angry protesters descend on mosque** – About a dozen right-wing Christians, carrying placards and yelling "Islam is a lie", angrily confronted worshippers outside a Fairfield Avenue mosque (Connecticut) on 06 August 2010. "Jesus hates Muslims", they screamed at worshippers arriving at the Masjid An-Noor mosque. One protester shoved a placard at a group of young children leaving the mosque, shouting "Murderers". Flip Benham, of Dallas, Texas, organizer of the protest, was yelling at the worshipers with a bullhorn. He said: "This is a war in America and we are taking it to the mosques around the country."

In: <http://www.ctpost.com/news/article/Angry-protesters-descend-on-mosque-606515.php> retrieved on 08.08.2010

xi) **Norway: Vandals desecrated a Mosque** – A mosque in the Norwegian city of Fredrikstad was vandalized on 19 August 2010 with paintings saying "oink" and "Allah is a [picture of a pig]". It was not the first time that the mosque was vandalized. Several times it suffered from graffiti and broken windows. In addition, members have had to suffer racist remarks in the six years they have been in the center of town.

In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2010/08/norway-neither-christians-nor-jews.html> retrieved on 21.08.2010

xii) **The Mosque Rage Boils Over: Anti-Muslim Attacks Increasing across US** – On 24 August 2010, a mosque in Madera, California was vandalized with a sign reading "Wake up America, the enemy is here".

In: <http://newsfeed.time.com/2010/08/26/the-mosque-rage-boils-over-anti-muslim-attacks-increasing-across-us/> retrieved on 28.08.2010

xiii) **US: Sacramento Area Mosque Targeted with Toxic Pig** – A plastic pig was put in a Sacramento area mosque's mailbox, and toxic messages were scribbled across it. The messages were: "No Mosque in NYC", "Remember 9-11", and "Mo-Ham-ed". The Islamic leadership there was not saying exactly where that mosque was for fear that they could be targeted further.

In: <http://www.fox40.com/news/headlines/ktxl-news-sacramentomosquetargetedwithtoxicpig.0.5633306.story> retrieved on 31.08.2010

xiv) **US: Satanic graffiti at St. Louis mosque under investigation by FBI** – The FBI was investigating after two incidents in which the words “Worship Satan” were spray-painted on the outside wall of a St. Louis mosque. The first incident happened about a week before October 1st, 2010 at the mosque on the city’s south side.

In: <http://www.kplr11.com/news/sns-ap-mo--mosque-graffiti.0.3233259.story> retrieved on 01.10.2010

xv) **US: Florence Islamic center vandalized using bacon** – Someone defaced the Florence Islamic Center on North Edisto Drive in Florence on 10 October 2010. The culprit used slices of bacon to spell out the words “PIG CHOPS” on the brick walkway of the mosque. Members of the center said that it was the second time in a few months that someone had vandalized their house of worship. Earlier this in 2010, vandals broke new windows in the facility.

In: <http://www.midlandsconnect.com/news/story.aspx?id=525150> retrieved on 13.10.2010

xvi) **US: NY Mosque Vandalized for 4th Time** – Masjid Noor in Huntington, N.Y., is a mosque that had again been targeted by vandalism several times. In the fourth such incident since August (2010), on 25 October 2010 glass were broken and nails scattered on the driveway of the facility. The vandalism occurred while some 30 people attended religious classes in the mosque. Police were investigating the incidents as possible hate crimes.

In: <http://www.sunherald.com/2010/10/26/2584162/cair-seeks-protection-for-ny-mosque.html> retrieved on 28.10.2010

xvii) **Strasbourg (France): Mosque gets threatening letter, powder** – A mosque in eastern France received a threatening letter containing a suspicious white powder which police said turned out to be harmless. Leaders at the Eyyub Sultan mosque in Strasbourg opened the anonymous letter, delivered by mail, after Friday prayers and found “two pages and an unidentified white powder”. One of the pages had Quranic verses written on it and was partly burnt and the other bore a printed message reading “Get out of our land while you can. Your choice: a suitcase or a coffin”.

In: http://www.straitstimes.com/BreakingNews/World/Story/STIStory_602792.html retrieved on 13.11.2010

xviii) **Arson attack on Berlin’s largest mosque** – The Sehlik mosque, largest in Berlin, is in the inner-city Berlin district of Neukölln, where many Muslims live, was victim of an arson attack. The fire, which was spotted in the early hours by a mosque’s employee, damaged the façade and one window. Nobody was injured. Police said their investigations were focusing on an unexploded bottle of propane gas, found by the building. They think the bottle was transported to the mosque in a black rucksack, on a pushcart. The employee who spotted the fire was able to extinguish it.

In: http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/europe/news/article_1600236.php/Arson-attack-on-Berlin-s-largest-mosque retrieved on 20.11.2010

xix) **Canada: Two held after pig’s head left at mosque** – Two people had been arrested after a pig’s head was left outside a Cambridge mosque. Detectives have quizzed the 21-year-old man and 22-year-old woman, both from the city, about the hate crime. The head was left on the doorstep of Shah Jalal Bangladeshi Community House in Darwin Drive, Arbury, in September 2010.

In: <http://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/Home/Two-held-after-pigs-head-left-at-mosque.htm> retrieved on 20.11.2010

xx) **UK: Beer thrown at mosque following Kingston protest march** – On 21 November 2010, masked men threw bottles of beer and urinated on a mosque following a march against what they called “Muslim extremism”. Bacon was also left on cars near Kingston Mosque during the attack by a group of 10-15 youths.

In: http://www.surreycomet.co.uk/news/topstories/8680008.UPDATE_Beer_thrown_at_mosque_following_protest_march/ retrieved on 23.11.2010

xxi) **Athens mosque plan faces new hurdles** – A bid to build a mosque in Athens assumed new, more dramatic proportions amid threats by the far-right to stop its construction and a denial by the renowned Anglo-Iraqi architect, Zaha Hadid, that she was involved in its design.



Tensions soared in the only EU capital where Muslims were still forced to pray in underground basement flats and garages in the absence of a proper place of worship.

Two weeks after a neo-fascist party won its first-ever seat on Athens council in local elections – highlighting growing Greek hostility over the country's rising immigrant population – opposition to the decades-old project has grown.

An extreme rightwing party poster, which reads 'Mosque in Athens: Nowhere and Never', in front of Muslims attending outdoor prayers at Attiki square in Athens – the only EU capital without a mosque.

Photograph: Petros Giannakouris/AP

In: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/nov/28/athens-mosque-far-right-zaha-hadid> retrieved on 30.11.2010

xxii) **UK: EDL shows violent racism with 'Burn a mosque' chant** – English Defence League (EDL) supporters showed their true colours in Preston on 27 November 2010, when a group marched down a main shopping street chanting: "**Burn a mosque down, burn a mosque**".

In: <http://uaf.org.uk/2010/11/edl-show-violent-racism-with-burn-a-mosque-chant/> retrieved on 30.11.2010

xxiii) **Germany: Islamic cultural center in Berlin attacked with a Molotov cocktail** – An



Islamic cultural center in Berlin was attacked early 08 December 2010 with a Molotov cocktail, which set the façade of the building alight, but the fire was out before authorities arrived.

Police said it was the sixth arson attack on Muslim institutions in the German capital in 2010.

In: http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/40583595/ns/world_news-europe/ and <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2010/12/berlin-islamic-cultural-center-attacked.html> retrieved on 10.12.2010

xxiv) **US: Ohio mosque received anti-Muslim e-mail** – The local chapter of the Washington-based Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) said a threatening e-mail was been sent to a Cincinnati mosque that was bombed five years ago. CAIR quoted the Dec. 11 e-mail as saying Muslims were not wanted in Cincinnati and warning: "Beware. We may just declare jihad (holy war) on you."

In: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/12/14/AR2010121405220.html> retrieved on 15.12.2010

xxv) **US: Man arrested in attacks on California mosque** – The FBI arrested Donny Eugene Mower, of Madera, a 37-year-old, school bus driver suspected of vandalizing a central California mosque in 2010. The complaint stated that in August 2010, a brick was thrown at the front of the Madera Islamic Center and several cardboard signs with the message "Wake up America, the enemy is here" were left outside the mosque. Some of signs at mosque were signed with the initials "ANB", and other read: "American Nationalist Brotherhood". The Madera County Sheriff's Department recovered a fingerprint from one of the placards and

linked it to Mower. Federal and local authorities began investigating the mosque incidents as potential hate crimes in August 2010, during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan and amid a national furor over a proposed mosque near ground zero in New York City.

In: <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/n/a/2011/03/10/state/n155139S23.DTL&tsp=1> retrieved on 12.03.2011

xxvi) **UK: EDL mosque protest in Reading is branded 'hateful'** – An English Defence League (EDL) protest in Reading over plans to build a new mosque in the town was condemned for causing "hatred and division". Local police said that up to 200 members of the EDL staged a peaceful protest in the town centre on Saturday (19 March) afternoon. Councillor Andrew Cumpsty, leader of Reading Borough Council, said: "Hatred and division have no place in civilised political debate." A team leader from the EDL told the BBC: "My message is no more mosques." EDL members came from around the UK to demonstrate against plans submitted to Reading Borough Council to build a new mosque and community centre. They were met by counter protesters but there was no violence and no arrests were made.

In: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-berkshire-12799462> retrieved on 21.03.2011

xxvii) **UK: Race hate vandals strike near Birkenhead mosque** – Hate crime vandals spray-painted racial slurs over homes near Birkenhead's mosque on 17 April 2011. The area surrounding the Borough Road mosque was targeted at the weekend with offensive graffiti such as "Islam = Murder" and "Britain for the British".



In: [http://www.wirralglobe.co.uk/news/8980130.Race hate vandals strike near Birkenhead mosque/#](http://www.wirralglobe.co.uk/news/8980130.Race+hate+vandals+strike+near+Birkenhead+mosque/) retrieved on 19.04.2011

xxviii) **US: Vandals Target Mosque with Painted Rocks** – Police said that vandals had targeted a Bartow County (Georgia) mosque with rocks twice in the month of April 2011. Each time, someone shattered doors and windows of the Islamic Center of Cartersville with painted rocks, causing extensive damage to the storefront religious center. The latest attack happened on April 12. Mosque member Amjad Taufique told *Channel 2's* Jeff Dore the rocks were painted with a message: "One displayed a Star of David. One said 'Muslim murderers.'" The Islamic center had been open in Cartersville for about two years, and Taufique told Dore they had had no problems before.

In: <http://www.wsbtv.com/news/27587295/detail.html> retrieved on 20.04.2011

xxix) **Belgium: Pig's head buried under cross on mosque site** - Opponents of plans to build a mosque in a southern Belgian city partially buried the head of a pig under a Christian cross bearing the inscription: "Here Lies Mohamed". Other graffiti at the site said "Islam = danger" and "Mohammed pedophile"



In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2011/04/belgium-pigs-head-buried-under-cross-on.html> retrieved on 21.04.2011

2. Desecration of Muslim Graves

i) **France: Muslim soldiers' graves desecrated** – The French Defence Minister, Herve Morin, announced on 06 May 2010 that vandals desecrated the graves of seven Muslim soldiers who died fighting for France in World War II after the tombstones were toppled and three of them were smashed at a military cemetery in the southern city of Tarascon.

In: <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iXqb5xolXgNhSnh5wzx-tngMLI7A> retrieved on 08.05.2010

ii) **France: three tombs were desecrated with racist inscriptions in Vienne (Isère)** – On 14 May 2010, it was discovered racist inscriptions on tombs of three squares Muslim cemetery in Vienna Isere. The graffiti was aimed at the French Harki community [the generic term for Muslim Algerians serving as auxiliaries with the French Army, during the Algerian War from 1954 to 1962, in: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harki>].

In: <http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/actualite/societe/20100516.OBS4029/inscriptions-racistes-sur-des-tombes-musulmanes-a-vienne-reaction-du-cfcm.html> translated from *French by Islam in Europe Blog* with some editions by the *Islamophobia Observatory* – retrieved on 18.05.2010

iii) **France: 18 Muslim tombs violated in Strasbourg** – 18 tombs of the Muslim sector of the Robertsau cemetery in Strasbourg were violated on night of 29 Jun 2010 by persons unknown that left no trace or message. The discovery came in the following morning when the guardian of the 61 tombs arrived. Socialist mayor Roland Ries defined it a barbaric act, and announced that the municipality would take care of the expense of renovating the burial sites.

In: <http://abna.ir/data.asp?lang=3&id=193803> retrieved on 30.06.2010

iv) **UK: Vandals desecrate Muslim graves in High Wycombe** – Vandals had attacked 20 Muslim graves at a cemetery in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. Headstones were pushed over and ornaments from the graves strewn around the cemetery in Hampden Road. The graves were vandalized between 2100 BST on 20 April and 0800 BST on 21 April 2011.



Thames Valley Police said it took the incident extremely seriously and was supporting families and the community as well as hunting the vandals.

In: <http://www.islamophobia-watch.com/islamophobia-watch/2011/4/22/vandals-desecrate-muslim-graves-in-high-wycombe.html> retrieved on 23.04.2011

3. Political and Social Campaigns against Islam and Muslims

i) **US: Pamela Geller, blogger with Tea Party ties, launches ad crusade against 'Islamization of America'** – Pamela Geller and the New York-based Stop the Islamization of America with Tea Party ties placed ads on New York city buses aimed at outraging Muslims. The ads read: "Fatwa on your head? Is your family or community threatening you? Leaving Islam?" They also direct Muslims to a Web site urging them to leave the "falsity of Islam".



In: http://www.nydailynews.com/news/2010/05/26/2010-05-26_ads_anger_muslims_tea_party_favorite_launches_crusade_against_islamization_of_am.html retrieved on 27.05.2010

ii) **Anti-Islam Movement Reaches Poland** – European anxiety over the presence of Muslims in traditionally Christian societies arrived in Poland, where the capital was blanketed in anti-Islamic posters and several hundred protesters that had showed up to denounce the construction of a mosque. Demonstrators waved signs proclaiming “Stop Islamization,” galvanized by posters put up around Warsaw showing a woman clad in a black chador, with menacing minarets that looked like missiles peering out behind her.

In: <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/poland/100520/islamophobia-europe-immigration> retrieved on 25.05.2010

iii) **US: billboard Warns Drivers about Islam** – On a stretch of highway from Orangeburg to



Columbia a billboard stood out, reading “Islam Rising Be Warned”. If you looked closely at the sign, it sent you to a website paid for by the Christian Action Network. *Wis10* (a TV station) emailed the group for a comment, and they requested *Wis10* to watch their video first. The video showed protests of people holding signs reading “Be prepared for the real holocaust” and showed the deadly attacks of 9/11, as well as a man saying: “I have been

ordered by Allah to fight against people until they testify there is no god but Allah.”

In: <http://www.wistv.com/Global/story.asp?S=12685488> retrieved on 23.06.2010

iv) **UK: Minister Caves in to Islamophobia** – A dangerous precedent of climbing down in the face of pressure from the English Defense League (EDL) was set in the third week of June 2010. Theresa May, the UK Tory home secretary, responded to the EDL’s plans to protest in Wembley against Muslim scholar Zakir Naik by banning him from entering Britain. Naik had visited Britain on several previous occasions. Caving into racists and Islamophobes will only strengthen them.

In: <http://www.socialistworker.co.uk/art.php?id=21607> retrieved on 23.06.2010

v) **Canada Cancels Travel Visa of Islamic Preacher** – Canada cancelled the travel visa of a Zakir Naik, who was scheduled to speak at a religious conference in Toronto. Officials from the Canadian High Commission in New Delhi telephoned popular Islamic televangelist Zakir Naik to say the 44-year-old doctor’s five-year, multiple-entry visa to Canada issued in 2010 had been cancelled, as the British Home Ministry said the department had discovered evidence “of his unacceptable behaviour.”

In: <http://www.thestar.com/news/world/article/827616--canada-cancels-travel-visa-of-islamic-preacher> retrieved on 25.06.2010

vi) **Dutch lawmaker forms anti-Islam group** – Geert Wilders, Dutch anti-Islam lawmaker, formed an international alliance to spread his message across the West in a bid to ban immigration from Islamic countries, among other goals. The Alliance would be launched initially in five countries: the U.S., Canada, Britain, France and Germany. Among the group’s aims was outlawing immigration from Islamic countries to the West and a ban on Islamic Sharia law. Wilders said at the Dutch Parliament: “The message, ‘stop Islam, defend freedom,’ is a message that’s not only important for the Netherlands but for the whole free Western world,”

In: <http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5i7sed5PIYN1M5veXBQGEeINc13LOD9GVIQOG0> retrieved on 16.07.2010

vii) **Anti-mosque game sparks row in Austria** – The Austrian Freedom Party’s website included a link to an online video game called “Bye Bye Mosque”, which gave players one minute to place targets in the image of cartoon muezzins calling for prayer over mosque minarets, and then click a “Stop” sign. The link to the controversial game was being used to encourage voters to elect Gerhard Kurzmann, the party’s candidate in the region of Styria, in local elections that were

scheduled to take place on 26 September 2010. "Game Over. Styria is now full of minarets and mosques!" the game said at the end of a session, before inviting players to vote for Kurzmann. However, there were no mosques with minarets in Styria.

In: <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0.7340.L-3949033.00.html> retrieved on 03.09.2010

viii) **Swedish MP calls Islam the enemy** – *The Local* (Sweden's news in English), was among a slew of Swedish news sources that in September 2010 reported on a local Sweden Democrat politician who called for a ban on Muslims practicing Islam in Strömstad in northern Sweden. In the week of 20 October 2010, Sweden Democrat member of parliament and international affairs spokesperson, Kent Ekeröth, declared that Islam, the religious faith itself, to be the "enemy" of Sweden.

In: <http://www.thelocal.se/blog/20101026/776/> retrieved on 28.10.2010

ix) **US: Kansas legislator forwards anti-Muslim e-mail** – Pretty Prairie Republican Joe Seiwert, a Kansas House Member, said that he was simply passing on information he had received from someone else when he forwarded the e-mail to about 40 people last week with no intention to offend anyone. Seiwert told *The Associated Press* that he forwarded it using his personal e-mail account. The unsigned e-mail has been circulating since at least 2006 and says Muslims could not be good Americans because they owed their allegiance to Islam. Asked whether he thought Muslims could be good Americans, Seiwert said he thought most were trying to be.

In: <http://www.ktka.com/news/2010/nov/11/kansas-legislator-forwards-anti-muslim-e-mail/> retrieved on 13.11.2010

x) **US: Dakota City councilman erects 'Never trust a man named Mohamed' sign** – Dakota



City councilman Bob Lane whipped up a controversy when he placed a sign on his property reading "Never Trust a Man Named Mohamed". Lane, well-known in Dakota City for his strong opinions primarily on local and county government, placed the sign near a multiplex rental unit he owns in the 300 block of North 14th Street, a high-traffic route into the Dakota County town of 1,827. The sign led several residents to lodge complaints at City Hall.

Lane told the *Journal* he did not specify what the Mohamed name referenced, adding: "It is freedom of

speech. Whenever we have a problem in the nation, the first name, the middle name or the last name is often Mohamed."

In: <http://www.islamophobia-watch.com/islamophobia-watch/2010/12/23/dakota-city-councilman-erects-never-trust-a-man-named-mohame.html> retrieved on 25.12.2010

xi) **UK: Portsmouth councilor in imam prayer protest** – Conservative councilor Malcolm Hey, a Portsmouth councilor, walked out of Tuesday night's Portsmouth City Council chamber because an imam, Sheikh Fazle Abbas Datto, was asked to deliver an opening prayer. The imam, from the Al Mahdi mosque in Wickham, had been invited by the city's lord mayor Paula Riches. Mr. Hey said it was not appropriate for a Muslim to deliver prayers at the start of a full council meeting. His behavior was heavily criticized by Muslim community group Wessex Jamaat, which said snubbing the imam by walking out was "a serious issue". Gerald Veron-Jackson, leader of the Liberal Democrat-controlled council, has written to Conservative Party chairman Baroness Warsi calling for the councillor to be excluded from the party. He added: "Not only were [his]

actions hugely disrespectful to the lord mayor and to the imam, but also to the whole of the Muslim community." But he has kept his position on the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (Sacre) due to a 'forgiving' letter by the President of Wessex Jamaat, Roshan Gangji to education boss, Councillor Terry Hall.

In: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-12284894> and http://www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/politics/mosque_request_saves_walk_out_councillor_s_role_1_2354327 retrieved on 29.01.2011 and on 30.01.2011, respectively

xii) **UK: Protesters stage anti-Islam demonstration north of London** – Chanting "never surrender" and waving signs reading "No more mosques" and "Islam is the devil", hundreds of protesters demonstrated 05 February 2011 just north of London. The protest in Luton was organized by the English Defence League, a far-right British organization that pushes an anti-Islamic message. It was formed in the summer of 2009 after a group of radical Muslims protested during a homecoming parade for British troops.

In: <http://www.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/europe/02/05/england.islam.protests/> retrieved on 06.02.2011

xiii) **CAIR: Missouri GOP Lawmaker Calls Sharia a 'Disease' Like Polio** – The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) called on state and US national GOP leaders to repudiate remarks by a Republican lawmaker in Missouri who referred to Islamic principles, or Sharia, as a "disease" like polio. CAIR said state Rep. Don Wells (R-Cabool) made that comparison on 16 March during a meeting of the Missouri House Judiciary Committee, which was discussing a bill Wells had proposed to ban consideration of Sharia in that state's courts. When a Democratic lawmaker asked if Wells really believed Sharia law was like polio, he replied, "Absolutely".

In: <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/cair-missouri-gop-lawmaker-calls-sharia-a-disease-like-polio-118192019.html> retrieved on 19.03.2011

xiv) **Belgium: Turkey protests anti-immigrant poster** – The Turkish Embassy in Brussels



had condemned a far-right party after it used posters depicting Turkish and Moroccan immigrants as a sheep being kicked out of Europe. The poster was presented at a conference of the anti-immigrant Flaman Vlaams Belang party over the weekend of 16 April 2011. It featured a white sheep that symbolizes European states exiling a red sheep with printed flags of Turkey and Morocco. It reportedly was based on a similar poster used earlier in another European country, Switzerland.

In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2011/04/belgium-turkey-protests-anti-immigrant.html> retrieved on 17.04.2011

xv) **UK: BNP anti-mosque campaigners arrested on suspicion of racially aggravated public order offence** – The former leader of the city's



BNP was arrested while taking part in a protest against a new mosque. Kieren Trent was arrested in Victoria Street, Wolverton, during a demonstration held by the right-wing group on 24 April 2011 afternoon. A female who was at the protest was also arrested. The demonstration took place following the decision by Milton Keynes Council's planning committee to allow The Plough pub in Manor Road, Bletchley, to be converted into a mosque.

It is believed members of the BNP approached Councillor Mike Galloway, cabinet member for development and a member of the committee, because he had voted in favour of the plans. A police spokesman said: "Officers arrived at the scene and arrested two people on suspicion of racially aggravated public order. A 20-year-old man and a 26-year-old woman were taken to police custody in Milton Keynes and later released on bail."

In: <http://www.islamophobia-watch.com/islamophobia-watch/2011/4/27/bnp-anti-mosque-campaigners-arrested-on-suspicion-of-racial.html> retrieved on 30.04.2011

xvi) UK: UKIP by-election candidate backs Geert Wilders, says Islam is 'morally flawed and degenerate' – Abhijit Pandya, an Indian-origin candidate for the Leicester South

byelection, had sparked fury by making critical remarks about Islam in his blog less than a week before the May 5 elections. Pandya, 31, the candidate for the UK Independence Party.



On his blog, Pandya called Islam "morally flawed and degenerate" and said he backed Geert Wilders, a controversial Dutch politician who allegedly called Islam a retarded ideology. He wrote: "A theological system that fundamentally encourages discrimination between those who believe it and those who don't, treating the latter as second-class citizens, is backward. A system that treats women as slaves without chains is morally flawed and degenerate. Cultural practices in many parts of the world which include child marriages and the death penalty for practising homosexuality are reminders that man is capable of going back to the dark ages very quickly."

In: <http://www.islamophobia-watch.com/islamophobia-watch/2011/4/27/ukip-by-election-candidate-backs-geert-wilders-says-islam-is.html> retrieved on 30.04.2011

4. Intolerance against Islam and its Sacred Symbols

i) US: Justin Long compares private parts to Prophet Muhammad – Justin Long, an American actor, had jokingly compared his private parts to the Prophet Muhammad. He made his controversial comments in an interview with Drew Barrymore, his *Going the Distance* co-star and sometime girlfriend. The couple asked each other ten questions via e-mail for an interview with *BlackBook* magazine. At one point Barrymore asked Long: "I heard you were meant to have full-frontal scene in the movie that got cut. What happened?" Long then jokingly replied, saying: "Apparently my p**** bears too striking a resemblance to the Prophet Muhammad."

In: http://www.monstersandcritics.com/people/news/article_1579577.php/Justin-Long-compares-private-parts-to-Prophet-Muhammad retrieved on 24.05.2010

ii) Italy: Islam denied income tax revenue – According to a bill approved by the Italian cabinet in May 2010, mosques in Italy would not receive a share of income tax revenue the Italian government allocated to religious faiths each year. Hindu and Buddhist temples, Greek Orthodox churches and Jehovah's Witnesses would be eligible for the funds. The government had earmarked 8% of income tax revenue for Italy's established churches, which the great majority went to the Catholic Church. Islam is not an established religion in Italy and there is only one official mosque in the country, Rome's Grand Mosque.

In: <http://www.adnkronos.com/AKI/English/Religion/?id=3.1.880028077> retrieved on 30.08.2010

iii) French police arrest man over Koran-burning video – A French judicial officer said that the French police questioned a man over an online video which features someone burning a page of the Koran and urinating on its ashes. The video which had since been removed from *YouTube* and *Dailymotion* showed a man tearing off a page of the Koran, making a paper plane and throwing it onto two glasses representing the World Trade Center. The man then burns the page and urinates onto its ashes. In the footage, the man claims he was soiling the Koran in the

"name of freedom". He showed his face to the camera at the beginning of the video, gave his name and said he lived in Bishheim, on the outskirts of Strasbourg.

In: <http://www.english.rfi.fr/visiting-france/20101004-french-police-arrest-man-over-koran-burning-video> retrieved on 07.10.2010

iv) **Pilgrimage church walls smeared with anti-Islam slogans** – Police in Mariazell, Styria,



said the outside wall of the Mariazell Basilica, Austria's most important pilgrimage site was defaced on 09 October 2010 with anti-Islamic statements. The graffiti was 30 meters long and one meter high, reading: "Der Koran ist dem Teufel seine Bibel" (Koran is the bible of the devil) and "Am Horizont taucht der Teufel auf" (The devil appears on the horizon).

In: http://www.austriantimes.at/news/General_News/2010-10-11/27372/Pilgrimage_church_walls_smeared_with_anti-Islam_slogans retrieved on 12.10.2010

v) **UK: Girl arrested for allegedly burning Qur'an** – A 15-year-old girl had been arrested in the West Midlands on suspicion of inciting religious hatred after allegedly burning an English-language version of the Qur'an – and then posting video footage of the act on *Facebook*. The teenager, from Sandwell, in the Birmingham area, was filmed on her school premises burning the book. Police confirmed the incident was reported to the school and the video had since been removed from the social networking site. The girl latter was released on police bail. It was believed the girl was allegedly filmed setting the book alight while other pupils looked on.

In: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/nov/25/girl-arrested-allegedly-burning-quran> retrieved on 27.11.2010

vi) **Leading rabbi says Europe risks being 'overrun' by Islam** – Speaking to journalists at a meeting in Jerusalem on 26 November 2010, Rabbi Rosen, the director of inter-religious affairs at the Washington-based *American Jewish Congress*, said that a predominantly secular and liberal Western European society was under threat by the rapid growth of Islamic communities that do not want to integrate with their neighbours. The rabbi warned: "...Western society very clearly doesn't have a strong identity. I would like Christians in Europe to become more Christian...those who do not have a strong identity are easily overrun by those who do." Rabbi Rosen's views were shared by a number of Jewish commentators, who look at the demographic growth of Muslims in Europe with the same trepidation as the demographic growth of Arabs in Israel.

In: <http://euobserver.com/9/31386> retrieved on 30.11.2010

vii) **NYPD gins up cops with anti-Muslim training video** – It was reported that New York police were shown a lurid, conspiracy-mongering movie called *The Third Jihad* as part of their counter-terrorism training in January 2011. The movie claimed that American Muslims were secretly trying to undermine and destroy Western civilization from within. *The Third Jihad* was produced by the Clarion Fund, the shadowy group that mailed out millions of DVDs of its first movie, *Obsession: Radical Islam's War Against the West* to swing-state voters in 2008. Responding to inquires, the NYPD acknowledged that *The Third Jihad* was "wacky" and was "inappropriate" for counterterrorism training. It was still not clear whose idea it was to show the film.

In: http://www.salon.com/news/politics/war_room/2011/01/19/nypd_third_jihad/ retrieved on 22.01.2011

viii) **UK: Man charged over 'Koran burning' in Carlisle** - Andrew Ryan, 32, from Summerhill, Carlisle has been charged in connection with the burning of a copy of the Koran in Carlisle, which meant that he has been charged with religiously aggravated harassment and theft of the Koran. Cumbria Police attended an incident in the city's English Street on 19 January 2011 after reports from the public.

In: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cumbria-12689516> retrieved on 12.03.2011

ix) **CAIR-LA seeks hate crime charges for vandalism with desecrated Qur'an** - The Greater Los Angeles Area office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-LA) on 12 March 2011 announced that it had called on the Anaheim Police Department to investigate a recent incident involving desecration of a Quran, as a hate crime. Earlier in the week of 12 March 2011, a Muslim woman returning to her car after shopping for groceries noticed a piece of paper taped to her car. She then saw that it was a partial page torn from a copy of the Quran with "F*ck it" written across it in red. The woman also noticed foam sprayed on the driver's side of the car. The vandal or vandals had also "keyed" the car's doors. The woman, a 68-year-old Egyptian-American grandmother who wore an Islamic head scarf, told CAIR-LA she was "shocked and terrified".

In: <http://www.islamophobia-watch.com/islamophobia-watch/2011/3/12/cair-la-seeks-hate-crime-charges-for-vandalism-with-desecrat.html> retrieved on 13.03.2011

x) **US: Bill Maher to Rep. Ellison: Koran is a 'Hate-Filled Holy Book'** – On 12 March, Congressman Keith Ellison (D-MN) appeared in Bill Maher's *Real Time*, where he was told the following:

*"I would say the threat from radicalized Muslims is a unique and greater threat. It is the greatest threat. Let me give you the reasons why I jotted down why. One. It's been going on a thousand years, this problem Islam and the West. **We're dealing with a culture that is in its medieval era.***

It comes from a hate-filled holy book, the Koran, which is taken very literally by its people. They are trying to get nuclear weapons. I don't think Timothy McVeigh would ever try to get a nuclear weapon because I think right-wing nuts, they think they love this country and they are not trying to destroy this country. They want to get it away from the people that they see as hijacking it. That's different than Muslim extremists who want to destroy it."

In: <http://gatewaypundit.rightnetwork.com/2011/03/bill-maher-to-rep-keith-ellison-the-koran-is-a-hate-filled-holy-book-video/> retrieved on 14.03.2011

xi) **Controversial pastor reveals plans if Muhammad found 'guilty' next** – The Florida pastor who burned the Qur'an said: "As far as judging Muhammad, it would take place in the same way. We would try to obtain experts on both sides of the bench, and if Muhammad was found innocent ... then we would issue a public apology to Islam, to the Quran, to the followers of Muhammad for our actions at insulting [them]. If he was found guilty, then we would do in the same manner as the Quran burning. We would offer probably four or five different forms of punishment, and then the form of punishment that the people voted upon, that would be the punishment that would be executed...On that day we had four forms of punishment – they were burning, grounding, shredding and facing of a firing squad. We would probably pick some of those kinds of forms, and if Muhammad was found guilty ... we would put together some type of picture or some type of dummy figure to represent him, and then the execution would be done on that particular object we created."

In: <http://www.wnd.com/index.php?fa=PAGE.view&pageId=285425> retrieved on 11.04.2011

xii) **BNP candidate accused of publicly burning a copy of the Koran is freed as police continue investigation** – Sion Owens, 41, of Bonymaen, Swansea, South Wales, a British National Party election candidate was arrested and charged at the weekend of 10 April under

Section 29 of the Public Order Act accused of publicly burning a copy of the Koran. However, he was freed on 11 April when the charge against him was unexpectedly dropped. His arrest and charge came after *The Observer* newspaper reported it had handed police a video which appeared to show Mr Owens dousing a copy of the Koran with paraffin before setting it alight.

In: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1375447/BNP-candidate-Sion-Owens-freed-accused-publicly-burning-Koran.html#ixzz1JAxqXLi1> retrieved on 12.04.2011

xiii) **US: Islamic center reports threat, finds charred Qurans** – Leaders of the Islamic Center of Springfield (Missouri) said they received a threatening letter targeting Muslims on 10 April 2011, stating, inter alia, that Muslims “stain the earth,” and the author vowed “Islam will not survive”, at the end of the five-line typed letter was a drawing of a ram’s head with the slogan “Death to Islam!”. Earlier that day, they found charred remains of three Qurans. The FBI confirmed an investigation into possible civil rights violations, and logs of police calls confirmed two incidents at the center on Sunday (10 April); one logged as “found property” and the other a “terrorist threat.” Neither log included reference to the Muslim holy book, but two center leaders described specifically what was found and reported to police.

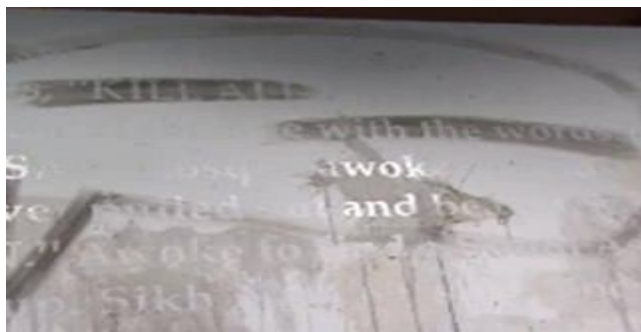
In: <http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2011-04-14-islam-threat-quran-burning.htm> retrieved on 16.04.2011

xiv) **Canada: Ezra Levant brings back Muhammad cartoons during Sun TV launch** – *Sun News Network* launched Monday (18 April), stoking controversy by broadcasting cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad that had sparked anger from Muslims worldwide after they were published in a Danish newspaper in 2005. Host Ezra Levant showed the cartoons in the TV station’s first hour as part of a segment about freedom of speech on the premiere of his show, *The Source*. Levant, who published the cartoons in his now defunct magazine *The Western Standard* in 2006, said other media should not have declined to publish the cartoons. Levant said on his show: “For that sin of showing people the news, we were prosecuted...Free speech is always under attack...I’m 100 per cent convinced this show will be attacked by the government too.”

In: <http://www.calgaryherald.com/Ezra+Levant+brings+back+Muhammad+cartoons+during+launch/4650698/story.html> retrieved on 21.04.2011

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

i) **US: Art Exposing Hate Crimes against Muslims Defaced** – An art exhibit intended to call attention to hate crimes may have been the target of one. A Muslim student, Anida Ali, at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago said her artwork, on display in a student gallery, was defaced with the words “Kill all Arabs” on 11 May 2010.



The exhibit addressed racial profiling and the rise of violence and hate directed at Muslims in the post-9/11 era. The installation featured a

wall filled with lines from actual hate crimes against people perceived as Muslim or Arab.

In: <http://cbs2chicago.com/local/art.muslims.hate.2.1690880.html> retrieved on 15.05.2010

ii) **German court denies Muslim right to pray at school** – A Berlin court rejected a legal bid by a 16-year-old Muslim student to be granted the right to conduct Islamic prayer rituals at his school in the Wedding district of Berlin. Explaining its verdict on 27 May 2010, the regional appeal court said that upholding peace in the school took precedence over the student's right to religious observance. The legal appeal followed a decision by the school to forbid the student from audibly praying in public at the school. The youth had also hoped to secure a special prayer room, but the court said he had no right to this.

In: <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE64Q5U120100527> retrieved on 28.05.2010

iii) **US: Muslim Man Beaten by Teens Claims it Was Hate Crime** – A Muslim man near San Francisco claimed his recent beating by teenagers was a hate crime. The man said he was holding a Koran on 11 Jun 2010 afternoon while waiting for a ride in Sunnyvale when two boys approached. The man said that the boys asked if he was Jewish and he replied Muslim, and the boys then called him a terrorist and started throwing punches. The man added that he suffered facial cuts and bruising and was asking cops and the FBI to investigate the assault as a hate crime. The Bay Area County on American-Islamic Relations said that hate crimes against Muslims were on the rise.

In: http://mystateline.com/fulltext-news/?nxd_id=170275 retrieved on 16.06.2010

iv) **UK: Attacks on Muslim girls** – These are the shocking injuries inflicted upon schoolgirl Sureyya Ozkaya during a brutal daylight assault near her Thornton Heath home: The 14-year-old's hair was set on fire and her hands and feet were cut with glass during the attack in Grangewood Park, before her attackers smashed her head against a tree and left her bleeding in a bush. She was stumbled upon by a woman walking her dog and carried home to nearby Kitchener Road following the attack, at about 7.30pm on 9 June 2010. Sureyya's mother Pemdegul Kale, 39, said three girls taunted her daughter about her Muslim faith as they carried out the assault, before burning her hair with a lighter and stealing her trainers.

Hayat Kaddouri Roddy and her 13-year-old daughter Huda were stopped by two teenagers, a boy and girl aged around 17 to 18, who refused to let them pass. They racially abused the woman before a man aged around 27 joined in the attack happened in Edmund Street, in the St David's area of Exeter, close to the subway, at around 12.30pm on 22 Jun 2010. Both were wearing hijab head-dresses, and Hayat also had on a traditional Muslim jilbab — a long dress. Hayat said: "This couple stopped us and said they weren't going to let us pass. They said 'you don't belong to this country.'"

In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2010/06/uk-attacks-on-muslim-girls.html> retrieved on 27.06.2010

v) **USA: Muslim teen beaten, called a 'terrorist' by classmates says he stayed silent out of fear** – Kristian, a Muslim boy and a 16-year-old high school freshman, said four bullies made his life a living hell in the halls of a Staten Island public school, calling him a "terrorist" and beating him every chance they got. He told his father and the police of the constant abuse he endured, and told the *New York Daily News* that the bullying began when the thugs first called him gay and quickly escalated to him being battered for his Muslim heritage and blamed for terrorist bombings, adding: "[They] punched me in my groin, and I fell to the floor. They started kicking me, and calling me 'You f---in' terrorist', 'You f---in' Muslim'." The revelations prompted police on 10 October 2010 to arrest four suspects - three 14-year-old Latinos and a 15-year-old African-American - were arrested on charges of assault and aggravated harassment - both as hate crimes.

In: http://www.nydailynews.com/news/ny_crime/2010/10/11/2010-10-11_si_muslim_teen_beaten_mocked_by_classmates.html retrieved on 13.10.2010

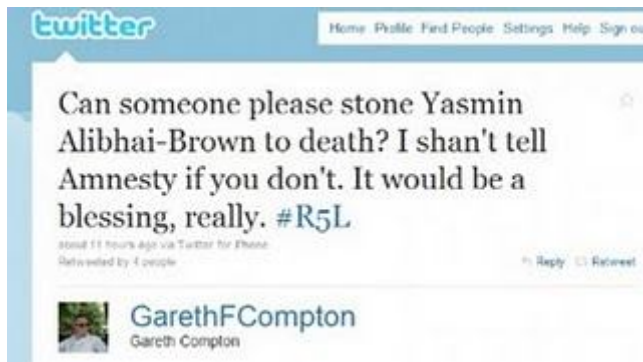
vi) **UK: Activist angry at 'defiled' Koran** – Mohammed Salim, of Letchworth Avenue, Rochdale, an Islamic activist, had been sent pages of the Koran with graffiti scrawled on them. He received three pages of the Muslim holy book graffitied with the words 'c**p', 'paper' and 'toilet'. The abusive mail was posted anonymously from Canada, addressed to 'Allah Hoo Hoo Salim' and arrived at Mr Salim's family home on 18 October 2010.

In: http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/s/1346167_activist_angry_at_defiled_koran retrieved on 23.10.2010

vi) **Finland: Christian Democrats want Christian refugees to be given preference over Muslims** – According to Christian Democratic Party Chair Päivi Räsänen, Christian refugees coming to Finland should be given first preference over Muslims. In a recent interview with Finnish university student magazine *Ylioppilaslehti*, Räsänen reasoned that Christians adapted to Finland better than Muslims because of commonalities in religion and culture. Räsänen added that Muslims were at greater risk of becoming isolated in Finnish society, which could lead to radicalization.

In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2010/10/finland-christian-democrats-want.html> and http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/10/rasanen_welcomes_christian_refugees_first_2100379.html retrieved on 01.11.2010

vii) **Birmingham: Tory councillor arrested after wishing a stoning death on Muslim journalist** – Tory councillor Gareth Compton allegedly called for a Muslim journalist to be stoned to death, and for that he had been arrested and bailed, suspended from his party, accused of 'incitement to murder' and branded a racist.



The 38-year-old barrister had been reacting to a radio show featuring newspaper columnist Yasmin Alibhai-Brown discussing David Cameron's visit to China. Mrs Alibhai-Brown, 60, said that, since the Iraq war and allegations of torture arising from the invasion, she did not think Mr. Cameron or most other British politicians were morally qualified to speak out about human rights abuses.

In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2010/11/birmingham-tory-councillor-arrested.html> retrieved on 12.11.2010

viii) **Alabama: BBQ Restaurants 'Safest' Because Muslims Don't Eat Pork** – If any art form can truly be called American, it was offensive text on the signboards of churches and places of business. The latest masterpiece came from an electronic repair shop in the Florence for this kind of art, Alabama: "BBQ PORK RESTAURANT IS SAFEST NO MUSLIMS INSIDE SEWER CAM REPAIR."



In: <http://wonkette.com/432104/alabama-barbeque-restaurants-safest-because-muslims-dont-eat-pork> retrieved on 10.12.2010

ix) **US: Two Men Arrested in Alleged Muslim Bias Attack on Downtown Subway Platform**

– Two men have been arraigned on hate charges after allegedly beating an Imam, calling him a "camel jockey" and throwing his religious head covering onto the subway tracks early morning of 28 December 2010. The victim was punched the several times in the face, and had to be

treated for a black eye and swelling. Police in Manhattan said that two men, Albert Melendez, 30, from Harlem, and Eddie Crespo, 28, from Staten Island, were accused of making anti-Muslim remarks and assaulting the 49-year-old victim on the northbound A train platform inside the Canal Street subway station.

In: <http://www.dnainfo.com/20101209/lower-east-side-east-village/two-men-arrested-muslim-bias-attack-on-subway-platform> retrieved on 10.12.2010

x) **US: Man accused of harassing Muslim women** – Local Police said a man in Twin Falls, Idaho, was arrested after reportedly threatening a Muslim woman shopping at the city's Walmart. It was reported that 42-year-old John C. Larsen was arraigned Thursday (Dec 23) on a charge of felony malicious harassment in Twin Falls County 5th District Court. Witnesses reported hearing the man scream at the women, telling her he had a concealed weapon, had killed Muslims in Iraq and would kill more.

In: <http://www.kivitv.com/Global/story.asp?S=13738333> retrieved on 25.12.2010

xi) **UK: Fire at Southampton halal food shop treated as arson** – Local police confirmed that a blaze at a Southampton grocery store on 27 January 2011 was being treated as arson. The incident at the Emdads Halal Food Hall, on Derby Road, St Mary's resulted in 18 people being evacuated from their homes.



In: <http://www.islamophobia-watch.com/islamophobia-watch/2011/1/30/fire-at-southampton-halal-food-shop-treated-as-arson.html> retrieved on 31.01.2011

xii) **Copenhagen: Thrown off plane for reading about Islam** – Joakim Johansson (24, from Arlöv-Sweden), converted to Islam in 2007, was supposed to fly from Kastrup (Copenhagen) to London to visit friends. He boarded the plane and took out manuscripts about Islam. Among other things the text was about interpretation of religion statements. Suddenly a flight attendant came over, called him to the captain and there he got a cold shower. Joakim, who was asked to leave the SAS plane, said: "The pilot said that I couldn't read that 'there', that people didn't like it nowadays." The police was waiting outside and escorted him to a detention cell in the airport. Joakim added: "They said that I wouldn't get to fly and asked me to try again another day. Then they would put me on the train to Malmö." After an interrogation and several hours in the cell, he got new information. SAS changed its mind and let him fly to London. Joakim did not get an apology from SAS and intended to pursue the matter further.

In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2011/01/copenhagen-thrown-off-plane-for-reading.html> retrieved on 31.01.2011

xiii) **US: Muslim Man Stabbed in Florida** – According to police, a Muslim man was attacked in Florida. The alleged attacker stabbed the Muslim victim in the neck during a Friday (04 February 2011) night discussion of religion. The stabbing reportedly occurred after the victim said he was Muslim. A police report of the incident quoted the alleged assailant, who was charged with aggravated assault, as saying that "Muslims are the root of the problem".

In: <http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/International/07-Feb-2011/Stabbing-of-Muslim-prompts-call-for-rejecting-Islamophobia-in-US> retrieved on 08.02.2011

xiv) **Sweden: UPS sued for demanding Muslim shave beard** – Sweden's Equality Ombudsman (DO) filed a lawsuit against parcel delivery company United Parcel Service (UPS) after the company dismissed a Muslim driver who refused to shave his beard. In a lawsuit filed with Sweden's Labour Court (Arbetsdomstolen) on 14 February 2011, the ombudsman argued that the company should pay the man, a resident of Spånga northeast of Stockholm, 150,000 kronor (\$23,000) in compensation plus 42,000 kronor in lost income, as well as interest on both amounts.

In: <http://www.thelocal.se/31960/20110210/> retrieved on 14.02.2011

xv) **Anti-Muslim Protestor Throws Crosses at Feet of Man Praying By White House** – A



group of anti-Sharia protestors who planned to counter-protest the planned pro-Sharia rally by the Anjem Choudary in front of the White House on Thursday (3rd March) found themselves without an opponent to debate. The counter rally planned by Frank Gaffney in response to Choudary's pro-Sharia demonstration was left without a *raison d'être* after Choudary failed to show up as he had previously announced (and promoted on *Fox News*). That left Gaffney and his group preaching to the choir so to speak as they denounced Sharia law to their followers as well as media and curious onlookers.

But just as the rally was dying out, a Muslim man who showed up to pray in front of the White House. He was quickly surrounded by a large group of protestors who shouted an array of insults at him: mocking him for drinking Starbucks coffee, telling him to go back to his country and even throwing tiny crosses at his feet as he prayed.

In: <http://tpmmuckraker.talkingpointsmemo.com/2011/03/anti-muslim-protestor-throws-crosses-at-feet-of-man-praying-by-white-house-video.php> retrieved on 05.03.2011

xvi) **US: The ugly face of Islamophobia in Orange County, California** – The Southern California chapter of the Islamic Circle of North America Relief USA (ICNA) organized a fundraising dinner in Orange County in February 2011. But, a motley collection of protestors who could be seen chanting in a video distributed by the Council on American-Islamic Relations civil rights group:

As the video shows, the rhetoric of the protestors became increasingly venomous toward the families and children who came to attend the ICNA Relief fundraising dinner. Protesters shouted invective statements such as "Go home terrorist", "Muhammad is a pervert, Muhammad is a child molester", "Go home and beat your wife, she needs a good beating", at the event-goers.

One of the protestors' guest speakers, seen in the video, was a local councilwoman who denounced the event as "pure, unadulterated evil," and continued:

I know quite a few Marines who would be very happy to help these terrorists to an early meeting in paradise.

The local paper, the *Orange County Register*, noted the signs saying "No Sharia law". Two Republican congressmen also attended the protest rally, including one, Ed Royce, who spoke of how "multiculturalism" was paralyzing America.

In: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/richard-adams-blog/2011/mar/03/orange-county-protest-islam> retrieved on 05.03.2011

xvii) **US: Southwest Apologizes for Removing Muslim Passenger from Flight** – Southwest Airlines apologized after a Muslim woman wearing a headscarf, Irum Abbasi, a San Jose University graduate student, was pulled off a flight on Sunday (13 March) because a flight attendant thought she heard her say into her cell phone: "It's a go."

Edgar Hopida, a spokesman for the Council on American-Islamic Relations, told *AOL Travel News*: "She went through the security check. She went through the secondary check because of her headscarf, which was fine...The flight attendant indicated she did not feel comfortable with the student on the flight." The airline said in a statement to *AOL Travel News*: "...We are attempting to follow up with the customer directly to apologize again for her inconvenience."

In: <http://news.travel.aol.com/2011/03/16/southwest-apologizes-for-removing-muslim-passenger-from-flight/> retrieved on 17.03.2011

xviii) **Bryan Fischer: Muslims in US Have No First Amendment Rights** – Bryan Fischer, the "Director of Issues Analysis" for the social conservative group the *American Family Association*, said that when it came to Islam, the First Amendment was a privilege, not a right. He wrote on 24 March on his *Renew America blog*: "Islam has no fundamental First Amendment claims, for the simple reason that it was not written to protect the religion of Islam...The First Amendment was written by the Founders to protect the free exercise of Christianity. They were making no effort to give special protections to Islam. Quite the contrary...Islam has no fundamental First Amendment claims, for the simple reason that it was not written to protect the religion of Islam. Islam is entitled only to the religious liberty we extend to it out of courtesy..."

Fischer took it a step further, calling Islam a "treasonous ideology" and adding that "from a constitutional point of view, Muslims have no First Amendment right to build mosques in America. They have that privilege at the moment, but it is a privilege that can be revoked." Fischer had previously called for the U.S. to have "no more mosques, period," because "every single mosque is a potential terror training center or recruitment center for jihad." He had also suggested that Americans should "handle Muslims just like we [Americans] handle neo-Nazis." And his show became a frequent stomping ground for conservative politicians, including potential 2012 presidential candidate Mike Huckabee, and actual 2012 candidate Tim Pawlenty.

In: http://tpmmuckraker.talkingpointsmemo.com/2011/03/bryan_fischer_muslims_have_no_first_amendment_righ.php retrieved on 26.03.2011

xix) **US: Muslims in Metro Detroit are upset about treatment by border patrol** – Muslims in Metro Detroit were seeking a federal investigation into allegations that agents at the border were treating them unfairly. The Michigan Chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) announced the filing of complaints with the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice. Muslims who had crossed the United States-Canadian border claimed customs and border agents had handcuffed them without just cause and even pointed guns at them. The allegations included repeated questions about religious practices including "How many times a day do you pray?" and "Who else prays in your mosque?"

In: http://www.wxyz.com/dpp/news/region/wayne_county/muslims-in-metro-detroit-are-upset-about-treatment-by-border-patrol retrieved on 26.03.2011

xx) **France seeks to ban street prayers** – French Interior Minister Claude Guéant had continued his assault on Islam by saying that he intends to ban prayer in the street. It was the latest in a series of comments which considered being discriminatory. What many French people might not realize is that these outdoor prayers, as with any public gathering in France, always receive government approval beforehand. Paris is the city of 1 minaret, despite the fact that France has the largest Muslim population in Europe. The lack of mosque space forces Muslims to conduct their Friday prayers in the street, but only in a dozen or so places in all of

France. French politicians continually invoke the country's 1905 secularism law to explain why the state cannot give financial assistance to build more mosques for their taxpaying citizens. But even when they have the money, Muslims continually allege that right-wing mayors refuse construction permits and keep land in the hands of the municipalities to prevent the creation of mosques.

It is said that France has 2,000 mosques nationwide, but the overwhelming majority of these are actually small prayer rooms. Just one large mosque was currently under construction in Paris and most said it still would not be enough. The French media often portrays these Muslims praying in the street as engaging in some type of provocative act, but the fact is they would rather be inside in a mosque.

In: <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/176192.html> retrieved on 24.04.2011

6. Incidents Related to *Hijab* (Veil)

i) **German Euro MP urges EU burka ban** – A top German Euro MP Silvana Koch-Mehrin, a member of the liberal Free Democrats (FDP) called for a Europe-wide ban on wearing the Islamic full-body veil, or burka, in public, saying the burka was “a massive attack on women's rights - it is a mobile prison”. Her party was in the German government with Chancellor Angela Merkel's centre-right Christian Democrats (CDU). In an article in the German newspaper *Bild am Sonntag*, Ms Koch-Mehrin said wearing the burka “openly supports values that we do not share in Europe. I want the wearing of all forms of the burka to be banned in Germany too - and throughout Europe.” Meanwhile, German media reported that CDU politician Wolfgang Bosbach, who headed the German parliament's home affairs committee, disagreed with Ms Koch-Mehrin, saying such a ban was unnecessary.

In: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8658017.stm> retrieved on 04.05.2010

ii) **Swiss canton considers burqa ban** – The local council in Aargau, a canton (state) in the north of Switzerland along the German border on 04 May 2010 passed legislation preparing the groundwork for a possible ban on the burqa, it voted overwhelmingly to work on a state initiative to make wearing the burqa in public places illegal. Most major parties backed the move. It was estimated that less than 100 Muslim women across Switzerland wore the burqa. The Swiss Federal Council, the executive branch of government, earlier in 2010 said it opposed a ban, noting the small number of women involved.

In: <http://www.earthtimes.org/articles/show/321920,swiss-canton-considers-burqa-ban.html> retrieved on 08.05.2010

iii) **Australia: Muslims Say Burqa ban is 'un-Australian'** – A call for a controversial ban on wearing the burqa in public had split opinion and sparked outrage from the Muslim community who labelled it a political stunt. Liberal Senator Cory Bernardi on 06 May 2010 sparked outrage after he called for the Islamic headdress to be banned following an earlier robbery in a Sydney store by a burqa clad man. Writing on his personal blog, the outspoken senator said the veil was “emerging as the preferred disguise of bandits and n'er do wells”. He wanted to see it banned, but also because it prevented women from interacting in normal day-to-day life. He also wrote: “The burqa isolates some Australians from others. It is un-Australian - and it is symbolic barrier is far greater than the measure of cloth it is created from. For safety and for society, the burqa needs to be banned.”

In: <http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/national/burqua-ban-is-un-australian-say-muslims/story-e6frf7l6-1225863357698> retrieved on 08.05.2010

iv) **Switzerland: Fribourg cuts benefits for veil-wearers** – Muslim women in Switzerland who refused to work without wearing the veil would have their social benefits reduced. The head of Social Services in Fribourg defended the decision to reduce welfare benefits by 15% over three months. Marie Therese Maradan told papers it was inconceivable the women who did not find work because of their veils should live off the state for years. An appeal had been launched against the decision, which the Swiss Central Islamic council described as discriminatory.

In: <http://worldradio.ch/wrs/news/wrsnews/fribourg-cuts-burqa-wearers-benefits.shtml?18975> retrieved on 11.05.2010

v) **French parliament condemns full Islamic face veil** – On 11 May 2010, the French parliament voted to condemn the full Islamic face veil, calling it “an affront to the nation’s values of dignity and equality”. The non-binding resolution was passed unanimously, although 30 communist deputies walked out in protest. Legislation to ban the full-face veil in public was expected later in 2010.

In: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8676238.stm> retrieved on 12.05.2010

vi) **France has first ‘burka rage’ incident** – A 26-year-old Muslim convert was walking through the store in Trignac, near Nantes, in the western Loire-Atlantique region, when she overheard the woman lawyer making “snide remarks about her black burka”. A police officer close to the case said: “The lawyer said she was not happy seeing a fellow shopper wearing a veil and wanted the ban introduced as soon as possible.” An argument started before the older woman, on her 60s, is said to have ripped the other woman’s veil off. As they came to blows, the lawyer’s daughter joined in. The officer said: “The shop manager and the husband of the Muslim woman moved to break up the fighting.” All three were arrested and taken to the local gendarmerie for questioning. A spokesman for Trignac police said that two complaints had been received, with the Muslim woman accusing the lawyer of racial and religious assault. The latter, in turn, had accused her opponent of common assault. Police said it was France’s first case of “burka rage”.

In: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/7735607/France-has-first-burka-rage-incident.html> retrieved on 19.05.2010

vii) **Antwerp: Court rules company can fire woman for wearing headscarf** – According to the Antwerp (Belgium) labor court, the wearing of religious clothing or symbols at work was not part of the protected ‘faith’ criteria in the anti-discrimination law. G4S, a company offering security and reception services, could impose the unwritten company neutrality principle on a Muslim woman who wanted to wear a headscarf. The company board adjusted the regulations and added a new clause which barred employees from “wearing any visible symbols of their political, ideological or religious convictions at work and/or any ritual act manifested as a result [of those convictions]”. After an unsuccessful meeting, the woman was fired with three months’ severance pay. The following day the new regulation came into effect. The court rules that the woman unjustly claimed she was fired for her religious convictions. According to the court, it would only be discrimination if she was fired for being a follower of Islam.

In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2010/05/antwerp-court-rules-company-can-fire.html> retrieved on 29.05.2010

viii) **Kosovo protest over school headscarf ban** – About five thousand people have protested in Pristina, the capital of Kosovo, against a government decision to ban religious symbols including Muslim headscarves in public schools.

In: <http://www.euronews.net/2010/06/19/kosovo-protest-over-school-headscarf-ban/> retrieved on 20.06.2010

ix) **Spanish Senate Narrowly Votes to Support Ban of Islamic Body Veil** – The Spanish senate approved a motion on 23 June 2010 urging Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero’s government to ban Islamic full-body veils in public places. The vote, 131-129, was passed with

the support of the conservative Popular Party and two smaller conservative regional parties, the CiU and UPN. The motion specifically called for a ban on the niqab. The Socialists accused the Popular Party of using the controversial issue for political gain, since the full-body veils were extremely uncommon in Spain.

In: <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0..5724242.00.html> retrieved on 25.06.2010

x) **Netherlands: Bus driver refuses service to woman in niqab** – 19 year old Ambaro had been wearing the Muslim veil since October 2009. When she got on a bus to Volkel in the Dutch city of Uden, she was immediately pushed out by the bus driver because of her 'extreme clothing', as she was wearing a nikab. *The Connexion* Bus Company did not approve of the driver's behavior and apologized to the woman's husband.

In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2010/07/netherlands-bus-driver-refuses-service.html> retrieved on 17.07.2010

xi) **US: Disney Sends Muslim Employee Home for Wearing Headscarf** – Imane Boudlal, a Muslim Disney employee was suing her employer over being sent home without pay for wearing a headscarf. She filed a complaint with the US Equal Opportunity Commission, the federal agency in charge of enforcing anti-discrimination laws. She worked as a restaurant hostess in the Disneyland Grand Californian Hotel, and company officials asked her to leave when she would not remove her hijab on 15 August 2010, shortly after the beginning of Ramadan. Boudlal said she was told her hijab did not fall in line with the "Disney look." She asked for a "religious accommodation," but was ultimately refused. Reportedly she was told to either give up the scarf or take a job working in a back-of-the-house position where she would not be seen by customers. Boudlal felt the notion was humiliating.

In: <http://www.allheadlinenews.com/articles/7019640964> retrieved on 21.08.2010

xii) **French Senate passes ban on Burqa** – The much debated burqa clad Islamic veil banning bill finally passed on the Senate of France. Such actions of Muslims were harming the local culture as believed by French leaders and therefore they decided to impose this rule. 246 of the 247 voters voted in favor of the bill whereas only one was against. Previously, in July, 2010, the bill was passed in the National Assembly as well.

In: <http://4press.biz/french-senate-passes-ban-on-burqa/1462/> retrieved on 15.09.2010

Related: France's constitutional watchdog endorses veil ban – France's constitutional watchdog on 07 October 2010 endorsed a divisive law forbidding face-covering Islamic veils anywhere in public, but expressed concern about applying it in places of worship such as a mosque. The decision of the Constitutional Council removed a key hurdle for the law, overwhelmingly approved in both houses of parliament in September 2010, despite concerns from some Muslims that it would further stigmatize France's No. 2 religion.

In: <http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5jBLvcjYl38M5uHzhqIF2IV8WWQywD9IN0B100?docId=D9IN0B100&safe=active> retrieved on 09.10.2010

Related: Pope criticises French burqa ban – According to a book due out on Tuesday (Nov 23), Pope Benedict XVI has criticized a French law banning Muslim women from wearing the Islamic full-face veils in public, saying women should be able to wear them voluntarily. Benedict said in a series of interviews in his native German to be published as a book: "As far as the burqa is concerned, I do not see a reason for a general ban. Some women do not wear the burqa entirely voluntarily and it is correct to talk of a violation against that woman. Of course one cannot agree with that. But if they want to wear it voluntarily, I don't know why one must ban them."

In: <http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-world/pope-criticises-french-burqa-ban-20101121-18284.html> retrieved on 21.11.2010

xiii) **French retiree given 1-month suspended sentence for attacking veiled Middle Eastern woman** – A Paris court handed a French retiree a one-month suspended sentence on 04 November 2010 for attacking a Middle Eastern woman who was wearing a face-covering Muslim veil. The court also ordered Jeanne Ruby, a retired English teacher, to pay €800 (\$1,140) in damages to the victim, a citizen of the United Arab Emirates who was on holiday in Paris when the February (2010) incident took place. Ruby had been charged with “aggravated violence” for scratching, biting and slapping the woman and snatching her veil off. The prosecutor in the case had asked Ruby be given a two-month suspended sentence.

In: <http://www.google.com/hostednews/canadianpress/article/ALeqM5hnB67d2vVYLOW10sk8FL3lwaVwUw?docId=5034632&safe=active> retrieved on 06.11.2010

xiv) **Sidney: Complaint lodged over burqa mural** – It has become a lightning rod in the public debate about the right of Muslim women to wear the burqa, attracting protests, the censure of a mayor and messages of support from talkback radio. But the Newtown mural of a woman in a full-face Muslim covering with a strike symbol over her face and the words “Say No to the Burqa” was the subject of an anti-discrimination complaint.



The work of a local artist, Sergio Redegalli, the piece adorned a wall of his studio facing the street and the busy rail line. He said he had painted it to open debate about the burqa, but now felt his right to freedom of expression was on the line.

In: http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/complaint-lodged-over-burqa-mural-20101125-18967.html?from=smh_sb retrieved on 27.11.2010

xv) **German doctor sanctioned for anti-Muslim sign** – A German public health agency disciplined a doctor on 25 November 2010 for hanging a sign in his surgery that demanded Muslim women remove their headscarves. The ‘rules’ sign in his waiting room had said headscarves were banned, very large families were not welcome and all patients had to speak German. The sign made headlines in September (2010)

In: http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/health/news/article_1601454.php/German-doctor-sanctioned-for-anti-Muslim-sign retrieved on 27.11.2010

xvi) **French teacher fired for wearing Hijab** – A Muslim teacher was dismissed from work in France for refusing to remove her Islamic Hijab or shaking hands with male colleagues due to her religious beliefs. The teacher had just started apprenticeship at a primary school in Toulouse. The school’s disciplinary committee which expelled her said it was defending secularism in public schools. A ban on Muslim headscarves at state schools was introduced in France in 2004.

In: <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/152810.html> retrieved on 28.11.2010

xvii) **Netherlands: Christian school bans teacher in Islamic headscarf** – An orthodox Christian primary school in The Hague on 26 November 2010 refused to accept a fill-in teacher because she was wearing an Islamic headscarf. School head Teun Klaver said the school had imposed strict rules on clothing around seven years ago. The school banned all religious clothing and attributes unless they related to the Christian faith. Orthodox religious schools were run privately but received government funding. They might only ban religious symbols under very strict circumstances, a spokesman for the equal opportunities commission told the *Volkskrant*.

In: http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2010/11/christian_school_bans_teacher.php retrieved on 29.11.2010

xviii) **Swiss Federal committee recommends burqa ban in schools, offices** – A Swiss government-appointed committee supported a partial ban on the traditional Islamic burqa and the niqab. The Federal Commission on Women's Issues called for traditional full-face veils to be banned in government offices and in public schools. The group said that it was a move to prevent gender discrimination.

In: <http://worldradio.ch/wrs/news/switzerland/federal-committee-recommends-banning-burgas-in-sch.shtml?22173>
retrieved on 09.12.2010

xix) **Netherlands: 73% support a burqa ban** – 73% of the Dutch people supported a general ban on burqas. This according to a Maurice de Hond poll for the KRO program *De Wandeling*. Among Catholic and Protestants, support for a ban was 10% points higher.

In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2010/12/netherlands-73-support-burqa-ban.html> retrieved on 10.12.2010

xx) **Netherlands: Catholic school discriminates with headscarf ban** – The Dutch Equal Opportunities Commission said on 07 January 2011 that a Catholic high school in Volendam was guilty of discrimination on religious grounds for banning a Muslim pupil from wearing a headscarf. The girl started wearing a headscarf at the beginning of 2011 school year and was banned from attending lessons, prompting her father to make a complaint. The commission said school pupils should, in principle, be free to wear a headscarf, Jewish skullcap or Christian cross. The commission said that schools could introduce a ban if it was necessary to preserve their special identity, but that was not the case with the Volendam school.

In: http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2011/01/catholic_school_discriminates.php retrieved on 09.01.2011

xxi) **Ban Muslim headscarf, says Dutch MP** – Dutch MP Jeanine Hennis, from the right-wing liberal party VVD, the largest party in the current government, was calling for a ban on the wearing of Muslim headscarves by public servants who worked at town halls. The politician said all religions were equal in her eyes and that the ban should cover all religious symbols. Ms. Hennis made her comments during an interview with free newspaper *De Pers*. She said: "When do you wear the headscarf? I'd like to instigate a debate on the matter - an open discussion on the separation between church and state."

In: <http://www.rnw.nl/english/bulletin/ban-muslim-veil-says-dutch-mp> retrieved on 16.03.2011

xxii) **Iranian girl attacked in UK over hijab** – On 14 April 2011, An Iranian Muslim girl London resident Zahra Kazemi Saleh was attacked by four young British women after refusing to remove her hijab as she was going home from school. Zahra sustained facial injuries in the encounter.

In: <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/174972.html> retrieved on 16.04.2011

Last update: April 30, 2011

B. LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION OPPOSING ISLAMOPHOBIA

The resolution text¹⁰⁷:

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles Human Relations Commission, Los Angeles Police Department, the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office, Los Angeles Unified School District, Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission and various civic and religious stakeholders have worked to resolve various levels of conflict impacting residents of our City; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles facilitates access to local government by empowering communities with the knowledge and skills to participate effectively. Los Angeles is comprised of diverse populations that are easily overlooked without proper attention: 47% of the City is foreign-born, speaks 224 languages, and affiliates with 600 religious sects; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles has historically opposed hate crimes and random acts of violence in previous actions of the council such as the Jewish Federation Alliance in 2008 (CF:08-0100-S1), The Beith David Educational Center Temple in Tarzana (CF:06-0010-S23) in 2006, The Hate Crimes Report (CF:03-2746) of 2002, Shadow Hills Burning Cross Incident (CF:99-0010-S39) in 1999; Hate Crime Destruction at the Go For Broke Monument in Little Tokyo (CF:04-001-S17) in 2004, the LAUSD Racial and Ethnic strife in the San Fernando Valley and South Los Angeles (CF:05-0731) in 2005; and

WHEREAS, the concept of religious pluralism is used to describe the significance of interfaith dialogue between members of different religious groups with the goal of minimizing conflicts between the different groups; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles' commitment to pluralism and to the free exercise of religion are the cornerstone of American values that have helped produce one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse and vibrant cities in the world; and

WHEREAS, there has been a marked nationwide increase in acts of violence, discrimination and hostility directed at Muslim Americans on the basis of their religious identity including here in Southern California; and

WHEREAS, this rise in anti-Muslim sentiment, commonly called Islamophobia, has contributed to opposition to the lawful construction and expansion of religious centers across the United States, including in Tennessee, Wisconsin, Illinois, Connecticut and California; and

WHEREAS, more than two dozen mosques across America have been the targets of vandalism, arson and other hateful acts in the past two years. In addition, hate crimes and incidents have increased tremendously in recent months and have led to hostile environments for many Muslim Americans; and

WHEREAS, The City of Los Angeles has a history of opposing various degrees of discrimination and supporting the rights to religious liberty and equal protection and recognizing that when those rights are threatened for some they are weakened for all; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2011-2012 State and Federal Legislative Program, support and sponsorship of any legislation which would OPPOSE Islamophobia and repudiate random acts of violence against Muslim Americans.

¹⁰⁷ Available in: <http://www.newsrealblog.com/2011/01/28/islamophobia-or-islamonausea-los-angeles-still-doesn%E2%80%99t-get-it/> retrieved on 29 January 2011

C. OVERVIEW ROUNDTABLE ON “ADDRESSING ISLAMOPHOBIA: BUILDING ON UNUSED OPPORTUNITIES FOR MUTUAL RESPECT AND INCLUSION”

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on May 27, 2010

Co-organized by the UN AoC, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the Council of Europe (CoE) and the British Council, the aim of this Roundtable was to hold an informed debate on how to address Islamophobia from a result-oriented perspective.

This Roundtable, announced in advance via the Forum's website and open to public participation, attracted a big audience and brought together a very high-level array of panelists who shared their different points of views during a debate moderated by Mr. Iqbal Riza, Special Advisor to the United Nations Secretary General for the UN Alliance of Civilizations. To introduce the debate several notes were prepared in advance and distributed among the participants, namely a note by President Sampaio, High Representative of the UNAOC; a note by Ambassador Ömür Orhun, Adviser to the OIC and Focal Point of the OIC to the UN AoC; and a note by Mrs. Beate Winkler, Director of the former European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC).

Further to the points made in the written note, in his opening remarks President Sampaio stressed the twofold purpose of this Roundtable — to serve as a platform to engage a meaningful dialogue about confronting Islamophobia and to generate concrete proposals for action at the global and regional level.

Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, the OIC Secretary General, underscored the dangerous implications of the growing trend of Islamophobia in particular in European societies where after all, he stressed, Muslims are not aliens. Advocating a constructive engagement rather than confrontation to tackle Islamophobia, he called upon Western countries to stop looking at the concept of defamation of religions with suspicion and mentioned a number of ongoing initiatives aimed at raising global awareness to the basic tenets of moderation in Islam such as a Conference that the OIC will organize in 2011 aimed at bringing “historical reconciliation between Islam and Christianity”.

Ms. Irina Bokova, the Director General of UNESCO, recalled that from the outset UNESCO's action has been based on the idea of eliminating ignorance and prejudices among cultures, so UNESCO has always highlighted the major contribution of Islamic culture to humanity and has endeavored to develop a positive view for the Islamophobia problem. In this regard, the role of education was underscored.

Mr. Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, the Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), provided an overview of the way his organization works in favor of tolerance and nondiscrimination regarding the Jewish, Islamic, Christian and other religions. On the issue of discrimination against Muslims, he addressed some key points, namely: release of annual reports on hate crime by ODIHR in spite of lack of comprehensive data collection mechanisms and of appropriate financial and human resources to monitor crimes of this kind in some countries; role of public discourse by key leaders to develop a different narrative and combat stereotypes; and discriminatory state practices. Additionally, some important OSCE initiatives were mentioned, such as the “Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religion and Beliefs in Public Schools” and the forthcoming “ODIHR Guidelines for Educators on Intolerance against Muslims”, a joint initiative by the Council of Europe and UNESCO. Together, these tools should contribute to build the references for combating discrimination against

Muslims. Last but not least, Ambassador Marc Perrin de Brichambaut called upon the need for a consensus on how this phenomenon should be addressed by states, intergovernmental organizations and civil society. In this regard, he stressed three final points: the need to protect each individual and each community, including Muslim communities, against any act of intolerance and discrimination; the need to protect our societies and our states themselves against the actions of religious extremists, including those abusing religion for religious purposes; the need to continue the work of education and the work of outreach to the media, to all generations.

Ambassador Usen Suleimenov made a speech on behalf of the Kazakh Chairmanship of the OSCE stressing that his country, because of its 136 nationalities representing 46 confessions, was developing an active policy designed to promote tolerance, non-discrimination and respect between different cultures and religions in his country. This explains also that the Republic of Kazakhstan, as the Chair of the OSCE in 2010, has chosen a slogan of "Four Ts", which stand for Trust, Transparency, Tradition and Tolerance, and made the topic of Tolerance and Non-Discrimination one of its main priorities in hosting the OSCE High-Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination on 29-30 June 2010 this year. Furthermore, as the Chair of the Organization of Islamic Conference in 2011, Kazakhstan intends to continue these endeavours.

Ms. Beate Winkler, former Director of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), and current Adviser for European Policies on Inclusive Societies and Intercultural Dialogue, emphasized three main messages: the need to create change and prevent negative perceptions, attitudes and images on Muslims from blocking positive developments; the need to integrate into all strategies for action the factual but also the emotional dimension of this problem; the need to address the "negative perceptions", expressed particularly by the media, as well as developing political leadership and organizing high cultural and sport events.

Professor Mike Hardy, Programme Leader for Intercultural Dialogue of the British Council, pointed out the need for constructive engagement and the role of the British Council (BC) in this regard. He stressed the involvement of the BC in the front line of intercultural dialogue and explained in more detail its initiative named 'Our Shared Europe', launched a couple of years ago to explore and raise awareness, very directly, about the amazing contribution that Muslims have made to the past, to the present, and to the potential of Europe as a terrain and as a domain.

Mr. André Azoulay, President of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures, stressed that Islamophobia was not an issue for Muslims, but an issue for all of us. He called upon the international community to speak out, to say things clearly and to show the same commitment to all forms of intolerance and discrimination, be it against Judaism or Muslims. He also addressed the need to develop a positive approach to the fact that there are today close to ten million Europeans belonging to the Islamic faith. Finally he mentioned that when the 'Union for the Mediterranean' is achieved, it would be a historical turning point for countries and peoples from both sides of the Mediterranean.

Mr. José María Ferré, Spanish Ambassador at Large for Relations with Muslim Communities Abroad, and Coordinator of the OSCE Cordoba Conference on Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, recalling the Spanish Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2007 as well as the Seminar on "Freedom of Religion in a Democratic Society" co-organized by the UN AoC and the Spanish Presidency of the EU at the beginning of May 2010, stressed the central role of human rights in Europe, namely the principle of freedom of religion for minorities living in secular societies. In

this regard, he also tackled the role played by various interreligious and intercultural dialogue initiatives to foster freedom of religion, such as the Saudi Initiative or the 'Common Word' supported by Jordan.

Professor Stefano Allievi, Professor of Sociology at the University of Padua, focused his remarks on his study on "Conflict over Mosques in Europe — Policy Issues and Trends" conducted in eleven countries of Europe. Professor Allievi's main point was that in Europe there is not such a problem of freedom of religion for Islam at least in quantitative terms (around eight million Muslims and ten thousand halls of prayer), but only at qualitative level, seen in the increasing number of cultural and religious conflicts emerging everywhere. In this regard, the role of "political entrepreneurs of Islamophobia" was stressed, as well of the media. Cultural pluralism and the ambiguity surrounding what can be called "exceptionalism" were also tackled. Professor Allievi ended by mentioning his current work on the issue of training of religious persons, Imams, religious actors in general, which according to him might become the next thermometer for Islamophobia in Europe.

Ambassador Ömür Orhun, Special Envoy of the OIC Secretary General and the Focal Point of the OIC to the UN AoC, stressed the issue of identity and focused in particular on Muslims of Europe who can contribute to the re-definition of Europeanness with their own and distinct identities in spite of a growing trend in a Europe that views Islam as a threat to national security and identity. As a conclusion, he requested a normative approach to combat Islamophobia based on a definition of Islamophobia that we all might agree on.

Ambassador Alexandre Fasel, Swiss Focal Point for the UN AoC, addressed the issue of recent developments that involve the minaret ban in his country, recalling the position of the Swiss Federal Government and of the Federal Parliament against the popular consultation and their call to vote against the proposal, which was accepted, in the end, by a majority. Reflecting on the latest findings of scientific research that shows that the vote was not against the Swiss Muslim community, but rather expressed a reaction against an abstract yet negative image of Islam, Ambassador Fasel explained the ongoing work aimed at increasing the search, together with the Swiss Muslim communities and the Federal Authorities, for ways and means to enhance the visibility of the Swiss Muslim community, so that there is a clear understanding of who they are, and their level of integration in the Swiss society, working with the media, and at the international level developing a practical dialogue, which goes beyond mere practical cognitive dialogue, so that a common narrative can be created upon which to build the views we have of each other.

Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, recalled the work carried out by the Assembly on the basis of the European Convention on Human Rights, especially its Article 9 (on freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including the right to manifest one's religion or beliefs) and Article 10 (on freedom of expression, including the right to express religious or philosophical views or oppose and criticize them). Despite the unique legal protection that the Convention and the European Court of Human Rights provide, Mr. Çavuşoğlu recognized that the reality in the various countries is far more complicated and that racism, xenophobia and all sorts of manifestations of intolerance against people of different religious beliefs are a fact of everyday life in our societies. In particular Islamophobia, in recent years, has been steadily on the rise, noting that growing anti-Muslim feelings amongst the non-Muslim population go hand in hand with growing feelings of victimization, frustration and alienation by Muslims and that Islamophobia is mostly the result of ignorance, misperception and lack of communication and dialogue. He eventually stressed

that for the Parliamentary Assembly, in combating Islamophobia, as well as any other form of intolerance based on religious principles, the key to success lies in active and constructive cooperation within societies. He recalled that, on the one hand, European governments have a duty to ensure equal rights and opportunities — both in law and in practice — for all, regardless of their ethnic, cultural and religious origin, and that, on the other hand, Muslims and Muslim communities should be the first ones to condemn and combat any form of political extremism under the cover of Islam. He announced that during the June session, the Parliamentary Assembly will be debating a major report on “Islam and Islamophobia in Europe”.

Ms. Dalia Mogahed, Senior Analyst and Executive Director of the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies, went through some highlights on studies done at her Center on perception of Islam and Muslims and made a few points on why it is in the self-interest of non-Muslim majority societies to combat Islamophobia. On the former, she stressed that in the United States, Islam and Muslims are the most negatively viewed religious group of the ones tested by Gallup (about 43% of Americans say that they have at least some prejudice against Muslims, 9% say they have a great deal of prejudice) and that this extreme prejudice was correlated not with the level of education, nor with religious practice, but with that person's opinion of Jews, so that anti-Semitic sentiment was the strongest predictor of anti-Muslim sentiments. Ms Mogahed stressed the importance of this empirical link between Islamophobia and anti-Semitism and pointed out that the two things should be dealt with together and should even be studied together. The second finding that she highlighted was that one's opinion of Islam, as a faith, was far more powerful in predicting whether people had prejudice or tolerance than was one's personal interaction with Muslims. Muslims, as a group, is their perception of Islam as a faith — what it teaches, what it stands for — that colors their view of the group much more than the exceptional Muslim doctor or dentist that they might know who is acceptable. As a concluding remark, Ms. Mogahed underscored the need for Western societies — Western democracies specifically — to care about Islamophobia because it is an ideology that fuels extremist narratives and should be seen as a threat to national security. She stressed that, in the end, Islamophobia is not something Western societies need to combat simply to be generous or to be charitable to Muslims. It is something that is hurting everyone; it truly is hurting society as a whole.

Mr. Rashad Hussain, the US Special Envoy to the OIC, mentioned what the United States is doing to combat this problem, Islamophobia, from the actions taken within the United States and within the international community. First, of course, there had been the President's outreach on this issue, making it clear several times and on various occasions that Islam is actually not a problem, but is a part of the solution. Furthermore, there are a number of actions taken, such as increased educational exchanges and real people-to-people interaction. Lastly, another area the President mentioned in his Cairo speech was the defense of the ability to practice Islam, which is something he talked about in terms of a woman's right to wear hijab, something that the United States continues to defend. The second point is the legal channel, because in the United States there is a legal mechanism in place by which to combat Islamophobia (First Amendment to the US Constitution; the Bill of Rights guarantees free practice of religion), even if there are certain limits to the legal avenue.

Mr. Radhouane Nouicer, UNHCR Representative to Rio Forum, focused his speech on the refugees and asylum seekers dimension of the problem, pointing out two complementary facts: today a majority of asylum seekers and refugees in the world adhere to the Islamic faith and most of the populations hosting them are also Muslim. Furthermore, he stressed that this occurs at a time when the level of extremism — ethnic and religious — is on the rise around the globe, even in the world's most developed societies, and when racism, xenophobia and populist fear-

mongering manipulate public opinion and confuse refugees with illegal immigrants and even terrorists. As a contribution to dispelling this confusion and these misperceptions, Mr. Nouicer mentioned that UNHCR commissioned a comparative study titled "The right to asylum between Islamic Sharia and international refugee law" that shows that more than any other historical source, Islamic law and tradition underpin the modern-day framework upon which UNHCR bases its global activities on behalf of refugees. He referred to the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the UN Alliance of Civilizations and the UNHCR to support each other's efforts in promoting cross-cultural understanding and reconciliation among nations and people across cultures and religions, and to help counter forces that fuel polarization and extremism.

Mr. Bogaç Güldere, the Turkish Focal Point to the AoC, underscored that mutual distrust and mutual alienation dominate the atmosphere of interactions between communities. He drew attention to the need to unlearn ignorance, scale up efforts to develop further interactions among communities at grassroots level, to dwell upon school curricula as well as the need for a more positive role to be developed by media coverage, particularly through the Rapid Response Media Mechanism that was launched by the UN Alliance of Civilizations.

Mr. Nazim Ahmad, Representative in Portugal and in Mozambique of the Aga Khan Development Network, stressing that his understanding was underpinned by his own Shia Ismaili Muslim tradition, focused on the need to address not the so-called clash of civilizations but the clash of ignorance that is filled by the education vacuum that persists in not teaching enough about the others. Ignorance, which can frequently lead to fear, is the root cause of many phobias, and is certainly at the heart of what is called Islamophobia. Some of the clashes, which captured the media headlines in some parts, occur where passions of free speech confuse liberty with license. In this regard, Mr. Nazim quoted Aga Khan, the Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims, calling for a renewal of an ethical commitment or "ethical sensibility which can be shared across denominational lines and that can foster a universal moral outlook" as a central requirement if we are to find our way through the minefields and quick sands of modern life.

With such an impressive number of panelists, because of lack of time it was not possible to enlarge the debate to the audience, much to the regret of some attendees who expressed their frustration.

In his concluding remarks, President Sampaio expressed his satisfaction with the Roundtable which brought to light some differences in points of views but also allowed a sharing of experiences, concerns and expectations, besides gathering ideas for possible future actions.

In his final intervention, Mr. Riza pointed out that although the debate was very much focused on Muslims in Europe, Islamophobia is a global issue and also exists in the Muslim world, including in his own country, Pakistan.

D. DECLARATION BY THE ANNUAL COORDINATION MEETING OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF OIC MEMBER STATES ON COUNTERING ISLAMOPHOBIA

UN Headquarters, New York 24 September 2010

We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegation of the Member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, participating at the Annual Coordination Meeting of the OIC Foreign Ministers, held in New York on 24 September 2010 under the motto of "Countering Islamophobia" declare the following:

While considering the importance of dialogue among civilizations and expansion of relations and cooperation between the Islamic World and other cultures and civilizations, we reiterate our commitment to continue efforts in engaging with the West in projecting the true tenets of Islam, and countering common challenges. However, we express profound regret and deep concern at the increasing acts of Islamophobia, growing trend of intolerance and hatred towards Muslims, and mounting number of acts of violence against Muslims in some Western societies.

We are of the view that the culture of peaceful coexistence and inter-communal and interreligious tolerance that the international community is trying to achieve, is under threat from marginal and extremist fanatics and from the pervasive xenophobic discourse of a minority of extremist politicians who, for the sake of domestic political gains, exploit the socio-economic difficulties faced by their societies to foment hatred against Islam and Muslims through negative stereotyping and defamation.

We strongly believe that defamation of Islam geared towards denigrating and dehumanizing Muslims, their beliefs and sacred personalities, insults the deep-seated religious feelings, undermines their dignity and violates their fundamental human rights thus threatening the multicultural fabric of the societies. We reject all acts and attempts of distortion to associate Islam with terrorism. Nothing could have been farther from the truth. Islam is a religion that implies peace by its very nomenclature. Such stereotyping leads to discrimination and poses grave and multidimensional challenges to global as well as regional peace, security and stability.

While we support all initiatives aiming at promotion of moderation, tolerance and encouraging dialogue for shunning violence and extremism, we call upon the international community to make collective efforts to prevent incitement to hatred and discrimination against Muslims and to take effective measures to discourage negative stereotyping of people on the basis of religion, faith or race. We invite the international community both in terms of policy and practice to stand against all xenophobic campaigns of fear-mongering and discriminatory measures that endanger peaceful coexistence among cultures, civilizations and nations and create a negative environment conducive to violence and violation of human rights of individuals and communities. We also call upon the international community to make concrete measure with a view to fostering an environment of respect for all religions.

We call for a global awareness on the dangerous implications of the rise of Islamophobia on world peace and security and call on the leaders of the international community to demonstrate their collective political will to address the issue with all urgency. We emphasize the need to develop, at the UN, including the HRC, a legally binding institutional instrument to promote respect for all religions and cultural values and prevent intolerance, discrimination and the instigation of hatred against any group or followers of any religion.

We call upon the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to set up an observatory at her office aimed at monitoring and documenting acts that led to incitement to religious hatred, hostility and violence. With reference to the recent unfortunate episode pertaining to the "Burn a Koran Day", we express our appreciation for the strong and principled statements made by the US authorities as well as community and religious leaders and world leaders. We emphasize that inter-civilizational dialogue based on mutual respect and understanding amongst peoples should be effectively used for promoting human welfare and progress and for strengthening international peace and security, tolerance and global harmony.

We request the OIC Secretary General to continue his initiatives in order to effectively counter Islamophobia through discussions and deliberations at various international fora.

*Prepared by:
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