EUROPEAN ISLAMOPHOBIA REPORT

2015

ENES BAYRAKLI • FARID HAFEZ (Eds)

SETA

EUROPEAN
ISLAMOPHOBIA
REPORT
2015

ENES BAYRAKLI • FARID HAFEZ (Eds)

SETA

COPYRIGHT © 2016 by SETA
All rights reserved.
No part of this publication may be reprinted or reproduced or utilized in any form or by any electronic, mechanical or other means, without permission in writing from the publishers.

ISBN : 978-605-4023-68-4

Layout : Erkan Söğüt
Printed in Turkey, Ankara by Pelin Ofset, 2016

SETA | FOUNDATION FOR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH
Nenehatun Caddesi No: 66 GOP Çankaya 06700 Ankara TÜRKİYE
Phone:+90 312.551 21 00 | Fax :+90 312.551 21 90
www.setav.org | info@setav.org | @setavakfi

SETA | İstanbul
Defterdar Mh. Savaklar Cd. Ayvansaray Kavşağı No: 41-43
Eyüp İstanbul TÜRKİYE
Phone: +90 212 315 11 00 | Fax: +90 212 315 11 11

SETA | Washington D.C.
1025 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 1106
Washington, D.C., 20036 USA
Phone: 202-223-9885 | Fax: 202-223-6099
www.setadc.org | info@setadc.org | @setadc

SETA | Cairo
21 Fahmi Street Bab al Luq Abdeen Flat No 19 Cairo EGYPT
Phone: 00202 279 56866 | 00202 279 56985 | @setakahire

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION Enes Bayraklı, Farid Hafez **5**

ALBANIA Juliana Ajdini **9**

AUSTRIA Farid Hafez **21**

BELGIUM Amina Easat-Daas **49**

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA Đermana Šeta, Zehra Alispahić, Emir Kovačević, Ekrem Tucaković, Mehmedović Nihad, Mensur Karadža,Nedim Begović **71**

CROATIA Vedran Obućina **93**

CZECH REPUBLIC Selma Muhič Dizdarevič **115**

FINLAND Linda Hyökki, Pia Jardi **131**

FRANCE Olivier Esteves **155**

GERMANY Anna-Esther Younes **179**

GREECE Alexandros Sakellariou **199**

HUNGARY Zsolt Sereghy **223**

IRELAND James Carr **239**

ITALY Grazia Alessandra Siino, Nadia Levantino **265**

KOSOVO Arber Fetiu **293**

LATVIA Anita Stasulane **309**

LITHUANIA Birutė Sabatauskaitė, Eglė Urbonaitė Tilindienė, Karolis Žibas **327**

MACEDONIA Mitre Georgiev **355**

NETHERLANDS Ineke van der Valk **375**

NORWAY Sindre Bangstad **401**

POLAND Konrad Pędziwiatr **423**

SERBIA Bojan Perovic **443**

SPAIN Alfonso Casani Herranz **465**

SWEDEN Aroma Abrashi, Åke Sander, Göran Larsson **491**

SWITZERLAND Saira Bano Orakzai **527**

UNITED KINGDOM Arzu Merali **549**

ABOUT EDITORS

Enes Bayraklı

Mr. Bayraklı earned his BA, MA and PhD from the Department of Political Science at the University of Vienna, and conducted research for his PhD thesis at the University of Nottingham in Britain between 2009 and 2010. He took office as a deputy director at Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Center in London in 2011-2013. Mr. Bayraklı also served as the founding director of Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Centers in Constanta and Bucharest during the period of August-December 2012. Mr. Bayraklı has been a faculty member in the Department of Political Science at the Turkish-German University since 2013. His fields of research include the Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy, Cultural Diplomacy, Foreign Policy Analysis, German Politics and Foreign Policy. bayrakli@tau.edu.tr

Farid Hafez

Farid Hafez is a researcher at the Department of Sociology and Political Science at the University of Salzburg. He earned his Ph.D. in political science from the University of Vienna. Hafez has been teaching at a number of universities in the world. He has been a Visiting Scholar at Columbia University. Hafez is the editor of the German-English Islamophobia Studies Yearbook, (www.jahrbuch-islamophobie.de). He was awarded with the Bruno-Kreisky-Award for the political book of the Year 2009 for his German anthology "Islamophobia in Austria" (co-edited with Prof. John Bunzl). He has published more than 10 books and 20 articles. His last publications include 'From the Far Right to the Mainstream: Islamophobia, Party Politics and the Media' (Campus Verlag, 2012, together with Humayun Ansari), an introduction to the history of Islamic Political Thought and 'Shifting borders: Islamophobia as the cornerstone for building pan-European right-wing unity' (in: Patterns of Prejudice, vol. 48, no. 5, October 2014). farid.hafez@sbg.ac.at

For more information about the EIR:
www.islamophobiaeurope.com
islamophobia@setav.org

INTRODUCTION

ENES BAYRAKLI • FARID HAFEZ

In June 2014, the website for reporting hate crimes to the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) went public. In 2014, only five states officially reported on hate crimes against Muslims, whereas civil society reported in 21 countries. Still, for the majority of the 57 member countries of the OSCE, there is no official information available. Furthermore, if one were to assess the quality of these state reports, it becomes apparent that the collected data does not always rely on a comprehensive systematic collection.

Since Islamophobia or anti-Muslim racism has become a growing threat in European societies, we – the editors – felt an urgent need to address this problem. In fact, there are still people denying the very existence of racism against Muslims. Many state and civil society institutions have done priceless work to prove and establish the opposite: from the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) to the countless civil society organisations throughout Europe. Yet, institutions like the FRA publish only irregular reports on a restricted number of countries while most civil society organisations tackle racism in general and only few focus on Islamophobia in specific - this is the urgent gap our report wishes to fill.

The *European Islamophobia Report* (EIR) is an annual report, which is presented for the first time this year. It currently comprises 25 national reports regarding each state and the tendencies of Islamophobia in each respective country. The current report features the work of 37 extraordinary scholars. In the years to come we will attempt to cover even more countries. This report aims to enable policymakers as well as the public to discuss the issue of Islamophobia with the help of qualitative data. At the same time, several of its unique characteristic features make a difference to the current state of the debate on Islamophobia.

Contribution of this report

The national reports in the EIR look at significant incidents and developments in each country during the period under review. The authors look at the employment sector: has there been any discrimination in the job market based on the (assumed) Muslimness of a person? They look at education: has Islamophobic content become part of any curricula, textbooks, or any other education material? The political field in a narrow sense is also a central aspect of the EIR: has Islamophobia played any role in politics, from election campaigns to political programmes to personal statements, etc., be it on a regional or national level? Authors also take a close look at a central force where Islamophobia has spread: the media. Which media events have focused on Islam/Muslims in an Islamophobic way? The justice system is also featured in the national reports: are there any laws and regulations that are based on Islamophobic arguments or any laws restricting the rights of Muslims in their religious lifestyle? Cyberspace as a central space for spreading hate crime is also examined: which web pages and initiatives have spread Islamophobic stereotypes? In addition, central figures in the Islamophobia network are discussed: which institutions and persons have, among others, fostered Islamophobic campaigns, stirred up debates or lobbied for laws?

Since the EIR is not content with pointing a finger at the problem, the reports also look at observed civil society and political assessment and initiatives undertaken to counter Islamophobia in the aforementioned fields. This will empower politicians and NGO activists, who want to tackle the issue. Since the EIR is not a purely scholarly work, at the end of every report, authors offer policy recommendations for politics and NGOs. An executive summary at the beginning and a chronology at the end of every report give the reader an overview on the state and the development of Islamophobia in the respective countries.

Since the single reports share broadly the same structure, the EIR offers the possibility to compare Islamophobia in these countries. Despite the fact that the data in specific fields is not available in an identical way for all countries, the report still facilitates an impulse for identifying research gaps.

Studies on Islamophobia have in the past predominantly concentrated on Western Europe. This is especially the case with reports focusing on Islamophobia. The EIR is the first to cover a wide range of Eastern European countries like Serbia, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, or Latvia. This will enrich the debate on racism in general and Islamophobia in Europe in specific.

What is Islamophobia?

Although the term 'Islamophobia' has become widely recognised in the Anglo-Saxon world and has become established in academia as can be seen by the numerous conferences, journals, and research projects dedicated to it, in many European countries, there is still a great amount of opposition to the term. One can understand the opposition expressed by the public not merely as an academic debate, but, in fact, as a sign of the hegemonic power of Islamophobic prejudices. Acknowledging this situation,

at the heart of this project lies the following working definition of Islamophobia:

"When talking about Islamophobia, we mean anti-Muslim racism. As Anti-Semitism studies have shown, the etymological components of a word do not necessarily point to its complete meaning, nor to how it is used. Such is also the case with Islamophobia studies. Islamophobia has become a well-known term used in academia as much as in the public sphere. Criticism of Muslims or of the Islamic religion is not necessarily Islamophobic. Islamophobia is about a dominant group of people aiming at seizing, stabilising and widening their power by means of defining a scapegoat – real or invented – and excluding this scapegoat from the resources/rights/definition of a constructed 'we'. Islamophobia operates by constructing a static 'Muslim' identity, which is attributed in negative terms and generalised for all Muslims. At the same time, Islamophobic images are fluid and vary in different contexts as Islamophobia tells us more about the Islamophobe than it tells us about the Muslims/Islam".

Central findings

That Islamophobia works without Muslims and tells us more about the anti-Muslim racists than it tells us about Islam and Muslims, can best be seen in the eastern region of Europe. In countries like Hungary, Finland, Lithuania, or Latvia, where only a small number of Muslims live, Islamophobia functions as a successful means to mobilise people. People not only greatly overestimate the country's Muslim population but, although Muslims have not committed any violent acts in most countries in the name of Islam, they are still often deemed violent and are considered to be terrorists.

It could be observed that both attacks in Paris, which happened in 2015, became a discursive event that shaped the debates on Islam and Muslims throughout Europe. Above that, the so-called 'refugee crisis' was a central topic, which many actors linked to the issue of Muslims invading Europe. For example, the leader of the Hungarian Fidesz' parliamentary club Antal Rogán warned of a future 'United European Caliphate',[1] while former Secretary of State László L. Simon urged Hungarians to return to their Christian spirituality and make more babies in order to counter the negative cultural effects of mass migration such as the envisioned 'impending victory of Islamic parties imposing polygamy and destroying the remainder of European culture'.[2] This strong Islamophobic rhetoric is not restricted to the extreme right. In fact, the *refugee-migration-Islam-terrorism nexus* became the standard argument justifying a number of domestic and international measures. The social democrat Czech President Milos Zeman claimed the influx of refugees into Europe was masterminded by Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood as "an organised invasion" to "gradually control Europe". [3]

1. Károly Villányi, "Azt akarjuk, hogy unokáink egy európai kalifátusban éljenek?", *Magyar Idök*, 14.11.2015, accessed 03.01.2016, http://magyaridok.hu/belfold/azt-akarjuk-hogy-az-unokaink-egy-europai-kalifatusban-eljenek-5035/.

2. "L. Simon: Szaporodjunk!", *Népszabadság Online*, 05.09.2015, accessed 03.01.2016, http://nol.hu/video/lsimon-a-szaporodasban-latja-a-jovot-1573295?utm_source=mandiner&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=mandiner_201601.

3. Agence France-Presse, "Integrating Muslims into Europe is 'impossible', says Czech president", 18 January, 2016, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/18/integrating-muslims-into-europe-is-impossible-says-czech-president (accessed 8 March, 2016)

Policy Recommendations

Islamophobia poses a great risk to the democratic foundations of European constitutions and social peace as well as the coexistence of different cultures throughout Europe. Both civil society actors and states should acknowledge the seriousness of this issue and develop concrete policies to counter Islamophobia. Here we have summarised some of the important policy recommendations from the national reports.

- Islamophobia should be acknowledged as a crime and should be included in all national statistics throughout Europe.
- Hate crime legislations should be adopted in all European countries that acknowledge one's religious identity as being a basis upon which one may be targeted.
- In order to collect data about Islamophobic incidents, victims registers must be introduced in all European states.
- In order to help the victims of Islamophobic attacks, counseling services for victims must be established in all European states.
- Journalists, lawyers, Police (security officials) and legal authorities in all European countries should be educated by qualified personnel in regards to Islamophobia.
- Muslim civil society has to be empowered with information to combat Islamophobia, especially in the direction of the creation of a consciousness of the illegality of hate crimes.
- Educational institutions and stakeholders have to work towards creating an alternative narrative of Muslims in the respective countries which will work to dispel the widely accepted negative image of Islam.
- Civil society actors must also push for legislative change in the context of school enrolment policies so that all members of the respective societies are treated fairly when accessing education.
- Governments must draft a policy that ensures that the rights of religious minorities to manifest their faith are respected in education and the workplace; this must not be left to the preferences of individual boards of management or principals.
- Discrimination on the job market towards Muslims and especially Muslims who wear veils is a widespread phenomenon. This should be recognised and seriously addressed by better legal regulations and the creation of a relevant consciousness.
- Civil society actors must engage with media actors/outlets in terms of the publication and broadcasting of standards in order to reduce/minimise the use of racialising discourses vis-à-vis Muslims and other minority communities.
- The civil rights violations experienced by women wearing headscarves should be addressed by lawmakers and politicians.
- An independent media watchdog should be established in order to monitor media reports in real time in all respective countries.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN
ALBANIA
NATIONAL REPORT 2015

JULIANA AJDINI

THE AUTHOR

Juliana Ajdini is a fellow at the Department of Social Work and Social Policy, University of Tirana since 2004. She graduated in 2000 as a social worker from the same department. From 2013 she holds a PhD in Social Work and Social Policy, obtained at the Department of Social Work and Social Policy, Faculty of Social Science, University of Tirana. Her doctoral thesis was a study of assessment of needs of incarcerated parent in Albania and their children. Her main areas of interest and expertise include research in social problems and respect and promotion of the rights of incarcerated persons. Her working experiences in these areas include teaching at Bachelor and Masters level studies and academic research focused especially on issues related to rights of prisoners/detains, gender equality, community organization, etc. Her working experience is also rich in consultancy service to national and international institutions and organizations in conducting research, preparing training manuals and materials, conducting training's, monitoring and evaluation. She is author and co-author in several articles and books published in Albania and abroad. Currently she lectures on social problems, methods and skills in social work, social work with families, and theories and social change. jajdini@gmail.com

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions. No representation, either expressed or implied, is made of the accuracy of the material in the national reports. The editors of the European Islamophobia Report cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The reader must make his or her own evaluation of the accuracy and appropriateness of the material.

To cite this report: Juliana Ajdini (2016): *Islamophobia in Albania. National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study has collected generated and analysed data on the phenomenon of Islamophobia with the aim of informing the stakeholders involved in addressing this phenomenon and the challenges interrelated with it. The research methodology approaches the identification and comprehensive analysis of the context by employing a variety of sources; in this way, the extent and relevance of several factors that enable or fuel Islamophobia in Albania can be understood. During the research period (January- December 2015), a wide range of official, academic and other reliable sources of data were examined. The report finds that Islamophobia in Albania is in its early phase, but in some situations it appears in a powerful way. The phenomenon of Islamophobia may be further developed due to a lack of contextual cooperation between non-security state authorities and leaders of religious communities to prevent the phenomenon. Some of the main findings of this report include the appearance of certain elements of Islamophobia, especially in social networks. Certain events in the international arena, for example the attack on Charlie Hebdo in France, or other terrorist attacks, further promote Islamophobic acts in Albania. In all the sources used, it appears that Western values are associated mostly with the Christian faith, while Eastern ones are connected to the Muslim faith. The report is accompanied by the provision of certain recommendations, which will help stakeholders to address this phenomenon in a comprehensive manner.

PËRMBLEDHJE EKZEKUTIVE

Përmes këtij studimi është bërë e mundur mbledhja, gjenerimi dhe analizimi i të dhënave rreth fenomenit të islamofobisë në Shqipëri me qëllim informimin e aktorëve të interesuar si dhe adresimin e sfidave që lidhen me të. Metodologjia e këtij raporti mbështet në identifikimin dhe analizimin e thelluar të kontekstit. Duke përdorur një larmi burimesh për të kuptuar shtrirjen dhe seriozitetin e një sërë faktorëve, të cilët mundësojnë apo nxisin islamofobinë në Shqipëri. Gjatë periudhës studimore (janar 2015 – dhjetor 2015) u shqyrtua një volum i gjerë burimesh zyrtare, akademike dhe të dhëna të tjera të besueshme. Ky raport dëshmon se islamofobia në Shqipëri ndodhet në fazat e hershme të saj, megjithatë shfaqet fuqishëm në momente të caktuara. Fenomeni i islamofobisë mund të zhvillohet më tej për shkak të mungesës së bashkëpunimit në drejtim të parandalimit të saj midis autoriteteve shtetërore jashtë fushës së sigurisë, shoqerise civile dhe drejtuesve të komuniteteve fetare. Disa nga gjetjet kryesore të raportit përfshijnë shfaqjen e elementëve të caktuar të islamofobisë sidomos në rrjetet sociale; për ngjarje të caktuara në arenën ndërkombëtare sic ishin sulmi ndaj revistës Charlie Hebdo në Francë apo sulme të tjera terroriste, që nxisin më tej akte islamofobike edhe në Shqipëri. Në të gjitha burimet e përdorura duket se vlerat perendimore lidhen më së shumti me besimin e krishterë, ndërsa ato lindore me besimin mysliman. Raporti shoqërohet edhe me dhënien e disa rekomandimve qe do të ndihmojnë palët e interesuara për ta adresuar këtë fenomen në mënyrë gjithëpërfshirëse.

INTRODUCTION

Albania is a European country and as such, cannot be excluded from the map in which Islamophobia has seen recently significantly spread. Albanians have always dreamed of being a part of the European structure, and that Albania be considered to be part of Europe by the Europeans. Throughout history, this dream has been denied more than once. However, Albania is often perceived as an Eastern country because of the prevalence of Islam. Often this perception is used as the main argument for the development of Islamophobic practices. In some countries, such as Albania, the secularization drive was able to produce a population in which the awareness of being Muslim was lost or marginal. In Albania and Kosovo, Muslims represent the majority of the population. However, with a population of nearly 2.8 million people, according to the latest census (2011), the three largest religious communities in the country are Muslim (56.7%), Catholics (10%) and Orthodox (6.8%)[1]. Religious harmony has been broadly recognized as a core societal value in Albania, where members of Muslim, Catholic, Orthodox and other religious communities have coexisted in peace. During his visit to Albania, even the Pope noted that it is a model of religious harmony[2]. However, in reality, problems exist that are linked to religion, and Islamophobia is one of these. Some results of Islamophobia are discrimination, exclusion and prejudice of people, all of which emanate religious beliefs.

SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

Various national and international media reports and research studies have confirmed that Albanian citizens have been involved in the Syrian conflict[3]. This group is perceived as an extremist one and has led to a heated discussion among people, and resulted in some Islamophobic acts. The presence of Albanian fighters in the Syrian conflict has worried the Albanian authorities and foreign companies over the past 3 years. To deal with this phenomenon, the Ministry of the Interior has created a broad anti-terror directorate, including exchange of information with Europol and Western partner services.

To date, there are no exact numbers for Albanians involved in the conflict or how many have died. However, according to data from the Ministry of the Interior it is thought that more than nine Albanians have lost their lives during the conflict in Syria and Iraq (Anti-Terror Department of the Ministry of the Interior, May 2014)[4].

The SIS (state intelligence service) reports that 13 Albanian and their spouses and children are with DEASH/ISIS. Albania's response to this has so far been de-

1. Source: INSTAT (www.instat.gov.al).

2. http://www.oranews.tv/vendi/papa-francesku-miresevjen-ne-shqiperi-ora-news-ndjek-live-viziten-historike/

3. http://www.mapo.al/2014/03/shqiptaret-ne-siri-9-te-vrare-dhe-12-te-plagosur-per-xhihadin

4. http://www.shekulli.com.al/p.php?id=263334

veloped mostly through repressive measures that have an immediate impact outside the national borders. Examples of such measures include amendments to the Criminal Code (2014) to allow for the prosecution of individuals participating in armed conflicts abroad and intensification of intelligence and police cooperation with law enforcement agencies in the region; in addition, a number of individuals who have recruited Albanian citizens to join the Syrian conflict have been prosecuted. However, to date state actions have lacked a solid prevention-oriented perspective or approach within national borders.

Related to the participation of Albanians in the Syrian conflict, nine imams have been arrested for calling the congregation to jihad in Syria[5]. Their trial at first was seen as unfair, both by the accused and by other Muslim people in Albania; it was difficult to believe that people who represented Islam would make a call for jihad.

However, it later became clear that these people represented a structure that was independent from the main Albanian Muslim community. The defendants are accused for recruiting 90 Albanians to join in the fighting in Syria through a network of sermons in mosques. The mosques in Unaza e Re and Mezezi were used as key links for the religious indoctrination of potential jihadists in the network.

However, this year, these hearings have degenerated into threats, curses and insults being expressed by witnesses, and even by the media, judges and prosecutors. In the hearing on December 23, 2015 one of the defendants said "…only Daesh/ISIS soldiers can liberate Albania from the government policies and thieves." Also, during this hearing many threatens were uttered against the prime minister, Edi Rama, the minister of the interior, Sajmir Tahiri[6], the head of the Democratic Party, Lulzim Basha and deputy Ben Blushi[7]. Meanwhile, another defendant, Muslim Fadil, told the judge: "Allah will destroy this country. They are treating us like criminals, I am not a criminal. I did not kill a fly. May Allah destroy His enemies[8]!"

After the attacks in Paris, the head of the State Information Service in Albania, Visho Ajazi, introduced urgent tasks and passed a state of emergency (November 14, 2015)[9]. The main task for SIS was the surveillance of all persons associated with and former radical Daesh/ISIS fighters who had returned to Albania, as well as other people who are from environments that are prone to radicalism or radical thought.

5. http://top-channel.tv/lajme/artikull.php?id=293856&ref=ml

6. http://time.ikub.al/ae8036ad6c/07e432b2dbe6d504e3a35a35082e38a3/lajm_Gjyqi-ndaj-imameve-kercenohet-ministri-Tahiri-Nese-u-ka-bere-keq-myslimaneve-ku-do-shkoje-tani-.aspx

7. http://opinion.al/imamet-kercenojne-ben-blushin-e-shpallin-qafir/

8.https://www.google.al/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjp0PnN5rbLAhUBsiwKHdaGBhYQFggZMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.gazetatema.net%2Fweb%2F2015%2F12%2F29%2Fimamet-mallkojne-shqiperine-allahu-e-shkaterrofte-kete-shtet%2F&usg=AFQjCNHTnua8vlcxt2TE6JnGJJ3OU4Zlww&sig2=tV6b7HlmhA7WnpL0lNQtCw&bvm=bv.116573086,d.bGg

9. http://shqiptarja.com/m/aktualitet/charlie-hebdo-masa-sigurie-dhe-ne-tirane-visho-ajazi-ne-amb--franceze-264570.html

After the attacks on Charlie Hebdo, various television debates asked the Muslim community and all Muslims of Albania to apologize for what had happened. There were many Muslims who spoke out against such actions, which are regarded as acts associated with Islam; however, there was a refusal to apologise, based on the argument that these acts were not related to religion. In different TV shows, such as "Opinion", "Tonight" etc., the main argument that was given by the persons identified with Islam was: "A person or group of individuals are not representatives of the entire faith. Suicide is haram, and is one of the unforgivable sins. The Qur'an is clear in these prohibitions when it states, "Whoever kills a soul, it is as if he has slain all of mankind. And whoever saves one, it is as if he has saved all of mankind."

The visit of the Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan caused a great deal of controversy; this included Islamophobic reactions. He and the Albanian president, Bujar Nishani, symbolically laid the first foundation stone of the Namazgja mosque that will be built in the Albanian capital[10].

When some players from the Albanian national football team went to pray in a mosque before the match between Albania and Armenia, many comments on social networks and news media discussed this event; it was argued that this was a violation of the principle of secularism. Photographs of the footballers praying were spread on social networks. Many people were angry with the players, and this anger-surpassed respect for faith, creed or other rights. Some of the comments suggested strengthening regulations, thus preventing the players from wearing the national uniform during religious rituals or in places of worship. However, almost no comments were made when the coach of the national team, wearing the same uniform, went to pray in church.

DISCUSSION OF ISLAMOPHOBIC INCIDENTS AND DISCURSIVE EVENTS IN VARIOUS FIELDS:

Employment

It is possible to say that in Albania de jure there is no problem of discrimination in the labour market. However, what has been observed is that the more obvious symbols of Muslim identity (hijab for girls/women, and beards and pants above ankles for boys/men) are visible in the public labour market. Generally, these are more involved in businesses which are privately owned by the Muslim community. Thus, girls with headscarves or hijab are more involved in day centres, kindergartens and schools run by the community. According to a study (Kocani, 2015) conducted with 248 women who wear the hijab in Tirana, 18.8 % were employed in the private sector, 2.1 % in public institutions, 5% in NGOs and only 2.5 % were self-employed. Men are more likely to be self-employed in vari-

10. http://top-channel.tv/lajme/artikull.php?id=299052

ous activities or by other members of the community.

This practice differs for men and women who do not wear identifiable signs such as hijab, beards or pants above the ankles. Sometimes managers who are not Muslim or practicing Muslims, show prejudice to the prayer time, perceiving it as a threat to the commitment to the work schedule.

In addition, there are cases when the headscarf causes problems, particularly when the position requires contact with clients, and thus impartiality. The employer justifies their decision by referring to the firm's dress code; although this is never in writing, tattoos, slippers and symbols displaying religious convictions are prohibited. However, as a society the cross worn as a necklace is acceptable.[11]

Education

According to the Albanian constitution, the schools are secular. This means that the curriculum approved by the Ministry of Education must not have a religious content. However, an important fact is that because in Albania, there is a non-inclusion of religious subjects or the history of religion in public education, students receives basic knowledge about religions through world history and/or national history books and sociology books. During the 25 years of democracy in Albania, many problems in these textbooks over the definition of Islam and its historical development have been identified. In 2015 a serious problem was identified.

For years, high school students in Albania learn sociology from a textbook written by Fatos Tarifa, et. al, published by Mediaprint Publishers. On page 109 of this book, where Islam is being explained, and the five pillars of Islam are listed. Here there is a sentence that is in stark opposition to what Islam teaches. "Reciting the slogan of Islam, according to which Islam is one Lord and Mohamed is His son" (11th Grade Sociology, page 109). This sentence goes against the very core teachings of Islam. According to Islam, God is the only God and Muhammad is His messenger. The Qur'an clearly states that God has no father and no offspring[12].

Politics

The construction of the largest mosque in the country has been delayed 22 years due to a long debate on the matter; in recent years this has taken on a political background. Both major parties have issued accusations about the construction of this facility, transforming it into an electoral matter, trying to win over the significant number of Muslims in the country. The land on which the mosque is to be built was designated as being behind the Palace of Culture. Representatives from the AIC

11. Kocani, A. Problemet e vajzave të mbuluara në shoqërinë e sotme shqiptare. 2015 (8 TH ANNUAL MEETING OF INSTITUTE ALB-SHKENCA)
http://iash-takimet.org/tv2013/programi/programi_shoqeria_2013.pdf

12. http://www.lapsi.al/lajme/2015/02/16/tjet%C3%ABr-skandal-me-tekstet-shkollore-libri-i-sociologjis%C3%AB-muhamedi-%C3%ABsht%C3%AB-biri-i#.VsCLjVQrLIU)

(Albanian Islamic Community) state that the Muslim community will preserve the green space in the new mosque project. However, there have been reactions against this proposed site. An area of 6 thousand square meters was given to the Muslim community before the May 8, 2011 elections by the prime minister, Berisha. The mayor of the city, Lulzim Basha, made the construction of the mosque one of his campaign promises to the Muslim community[13]. Another important debate has been placing a plaque commemorating Sultan Süleyman on the door of Lezha Castle. What was seen to be a symbol of a historical period in Albania has become a religious debate in a city where most of the residents are Christian. Meanwhile, the Lezha PDK deputy and candidate deputy for the Left, Edward Ndocaj (as from 29 October 2015 Ndocaj has become a member of the Albanian parliament) reacted again this symbol, stating that it "is Ottoman influence, not a national one". On the other hand, a researcher, Gjergj Karaiskaj, states that the plaque is part of the monument and demonstrates an important era in the country's history.

Another Albanian historian, Artan Lame, states that without the plaques we will have little proof of the fact that people were living in this area at the date in question.

With a backdrop of 1.67 million Muslims in Albania[14], it is astonishing to see that politicians and artists congratulate all Albanians on Christmas and Easter through social media and/or television speeches, while they congratulate only the Muslims for Muslim holidays!

The Media

After every international attack, which is carried out, or thought to be carried out by Muslim groups, a series of television debates immediately appear, even in Albania. We can see many debates from journalists and columnists, both pro and anti-Muslim. For examples, in some TV shows, such as "Opinion", which has a focus on Islam, A.Zheji said "The Muslim king of Albania, Ahmet Zogu, said that the Albanian sun has born in the West". Others explain the prejudice against Muslims as being linked with the ignorance of the people about Islam. In one episode of "Opinion" (08 January 2015), one of the guests, B. Blushi was asked by E. Mertiri to apologise for the Charlie Hebdo attack[15]. Some of the discussions in the media deal with themes such as the threat created by Daesh/ISIS, religious tolerance - reality or myth, prejudices against Muslim, terrorism in Europe, Islam, Europe and terrorism etc. Moreover, during the Festivali i Këngës (National Song Festival) one of the presenters, P. Laco, cited several composers from earlier years of the festival, and flippantly declared: "All these people with Muslim names have created Albanian music."

13. http://hdvhs.webcam/view.php?v=14vJprq9VMs).

14. Source: INSTAT (www.instat.gov.al). A significant number of respondents refused to answer to Census 2011 question on religious background, thus leading to various religious communities contesting the data. The Bektashi community accounts for nearly 2.1%.

15. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CJ0rhPLxLq4

Cyber-Space

The main concern about Islamophobia in Albania is what is read in cyber-space. It seems that the most common language used to discuss the Muslim faith is a language of hatred, disgust and anger. On different website or in articles that discuss Islam, we can find an aggressive language against Islam; the people using this language are anonymous.

For example:

- http://shqiptarja.com/bota/2728/franc--sulme-me-arm--e-bomb--n--paris-60-persona-t--vdekur-326918.html - "..all the Muslims of the world should go to hell!"
- http://www.lapsi.al/ide/2015/11/14/koha-p%C3%ABr-t%C3%AB-ndihmuar-islamin#.VsCkjFQrLIU - "…Islam is the most disgusting race..."
- http://www.balkanweb.com/site/ja-si-visheshin-femrat-ne-iran-para-revolucionit-islamik/ - "Islam is a damnation and ugliness of humanity."

OBSERVED CIVIL SOCIETY AND POLITICAL ASSESSMENT AND INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN TO COUNTER ISLAMOPHOBIA

Civil society has been almost non-existent in encouraging or actually developing an informed discourse on religious radicalization tendencies, Islamophobia and other religious developments in the country. In general, the public discourse on this phenomenon has been superficial and has ignored many important aspects for prevention[16].

Islamophobia is seen as something that does not exist in Albania. Therefore, in the name of religious harmony, the issue of preventive practices has not been addressed.

CONCLUSION

Policy Recommendations for Politics and NGO's

A progress report of the EU (2015) states: "Albania has been affected by the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters and radicalization. Cases of hate speech need to be addressed more forcefully. The phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters needs a specific approach by the intelligence and law enforcement community and a coherent judicial policy on offenders."

State Institutions:

Religious brotherhood is an important value for the Albanian people, and this directly concerns the Albanian prime minister. After the events of January in France, at a

16. Idm. Religious Radicalism And Violent Extremism In Albania. 2015

meeting with heads of religious faiths the prime minister said, "Albania is quite weak and vulnerable to the threat of Islamic fundamentalism."

- The Islamophobia phenomenon should be addressed by actively involving state institutions and agencies that operate in the area of local governance, education, social affairs, youth, employment and antidiscrimination; in addition, other non-state actors and above all, religious communities and civil society should be involved.
- The design of preventive programs and involvement of influential stakeholders must be associated with a more active role by the state, particularly at the local level.
- For a country like Albania which has so many religions and where freedom of religion is guaranteed in the Constitution, it is important that the treatment of religions and historiography adopt a neutral position, giving students information that has been verified by research.

NGOs

- NGOs must address Islamophobia by establishing forums in which active opinion makers, religious leaders and theologians take part. Their messages against Islamophobia must be spread on social networks, the radio, and television and school programs.
- The promotion of studies, support for research and continuous monitoring should take place to ensure an updated database on the phenomenon of Islamophobia and its trends, thus serving policymakers, as well as religious communities and other societal actors, in developing relevant policies.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN AUSTRIA NATIONAL REPORT 2015

FARID HAFEZ

THE AUTHOR

Farid Hafez is a researcher at the Department of Sociology and Political Science at the University of Salzburg. He earned his Ph.D. in political science from the University of Vienna. Hafez has been teaching at a number of universities in the world. He has been a Visiting Scholar at Columbia University. Hafez is the editor of the German-English Islamophobia Studies Yearbook, (www.jahrbuch-islamophobie.de). He was awarded with the Bruno-Kreisky-Award for the political book of the Year 2009 for his German anthology "Islamophobia in Austria" (co-edited with Prof. John Bunzl). He has published more than 10 books and 20 articles. His last publications include 'From the Far Right to the Mainstream: Islamophobia, Party Politics and the Media' (Campus Verlag, 2012, together with Humayun Ansari), an introduction to the history of Islamic Political Thought and 'Shifting borders: Islamophobia as the cornerstone for building pan-European right-wing unity' (in: Patterns of Prejudice, vol. 48, no. 5, October 2014). farid.hafez@sbg.ac.at

"This research has been supported by Land Salzburg, Stadt Wien Kulturabteilung (MA 7), and Grüne MigrantInnen Wien."

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions. No representation, either expressed or implied, is made of the accuracy of the material in the national reports. The editors of the European Islamophobia Report cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The reader must make his or her own evaluation of the accuracy and appropriateness of the material.

To cite this report: Farid Hafez (2016): *Islamophobia in Austria: National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As in many other countries, the news of the terrorist attacks in Paris (Charlie Hebdo) as well as the ones later in November shaped the public debate on the place of Islam in Europe. In addition to this, the Austrian government issued a new law regarding Islam, which regulates the relation between the Austrian Republic and the legally recognised Islamic Councils. The law has been criticised as discriminatory by many scholars of religious law, NGOs, as well as churches and religious communities. The ongoing terrorist attacks of Daesh as well as the subsequent refugees fleeing from Syria and Iraq to Europe have had deep political implications on Austrian politics. The public climate is becoming more aggressive towards Muslims. The recorded number of harassments on the streets and violations against Muslims is increasing, which may have only to do with a heightened consciousness on the side of Muslims who seem to have become more active in talking about these discriminations since autumn 2014, after which the debate on Daesh has become omnipresent. While a number of NGOs and activists speak out against these developments, right-wing parties, which spread stereotypes of Muslims, are getting stronger. The FPÖ has used offensive Islamophobic campaigning in three regional elections. While media reports more and more about Islamophobic incidents, a biased coverage of Islam and Muslims can be observed, especially in a great number of fabricated tabloid press stories. Authoritative Muslim public figures, which play the role of native informants, often support and thus legitimise this discourse.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Wie auch in anderen Ländern haben die terroristischen Übergriffe in Paris im Jänner und November 2015 auch die österreichische öffentliche Debatte über den Platz des Islams in Europa geprägt. Die Erneuerung des Islamgesetzes 2015 hat die Verhältnisse zwischen Staat und islamischer Religionsgesellschaften in Österreich neu geordnet. Dieses Gesetz wurde von vielen AkteurInnen, darunter Rechtswissenschaftler, Nichtregierungsorganisationen, wie auch Kirchen und Religionsgemeinschaften als diskriminierend beurteilt. Der anhaltende Krieg von Daesh/ISIS und die daraus resultierenden Flüchtlingsströme aus Syrien und dem Irak nach Europa haben auch in der österreichischen Politik tiefe Spuren hinterlassen. Das öffentliche Klima wird steigend aggressiver. Übergriffe auf MuslimInnen, v.a. Frauen, wie auch Vandalismus gegenüber muslimischen Einrichtungen vermehren sich an der Zahl, was auch mit einem gestiegenen Bewusstsein auf Seiten von MuslimInnen gegenüber ihnen begangene Ungerechtigkeiten zu tun haben kann. Eine omnipräsente Debatte über Daesh/ISIS scheint auf Seiten der MuslimInnen zu einer stärkeren Sensibilisierung geführt zu haben. Während sich auf der einen Seite NRO's und AktivistInnen gegen diese Entwicklungen aussprechen, nehmen auch die Aktivitäten von rechten AkteurInnen in der Verbreitung anti-muslimischer Rassismen zu. Die FPÖ bediente sich in drei Wahlkämpfen offensiv islamophober Kampagnen. Während das kritische Bewusstsein von Medien, über islamophobe Übergriffe zu berichten, steigt, so ist gleichzeitig eine stereotype Darstellung von ‚Islam/MuslimInnen' erkennbar. Das gilt insbesondere für die Boulevard-Presse. Muslimische Figuren, die diese Vorurteile bestätigen, werden oft herangezogen, um diese Vorurteile zu bestätigen.

INTRODUCTION

Austria is in many ways special in terms of its accommodation of Islam, its historical encounters with Muslim empires and the role of right-wing populist parties since 2005.[1] Historical encounters of war and cultural exchange with the Ottoman Empire are remembered to the present day, be it in folkloric songs, statuaries, historical monuments in churches and historical locations, with which many cities like Vienna are adorned. The colonial past of the Austro-Hungarian Empire today is often re-imagined by referring to the submissive and more 'European' white Bosnian Muslim in contrast to the Oriental Turkish Muslim enemy. At the same time, the colonisation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Austro-Hungarian Empire also created the basis for a comparably liberal and tolerant way of accommodating Islamic religion. Since 1912, Islam has been a legally recognised religion, and in the wake of labour immigration to Austria from countries like Turkey and the subsequent rise of Muslim peoples, this law was revitalised by the establishment of the Islamic Council in Austria (Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich) in 1979. Since then, this institution was able to create a number of institutions serving Muslim religion with support from state institutions like religious instructions for Muslim pupils in public schools, etc. This comparably liberal state-church framework stands in strong contrast to recent developments that started in the early 1990s, when growing support for the right-wing Populist Party FPÖ (Austrian Freedom Party) under the leadership of Jörg Haider went hand in hand with racist campaigns against black people and immigrants from Yugoslavia and Turkey. Islamophobia became central with a time lag after 9/11, when the FPÖ went into opposition after it was part of the government in power from 2000 to 2005. Since then, the FPÖ has made Islamophobia one of its central strategies to mobilise the electorate. The radicalisation of FPÖ slogans ("We want home, not Islam"; "[Prophet] Muhammad is a child abuser and an epileptic") paired with policy claims of among others the surveillance of mosques and rethinking the legal status of Islam as a legally recognised religious community were slowly adopted by single politicians and party strategists. Especially the Conservative Party (ÖVP), which presided over the Ministry of Interior, started to compete with the Islamophobic stance of the FPÖ very early. The Conservative Party incorporated Islamophobic claims in their election campaigns in a more civilised and 'codified' way. Only in 2008, after the Swiss right-wing Populist Party had initiated a debate on the ban of minarets, the first legal restrictions were implemented. First in Vorarlberg, with the votes of the ruling Conservatives and their right-wing coalition partner, and then in Carinthia with the votes of the ruling far right split BZÖ and the Conservatives, a ban for the construction of mosques and minarets was imple-

1. Hafez, Farid (2010), *Österreich und der Islam: eine Wende durch FPÖVP? Anmerkungen zur Rolle von Islamophobie im politischen Diskurs seit der Wende*, in Baker, Frederick/Herczeg, Petra (Hg.), *Die beschämte Republik: Zehn Jahre nach Schwarz-Blau in Österreich*, Wien: Czernin Verlag.

mented. On a national level, no comparable discriminations like a ban of wearing the hijab were implemented. Nevertheless, anti-racist NGOs like ZARA have been recording much discrimination in the labour market against Muslim women. Although Muslims witness a rather liberal political framework, prejudices in society are widespread and Muslims are – in a European perspective – comparably poorly organised in terms of political participation. The Eurobarometer reveals that Austria is on the top of the list of countries where people would feel uncomfortable working with a Muslim or having a son/daughter in relationship with a Muslim.[2]

In terms of people, there does exist some alarming data in regard to the spread of Islamophobia. According to a recent quantitative study conducted in 2015 by the anti-racist Austrian Mauthausen Committee (n=1000), 65 per cent of respondents said it was problematic, if somebody from the family would convert to Islam. Sixty-four per cent of respondents said that it was problematic if a mosque was built in their neighbourhood, while 42 per cent thought the same in the case of a Buddhist temple.[3]

SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

Three developments have been especially crucial in 2015. When in October 2014, a draft of the 2015 Islam law was presented a huge protest from Muslim NGOs, law scholars, as well as churches broke out. The draft received more than 160 reviews, out of which the majority were fundamentally critical towards the draft. Most of the criticism was not incorporated and the law was passed on 30 March, 2015. Debates in national parliament revealed that there is a lot of mistrust towards Muslim peoples. While the government argued that the law was treating all religious communities equally, oppositional MPs of the Greens and NEOS voiced concern that the Islam law would transport a "general suspicion" against Muslims.[4] According to Alev Korun and Harald Walser from the Greens, "the Islam law gives voice to a general suspicion".[5] Even an MP from the ruling Conservative Party, who argued that there was no general suspicion against Muslims in the law assessed that the public debate entangled different issues and prejudices with each other and created an atmosphere of suspicion.[6]

This law was debated coincidentally with the rise of Daesh, the terrorist organisation in Iraq and Syria. This globally relevant phenomenon was the second development which impacted Austrian politics. The media coverage on Daesh created a media and

2. Special Eurobarometer 437, Discrimination in the EU in 2015 Report,,October 2015, pp. 34-37.

3. Mauthausen Komitee Österreich, "Studie: Toleranz in Österreich groß geschrieben – bei Religion scheiden sich die Geister," April 27, 2015, accessed January 28, 2016, http://www.mkoe.at/studie-toleranz-oesterreich-gross-geschrieben-religion-scheiden-geister

4. Steneographisches Protokoll, 61. Sitzung des Nationalrates der Republik Österreich, XXV. Gesetzgebungsperiode, Mittwoch, 25 February 2015, p. 159.

5. Ibid.,pp. 151, 170.

6. Ibid., p. 200.

social hysteria. The weekly quality paper Profil for example published an article stating that the intelligence service of the Ministry of Defense would "investigate against five strictly observing Muslim conscripts". The article was entitled "Alarming Islamism in Army. Intelligence Service investigates because of Daesh-gesture of a conscript".[7] A hint to the assumed sympathy with Daesh was established by a photo of the young men raising their forefinger, which symbolises the oneness of God and has become "the ISIS finger" for the tabloid press.[8] A student, who had already informed the security services about a young girl that attempted to travel to Syria to join Daesh/ISIL, gives an account in an interview of how he himself became the focus of the security services, after he was reported to the security services for speaking about Daesh/ISIL to neighbours. The student was asked whether he takes his religion seriously and why he was not wearing a jalabiyya, a traditional Arabic garment. Since the security services were speaking to another person in the building involved in the case, the image spread around in the tiny city of Lower Austria that he might somehow be engaged in Daesh/ISIL activities. People on the street greeted him playfully as the 'terrorist'.[9] Hence, his reputation was severely damaged for a period of his life.

At the beginning of the new school year in autumn 2014, the Minister of Education published a letter that reached out to the teachers in all public schools that "conspicuous pupils shall be reported to the school administration".[10] This politics of policing clearly surpassed the competence of teachers, who are first of all not trained in this field and secondly could easily misuse this power according to respective beliefs and political Weltanschauung. Hence, it is no wonder that teachers reported to be very confused by minor incidents. One teacher reports that she would not know, if a young Muslim girl that started wearing the hijab after summer break could now be a sympathiser of Daesh. Interestingly enough, this politics was not debated at all in the media. And it was also not restricted to the field of education.

In Viennese kindergartens, public officials are said to have made inspections at Muslim private kindergartens, asking the personnel whether the Koran was taught, if religious personnel was visiting them to teach the Koran, if the Koran was played on CD, etc. These interviews were made regularly on no legal basis. Again, this issue never reached public interest in the media. Rather, it was the other way around: regularly, certain newspapers reported the spread of extremist thought and indoctrination of Muslim kindergarteners. This happened first and foremost in the yellow press. A journalist of the daily Kurier reported that the story behind a Muslim kindergarten

7. Profil Redaktion, "Islamismus-Alarm im Bundesheer," *APA*, July 15, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20150718_OTS0006/profil-islamismus-alarm-im-bundesheer?utm_source=2015-07-18&utm_medium=email&utm_content=html&utm_campaign=mailaboeinzel

8. An inquiry at the Ministry of Defense did not answer the question whether a member of the Ministry of Defense or somebody outside of the army launched the examination. Robert Rauter, email to the author, 6 August, 2015.

9. Interview with the author, 13 November, 2014.

10. Letter by the Minister of Education.

that taught its kindergarteners about 'Jihad' was based on the report of a person that had a lawsuit brought against him because of suspicion of re-engagement in National Socialist activities. The Viennese municipal administration in charge of kindergartens devitalised the rhetoric that any 'tendencies of radicalisation' were observed in this kindergarten. Meanwhile, this kindergarten received a number of threats.[11] It seems that this issue had also some relevance for the tabloid press. The most widespread tabloid press, the Kronenzeitung, published an article reporting that an officially authorised kindergarten had a kindergartener with a niqab, a face veil. In their article, they promoted a journalist's book No tolerance to the intolerant and cited the author with extremist views such as that Europe was practicing a naïve "appeasement politics regarding militant Islamism". The article concludes with the words: "Indoctrinated extremist kids could create huger problems in ten to twelve years."[12]

Due to the rise of attacks on Muslim women on the streets, the violation of Muslim religious space like putting carcases of pigs on the door handle of a mosque, the Islamic Council in Austria announced the foundation of a new institution – Dokustelle für Muslime[13] – to document discrimination against and threats to Muslim peoples and institutions.[14] A first report is planned to be presented in March 2016. According to Elif Öztürk, 78 Islamophobic acts were reported to them between 10 December, 2014 and 31 December, 2015.[15] The Charlie Hebdo attacks as well as the Paris attacks on 13 October, 2015 seem to have increased the number of individual attacks as well as organised activity against Muslim peoples and institutions.

Another important development was the so-called 'refugee crisis', which initiated a debate on "how many Muslims can we let in" throughout Europe and which was taken as a starting point for many Islamophobic activities, especially – but not solely – within the right-wing camp.

ISLAMOPHOBIC INCIDENTS AND DISCURSIVE EVENTS IN VARIOUS FIELDS

Following the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris, an increasing number of threats have been registered. Only a minority of victims tends to report these incidents to an anti-racist institution, go to the media or to the authorities. Some renowned human

11. Bernhard Ichner, "Kindergarten-Chef wehrt sich gegen Dschihad-Vorwurf," Kurier, November 25, 2015, accessed on January 28, 2016, http://kurier.at/chronik/wien/kindergarten-chef-wehrt-sich-gegen-dschihad-vorwurf/166.191.819.

12. Richard Schmitt, "Wien: Total verschleiert beim Kindergartenausflug," *Krone*, 14 October, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://mobil.krone.at/phone/kmm__1/story_id__476944/sendung_id__488/story.phtml

13. "Dokustelle für Muslime," accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.dokustelle.derislam.at/

14. "Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich," 31 December, 2014, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.derislam.at/index.php?f=news&shownews=1939&kid=1

15. Email from Elif Öztürk to the author, 1 February, 2016.

rights activists like Dudu Kücükgöl try to raise awareness in social media, calling Muslims to speak out against injustice and hence create spaces of communication for these victims. As stakeholders, these people create a bridge for the victims to connect to journalists and speak out or take advice from advocacy groups for equal treatment (Gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft, ZARA, etc.). A Muslim girl said she got verbally attacked when somebody on the street told her "Take your hijab off. You look ugly with the hijab!" When she wanted to call the police, she was physically attacked. When the police came, the perpetrators are said to have reversed their status by telling the police "She threatened us and wanted to stab us." Her case was not pursued because of limited evidence.[16] Another person reports that she was spit on and insulted by a passing person while she was standing at the street lights.[17] The same perpetrator[18] was reported to allegedly have attacked a veiled woman with spray, while screaming "Islam is shit, all terrorists!" While people on the streets and metro supervisors intervened and helped the victim, the police saw no reason to further investigate the case.[19] In the wake of Charlie Hebdo, a Viennese mosque was reported to have been grafittied with the slogan "Paris! Islam is shit = out".[20] Parents of a reported 'computer nerd' were asked by teachers, if they knew what he was a sympathiser of Daesh and if he was watching IS videos on Youtube. After the Paris attacks, another pupil that regularly draws swastikas started to call him a 'terrorist' and the pupil hit him.[21] In another instance, a mother reported that her five-year-old daughter was spit on by an old man. When she shouted at the man, he gesticulated shooting a gun and went away.[22] In a high school, a teacher asked, how many Muslims were in the class. Two pupils put up their hands. The teacher answered "So we have two Islamists here". The pupils did not want to react because they were afraid of possible repercussions as they are supposed to graduate the following year.[23] When a bomb threat was announced at a Viennese metro station, a Muslim woman has reported, she was told "One should slash her hijab".[24]

Physical assaults, violations and harassment

A Muslim woman reports that she was attacked on 29 April. A woman approached

16. " Salzburgerin wurde attackiert und angeklagt!," *Haber Journal*, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.haberjournal.at/de/osterreich/salzburgerin-wurde-attackiert-und-angeklagt-h1723.html

17. Interview with the author, 20 February, 2015.

18. Menerva Hammad, "Spuck mir in die Augen Baby," *Das Biber*, 11 February, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.dasbiber.at/blog/spuck-mir-die-augen-baby

19. Interview with the author, 20 February, 2015.

20. *Haber Journal* accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.haberjournal.at/avusturya/viyana39da-camiye-irkci-saldiri-h6342.html

21. Interview with the author, 20 February, 2015.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

her and snatched off her hijab when she dismounted from a public bus. She screamed at her and told her she should go back to Turkey, if she wants to wear this "skimpy dress". On 31 May a graffiti work saying "Muslims shall be slaughtered" was seen at a Viennese public transport station. A pedestrian immediately reported it and it was removed by the responsible Viennese authority on 3 June.

On 30 August, two families with seven children – amongst them a two-year-old and a five-year-old – were attacked while walking in the streets in Linz. Some of the women were wearing a hijab. Two men approached them, telling them "What do you want here? Go home!" One man bumped into the family and the other one threw a closed can of beer towards them. He hit a twelve-year-old girl in the leg. The doctor noticed heavy bruising.[25] A few weeks before, another woman with a hijab was insulted and was spat on at in a supermarket in Linz, Upper Austria. Since the victims were NGO activists, their cases found their way into the press.[26]

On 12 June, a doctoral student from the USA was attacked in the tram in Graz. The woman who was wearing a hijab was with her husband, her three-year-old son and five-year-old daughter. Suddenly, she was attacked by an old man, who yanked her hair. He ran out at the next station. The victim reported the incident to the police, who was not willing to register the case at first, as there was no medical protocol proving an injury. Her children asked their mother whether this man would come again and refused to ride the tram after the incident.[27]

On 28 June a window of a mosque was vandalised and a letter was found saying "Muslims go out".[28] Between 17 and 18 October, a Jewish cemetery in Hohenems and an Islamic cemetery in Altach were desecrated. Swastika and racist slurs were smeared on the graves and buildings of the cemeteries.[29] On 30 December there was an arson attack on a renovated Muslim prayer room in Krems in Lower Austria.[30]

After the Paris attacks on 13 November, an increasing number of Muslims have reported being harassed in public. One day after the attack, a pregnant Austrian Airlines employee with a hijab was told "I am happy for your baby but not happy for Paris". The employee answered "I have nothing to do with all that." He replied "Yes, I know but we had the Holocaust in Austria and it is enough."[31] Two days after the

25. Email of the father of the victim to the author, 31 August, 2015.

26. "Mädchen in Linz mit Bierdose beworfen, weil es Muslimin ist," *Nachrichten*, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.nachrichten.at/oberoesterreich/Maedchen-in-Linz-mit-Bierdose-beworfen-weil-es-Muslimin-ist;art4,1957329

27. Email from 20 August, 2015.

28. Photo taken on 27 July in Deutsch Wagram.

29. "Jüdischer und islamischer Friedhof mit Hakenkreuzen beschmiert," *VOL*, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.vol.at/juedischer-und-islamischer-friedhof-mit-hakenkreuzen-beschmiert/4491292

30. "Brandschlag auf Moschee in Niederösterreich," *Kismetonline*, 30 December, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.kismetonline.at/brandanschlag-auf-moschee-in-niederoesterreich/

31. Email to author, 18 December, 2015.

attack, a young man with a six-year-old boy got into the tram and shouted out loud "It would be better, if all those assholes with their cleaning rags on their heads get killed", while watching a hijab-wearing woman. He went on to say "They all have to be exterminated! That's why HC [FPÖ chairman, FH] is the only solution, I tell you!"[32] A Muslim girl received a public post on Facebook by her long-time teacher, with whom she remembers only good days, saying "To be silent on the terror in Paris means to accept it or even approve of it."[33] A woman wearing a hijab talked about being harassed on the street by a woman who approached her shouting "terrorist slut", "shit Islam" and other abusive words.[34] On 1 December, a hijab-wearing woman was called "shit Muslims" when she walked to the tram in Graz.[35] A mother with a hijab walked with her nephew through a market in Salzburg. She conceded to buy him a wooden sword, although she did not want to be seen with such a toy. Two metres away from the booth where they bought it, a man told them "Yesss super! This is the right present for a child. Just go and cut off a head." Her nephew started crying, saying "Aunt, we can throw it away. Don't be angry with me."[36]

Public campaigns

More and more frequently, posters in public appear which call for action against Muslims. In Deutsch Wagram, a poster with an inscription stating "Stay out", which is normally used for dogs, was discovered at a cigarette machine, showing not a dog but a Muslim man and woman in traditional garments.[37] The youth branch of the Upper Austrian FPÖ, the RFJ OÖ, launched an Islamophobic and anti-refugee video on Facebook that was widely shared. It showed a bare-breasted white, blonde woman swimming in a pool saying that the water is up to our necks. The video then argued that Austrians would become "alien in their own country", showing pictures of praying Muslims, a flag with the shahada, veiled women, etc.[38] A new modern right-wing civic movement, the 'Identitarian Movement Austria', has increased its activities in 2015. Their central topic is the perceived threat Islamisation poses to the Austrian and European homelands. The immigration waves of refugees have sparked an increasing number of activities. In a propaganda video they state "We are the heart of Europe […] All this vanishes today. […] The land of churches and castles becomes the land of mosques and Kebab booths. A secure and peaceful land becomes a land of criminality and a land of terror Islam. They take our homeland

32. Email to author, 25 November, 2015.

33. Email to author, 26 November, 2015.

34. Email to author, 19 November, 2015.

35. Email to author, 1 December, 2015.

36. Email to author, 19 November, 2015.

37. Photo taken on 27 July in Deutsch Wagram.

38. "RJF OÖ," Facebook, accessed on 28 January, 2016, https://www.facebook.com/rfj.ooe/videos/vb.176999712329637/1075982942431305/?type=2&theater

Poster 'Islamisation – Not with us' by the Identitarian Movement Austria[41]

[…]"[39] Frequently, they appear in public by disturbing open conference debates by anti-racist NGOs or by putting up posters in public spaces without permission, warning of losing the homeland or against an imagined threat of 'Islamisation'. Recently, their leader was given a podium in a live debate in a programme of the Austrian broadcast TV ORF.[40] [41]

When the franchise supermarket chain SPAR introduced Halal meat, they had to face a huge wave of protest by racist people on their Facebook account. Racist arguments such as "Halal stands for Islam's brutality, [...] intolerance towards believers of other faiths" or "next time, marriage of kids will be allowed" were posted.[42] This induced SPAR to openly declare it would remove Halal meat from its assortment of products.[43] This seemingly 'counter-cultural fight' of Islamophobes was also registered regarding a Christmas calendar from the Chocolate producer Lindt, who uses seemingly Oriental architectural motifs for over 10 years and was thus criticised for its attempt of Islamisation.[44]

Although PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident) was also launched in Austria at the beginning of 2015, it never succeeded. One reason amongst many[45] is the strength of an already existing right-wing party in parliament. The FPÖ Chairman declared "We are the real PEGIDA".[46]

39. "Österreich-Meine Heimat," Facebook, accessed on 28 January, 2016, https://www.facebook.com/vlogidentitaer/videos/1483749671933941/

40. Peter Temel, "Forum für besonders wütende Bürger," *Kurier*, 25 November, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://kurier.at/meinung/blogs/gespraechsstoff/orf-buergerforum-zum-thema-fluechtlinge-forum-fuer-besonders-wuetende-buerger/166.123.127

41. Photo taken by Mine Atar Yilmaz.

42. Tori Reichel, "Dürfen wir vorstellen: Die Leute, die sich über das Halal-Flisch von Spar aufregen," *Vice*, 3 December, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.vice.com/alps/read/halal-fleisch-spar-kommentare-373

43. "Spar," accessed on 28 January, 2016, https://www.spar.at/de_AT/index/Information/kein_fleisch_aus_schaechtungen_bei_spar.html

44. Andre, "Islamischer' Kalender von Lindt erregt die Gemüter," *Mimikama*, 3 December, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.mimikama.at/allgemein/islamischer-kalender-von-lindt-erregt-die-gemter/

45. Irmi Wutscher, "Ordentlich in den Sand gesetzt," *FM4*, 3 February, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://fm4.orf.at/stories/1753444/

46. Daniel Steinlechner, "FPÖ Strache: ‚Wir sind die wahre Pegida'," *News*, 16 January, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.news.at/a/fpoe-strache-wahre-pegida

Discrimination in the employment sector

The yearly Zara Report of ZARA reveals that hijab-wearing women are frequently objects of hatred and discrimination, in daily life as well as on the job market.[47] In this report, a number of people – in specific Muslim women wearing a hijab – reported to have been discriminated as a result of their religious identity.

A Muslim woman applied for a job at a metalworking company. She was not taken because of her hijab and was told "If you take off your skimpy dress, then we will have a look at it." Although the applicant suggested wearing a periwig, the company told her just to "apply again with a normal photo". The applicant was advised by the government's advocacy group for equal treatment to handle the issue via the Arbeiterkammer, an official representative of employees in Upper Austria. After she won the case before the labour court, she was offered compensation of 1.550 Euro.[48]

With the help of Klagsverband, a Litigation Association of NGOs against Discrimination, a student who was not given a job at one of Vienna's most famous bakeries, sued and won the first case in Austrian history of discrimination against gender and religion. She received 2.500 Euro.[49]

A growing number of Muslim women, who were born in Austria, speak the language and have additional skills, report that when sending a photo with their hijab, they are not even called for an interview, while applications without a photo lead to interviews, which are answered in the negative.[50]

A young social science student with a hijab applied for a job at the education authority in Upper Austria. The last question during the interview was "Are you ideologised or do you belong to any group that spreads an ideology." Her answer was that she belongs to no group and was not ideologised. The interviewee went on to ask "You do not even go to the Friday prayer (in a mosque, FH)?"[51]

One male Muslim religious teacher reports to have quit his job because of the huge amount of Islamophobic tendencies in everyday life. He was not anymore able to confront misrepresentations, defending his religion, etc.[52]

A young Muslim woman with a hijab entered the room for a job interview and

47. "Racism report 2014-Case report on racist incidents and structures in Austria," accessed on 28 January, 2016, www.zara.or.at/_wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Zara_RR14_engl_web_fin.pdf

48. "Wegen Kopftuch diskriminiert: 1550 Euro Schadenersatz," *Kleine Zeitung*, 10 February, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.kleinezeitung.at/s/chronik/4659503/Bei-Bewerbung_Wegen-Kopftuch-diskriminiert_1550-Euro-Schadenersatz-?xtor=CS1-15

49. David Krutzler, "Kein Job wegen Kopftuchs: Studentin erhält 2.500 Euro," *Der Standard*, 16 March, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://derstandard.at/2000012992823/Kein-Job-wegen-Kopftuch-Studentin-erhaelt-2500-Euro

50. Kerstin Schnitzhofer, "Kopftuch in der Arbeit? Die Nächste bitte!," *Salzburg 24*, 25 February, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.salzburg24.at/kopftuch-in-der-arbeit-die-naechste-bitte/4246894

51. Interview by author, 28 November, 2015.

52. Murat Hirsekorn, accessed on 28 January, 2016, comment on Murat Hirsekorn, "Warum ich nicht mehr arbeiten kann," *Netzwerk Muslimische Zivilgesellschaft*, March, http://dieanderen.net/warum-ich-nicht-mehr-arbeiten-kannn/

when the office assistant caught sight of her, she immediately stated "The doctor said if a headscarf comes I have to say no."[53]

Another woman, who had successfully applied for a job with her hijab was asked on her first day at work, why she did not take the hijab off and told that she had to leave since she cannot work as a saleswoman with a hijab.[54]

Politics

Charlie Hebdo enabled the Ministry of Interior to strengthen security policies. The government decided on a security pact to spend between 250 to 290 million Euro on the 'terrorist threat' until 2018.[55] Twelve million of this amount was planned for CVE programmes.[56] According to the Foreign Minister, Austrian jihadists shall be deprived of their passports.[57]

For the FPÖ, Islamophobia is a central part of their ideology as well as campaigning. During the Sommergespräche, the yearly political summer talks on Austrian broadcast TV ORF, the chairman of the FPÖ – with more than 1 million viewers tuned in[58] – was asked how he would react if his daughter converts to Islam. Strache answered with the words "I am convinced that this would never happen, because my daughter is a cosmopolitan, freedom-loving human being and will never allow to be oppressed."[59] Every Ash Wednesday, the leader of the far right FPÖ speaks to some of his functionaries and followers. Journalists reported that Islam was one of the main topics of the leader's speech. He uttered words such as "I don't want my daughter to have to wear a veil one day" or "we say what the silent majority in Austria thinks: (sarcastically, FH) Islam has nothing to do with Islamism – and alcohol has nothing to do with alcoholism".[60] In addition to that, the FPÖ leader HC Strache is the most followed Austrian politician on Facebook. On his page, users regularly publish contents containing anti-Muslim hatred. One example among more than

53. Email to author, 1 July, 2015.

54. Email to author, 16 October, 2015.

55. Polizei-Sondereinheit auf Großeinsatz in Wiener Innenstadt, *Wirtschaftsblatt*, 20 January, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://wirtschaftsblatt.at/home/nachrichten/oesterreich/wien/4642890/PolizeiSondereinheit-auf-Grosseinsatz-in-Wiener-Innenstadt

56. Iris Bonavida, "Zwischen 260 und 290 Millionen Euro sollen in den nächsten vier Jahren zusätzlich in den Sicherheitsbereich fließen," *Die Presse*, 20 January, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://diepresse.com/home/politik/innenpolitik/4642703/Sicherheitspaket_Bis-zu-290-Mio-Euro-fur-Polizei?from=suche.intern.portal

57. APA, Terrorgefahr: Kurz will österreichischen Jihadisten den Reisepass entziehen, *Der Standard*, 19 January, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://derstandard.at/2000010580486/Kurz-will-Jihadisten-den-Reisepass-entziehen

58. *Kundendienst ORF* accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://kundendienst.orf.at/programm/fernsehen/orf2/sommergespraeche.html

59. "Sommergespräch mit FPÖ-Parteichef Heinz-Christian Strache," 17 August, 2015, 9.05 pm, accessed on 28 January, 2016.

60. Markus Rohrhofer, " Soloturner Strache in der Rieder Jahnhalle," *Der Standard*, 18 February, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://derstandard.at/2000011878475/Strache-in-RiedSoloturner-in-der-Jahnhalle

1.048 that have been collected is the post "Only a dead Moslem is a good Moslem".[61] In a picture, which Strache shares on Facebook, Voltaire is cited with the following words: "The Koran teaches fear, hate, despite towards others, killing as a legitimate means to spread and preserve the Satanic teaching. He badmouths women, separates people into classes and again and again calls for blood."[62] [63]

Three elections took place in 2015. During the Upper Austrian elections, the FPÖ on its posters called against "Asylum Chaos and Islamisation".

FPÖ's Campaign Poster [63]

The FPÖ eventually became part of the government coalition and since its leader became vice-governor, he re-emphasised his claim during the elections campaign that Muslims shall not be welcomed as refugees.[64] Also during the Styria elections, the FPÖ campaign was openly Islamophobic: their primary slogan was "New apartments instead of new mosques".[65] The Styria FPÖ raised a campaign against the construction of a mosque on www.moscheenstopp.com. For them the "goal is to create a consciousness of the threat of Islamisation in Styria. Mosques and minarets are the most visible signs of this development".[66] Their webpage calls for

"[The] ban of additional mosques with minarets […], stricter surveillance of

61. "Eau de Strache," accessed on 28 January, 2016, https://www.eaudestrache.at/

62. "SOS Mitmensch," Nachgefragt: Was hat es mit Straches Anti-Koran-Zitat auf sich?, 21 December, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.sosmitmensch.at/site/home/article/1141.html

63. Photo by Damir A. Saračević.

64. "SOS Mitmensch," 3 December, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.sosmitmensch.at/site/home/article/1140.html

65. Colette M. Schmidt, "FPÖ-Wahlkampf gegen virtuelle Moscheen," *Der Standard*, 25 April, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://derstandard.at/2000014938442/FPOe-Wahlkampf-gegen-virtuelle-Moscheen

66. "FPÖ-Steiermark," accessed on 17 November, 2015, www.fpoe-stmk.at/news-detail/artikel/fpoe-steiermark-stopp-dem-moscheenbau/

Islamist mosques, the presentation of an Islamisation Report in parliament […] loss of citizenship for Jihad fighters, the ban of the distribution of the Koran by Salafists in the public square, no special rights for Muslim pupils (regarding exemption of swimming courses for females, class trips and sexual education) […], the prevention of an Islamic parallel justice system."[67]

During the Viennese campaign, the discourse on refugees dominated the election campaigns. Commentators of daily newspapers regularly cautioned against Daesh fighters within the waves of refugees. One author says "The failure in the management of the 'refugee crisis' must be corrected. Also the USA have regretted their passivity on 9/11."[68] The same Austrian daily Die Presse also gave Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán a long interview to spread his very Islamophobic views in the midst of the so-called 'refugee crisis', arguing that "Muslims will soon be more in numbers that we are".[69]Also far right politicians like the Viennese FPÖ Chairman argued that "Daesh terrorists would be infiltrated […] and an Islamisation would occur since the majority of refugees were Muslim."[70] Within the debate on the so-called 'refugee crisis', FPÖ mastermind Herbert Kickl openly announced that "since the church is helping immigrant Muslims so much, it should be possible to missionise them".[71] The chairman held a policy statement that was shared on Facebook more than 34.000 times and viewed nearly by 2 million people, where he argued that Daesh may send fighters to Europe.

The European Peoples Party Group in the European Parliament called for EU action to prevent the radicalisation and recruitment of terrorists. Based on the new Austrian Islam law, conservative MEPs from the Austrian ÖVP praised the new Austrian law as groundbreaking, and according to them, financing mosques with foreign money should become illegal in the whole EU. They also lobbied for the withdrawal of citizenship for fighters of terrorist organisations.[72]

On 9 December, a so-called 'project interim report'[73] of an alleged study on radicalisation in Muslim kindergartens was presented. The presentation reveals a po-

67. "Stopp dem [sic] Moscheenbau," accessed on 28 January, 2016, www.moscheenstopp.com

68. Anneliese Rohrer, "Versagen des Krisenmanagements kann für EU 9/11-Moment bedeuten," *Die Presse*, 11 September, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://diepresse.com/home/meinung/quergeschrieben/anneliese-rohrer/4819479/Versagen-des-Krisenmanagements-kann-fur-EU-911Moment-bedeuten?xtor=CS1-15

69. Christian Ultsch,"Orbán: 'Muslime werden bald mehr als wir sein'," 9 September, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://diepresse.com/home/politik/4822692/Orban_Muslime-werden-bald-mehr-als-wir-sein

70. Exists on Puls4 Channel, 7 September, 2015, http://www.puls4.com/video/pro-und-contra/play/2853802

71. Freiheitlicher Parlamentsklub, "FPÖ-Kickl: Naivitäts-Lehrstunde mit Caritas-Präsident Landau," *APA*, 13 September, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20150913_OTS0040/fpoe-kickl-naivitaets-lehrstunde-mit-caritas-praesident-landau

72. ÖVP Bundesparteileitung, "ÖVP-Becker: Keine Auslandsfinanzierung von Moscheen in der EU," *APA*, 19 October, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20151019_OTS0055/oevp-becker-keine-auslandsfinanzierung-von-moscheen-in-der-eu

73. Univ.-Prof. Dr. Ednan Aslan, "Projektbericht: `Evaluierung islamischer Kindergärten/-gruppen in Wien`" (Universität Wien, Institut für Islamische Studien, 2015), accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://images.derstandard.at/2015/12/10/ProjektberichtIslamischeKindergaertenErgebnissefinal-2.pdf

litical motive of oppositional politics of the Conservatives against the ruling social democratic party in Vienna.[74] The report received harsh and substantive critique by scholars such as Andrea Schaffar[75] and Susanne Heine[76] for being anything than scientific. Also, four out of an alleged 150 Muslim kindergartens and 450 Muslim so-called children's groups, which were mentioned in the report, asked the press to take juridical steps against the mentioned allegations.[77] Although on a political level, the Viennese governors denied any of the allegations of spreading extremism in Muslim kindergartens, a consequence of the debate was that officials undertook profiling of kindergartens with Muslim personnel. Kindergarten personnel said they were interrogated by officials regarding whether children would be taught to pray, whether they were taught the Koran, which language they spoke, if they would celebrate Santa Claus and Christmas and told that they had to because this would be part of Austrian tradition.[78] In fact and to the contrary, the educational plan (66 pages) of the Viennese government does not mention anything like 'Austrian values' or 'tradition' in any single sentence.[79]

Before this, CVE projects (Countering Violence and Extremism) had already been institutionalised by government agencies. CVE projects especially focus on Muslim figures. Ednan Aslan, a professor of Islamic Religious Pedagogics at the University of Vienna, is regularly cited by Islamophobic actors. He is the author of the already cited interim report on Muslim kindergartens. As a person who appears to be a scholar of Islam,[80] many Islamophobic actors cite him as evidence that their criticism of Islam is not racist. According to the anti-racist NMZ, these 'experts' play a significant role in spreading prejudices against Islam and Muslims, comparable to anti-Jewish racism. Aslan for example explains that "all Muslim organisations share the goals of Daesh to create an Islamic state"[81] and that "all Islamic theological faculties outside of Europe are teaching the theology of Daesh"[82]. As the long-time

74. Emran Feroz, "Österreich: Paradoxer Diskurs über muslimische Kindergärten," *Heise*, 18 December, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.heise.de/tp/artikel/46/46881/1.html

75. Andrea Schaffer, "Langfassung: Methodische Kritik zur `Evaluierung islamischer Kindergärten/-gruppen in Wien`," *Science Blog*, 20 December, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://scienceblogs.de/sociokommunikativ/2015/12/20/langfassung-methodische-kritik/?all=1

76. "`Plattform Christen und Muslime` beklagt `Generalverdacht`," *Erzdiözese Wien*, 18 December, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, https://www.erzdioezese-wien.at/site/home/nachrichten/article/47472.html

77. "Betreiber muslimischer Kindergärten wehren sich," *Der Standard*, 11 December, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://derstandard.at/2000027339190/Betreiber-von-islamischen-Kindergaerten-wehren-sich

78. Interview with the author, 22 December, 2015.

79. Magistratsabteilung 10, Bildungsplan, 09/2006.

80. A critical review of his academic career suggests that his academic records in terms of Islamic theology are quite poor. See: Karim Saad, *Ednan Aslan: Auf der Suche nach den Jihadisten*, 16 November 2014, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.kismetonline.at/ednan-aslan-auf-der-suche-nach-den-jihadisten/

81. ORF 2, Orientierung, Interview, 22 November, 2015.

82. Ibid.

anti-Semitism scholar Wolfgang Benz has said "What the Talmud hetz (baiting, FH) was in the past, today is the Koran hetz. A minority is stigmatised as threatening, because the religion supposedly commands them to do so."[83] The NMZ criticises the Viennese education authority for re-inviting Aslan after he had held a training course for 180 teachers in November 2014 and was harshly criticised by them for presenting a raster scan for identifying extremist pupils in schools.[84] According to Aslan, frequently using Arab expressions such as Subhanahallah (Praise be to God), Maschaallah (as God wants), Yaani (non-religious terminology for 'so to say'), munafiq (hypocrite), Kafir (disbeliever), Muschrik (idolater) and Achi (brother) point to extremism.[85] Most of these terminologies (except kafir and muschrik) are part of everyday language, even for non-religious people.

Media

Teilnehmende Medienbeobachtung (TMB) is a volunteer online platform consisting of scholars and students of anthropology that critically monitors racist and sexist media coverage and intervene in the public debate.[86] In 2015, they critically reviewed and subsequently published twenty articles. In their analyses, they identified fifteen articles that spread Islamophobic stereotypes.

The weekly liberal magazine Profil was criticised after publishing a cover with the sentence "What makes Islam dangerous", showing the murderers of Charlie Hebdo shooting one of their victims.

The yellow press like Österreich regularly published articles with information that is fabricated or simply distorted. An example of this is an article on the law regarding Islam. While many voices criticised the government for implementing the law, which shall forbid getting regular financial support for religious activities from abroad, Österreich asserted that "the Islam law forbids

83. Netzwerk Muslimische Zivilgesellschaft, Schulen in Wien. Deradikalisierung oder Denunzierung?, *NMZ Schriftenreihe Nr.1*, 2015, p. 6.

84. "Informationsnachmittag Dschihadistische Gefährdung," *Netzwerk Muslimische Zivilgesellschaft*, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://dieanderen.net/informationsnachmittag-dschihadistische-gefaehrdung/

85. NMZ, Deradikalisierung oder Denunzierung?, p. 9.

86. "Teilnehmende Medienbeobachtung aus Kultur- und Sozialanthropologischer Perspektive" http://www.univie.ac.at/tmb/?page_id=2

financing of Jihadism. 'It's high time' say secret service agents."[87]

Another free daily newspaper Heute published a fabricated report about "Jihadists in council housing". In this article, a young Muslim resident was said to have a flag of Daesh/ISIL and it was reported that the executive power found weapons and that a neighbour said that the young man started changing his behaviour by not greeting them anymore and having a beard. Although the information was afterwards reported by the Austrian Presse Agentur to be false, Heute published a second article on the same subject, supporting the false claims. As a result a young man lost his job and got kicked out of council housing. The FPÖ published a leaflet with the title "Did you know that terrorists live in your neighborhood?" and called for "no space for Islamists in Austria" and "loss of citizenship for religious warriors"; it spread the publication in and around council housing. [88] The Austrian Broadcasting Corporation ORF as well as the weekly Profil and daily Kurier covered this incident and its consequences in a critical news story.

The free tabloid daily Österreich published an article with the headline "Viennese Kindergartens Call for Jihad". According to this article, "the instruction to 'fight with the sword' stems from the late Fatima Grimm – daughter of the 300.000-fold killer and KZ-butcher Treblinka Karl Wolff"[89] and was taught in the kindergarten. While this article was spread online and even some quality papers took up the issue, only Kurier published an alternative report which gave the head of the kindergarten company the opportunity to denounced that this brochure of F. Grimm played any role in the education of the children.[90] The daily Die Presse only took the relation of the author to her father as a departing point for another article titled "The Nazi daughter as a convert to Islam".[91]

After the Paris attacks, a wave of leading articles appeared in daily newspapers and created a public debate, after the Foreign Minister called for an introduction of an 8-hour value course for refugee newcomers. The foreign minister said that since "people come from very different cultures they have not yet got

87. Erwin Scheriau, " Terror-Gelder gekappt," *Oe 24*, 25 February, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.oe24.at/oesterreich/politik/Terror-Gelder-gekappt/178319016

88. Hans Kirchmeyr, "Dschihad im Gemeindebau? Die dramatischen Folgen einer „Heute"-Falschmeldung," *Kobuk*, 10 March, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, https://www.kobuk.at/2015/03/dschihad-im-gemeindebau-die-dramatischen-folgen-einer-heute-falschmeldung/

89. Josef Galley, "Wiener Kindergarten ruft zu Jihad aus," *Österreich*, 24 November, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, www.österreich.at/chronik/Wiener-Kindergarten-ruft-zu-Jihad-auf/213397085

90. Bernhard Ichner, "Nichts Verdächtiges bei Kindergarten-Kontrolle," *Kurier*, 27 November, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://kurier.at/chronik/wien/nichts-verdaechtiges-bei-kindergarten-kontrolle/166.367.401

91. Thomas Kramar, "Die Nazi-Tochter als Konvertitin zum Islam," *Die Presse*, 26 November, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://diepresse.com/home/zeitgeschichte/4875249/Die-NaziTochter-als-Konvertitin-zum-Islam?_vl_backlink=/home/index.do

to know European basic values".[92] Journalists in a number of articles argued that "the creation of a parallel system of Shariah-judges [...] must be foreclosed", something no single Austrian Muslim had ever suggested.[93] Journalists 'reminded' Muslim immigrants to treat their sons and daughters equally and to resolve conflicts not with weapons but with dialogue.[94]

Similar constructed hysterias were created in other newspapers. The daily OÖN spread feelings of suspicion in an article on refugees, who fled from the Taliban. The newspaper said that they knew about "men in a black Mercedes, who drive through the district of Vöcklabruck and invite people from asylum seekers' hostels to pray in the mosque. The question, whether people only pray there or promote the gang of murderers IS (Daesh, FH) is to be answered by state security."[95]

The Austrian daily quality newspaper Der Standard published an article with a photo portraying a young girl with a pink hijab reading a book (the Koran?) next to the title "Difficult fight against Jihadism in School". The association of a hijab-wearing schoolgirl with Jihadism is obvious. A leading editor of Der Standard answered the criticism of a Muslim woman, who wrote the newspaper. He wrote "the picture is from Tirana [...] and the girl cannot be identified. [...] We care about not violating personal rights. [...] For us, this was not about the person, but about the symbolic image, which relates to the statements of directors in Austrian schools, who say that the spread of headscarfs in Viennese schools is an indication of the growing influence of Jihadist movements".[96] In contrast to this reply to a Muslim woman, an anti-racist activist received a completely different (public) answer on twitter, saying "The picture selection was not well made. We take the feedback very seriously."[97]

Photo by Damir A. Saračević.

At the very same time, the number of newspapers reporting incidents of dis-

92. "'Kommen aus anderen Kulturkreisen'," *ORF Stories*, 5 November, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, orf.at/m/stories/2308387/2308194/

93. Viktor Hermann, "Die Zuwanderer müssen unsere Werte annehmen," *Salzburger Nachrichten*, 7 November, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, www.salzburg.com/nachrichten/meinung/standpunkt/sn/artikel/die-zuwanderer-muessen-unsere-werte-annehmen-172418/

94. Ibid.

95. Norbert Blaichinger, "'Wollte nicht mehr lachen'-Taliban schlugen Samia Zähne aus," *Nachrichten*, 19 June, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.nachrichten.at/oberoesterreich/salzkammergut/Wollte-nicht-mehr-lachen-Taliban-schlugen-Samia-Zaehne-aus;art71,1861146

96. Email sent to author, 1 December, 2015.

97. Comment on Twitter, accessed on 28 January, 2016, https://twitter.com/derStandardat/status/671354814631190528?lang=de

crimination against Muslims is growing.[98] Also, the editor in chief of the Styrian tabloid press Kronenzeitung, Christoph Biró, withdrew after publishing a hateful leading article. Biró said that "young, testosterone-controlled Syrians, ... make especially aggressive sexual assaults".[99]

The tabloid press associated the issue of the Muslim kindergartens and the alleged radicalisation of young children with criminal acts of fraud charge for evading state subsidies. The Kronen Zeitung published an article called "Large-Scale Raid in Vienna's Islam-kindergartens". The picture showed heavily equipped policemen with a veiled Muslim woman behind them.[100]

Michael Ley, "Islamisierung Europas: Nein, ich habe keine Visionen," *Die Presse*, 19 June, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://diepresse.com/home/spectrum/zeichenderzeit/4758713/Islamisierung-Europas_Nein-ich-habe-keine-Visionen

Next to some Muslim people who support Islamophobia such as Ednan Aslan, a number of other authors spread their Islamophobic contents as freelance journalists. Michael Ley, one of the latter, is regularly given space for his writings in the right liberal daily newspaper Die Presse. In one of his articles titled "Islamisation of Europe: No, I have no Visions" he argues in the last sentence that "Europe is given the choice: A Reconquista – a reconquest of its civilization – or suicide". According to him, Islam is not compatible with democracy and European civilisation and hence has to be defeated. His writings as well as his public appearance[101] are also shared by blogs such as the most well-known German Islamophobic PI-News.[102] The far right unzensuriert.at campaigns for his publications.[103] Other authors such as Theo Faulhaber are given space for spreading radical theses on Islam. In one op-ed piece, he argued that there was "no 'normal' and no 'radical' Islam. There is only one Islam" with an "intrinsic militancy".[104]

98. Kerstin Schnitzhofer, "Kopftuch in der Arbeit? Die Nächste bitte!," Salzburg 24, 25 February, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.salzburg24.at/kopftuch-in-der-arbeit-die-naechste-bitte/4246894

99. Christoph Biró, "'Testosteron-gesteuerte Syrer': Beschwerdeflut zu „Krone"-Kommentar," *Der Standard*, 26 October, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://derstandard.at/2000024539316/Testosteron-gesteuerte-Syrer-Beschwerdeflut-zu-Krone-Kommentar

100. "Grossrazzia in Wien Islam-Kindergärten," *Krone*, 22 December, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.krone.at/Oesterreich/Grossrazzia_in_Wiens_Islam-Kindergaerten-5_Mio._Euro_veruntreut-Story-488158

101. "PI News," accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.pi-news.net/2015/11/p491727/

102. "PI News," accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.pi-news.net/2015/06/michael-ley-presse-zur-islamisierung-europas/

103. "Der Selbstmord des Abendlandes-Die Islamisierung Europas," *Unzensiert*, accessed on 28 January8, 2016, https://www.unzensuriert.at/content/0018333-Der-Selbstmord-des-Abendlandes-Die-Islamisierung-Europas

104. Theo Faulhaber, "Zehn aktuelle Thesen zum Islam und Europa," *Kurier*, 5 January, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, kurier.at/meinung/gastkommentare/zehn-aktuelle-thesen-zum-islam-und-europa/106.366.887

Justice system

The new Islam law has been the target of a great amount of protest by various actors. The fact that Islam is the subject of a number of special regulations in contrast to other legally recognised churches and religious communities has been identified as discriminatory. One such discrimination is the fact that Muslim associations are banned from legally organising themselves outside of the legally recognised Islamic Councils. This effectively means that the law of association is no longer fully applicable to Muslim associations whose right to publicly congregate has been restricted based on religious practice. It was also criticised that Muslim chaplains must now be trained at the University of Vienna and not – as is the case with all other churches – by the respective Islamic Council. Generally, the law can be read as a strengthening of the position of the already existing Islamic Council vis-à-vis Muslims, and at the same time a strengthening of the state vis-à-vis the Islamic Council, and thus creating a system of surveillance, where the Islamic Council becomes a quasi-subordinated institution of the Austrian state.

Still, the legal system allows one to change the family name within the first two years after receiving citizenship. A given reason is that "somebody with a foreign origin may acquire a family name that simplifies integration better".[105] Before the backdrop, such a regulation seems supportive of possible future victims of racism. But at the same time, such regulations reconfirm institutional racism.

A partial improvement of the legal system is the amendment of the law on sedition (Verhetzungsparagraph), which shall be enacted on 1 January, 2016. An inductee can now be punished up to three years (before this was two years), and up to five years, if his preaching of hatred has led to physical violence. At the same time, judges now have to prove that the perpetrators had a defamatory intention, which means creating new barriers.[106] In the meeting for the Universal Periodic Review of the United Nations on 9 November, 2015, Austria was especially criticised for being lax in fighting equally against various kinds of discrimination based on age, religion and gender with the exception of the labour market.[107]

The ever-increasing coverage of Daesh/ISIL in Austrian media led to the initiation of Countering Violent Extremism programmes. On 29 December, 2014, a law banning symbols of Daesh/ISIL, al-Qaida and other terrorist (Muslim) groups was

105. "Gesetzliche Gründe für eine Änderung des Familien-/Nachnamens," Help.GV, accessed on 28 January, 2016, https://www.help.gv.at/Portal.Node/hlpd/public/content/233/Seite.2330300.html

106. Maria Sterkl, "Hetze gegen 'Ausländer' wird strafbar," Der Standard, 7 July, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://derstandard.at/2000018722025/Neue-Regeln-fuer-Hetze-gegen-Minderheiten

107. "ODS," accessed on 17 November, 2015, http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G10/171/36/PDF/G1017136.pdf?OpenElement

enacted.[108] The lawyer Josef Unterweger criticised the law for banning symbols that are part and parcel of the Islamic religion (e.g. the shahada) and that would not be distinguishable from other symbols by normal citizens. In addition he argued that other terrorist organisations like the leftist RAF or the Austrian 'Südtiroler Bumser' were fought without forbidding their symbols.[109] The aforementioned article published in Heute that falsely identified a young Muslim resident who was said to have a flag of Daesh/ISIL and who subsequently lost his job and housing, is an example that occurred before this new law had emerged. A heightened consciousness on the side of Islamophobic actors may lead to a growing number of false accusations.

Countering Islamophobia

Institutional level. The Austrian Ministry of Integration and Foreign Affairs established a 'Hotline against Discrimination and Intolerance', which is part of the civil service of the ministry. It is there to build up consciousness that discrimination is no trivial offence, but a serious issue. While the hotline does not create new institutions, it aims to connect victims to the already existing institutions in this field,[110] and first and foremost to the Ombudsman for Equal Treatment, which is part of the Office of the Prime Minister and the NGO Civil Courage and Anti-Racism Work (ZARA). Substantially, no new state institutions were created to combat Islamophobia. The Islamic Council created Dokustelle für Muslime on one side to register Islamophobic acts and on the other, to create a consciousness on the behalf of Muslims that will help them to learn their rights and the necessary skills to combat hate crimes.

Civil society. The ATIB (Avusturya Türk İslam Kültür ve Sosyal Yardımlaşma Birliği) protested against the new Islam law at the Constitutional Court and specifically against the dissolution of Muslim associations that were formerly organised according to the law of associations (VereinsG 2002).[111] Civil society activism against Islamophobia has also shaped the current state of affairs regarding Islamophobia. After a speech by Geert Wilders, who was invited to Vienna by the right-wing party FPÖ,[112] Muslim activist Tarafa Baghajati initiated investigations against him at the public prosecution department because

108. "Terror-Symbole-Gesetz 2014," Bundesgesetzblatt für die Republik Österreich, 29 December, 2014, accessed on 28 January, 2016, 104, https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2014_I_103/BGBLA_2014_I_103.pdf

109. "Bundesgesetz, mit dem die Verwendung mit Symbolen der Gruppierung islamischer Staat und anderer Gruppierungen verboten wird," *Bundesministerium für Inneres*, 24 October, 2014, accessed on 28 January, 2016, https://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/VHG/XXV/SNME/SNME_01826/imfname_370491.pdf

110. "Hotline gegen Diskriminierung und Intoleranz," *Bundesministerium Europa Integration Äußeres*, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.bmeia.gv.at/integration/hotline-gegen-diskriminierung/

111. "ATIB Türkisch Islamische Union für kulturelle und soziale Zusammenarbeit in Österreich," APA, 3 December, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20151203_OTS0122/hunderte-islamische-vereine-und-gebetsstaetten-vor-behoerdlicher-schliessung

112. The panel discussion can be watched online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sp3YHWhttQY

of sedition, vilification of religious belief and violation of the Prohibition Act of 1947, which prohibits Holocaust denial and belittlement of Nazi atrocities.[113] According to Wilders, this was a "juridical jihad fought against him".[114] Counter-demonstrations against PEGIDA in every city were successful in mobilising many more followers than the latter.

Media. An increasing number of reports covering Islamophobic discrimination can be observed in news media in ORF as well as in daily newspapers, which seems to be related to a heightened consciousness of Muslims and the existing communication channels to media outlets.

CONCLUSION:

policy recommendations for politics and NGOs

The terrorist attacks in Paris shaped the public debate and created a hysteria, which did end at politicians, but flooded political institutions, media and society. The new Islam law, which used to symbolise Austria's tradition of legal equal treatment of Muslims and their recognition in the political system, was turned into a symbol of the opposite. In the midst of the debate on Daesh and Charlie Hebdo, it was easy to legitimise this new law. The recorded number of instances of harassment on the streets and violations against Muslim subjects – which are not systematically collected it must be noted– is increasing. The Muslim community seems to have created a heightened consciousness to stand up against these injustices. While a number of NGOs and activists speak out against these developments, right-wing parties, which spread stereotypes of Muslims, are getting stronger. The FPÖ has used offensive Islamophobic campaigning in three regional elections. While media reports more and more on Islamophobic incidents, a biased coverage of Islam and Muslims can be observed, especially in many fabricated tabloid press stories.

- Austria should fulfil its promise from Durban 2001 and adopt a National Action Plan (NAP) against Racism in order to meet the challenges regarding discrimination and racism which are prevalent in all areas of society.
- Financial and human resources should be raised for the Equal Treatment Commission and for an increase of the capacities of the Ombud for Equal Treatment to fulfil its task of raising awareness of the Equal Treatment Act.
- Discrimination on the job market must be fought with better legal standards

113. "Kurier," "KURIER: Staatsanwalt ermittelt gegen Gert Wilders," *APA*, 27 July, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20150727_OTS0095/kurier-staatsanwalt-ermittelt-gegen-gert-wilders?utm_source=2015-07-27&utm_medium=email&utm_content=html&utm_campaign=mailaboeinzel

114."APA," "Wilders: Wiener Staatsanwalt führt Jihad gegen mich," Der Standard, 28 July, 2015, accessed on 28 January, 2016, http://derstandard.at/2000019884858/Wilders-Wiener-Staatsanwalt-fuehrt-Jihad-gegen-mich

and the creation of a relevant consciousness. Penalties for the violation of discrimination on the six grounds mentioned in the EU Directives on this issue should be increased.

- The amended Equal Treatment Act (August 2013) has to fulfil the long demanded extension of protection against discrimination (levelling up) on grounds of sexual orientation, age, belief and religion to areas outside employment.
- The Islam law has to be amended in order not to be in conflict with the Austrian constitution. This is of utmost importance, since the new law has sent a message of inequality to the Muslim masses.
- Training on racism, especially Islamophobia, should be offered to journalists, lawyers, and police (security officials) by qualified personnel.
- Muslim civil society has to be empowered with information to combat Islamophobia, especially in the creation of a consciousness towards the illegality of hate crimes.
- Educational institutions and stakeholders have to work towards creating an alternative narrative of Muslims in Austria which will work to dispel the widely accepted negative image of Islam.

CHRONOLOGY

7 January

- Charlie Hebdo shooting.

February

- PEGIDA Austria marched in different Austrian cities with little success.

March

- The first case in Austrian history of discrimination due to gender and religion was won.

30 March, 2015

- Islam law was adapted.

31 May

- Elections in Styria.

27 September

- Elections in Upper Austria.

11 October

- Elections in Vienna.

18 October

- A Jewish cemetery in Hohenems and an Islamic cemetery in Altach were desecrated by Swastika and racist slurs, which were smeared on the graves and buildings of the cemeteries.

13 November

- Paris attacks.

December:

- The supermarket chain SPAR removed Halal meat from its product assortment due to Islamophobic protests.

5 December:

- Debate on radicalisation in kindergartens.

30 December:

- Arson attack on a renovated Muslim prayer room in Lower Austria.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN BELGIUM NATIONAL REPORT 2015

AMINA EASAT-DAAS

THE AUTHOR

Amina Easat-Daas has recently completed her PhD at Aston University, Birmingham, UK. Her doctoral research is entitled Muslim Women's Political Participation in Francophone Europe: A Comparative Analysis of France and Belgium, and it specifically examines the motivations, opportunities and barriers to political participation by Muslim women in the two cases. Amina's broader research interests include the study of Muslim political participation and representation, Muslim women's dress, 'European Islam' and anti-Muslim prejudice or Islamophobia in Europe, and has several forthcoming book chapters and articles related to these topics. Amina has worked alongside prominent European NGOs. She regularly participates in academic conferences throughout the UK and has also previously presented some of her work related to anti-Muslim prejudice at the European Parliament in Brussels. aeasat@gmail.com

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions. No representation, either expressed or implied, is made of the accuracy of the material in the national reports. The editors of the European Islamophobia Report cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The reader must make his or her own evaluation of the accuracy and appropriateness of the material.

To cite this report: Amina Easat-Daas (2016): Islamophobia in Belgium: *National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This section of the European Islamophobia Report details the state of Islamophobia in Belgium in 2015 and establishes its significant growth across the country over the year. Islamophobia in Belgium is shaped by factors both internal and external to the country; most notably peaks in Islamophobia in Belgium correlate with events in Paris such as the Charlie Hebdo attacks in January and the series of terror attacks in the French capital in November 2015. Belgian Muslim women and young Muslims are disproportionately affected by the phenomenon, notwithstanding Muslim men and those presumed to be Muslim or those affiliated with Islam who are also targeted by Islamophobia. In spite of the growing rates of Islamophobia in the country, Belgium is also home to numerous counter-Islamophobia initiatives. Analysis of these groups demonstrates several examples of good practice, which have informed the set of recommendations proposed at the end of this section of the report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY IN FRENCH

Cette partie du Rapport Européen de l'Islamophobie raconte l'état de l'Islamophobie en Belgique pendant 2015 et il établit une forte croissance d'Islamophobie à travers du pays. L'Islamophobie en Belgique est formée par des éléments même dans le pays et l'extérieur, surtout des augmentations soudaines sont liées avec des évènements qui ont eu lieu à Paris, par exemple les attentats 'Charlie Hebdo' en janvier et la série des attentats terroristes du novembre 2015. Les Musulmanes et les jeunes Musulmans sont affectés par l'Islamophobie d'une façon disproportionnée, néanmoins les hommes Musulmans et ceux qui sont présumés d'être Musulman ou d'être affilié avec l'Islam sont aussi ciblé par l'Islamophobie en Belgique. Malgré l'augmentation de taux d'Islamophobie en Belgique, les organisations qui luttent contre l'Islamophobie en Belgique sont nombreuses. L'analyse de ces groupes démontre des exemples de bonne pratique, qui ont informé les recommandations proposées à la fin du rapport.

INTRODUCTION

Belgium is the administrative and political heart of Europe. Its capital, Brussels, is the seat of the European Parliament and many prominent pan-European institutions. The Belgian federal regions differ in terms of the primary languages spoken, but also each region sees the foregrounding of complex political and social issues. Typically these concerns are in part driven by the influences exerted on the country by its closest neighbours: France and the Netherlands. More specifically the consequences of French polemics are more keenly perceived in Wallonia and in parts of the bilingual capital, Brussels. So, for example in spite of Belgian constitutional norms of organised secularism, the French secular, pro-assimilationist model strongly shapes normative attitudes in francophone Belgium. This influence is driven by both historical factors and also the presence of French language media. In 2015, perhaps more than ever before, this French influence has shaped both the nature and incidences of Islamophobia in Belgium.

Conversely in Dutch-speaking Flanders, the influence exerted by the Netherlands is more apparent. This typically manifests in the multicultural model taking precedence[1]. In spite of the dominance of multicultural norms, comparable to the Netherlands' successful Partij Voor de Vrijheid, or Freedom Party, Flanders is home to the particularly vocal and notably Islamophobic far-right political party, Vlaams Belang (VB), or Flemish Interest. Their moderate success shapes the nature of Islamophobia and to an extent contributes to the normalisation of anti-Muslim attitudes in the country.

Belgian Muslims make up an estimated 6 % of the overall Belgian population[2], and are either of Moroccan or Turkish heritage. Furthermore, Belgium is also home to an estimated 50,000 to 100,000 native Belgian converts to Islam[3] . These Muslims are often as visible as their Turkish and Moroccan counterparts and also occupy prominent roles in the Belgian Muslim community, such as former Vice President of the Belgian Muslim Executive, Isabelle Praille.

During recent months in particular, the question of Islam, Muslims and Islamophobia in Belgium have been at the fore not only in the country but also globally. The year began with raids across Belgium as part of the search for suspected Islamic extremists, and although necessary, the raids contributed to the climate of fear of Belgian Muslims. The year continued with controversies surrounding Muslim women's dress and ended with an intense worldwide focus on Belgian Muslims coupled with a dramatic rise in Islamophobia following the attacks in Paris on 13 November, 2015.

1. Bertossi, Christophe. (2012): "French Republicanism and the Problem of Normative Density." *Comparative European Politics* no. 10 (3):248-265.

2. Pew Forum. (2015): *Religious Composition by Country 2010-2050*. Pew Forum 2015 [cited 02.08.15 2015]. Available from http://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/religious-projection-table/2010/percent/all/.

3. Karagiannis, Emmanuel. (2012): "European Converts to Islam: Mechanisms of Radicalization." *Politics, Religion and Ideology* no. 13 (1):99 - 113.

Ever increasing rates of Islamophobia underline the need to systematically document and analyse this growing trend. This section of the report draws on media sources, data compiled by Belgian and European anti-Islamophobia initiatives and key Belgian grassroots activists to present an overview of Islamophobia in Belgium in 2015.

Recognising the potentially problematic nature of defining Islamophobia and in a bid to refute claims of overgeneralisation or its non-existence, as highlighted by Allen[4], this section of the European Islamophobia Report draws on several definitions of Islamophobia. Namely the initial definition put forward in the European Islamophobia Report, the first noted definition as put forward by the Runnymede Trust in its 1997 report Islamophobia: A Challenge for us All describes it as"… a useful shorthand way of referring to dread or hatred of Islam – and therefore a fear of all or most Muslims" (Richardson 1997, 1). Finally the review of Islamophobia in Belgium in 2015 also relies on the definition of Islamophobia as applied by Counter-Islamophobia (CICB) or Collectif Contre l'Islamophobie/Collectief Tegen Islamofobie in België, taken from their sister organisation the Counter-Islamophobia Collective in France (CICF), or Collectif Contre l'Islamophobie en France who describe Islamophobia as

"… discriminatory acts or violence against institutions or individuals based on their affiliation, real or imagined, with Islam. These acts are provoked by ideologies and discourses that create hostility and rejection of Muslims."[5]

Applying these multiple definitions of Islamophobia allows for an understanding of the term's complex and nuanced undertones that might not be as keenly understood if relying on a sole definition. Furthermore this also allows the report to capitalise on the way in which Islamophobia is understood in Belgium by those who record and report it.

Having established the particularisms of Belgium and the relevance of outlining the nature of Islamophobia in Belgium in 2015, this section of the report continues by outlining a chronological overview of selected significant Islamophobic events in Belgium that took place in this year. This is followed by a summary of selected Belgian anti-Islamophobia initiatives and some of their campaigns during 2015. The text continues by putting forward a series of conclusions and policy recommendations that arise from this section of the report.

CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT ISLAMOPHOBIC EVENTS

An overview of selected key Islamophobic events is presented in a timeline format in the section below. The chronology seeks to provide an insight into the scale of anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic events in Belgium during the course of 2015 by highlighting particular

4. Allen, Christopher. (2010): *Islamophobia*. Surrey: Ashgate.

5. CCIF, Collectif Contre L'Islamophobie. (2014) : Annual Report 2014. Paris: Collectif Contre L'Islamophobie.

peaks, troughs and triggers of Islamophobia over the year. The Islamophobic incidents detailed in this section are drawn from official publications by anti-Islamophobia organisations in Belgium, Belgian Muslim groups and individuals, and media sources. Undoubtedly, Islamophobia is a complex phenomenon with multiple actors and numerous victims and therefore the overview of anti-Muslim events detailed below only provides some insight into some of those who perpetrate Islamophobia in Belgium, such as the media, institutional actors, the general public and political figures. The chronology also sheds light on those who are at the receiving end of Islamophobia including visibly Muslim women, Muslim males, Muslim politicians, those presumed to be Muslim or affiliated with Muslims, Muslim organisations and sites of worship. Nonetheless, whilst the chronology highlights some of the multiple and complex factors that surround Islamophobia in Belgium in 2015, the section is by no means comprehensive since it is constrained by issues of self-reporting by victims of Islamophobia. The true scale of the phenomenon cannot be fully understood, and therefore as a result the chronology is best regarded as a snapshot of reported Islamophobia - or the tip of the iceberg.

January

- 7 January, 2015. Attack on the Charlie Hebdo offices in Paris. The shootings, perpetrated by brothers Saïd and Chérif Kouachi, resulted in twelve deaths, including those of famous French cartoonists Jean Cabut, Stèphane Charbonnier and Philippe Honoré, and also the death of Muslim police officer Ahmed Merabet. Although these events took place across the border, the attacks resulted in an increase in reported incidences of Islamophobic attacks on Muslims and Muslim places of worship in Belgium. The events in Paris are also linked to raids that took place across Belgium later in January 2015.
- 8-9 January, 2015. Prominent Muslim organisations, such as the Belgian Muslim Executive (EMB) and the League of Belgian Muslims (LMB), issue official statements condemning the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris, call for unity and speak out against the stigmatisation of Belgian Muslims[6].
- 15 January, 2015. Following reports of possible attacks on sellers of the Charlie Hebdo publication inspired by the attacks in Paris earlier in the month, Belgian police carry out raids and arrests in areas with significant Muslim communities, including Verviers, Molenbeek, Schaebeek, Vilvoorde and Zaventem. Although necessary, these events contribute to the climate of fear of Belgian Muslims.

February

- 15 February, 2015. Mosques in the francophone Belgian Liège province host an open mosque event, whereby members of the public are able to visit their local

6. Azzouzi, Karim. (2015): Communique de presse LMB: Attentat meurtrier contre l'hebdomadaire Charlie Hebdo. Brussels: Ligue des Musulmans de Belgique. Soir, Le. (2015b) : "L'Exécutif des musulmans de Belgique appelle «les acteurs musulmans à condamner le terrorisme»." 08.01.15.

mosque. Verviers-based imam, Franck Amin Hensch highlighted that the day sought to dispel popular stereotypes and associations of Muslims with radicalism. The day represents a timely example of the efforts to counter Islamophobic attitudes among the wider population undertaken by the Belgian Muslim community[7].

March

- 2 March, 2015. Around 200 demonstrators took to the streets in Antwerp in a Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the West (PEGIDA) demonstration protesting against the alleged 'Islamification' of Europe[8]. Although founded in neighbouring Germany, PEGIDA has gained some support in Belgium. Support for the far-right and Islamophobic organisation is more keenly seen in Dutch-speaking Flanders, than in francophone Wallonia and Brussels. Coincidently, as stated, Flanders is also home to the fairly successful far-right and notably anti-Muslim political party VB. Comparatively, far-right political parties see reduced success in francophone Belgium[9]. The already significant pool of supporters of the VB is likely to readily identify with the Islamophobic narrative promoted by PEGIDA and as a result likely to support their anti-Muslim and anti-Islam campaigns in Belgium.
- 25 March, 2015. Belgian far-right politician, Filip Dewinter of VB along with a group of Belgian lawmakers met with Syrian President Bashar Al Assad. Dewinter and his political party colleagues are noted for their Islamophobic positions, including the demonization of Muslim immigrants to Belgium and their rhetoric against the construction of mosques in the country. Dewinter is among several European politicians who have expressed support for Assad[10]. Dewinter's position arguably shaped the treatment of Syrian refugees, who are often Muslim, to Belgium later in the same year.

April

- 1 April, 2015. Dutch-speaking Belgian anti-racism organisation, KifKif, and Documenting Oppression against Muslims report that the Catholic school in Mechelen has banned students from wearing long skirts to school. The ban is justified as a means of removing faith symbols from schools. Both organisations criticise the ban as being unfairly targeted towards young Muslim schoolgirls and therefore Islamophobic[11]. This Islamophobic event in Flanders precedes a similar controversy

7. Events, Islamic. 2015. *Des mosquées de la Province de Liège ouvrent leurs portes*, 10.02.2015 2015 [cited 20.11.2015 2015]. Available from http://www.islamic-events.be/2015/02/mosquees-province-liege-portes-ouvertes/.

8. Taylor, Sarah Joanne. (2015): "Belgium: PEGIDA Anti-Muslim March Attracts 200." *Euronews*, 03.03.2015.

9. Deschouwer, Kris. (2009): *The Politics ofBelgium*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

10. Eye, Middle East. (2015): "Syria's Assad Meets Far-Right Belgian Politician." *Middle East Eye*, 25.03.2015.

11. Hudhayfa, Abu. (2015): *Catholic school in Belgium bans long dresses unfairly targets Muslim students*. Documenting Opression Against Muslims 2015 [cited 20.10.2015 2015]. Available from http://www.doamuslims.org/?p=2432.

in Brussels and is reflective of the persistent and growing Islamophobic demonization and intense fixation on Muslim women's dress in Belgium.

- 23 April, 2015. The organisation Muslims' Rights Belgium (MRB) publish their annual report for the preceding year. The report indicates that 696 Islamophobic incidents took place in francophone Belgium alone during 2014. The report details incidents of Islamophobia including those that took place in the workplace, schools and public places. The document concludes that women are more likely to be victims of Islamophobia than men with 73 % of reports from women compared to 27 % from males, and also younger people are more likely to suffer anti-Muslim discrimination with 94 % of those who reported Islamophobia to MRB being aged twenty nine or under[12].

May

- 29 May, 2015. The francophone Belgian political party Centre Démocrat Humaniste announces its decision to expel its political representative in Schaerbeek and Brussels, Mahinur Özdemir. She is most famous for being the first elected political official in Europe who wears a headscarf. Özdemir has been involved with the party since 2006 and has stood as an elected political representative for the party at the municipal and regional parliamentary level since 2009. She was unexpectedly expelled from the party on the grounds of her alleged position on the Armenian genocide. Fellow political colleagues such as Farida Tahar dismissed the expulsion of Özdemir as an example of Islamophobia in Belgian politics[13]. In spite of her contestations and numerous supporters, Özdemir was formally excluded from the political party in November 2015. Nonetheless she continues to stand as an independent political official. Özdemir's experiences point to discriminations that cut across issues of ethnicity, gender and faith faced by many Muslim women, and Muslims more generally, in Belgium.
- 29 May, 2015. Reports emerged of thirty Brussels schoolgirls being denied entry to their school on the grounds of wearing long skirts. Their attire was deemed problematic since it was considered that the long skirts were overly symbolic of Islam. The affair follows a similar incident in Dutch-speaking Mechelen earlier in the year, and a similar controversy in France in the preceding weeks. However, in Brussels all reports indicate that the matter was quickly resolved and the girls were allowed back into their school soon after. Nonetheless, the affair demonstrates the often gendered nature of Islamophobia in Belgium[14].

12. MRB, Muslims' Rights Belgium. (2014): Islamophobie en Belgique Francophone: Rapport Annuel 2014. Brussels: Muslims' Rights Belgium.

13. RTL. (2015): *L'exclusion de Mahinur Özdemir du cdH scandalise certains: "Cela ne va que cristalliser encore plus le débat"*. RTL Belgium 2015 [cited 05.06.15 2015]. Available from http://www.rtl.be/info/regions/bruxelles/l-exclusion-de-mahinur-ozdemir-du-cdh-scandalise-certains-cela-ne-va-que-cristalliser-encore-plus-le-debat--727185.aspx.

14. Tunakan, Begüm. (2015): "After France, Muslim Students in Belgium Banned from School." *Daily Sabah*, 31.05.15.

June

- 26 June, 2015. The Belgian anti-racism organisation Movement against Racism, Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia (MRAX) publishes its report for the previous year. Although the report highlights a wide range of prejudice and discrimination, including anti-Semitism, Afrophobia and anti-Gypsyism, the report highlights an increase in the number of reports of Islamophobia it received, rising from 13 % in 2013, to more than 20 % of all reports received by the organisation in 2014. The document also points to the rise in Islamophobia with the increasing use of the internet and in particular social media[15]. These published figures correlate with a similar report published by MRB in April 2015 and indicate the concerning rise of Islamophobia in Belgium.

July

- 31 July, 2015. The CICB reported a significant increase in anti-Muslim incidents in Belgium, rising from 95 recorded events in 2011 to 185 events in 2014[16]. Like the reports published by MRB and MRAX, the statistics published by the CICB indicate an increase in Islamophobia across the country. However, whilst all three reports point to a clear and significant increase in the incidence of Islamophobia in Belgium during the previous year, each of the organisations rely on self-reporting by victims to compile their statistics and therefore the findings in each case are bound by the constraints of victims of Islamophobia coming forward and cannot fully depict the scale of anti-Muslim discrimination. Reports of this rise in Islamophobia in Belgium also reach the mainstream media. Although the media faces much criticism for its role in the promotion of Islamophobic narratives, this article demonstrates the coverage of anti-Islamophobia initiatives in Belgium and points towards a positive move in raising public awareness in the growing problem of Islamophobia in the country.

August

- 17 August, 2015. The company Siroperie Meurens reported intense Islamophobic backlash following its application for halal certification for their well-known sweet speciality, Sirop de Liège. The fruit syrup is already permissible for Muslim consumption. The bid for halal certification was part of the company's drive to penetrate Muslim markets, such as those in Indonesia or Egypt. The decision was met with calls for boycott of the product by the public and especially Catholics, and a false conflation of the company with the so-called Islamic State in Syria and the Levant (ISIL). The company CEO expressed his surprise stating

15. MRAX, Mouvement Contre le Racisme, l'Antisémitisme et la Xénophobie. (2014): Rapport MRAX 2014. Brussels: Mouvement Contre le Racisme, l'Antisémitisme et la Xénophobie.

16. CCIB, Collectif Contre L'Islamophobie en Belgique. (2015a): Communiqué de Presse: Islamophobie: J'écris ton Nom. Brussels: Collectif Contre l'Islamophobie en Belgique.

"I know that there's Islamophobia in Belgium, but not to this point"[17]. The example also indicates the way in which a presumed affiliation with Islam leaves individuals and organisations open to become victims of Islamophobia.

September

- 3 September, 2015. Having previously lodged a complaint against the newspapers Het Belang Van Limburg and De Gazet Van Antwerpen for the publication of Islamophobic cartoons, the CICB receives correspondence from the editors recognising the error in publication. This specific case highlights the role of the media in the spread and normalisation of Islamophobia in Belgium, but also makes clear the way in which anti-Islamophobia groups work to combat this and the potential positive effects of such groups.
- 11 – 21 September, 2015. The CICB coordinates a week of action against Islamophobia in Belgium, including a sold out fundraising gala dinner held in Molenbeek on 18 September, 2015. The week primarily promoted the organisation's work in their campaign against Islamophobia in Belgium.
- 21 September, 2015. The European Action Day against Islamophobia and Religious Intolerance held in the European Parliament in Brussels is organised by the Council of Europe and numerous non-governmental organisations as part of the No Hate Speech Movement project. The event is an example of the way in which Belgium is also at the fore of pan-European anti-Islamophobia initiatives.
- 24 September, 2015. The celebration of Eid al Adha by Muslims across the world. The Muslim festival traditionally entails the ritual sacrifice of an animal by Muslim adults in recognition of the Prophet Abraham's actions. In Belgium the festival was preceded by controversy surrounding the practice of this ritual slaughter in Belgium. Typically, during the celebration the Belgian legislation that slaughter must take place in specific slaughterhouses is softened in order to allow Belgian Muslims to complete the slaughter. However, due to protest from animal rights activists, slaughters were restricted to only three sites in Brussels. Muslim officials dismissed the move as Islamophobic and called on Muslims to send money to the poor abroad or to donate money to Belgian projects (2015).

October

- 1-2 October, 2015. The Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights held in Brussels, Belgium takes place. The colloquium theme this year is Tolerance and Respect: Preventing and Combating Anti-Semitic and Anti-Muslim Hatred in Europe. The conference theme underlines the similarities between Islamophobia

17. Holehouse, Matthew. (2015): "Belgian Fruit Syrup Faces Boycott Calls Over Halal Labelling." *The Telegraph*, 17.08.2015.

and anti-Semitism and points to the pressing need to meaningfully combat both forms of religious hatred[18].

- 15 October, 2015. Flemish Belgian schoolgirl, Silke Raats prematurely cuts short her social experiment where she wore the Islamic headscarf due to the unexpected amount of Islamophobic abuse she received. Examples include suggestions that she ought to be sent to Syria in spite of having no connection to the country and also suggestions that others should keep away from her since she might "start throwing bombs"[19]. Raats' personal experiences shed light on the depth and severity of Islamophobia experienced towards visibly Muslim women in Belgium and the seemingly automatic associations made between Muslim women's dress, extremism and threat of violence.

November

- 13 November, 2015. Extremist attacks across Paris. The terror attacks resulted in 130 deaths and 368 injuries. Shortly after the attacks so-called ISIL claimed responsibility for the atrocities. The suspected attackers were thought to be from the Molenbeek area of Brussels. Although committed across the border, the attacks resulted in intense local, national and international scrutiny of Belgian Muslims and a sharp rise in Islamophobia.
- 14 November, 2015. The spike in Islamophobia also results in an increase in online anti-Muslim and anti-Islam posts; an example reported to the CICB includes the Facebook post "Fils de puta*n… j'encu*e le prophète" ("son of a bi*ch, I fu*k the Prophet") accompanied by a photo of Adolf Hitler[20].
- 16 November, 2015. The CICB receives a report of a female teacher conflating all Muslims with terrorists. The event resulted in both Muslim and non-Muslim students leaving the class, some of whom were in tears[21].
- 16 November, 2015. A Muslim woman reports facing discrimination at work on the grounds of her headscarf[22].
- 17 November, 2015. In a television appearance on RTL French polemicist Eric Zemmour controversially states that the alleged justification for the Paris attacks was rooted in Islam and the Qur'an. Most controversially, during the programme Zemour stated "au lieu de bombarder Raqa, la France devrait bombarder Molenbeek d'où sont venus les commandos du vendredi", suggesting that instead of bombing Islamic state-

18. European Commision. (2015): *Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights: "Tolerance and respect: preventing and combating antisemitic and anti-Muslim hatred in Europe"* 2015 [cited 2015.11.04 2015]. Available from http://ec.europa.eu/justice/events/colloquium-fundamental-rights-2015/index_en.htm.

19. El Jafoufi, Khalid. (2015): "Belgian Girl Halts Social Experiment after Eearing a Headscarf for 10 Days." *Mvslim*, 15.10.15.

20. CCIB, Collectif Contre L'Islamophobie en Belgique. (2015b): Islamophobie en Belgique; Bilan des Actes Islamophobes Post-13 Novembre 2015. Brussels: Collectif Contre l'Islamophobie en Belgique.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

held Raqa in Syria, it would be more apt for France to bomb the Brussels area of Molenbeek. Although heavily populated by Muslims, Molenbeek was also home of the perpetrators of the Paris attacks. Zemmour's clearly Islamophobic remarks provoked outrage among Belgian Muslims and in response protests were staged in Brussels[23].

- 21 November, 2015. As part of the search for Paris attacker Salah Abdeslam, the metro, schools, and shops are shut in Brussels.
- 26 November, 2015. Reports emerge of a suspected anthrax attack on the Grand Mosuée du Cinquintenaire in Brussels. The substance was later found to be non-threatening[24].
- 28 November, 2015. The recently formed group Bruxelloise et Voilée receive online hate speech suggesting "a bullet in the head" for the Muslim woman discussed in the online post[25].

December

- 2 December, 2015. Parliamentarian Mahinur Özdemir receives a threatening letter sent via the postal service to her home address. The letter has excrement smeared over it and reads "Bougn*l, je ch*e dans ta voile" ("W*g, I sh*t on your headscarf")[26].
- 7 December, 2015. LMB also receives postal correspondence marked with excrement stating "Je ch*e dans ta geule sale bougn*l" ("I sh*t in your gob dirty w*g"). The letter appears to be very similar to the letter received by politician Mahinur Özdemir a few days earlier[27].
- 7 December, 2015. The CICB receives reports of a male school teacher accusing three students of being terrorists[28].
- 8 December, 2015. Belgian newspaper La Capitale publishes reports of Belgian Muslim deputy receiving online Islamophobic abuse. The comments posted on social media stated "Jamal Ikazban le représentant des mosques radicales qui prône haine du juifs dans les quartiers" ("Jamal Ikazban, the representative of radical mosques that promote hating Jewish people in the suburbs")[29].

23. Libre, La. (2015): *Eric Zemmour: «La France devrait bombarder Molenbeek» (vidéo)*. La Libre 2015 [cited 21.11.2015 2015]. Available from http://www.lesoir.be/1045840/article/actualite/france/2015-11-17/eric-zemmour-france-devrait-bombarder-molenbeek-video.

24. RTBF. (2015): *"Alerte anthrax" à la grande mosquée de Bruxelles: probablement de la farine* 2015 [cited 02.12.2015 2015]. Available from http://www.rtbf.be/info/regions/bruxelles/detail_menace-terroriste-alerte-anthrax-declenchee-a-la-grande-mosquee-de-bruxelles?id=9148278.

25. CCIB, Collectif Contre L'Islamophobie en Belgique. (2015b): Islamophobie en Belgique; Bilan des Actes Islamophobes Post-13 Novembre 2015. Brussels: Collectif Contre l'Islamophobie en Belgique.

26. Ibid.

27.Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. Capitale, La. (2015): *Molenbeek: Jamal Ikazban dépose plainte pour des propos tenus sur Vivacité* 2015 [cited 19.12.2015 2015]. Available from http://www.lacapitale.be/1441560/article/2015-12-10/molenbeek-jamal-ikazban-depose-plainte-pour-des-propos-tenus-sur-vivacite.

- 13 December, 2015. A Muslim female teacher reports not being allowed to give a lesson in a public institution because she is wearing the Islamic headscarf[30].
- 15 December, 2015. A Muslim police officer anonymously reports an increase in the circulation of Islamophobic mail in his area of work[31].
- 15 December, 2015. A young Muslim mother is refused access to Cirque Bouglione on the grounds of her headscarf[32].
- 16 December, 2015. The Brussels leader of the political party Mouvement Reformateur, Vincent De Wolf, issues a statement calling for the removal of faith symbols, notably including the Islamic headscarf, from public service roles[33].
- 18 December, 2015. The CICB releases a statement indicating the sharp rise in Islamophobic attacks on Belgian Muslims is directly attributed to the Paris attacks. A total of 47 attacks are reported during the period between 13 November and 16 December, 2015. Attacks were physical, verbal, and also took place online. The official publication launched by the organisation was initially published in French, however many of the Islamophobic reports detailed by the group have been included in this chronology.
- 18 December, 2015. Le Soir publishes an article which reported an increase in the violent nature of Islamophobic attacks in Belgium, particularly since the Paris attacks[34].
- 24 December, 2015. In his Christmas and New Year speech, King Philippe of Belgium pays particular attention to the Paris attacks and their consequences on Belgium and Belgian society. During his speech he recognises the challenges facing Belgian society, reaffirms the need for unity across Belgian society and speaks out against hate speech.

COUNTER-ISLAMOPHOBIA INITIATIVES

Although the incidences of Islamophobia in Belgium are growing in number and complexity, the country is also home to numerous local, national and pan-European counter-Islamophobia initiatives. The section below details some of these organisations and highlights selected anti-Islamophobia projects led by these groups.

European Network against Racism

The European Network against Racism (ENAR) is a Europe-wide anti-racism move-

30. CCIB, Collectif Contre L'Islamophobie en Belgique. (2015b): Islamophobie en Belgique; Bilan des Actes Islamophobes Post-13 Novembre 2015. Brussels: Collectif Contre l'Islamophobie en Belgique.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. Soir, Le. (2015): *Vincent De Wolf: «Pas de voile dans la fonction publique»* 2015c [cited 2015.12.20 2015]. Available from http://www.lesoir.be/1070889/article/actualite/belgique/politique/2015-12-16/vincent-wolf-pas-voile-dans-fonction-publique.

34. Soir, Le. (2015): *L'Islamophobie Devient Plus Violente*. Le Soir 2015a [cited 20.12.15 2015]. Available from http://www.lesoir.be/1072749/article/actualite/belgique/2015-12-18/l-islamophobie-devient-plus-violente.

ment located in Brussels. The umbrella organisation was founded in 1998 and consistently leads campaigns to counter discrimination faced by European minorities, such as anti-Gypsyism, anti-Afrophobia and counter-Islamophobia projects. In its fight against Islamophobia during 2015, ENAR has participated and facilitated numerous anti-Islamophobia projects, including gathering online information detailing the state of Islamophobia in Europe and participating in local counter-Islamophobia initiatives. The organisation's senior policy officer, Julie Pascoët, oversees much of the organisation's work in the fight against Islamophobia. She stated that during 2015 and in particular the backlash encountered by Muslim communities following events in Paris the need to take Islamophobia more seriously has arisen and therefore in her capacity at ENAR she has

"…coordinated the design of a full-fledged advocacy strategy for combating Islamophobia, involving local and national anti-racist and human rights organisations. The idea was to increase our advocacy work at different levels in order to mutually support our efforts at local, national and European level, to increase our influence, with the final aim to make a concrete improvement for victims on the ground."

ENAR is also currently compiling its Forgotten Women: The Impact of Islamophobia on Muslim Women project, which investigates the gendered effects of Islamophobia in eight European countries, including Belgium. Given that this report, along with others, have highlighted the disproportionate way in which Islamophobia affects Muslim women, the initiative led by ENAR represents a timely and much needed contribution to the study and fight against Islamophobia.

Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations

The Forum of Muslim Youth and Student Organisations (FEMYSO) was founded in 1996 and represents young Muslims from across 23 European countries, including Belgium. The Brussels-based organisation provides training advocacy for Muslim youth on a variety of issues. President Yousef Himmat and former President, Intissar Kherigi came forward to contribute to this section of the report, and articulated the concerning nature of Islamophobia in Europe by stating

"It is a complex and multifaceted problem that is limiting the ability of the Muslim community, especially young people, to realise their potential…It affects how young European Muslim people see themselves and their place in European society… their sense of belonging and confidence, employment prospects, civic participation and life chances."

FEMYSO continuously works to creatively tackle this widespread and deep-rooted problem by coordinating numerous seminars, providing training opportunities and study sessions. The organisation is also invited to participate on counter-Islamophobia programmes and has worked with the European Parliament, the Council of Europe and United Nations in the past. FEMYSO is also

invested in researching the effects of Islamophobia on Muslims and especially Muslim youth across Europe, including Belgium[35].

The Counter-Islamophobia Collective in Belgium

The Counter-Islamophobia Collective in Belgium (CICB) is perhaps the country's foremost anti-Islamophobia organisation. The group focuses its efforts on documenting and countering anti-Muslim hate in Belgium. The organisation works across the Belgian linguistic communities and is therefore able to report and provide support for both Flemish and francophone victims of Islamophobia. The CICB was founded in September 2014 and its formation was inspired by its French counterpart, the Counter-Islamophobia Collective in France. During 2015, CICB has been especially active in the fight against Islamophobia, many of its activities have been outlined in section three of this part of the European Islamophobia Report.

KifKif

The Belgian association KifKif is based in Flanders and focuses on combatting prejudice in the region. As part of their commitment to the fight against discrimination in Dutch-speaking Belgium, the organisation has team members dedicated to reporting, monitoring and combatting Islamophobia. For example, in 2015, KifKif ran a series of training workshops in Antwerp related to understanding and countering anti-Muslim stereotypes, among others, in the media.

Muslims' Rights Belgium

Muslims' Rights Belgium (MRB) is a francophone Belgian counter-Islamophobia organisation. MRB's primary objectives include combatting Islamophobia and enabling victims of anti-Muslim hate to continue to contribute to Belgian society. Since its formation in 2012, MRB has published an annual report detailing the accounts of Islamophobia in francophone Belgium that they have received.

CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

To summarise and conclude, this report has demonstrated the extent of anti-Muslim prejudice and its manifestations in Belgium during the course of 2015. Principal findings that emerge from this overview include the following observations: firstly, like the other reports presented in the chronology, there is a growing presence of Islamophobia in Belgium. Documenting these events in a timeline demonstrated how anti-Muslim acts in Belgium are strongly shaped by external factors. In 2015, Islamophobia in Belgium was most significantly influenced by factors in France,

35. Ray, Elsa, Samy Debah, Raouda Ghenania, Youssef Himmat, Najatte Kaaoiss, Intissar Kherigi, and Marwan Muhammad. (2014): Islamophobia in Europe: Description of a Scourge, Report on Islamophobia in Europe. Brussels: IMAN. Easat-Daas, Amina. (2013): European Muslim Youth and the Rise of the Far-Right Anti-Muslim Narrative. Brussels: FEMYSO.

such as the Charlie Hebdo shootings in January 2015 and the terrorist attacks that took place across Paris in November 2015. To a lesser extent anti-Muslim incidents in Belgium were also shaped by European factors, such as the rise of PEGIDA across Europe, and internal factors such as halal food.

The review of the nature and scale of Islamophobia in Belgium in 2015 also indicated that anti-Muslim prejudices disproportionately affect women and to a lesser extent young people. Belgian Muslim women are targeted in particular due to their often visibly Muslim appearance. The work undertaken by Belgium-based organisations such as FEMYSO and ENAR into the effects of Islamophobia on these groups in conjunction with the observation that Muslim women and youth are comparatively affected to a greater extent by Islamophobia in Belgium underlines the importance of such projects.

At the outset of this section of the European Islamophobia Report the report explored the way in which key Belgian anti-Islamophobia initiatives define Islamophobia; however, the information presented in section three, and in particular the Siroperie Meurens case, highlighted that not only Muslims and those presumed to be Muslim are targeted by Islamophobia, but those thought to be affiliated or supportive of Muslims are also negatively affected by its consequences. Therefore, based on this observation it is perhaps appropriate to consider Islamophobia as something that affects Muslims, presumed Muslims and those affiliated with and supportive of Muslims and also physical sites linked to these individuals.

Outlining selected counter-Islamophobia projects highlighted both the extent of anti-Muslim acts in Belgium and also the outstanding work undertaken by these numerous initiatives to counter normalisation of Islamophobic discourses in the country, to compile statistical and qualitative reviews of the severity of the problem, and perhaps most importantly, to provide support for those subject to Islamophobia in Belgium. Nonetheless, in spite of the extensive work that these groups are engaged in, anti-Muslim prejudice and hate remains a growing problem in Belgium and it is in light of this observation that this national report puts forward the following recommendations:

Defining Islamophobia. On the national and European level, collectively employ a definition of Islamophobia that incorporates the range of individuals adversely affected by the phenomenon, including Muslims and those perceived as either being or affiliated with Muslims.

Collaborative Working. Organise a national platform where the numerous Belgian counter-Islamophobia initiatives can come together to combine their extensive efforts in order to successfully and efficiently tackle the growing problem of Islamophobia.

Support. The need for continued support for victims of Islamophobia, particularly for Belgian Muslim women and young Belgian Muslims. Collaborative working may enable Belgium's multiple anti-Islamophobia groups to provide specialised support

for those most targeted by the problem. These initiatives must also continue to be supported both financially and morally by Belgian political officials.

Awareness. Promote an increased awareness of the work undertaken by Belgian counter-Islamophobia projects, Islamophobia reporting facilities, and informing citizens of their rights in order to enable and empower victims in their everyday lives.

Community Cohesion. As stated by King Philippe in his end of year public address, Belgium and its diverse population must not be divided by all that has affected Belgium during 2015 and instead Belgians must come together and show zero tolerance for hate. Belgian politicians and counter-Islamophobia should be at the fore in promoting this and working together for a more cohesive and unified Belgium.

REFERENCES

2015. Ritual Slaughter Besets Belgium Ahead of Eid al-Adha Holiday 2015 [cited 04.11.2015 2015]. Available from http://www.news24.com/Green/News/Ritual-slaughter-besets-Belgium-ahead-of-Eid-al-Adha-holiday-20150922.

Allen, Christopher. 2010. Islamophobia. Surrey: Ashgate.

Azzouzi, Karim. 2015. Communique de presse LMB: Attentat meurtrier contre l'hebdomadaire Charlie Hebdo. Brussels: Ligue des Musulmans de Belgique.

Bertossi, Christophe. 2012. "French Republicanism and the Problem of Normative Density." Comparative European Politics no. 10 (3):248-265.

Capitale, La. 2015. Molenbeek: Jamal Ikazban dépose plainte pour des propos tenus sur Vivacité 2015 [cited 19.12.2015 2015]. Available from http://www.lacapitale.be/1441560/article/2015-12-10/molenbeek-jamal-ikazban-depose-plainte-pour-des-propos-tenus-sur-vivacite.

CCIB, Collectif Contre L'Islamophobie en Belgique. 2015a. Communiqué de Presse: Islamophobie: J'écris ton Nom. Brussels: Collectif Contre l'Islamophobie en Belgique.

CCIB, Collectif Contre L'Islamophobie en Belgique. 2015b. Islamophobie en Belgique; Bilan des Actes Islamophobes Post-13 Novembre 2015. Brussels: Collectif Contre l'Islamophobie en Belgique.

CCIF, Collectif Contre L'Islamophobie. 2014. Annual Report 2014. Paris: Collectif Contre L'Islamophobie.

Deschouwer, Kris. 2009. The Politics ofBelgium. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Easat-Daas, Amina. 2013. European Muslim Youth and the Rise of the Far-Right Anti-Muslim Narrative. Brussels: FEMYSO.

El Jafoufi, Khalid. 2015. "Belgian Girl Halts Social Experiment after Eearing a Headscarf for 10 Days." Mvslim, 15.10.15.

European Commision. 2015. Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights: "Tolerance and respect: preventing and combating antisemitic and anti-Muslim hatred in Europe" 2015 [cited 2015.11.04 2015]. Available from http://ec.europa.eu/justice/events/colloquium-fundamental-rights-2015/index_en.htm.

Events, Islamic. 2015. Des mosquées de la Province de Liège ouvrent leurs portes, 10.02.2015 2015 [cited 20.11.2015 2015]. Available from http://www.islamic-events.be/2015/02/mosquees-province-liege-portes-ouvertes/.

Eye, Middle East. 2015. "Syria's Assad Meets Far-Right Belgian Politician." Middle East Eye, 25.03.2015.

Holehouse, Matthew. 2015. "Belgian Fruit Syrup Faces Boycott Calls Over Halal Labelling." The Telegraph, 17.08.2015.

Hudhayfa, Abu. 2015. Catholic school in Belgium bans long dresses unfairly targets Muslim students. Documenting Opression Against Muslims 2015 [cited 20.10.2015 2015]. Available from http://www.doamuslims.org/?p=2432.

Karagiannis, Emmanuel. 2012. "European Converts to Islam: Mechanisms of Radicalization." Politics, Religion and Ideology no. 13 (1):99 - 113.

Libre, La. 2015. Eric Zemmour: «La France devrait bombarder Molenbeek» (vidéo). La Libre 2015 [cited 21.11.2015 2015]. Available from http://www.lesoir.be/1045840/article/actualite/france/2015-11-17/eric-zemmour-france-devrait-bombarder-molenbeek-video.

MRAX, Mouvement Contre le Racisme, l'Antisémitisme et la Xénophobie. 2014. Rapport MRAX 2014. Brussels: Mouvement Contre le Racisme, l'Antisémitisme et la Xénophobie.

MRB, Muslims' Rights Belgium. 2014. Islamophobie en Belgique Francophone: Rapport Annuel 2014. Brussels: Muslims' Rights Belgium.

PEGIDA Vlaanderen. 2015. PEGIDA Vlaanderen 2015 [cited 20.12.2015 2015]. Available from www.facebook.com/pegidavlaanderen.

Pew Forum. 2015. Religious Composition by Country 2010-2050. Pew Forum 2015 [cited 02.08.15 2015]. Available from http://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/religious-projection-table/2010/percent/all/.

Ray, Elsa, Samy Debah, Raouda Ghenania, Youssef Himmat, Najatte Kaaoiss, Intissar Kherigi, and Marwan Muhammad. 2014. Islamophobia in Europe: Description of a Scourge, Report on Islamophobia in Europe. Brussels: IMAN.

Richardson, Robin. 1997. Islamophobia: A Challenge For Us All. London: The Runnymede Trust.

RTBF. 2015. "Alerte anthrax" à la grande mosquée de Bruxelles: probablement de la farine 2015 [cited 02.12.2015 2015]. Available from http://www.rtbf.be/info/

regions/bruxelles/detail_menace-terroriste-alerte-anthrax-declenchee-a-la-grande-mosquee-de-bruxelles?id=9148278.

RTL. 2015. L'exclusion de Mahinur Özdemir du cdH scandalise certains: "Cela ne va que cristalliser encore plus le débat". RTL Belgium 2015 [cited 05.06.15 2015]. Available from http://www.rtl.be/info/regions/bruxelles/l-exclusion-de-mahinur-ozdemir-du-cdh-scandalise-certains-cela-ne-va-que-cristalliser-encore-plus-le-debat--727185.aspx.

Soir, Le. 2015. L'Islamophobie Devient Plus Violente. Le Soir 2015a [cited 20.12.15 2015]. Available from http://www.lesoir.be/1072749/article/actualite/belgique/2015-12-18/l-islamophobie-devient-plus-violente.

Soir, Le. 2015b. "L'Exécutif des musulmans de Belgique appelle «les acteurs musulmans à condamner le terrorisme»." 08.01.15.

Soir, Le. 2015. Vincent De Wolf: «Pas de voile dans la fonction publique» 2015c [cited 2015.12.20 2015]. Available from http://www.lesoir.be/1070889/article/actualite/belgique/politique/2015-12-16/vincent-wolf-pas-voile-dans-fonction-publique.

Taylor, Sarah Joanne. 2015. "Belgium: PEGIDA Anti-Muslim March Attracts 200." Euronews, 03.03.2015.

Tunakan, BegÜm. 2015. "After France, Muslim Students in Belgium Banned from School." Daily Sabah, 31.05.15.

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	English	Original Language
CICB	The Counter-Islamophobia Collective in Belgium	French – Collectif Contre l'Islamophobie en Belgique Dutch - Collectief Tegen Islamofobie in België
CICF	The Counter-Islamophobia Collective in France	French- Collectif Contre l'Islamophobie en France
EMB	The Belgian Muslim Executive	French - Exécutif Musulman de Belgique Dutch - Executief van de Moslems de België
ENAR	European Network against Racism	
FEMYSO	Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations	
IMAN	Islamophobia Monitoring and Action Network Project	
'ISIL'	Islamic State of Syria and the Levant	
LMB	Belgian Muslim League	French- Ligue des Musulmans de Belgique
MRAX	Movement against Racism, Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia	French - Mouvement Contre le Racisme, l'Antisémitisme et la Xénophobie
MRB	Muslims' Rights Belgium	
PEGIDA	Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the West	German - Patriotische Europäer Gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes)Appendices
VB	Flemish Interest	Dutch – Vlaams Belang

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

NATIONAL REPORT 2015

ĐERMANA ŠETA, ZEHRA ALISPAHIĆ, EMIR KOVAČEVIĆ, EKREM TUCAKOVIĆ,
MEHMEDOVIĆ NIHAD, MENSUR KARADŽA,NEDIM BEGOVIĆ

THE AUTHORS

Đermana Šeta holds a BA in English language and literature from the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo and an MA in Religious Studies from the Center for Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Studies, University of Sarajevo. She is the Head of the Commission for Freedom of Religion of the Islamic Community in B&H, a fellow at the Center for Advanced Studies, Sarajevo and president of the assembly of Center for education and research "Nahla". Her research focus is on sociology on religion, sociology of gender and women's studies, sociology of family, religion and human rights. She has authored several researches and articles. Her master thesis was published as a book entitled "Why the Headscarf: B&H Muslim women on their life and work with the headscarf" (Zašto marama: B&H muslimanke o životu i radu pod maramom) 2011, CNS & CIPS. Previously she worked as Executive director of Association for language and culture „Lingvisti", and Head of research department at CER Nahla. She is a doctoral candidate in Sociology at the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Sarajevo. She is a senior research associate at the Institute for Islamic Tradition of Bosniaks. Currently she is engaged as a project leader in establishing and organizing Department for Marital and Family issues (women's activism/marriage and family) in Administration for Religious Affairs, Riyasat/Seat of the Islamic community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, djermana@yahoo.com.

Zehra Alispahić, PhD is a professor of the Arabic language at the Faculty of Islamic Science in Sarajevo. She graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo, Department for Oriental Philology (Arabic, Turkish and Persian languages). As ISESCO's (Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) scholarship holder, she completed post-graduate studies in Arabic language and Islamic pedagogy at the Kingdom of Morocco in Rabat, at the University Muhammed V, Faculty of Pedagogic Science. Since 2005, she has worked as the Arabic language professor at the Faculty of Islamic Science in Sarajevo. For more than twenty years, she has been present in electronic and printed media in BiH. She has been a long-standing editor of religious program on the Federal radio and an expert collaborator for the religious program of BHRTV.

Emir Kovačević is a lawyer. He is actively engaged in the work of the Inter-religious Council on behalf of the Islamic Community. As a coordinator of the legal expert group he worked on the drafting law on the Legal status of churches and religious communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Anti-discrimination Law. He is a member of the Commission for religious freedom in the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He is author of the two books on the topic: Freedom of religion in judgments of the Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg which was published in 2013. Freedom of religion in the workplace in USA published in 2015.

Ekrem Tucaković, PhD in journalism, editor-in-chief of Preporod magazine
Mehmedović Nihad, legal adviser in Riyasat of Islamic community
Mensur Karadža, head of legal department in Riaysat of Islamic community
Nedim Begović, PhD, Professor at Faculty of Islamic studies

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions. No representation, either expressed or implied, is made of the accuracy of the material in the national reports. The editors of the European Islamophobia Report cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may be made. The reader must make his or her own evaluation of the accuracy and appropriateness of those materials.

To cite this report: Đermana Šeta et.al. (2016): Islamophobia in Bosnia and Herzegovina: National Report 2015, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, European Islamophobia Report 2015, Istanbul, SETA, 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report represents an overview of major events during 2015 in relation to violations of the rights of Muslims, as well as to incidents caused by Islamophobia and intolerance towards Islam and Muslims. This country report for Bosnia and Herzegovina is drafted as a part of the SETA foundation project entitled "European Islamophobia Report 2015". After the introduction and country profile, part 3 of the report introduces verbal and physical incidents and incidents of desecration of mosques and other Muslim places and premises. In part 4, discussions of Islamophobic incidents and discursive events in various fields are presented, i.e. employment, education, politics, media, justice and security. Part 5 presents observed civil society initiatives. Part 6, as a conclusion, offers policy recommendations, followed by part 7 and a brief chronology of the most important events in 2015. This country report for B&H has been drafted by the Commission for Freedom of Religion of the Riyasat of the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The methodology used for drafting this report consists of desk research, available reports, media analysis and interviews with important stakeholders. 13 people/institutions in total were contacted in order to gain relevant information on different topics: media, justice, education, etc.

SAŽETAK

Ovaj izvještaj predstavlja presjek dešavanja u 2015. godini u vezi sa kršenjem prava muslimana te incidentima uzrokovanim islamofobijom i netolerancijom prema islamu i muslimanima. Ovaj izvještaj za Bosnu i Hercegovinu je izrađen u okviru projekta SETA fondacije pod nazivom "European Islamophobia Report 2015".nakon uvoda i kratkog profila države BiH, u dijelu 3. izvještaj prezentira verbalne i fizičke napade i napade na džamije i druge muslimanske objekte. Dio 4 predstavlja incidente i događaje iz različitih društvenih segmenata, t.j. zapošljavanje, obrazpovanje, politika, mediji, pravosuđe i sigurnost. Dio 5. predstavlja pozitivne inicijative iz civilnog društva. Dio 6. kao zaključni dio nudi preporuke a 7. dio kratki hronološki pregled najvažnijih događaja u 2015. Ovaj izvještaj za BiH izradila je Komisija za slobodu vjere Rijaseta IZ u BiH. Korištena metodologija uključivala je analizu dostupnih publikacija i izvještaja, analizu medijskih sadržaja te intervjue sa relevantnim akterima. Od 13 osoba/institucija zvanično su traženi potrebni podaci u vezi sa konkretnim segmentima izvještaja: mediji, pravosuđe, obrazovanje, itd.

Glossary of terms and abbreviations

B&H	Bosnia and Herzegovina
EIR	European Islamophobia Report
The Commission	Commission for Freedom of Religion of the Riyasat of the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
IC	The Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina
CVE	Countering violent extremism

INTRODUCTION

This country report for B&H has been drafted by the Commission for Freedom of Religion. The commission was established on 13 September, 2012 by a resolution of the Riyasat of the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The commission is an independent expert and advisory body of the Riyasat, and its role is to help the Riyasat in performing its constitutional duty of protecting the rights of Muslims. The commission is in charge of: promoting respect of freedom of religion, documenting and mediating cases in which the right to freedom of religion has been violated, informing the members of the Islamic community about their religious rights and means of legal protection, cooperating with state institutions and similar organizations in the country and abroad, proposing a certain opinion or activity in regards to violations of the freedom of religion of members of the Islamic community to the Riyasat. The commission publishes a report once a year. The commission has nine members.[1]

The methodology used for drafting this report consists of desk research, available reports, media analysis and interviews with important stakeholders. 13 people/institutions in total were contacted in order to gain relevant information on different topics that included the media, justice, education, etc.

COUNTRY PROFILE

It is generally accepted that Islam arrived in Bosnia with the Ottoman armies in the fifteenth century. Today Bosnian Muslims are overwhelmingly Sunnis. Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks) are an indigenous Slavic ethnic group. Due to more than 55 years of Communism (1945-1990) and a devastating war (which included interethnic and interreligious tensions and conflicts) today's situation with interreligious understanding and tolerance is fragile and complex. The 1995 Dayton peace agreement brought to an end the bloodshed of the 1992-1995 war but entrenched the results of "ethnic cleansing", cementing the divide in the country. Annex 4 of the Dayton accord is the Constitution of B&H in which two separate entities (territorial units) are established; a Bosniak-Croat Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Republika Srpska, each with its own president, government, parliament, police and other bodies. Overarching these entities is a state of Bosnia government and rotating (three-member) presidency. In addition, there is the district of Brčko, a self-governing administrative unit established as a neutral area that is placed under joint Serb, Croat and Bosniak authority. This elaborate multi-tiered system of government, with cabinets and parliaments on state, entity and cantonal levels, means that Bosnia is now

1. For the 2014 report in English, see: http://www.rijaset.ba/images/stories/Za-download/report_religious_rights_violation_2014.pdf

overburdened with politicians and civil servants, many of whom continue to receive salaries not in keeping with the country's impoverished condition.[2]

When it comes to the population of Muslims in B&H, according to the census conducted in 1991, 43.5% (1,902,956) of inhabitants declared themselves to be Muslims (out of a total 4,377,033). This identifies the national nomination for ethnic Bosnian Muslims; this term was replaced with the term Bosniak in 1993. Since, in the case of all three constituent ethic communities[3] in Bosnia, the ethnic and religious identities overlap to a large extent, this figure is usually taken as indicative of the number of adherents to Islam. Due to war-related death, expulsion and internal and external migration in the 1992-1995 aggression against B&H, the numbers and demographic distribution of ethnic groups have significantly changed. The results of the first after-war census held in October, 2013 are still not available. According to estimates by the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the current population of the country is 3,831,555, while the CIA World Factbook estimates the total number of Bosnian citizens in 2013 at 3,871,643, 48% of whom are said to be Bosniaks, 37.1% Serbs, 14.3% Croats and 0.6% other nationalities.[4]

Today Bosnia and Herzegovina is a secular state with no state religion. In today's post-war B&H, the increased presence of religion in the public arena is evident. Some welcome the religious revival as a healthy assertion of identity after the decades-long de-Islamisation process that occurred during the Communist period, while others see it as a rising threat to the secular and politically fragile state.[5]

Annex 1 of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina includes 15 main documents on human rights. The constitution states that the rights and freedoms set forth in the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its Protocols shall apply directly in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These shall have priority over all other law. (Article 2.2). All persons within the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina shall enjoy the human rights and fundamental freedoms referred to in paragraph 2 above; these include: (...)(g) Freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 2.3).

A special law providing for the freedom of religion and religious non-discrimination, as well as the legal status of churches and religious communities was adopted in 2004. This is the Law on Freedom of Religion and the Legal Position of Churches and Religious Communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to this law

2. For more information, see: CIA Fact book, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bk.html; Bosnia-Herzegovina country profile – Overview, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17211415; Bosnia and Herzegovina: the world's most complicated system of government?: http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2014/oct/08/bosnia-herzegovina-elections-the-worlds-most-complicated-system-of-government

3. Most Croats are adherents to the Roman Catholic faith, while most Serbs are Orthodox Christians

4. Country survey for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Smajić, Aid, Year book of Muslims in Europe, Vol. 6., Brill, 2014.

5. Also see: State Department's International Religious Freedom Report for B&H at http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/238574.pdf

everyone has the right to freedom of religion or belief, including the freedom to publicly profess or not a religion. Also, everyone has a right to adopt or change his or her religion, and has the freedom - individually or in community with others, in public or private - to manifest his or her religion or belief in any manner, in worship, practice and observance, or in maintenance of customs or other religious activities. Everyone has the right to religious education, which shall be provided solely by persons appointed to do so by an official representative of the individual's church or religious community, whether in religious institutions or in public and private pre-school institutions, primary schools and higher education, and this shall be regulated according to the specific regulations (Article 4.1).

Along with this also the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination was adopted in 2009; according to this law discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief consists of any different treatment, including any type of exclusion, limitation or preference based on real or assumed features towards any person or group of persons on grounds of religion or belief, and every other circumstance with a purpose or a consequence that inhibits or endangers recognition, enjoyment or realization of rights and freedoms in all areas of public life (Article 2.1). Prohibition of such discrimination shall be applied to all public bodies, all natural and legal persons, in the public and private sector, in all spheres; in particular, in employment, membership in professional organizations, education, training, housing, health, social protection, goods and services designated for public and public places together with performing economic activities and public services (Article 2).

Hate crime as a specific crime is motivated by intolerance towards certain groups in society. Some of the several criminal codes in B&H contain limited provisions that allow more severe punishment to be imposed for crimes committed with a motivation of bias. Use of these provisions is inconsistent and relatively rare. For example, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FB&H) and the Brčko District criminal codes include aggravated forms of some criminal acts, such as murder, rape or causing grievous bodily injury when committed with a motivation of bias. The FB&H Criminal Code also includes an aggravated form of malicious mischief. Many laws on peace and public order at the cantonal level also include minor offences, punishable with a fine, which encompass insulting behaviour based on national, racial or religious grounds. The FB&H, Republika Srpska and Brčko District criminal codes also include provisions on incitement to national, racial or religious hatred, discord or hostility. According to OSCE B&H statistics hate crimes in B&H often target returnee communities (who are often isolated and vulnerable) and religious and sacred objects (mosques, churches and graveyards), as well as private property belonging to returnees or members of minority communities. OSCE B&H also records hate crimes through the Hate Monitor, which is a monthly visualization of the Mission's

hate crimes monitoring data.[6] More than 85% of all hate crimes registered through the Hate Monitor are due to ethnicity/religion. Unfortunately, the statistics have not been segregated by religion.

When it comes to hate speech regulations, the FB&H and RS laws do not specifically proscribe hate speech, but prohibit acts that cause ethnic, racial or religious hatred.[7] Nevertheless, usage of incendiary language (in the media, by politicians and others) usually goes unpunished.[8] Islamophobic hate speech is particularly common on line, but until now there have been no procedures initiated that would limit or sanction this. More information on hate speech in media will be given under media section.

SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

The following incidents were collected through media reporting, direct reporting to the commission and personal contacts. The Interreligious Council of B&H also published a Report on Monitoring and responding to attacks on religious buildings and other holy sites in BiH.[9] From the date of the writing of this report, the data for 2015 have not yet been published.

Verbal and Physical Incidents

- Bijeljina (Republika Srpska) on 19 January, 2015: offensive graffiti in Cyrillic on a building stating: Ko će brže, a ko prije tursku krv da prolije (Who will be faster and swifter to drink the blood of Turks). The returnees were of the conviction that this graffiti would not be quickly covered up, as such incidents had occurred even before without reaction.
- 13 March 2015 in Višegrad (Republika Srpska) was the place for a large parade of Chetnik guards who chanted the slogan: "We are a Serb army, prepared to return the territories seized from us."
- March 2015 in Doboj (Republika Srpska) 25th anniversary of a hooligan group "Dukes" was celebrated with the slogan: "Disgusting Islam converts (poturice), we hate you so much, Doboj has been and shall remain a Serb city." During Ramadan, at the time of an iftar organized in the centre of Doboj, the same group

6. For more information, see: http://hatemonitor.oscebih.org/Default.aspx?pageid=10&lang=EN

7. For more information, see: http://zalbe.vzs.ba/index.php/zakonska-rjesenja

8. United States Department of State, Country Report for B&H on Human Rights Practices for 2014, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor.

9. IRC Report for 2014: http://mrv.ba/images/stories/Monitoring/izvjestaj%202013-2014%20-%20english.pdf

chanted Chetnik slogans, calling for the killing of Muslims.

- In the city of Doboj (Republika Srpska), on 23 June, 2015, a group of about 50 Serbs swore at and threatened Muslims - Bosniaks who had gathered for an iftar organized in the open, in front of the Donja mosque-Trnjak.
- In the city of Zvornik (Republika Srpska), on 26 June, 2015, a group of young men disturbed Muslims during their morning fajr prayer in Riječanska Mosque, swearing and uttering offensive remarks about the mosque and Ramadan.
- Tomislavgrad, on 29 June, 2015: During Ramadan, an unknown person aprayed offensive graffiti on the house of Izet Tiro Opet Vlah se noću kreće, Rudan biti zaboravljen neće (Vlahs will again roam in the night, Rudan will not be forgotten). This is related to a war criminal convicted for war crimes against Bosniaks in this village in August, 1993.
- In the city of Bijeljina (Republika Srpska), on 02 July 2015, a group of young men disturbed Muslims during their morning fajr prayer, banging at the door of Sultan Sulejman Atik Mosque, yelling: "Are you there, Turks?"
- On 14 July, 2015, in the same city of Bijeljina (Republika Srpska), a young Serb man insulted the imam of Sultan Sulejman Atik Mosque, using abusive words and issuing threats.
- July, 2015 in Kotor Varoš (Republika Srpska): A brutal attack on Nermin Hanifić occurred when unknown attackers engraved "four S" on his stomach.
- Vlasenica (Republika Srpska), on 20 July, 2015.: A Bosniak returnee Mehmed Kuljančić was beaten up by four Serb young men. The Bijeljina police confirmed that Stevan Garić had been arrested and that he will be punished for violation of public order.
- Čelić (in Federation of B&H, bordering with Republika Srpska), on 21 July, 2015. At a commemoration monument for dead members of the Bosnian and Herzegovina Army the nationalistic Serbian "four S" were engraved.

Incidents of Desecration of Mosques and Other Muslim Places and Premises

- In the city of Bijeljina (Republika Srpska), on 26 January, 2015, the windows of Salihbegovića Mosque were broken.
- In Višegrad (Republika Srpska), on 21 May, 2015, a hand grenade was found in the yard of Gazanfer-bey Mosque.
- Bijeljina (Republika Srpska), on 25 June, 2015: A cemetery and commemorative monument to army and civilian war victims was desecrated. The B&H flag had been torn down. Surveillance cameras recorded everything. It remains unclear why police did not protect the mosque, as there is an order for physical police protection during the month of Ramadan. Ljubiša Burić admitted urinating in the cemetery and taking down the flag. He will be further prosecuted for this.

- In Tomislavgrad, on 14 August, 2015, a group of young men placed a gas bottle next to the entrance door of the mosque and released the gas. A group of young men were shouting and cursing, and threatening: "You are done."
- In Ljubuški, on 18 November, 2015, a masjid was desecrated, its doors and windows broken, as well as the some things in the masjid.

DISCUSSION OF ISLAMOPHOBIC INCIDENTS AND DISCURSIVE EVENTS IN VARIOUS FIELDS

a. Employment

Legislation in Bosnia and Herzegovina provides limited protection of the right to freedom of religion in the employment sector and at the workplace. Specific problems Muslims face in the employment sector are: exercising the right to take break during working hours on Friday in order to attend jumaah prayer, performing daily prayers during working hours and wearing the headscarf at the workplace. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the right to be absent from work in order to attend jumaah prayer is not explicitly regulated by the Law on Freedom of Religion and Legal Position of Churches and Religious Communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina or in the labour legislation. The Labour Law of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina stipulates the right of an employee to one hour off work during a business week, but it does not specify the employer's obligation to meet the employee's request for an hour off on Friday to attend the jumaah prayer. The Labour Law of Republika Srpska stipulates that the employer can approve one hour off work during working hours at the end of the week for workers whose work allows such an absence.

The proposed text of the agreement between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which as mentioned has still not been approved by the B&H Presidency or the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, includes provisions protecting the aforementioned rights of Muslim employees, both in public and private employment sectors. Enactment of these provisions would ensure equality for Muslims with members of other religious communities and churches in Bosnia and Herzegovina, given that some specific Christian requests have been accepted in previously signed agreements, for example, the integrity of confession.

When it comes to celebration of holidays, the labour legislation of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of the Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina stipulate employee's right to four days of leave in a calendar year for religious or traditional purposes, with two days being paid. In Republika Srpska, employees are entitled to three days of unpaid leave in a calendar year for religious or national-traditional purposes. Since the 1995 constitution went into force, a single state-level law on holidays has not been passed in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This issue is regulat-

ed at the levels of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska, and Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina. A proposed separate law on non-working days during religious holidays in Bosnia and Herzegovina which applies to employees in all institutions, organizations and companies throughout the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina entered the parliamentary procedure this year, but was not discussed, finally being removed from the parliamentary agenda.

Below are some complaints about violations of Muslims' right to freedom of religion in the employment sector which were received by the Commission for Freedom of Religion during 2015:

- On 5 March 2015, the Commission received a complaint from an employee of a state-owned company that her supervisor had prohibited her from performing the noon prayer at her workplace during a break. The complainant believes that her rights to freedom of religion and non-discrimination were violated in this way, given that managers of other departments allowed their employees to perform prayers.
- On 3 July, 2015 in Srebrenica a petition was organized against a public kindergarten teacher Lejla Avdić who wore a headscarf. It was initiated by a Serbian Orthodox Church priest Aleksandar Mlađenović and a teacher Jadranka Lalović (the petition was signed by 10 Serbian parents). They requested that she take off the headscarf or resign.
- In October, 2015 the issue of banning the wearing of religious symbols for all employees in judicial and prosecutorial institutions appeared in an internal, publicly non-disclosed letter sent internally by the HJPC (High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council).[10] This raised a great deal of controversy, as it seemed to indirectly target only one specific category, namely Muslim women who wore the headscarf. The ban is currently continuing, although it violates international human right obligations. It still remains to be seen how this will further evolve, since there have as yet been no cases in which this internal act has been implemented.
- On 30 November, 2015, a complaint was received from a person working in a federal public institution. After she had passed both written and oral tests, she was informed that she had been selected for the position. Having worked for over two months, she was invited for a conversation and informed that her headscarf in the workplace was in contradiction of the law and that she should refrain from public manifestation of her religious beliefs. She believes that her headscarf does not interfere in her professional work or ability to do her job professionally and honestly, and that it this decision thus violated her right to freedom of religion at the workplace.
- On 10 December, 2015, the Commission received a complaint about the dress

10.http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2016/02/hijab-wearing-women-react-bosnia-court-ban-160202133259025.html

code procedure in a cantonal hospital. The procedure, among other things, stipulates that if an employee wants to wear a different uniform for cultural or religious reasons, he/she must request approval from their immediate supervisor and that only if the immediate supervisor agrees can the employee be allowed to wear a different uniform.

- On 28 December, 2015, a complaint was received from an employee of the ministry of the interior on the cantonal level; the complaint states that a commander of the special support unit did not allow policemen to go to a mosque to perform their prayers. The complainant specified that this constituted violation of the right to perform religious duties according to the right to freedom of religion.

b. Education

The institutional image of the education sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a reflection of the state structure, is defined by the B&H constitution, entity-level and cantonal constitutions, and the Brčko District Statute which serve as the basis for the legal definition of competencies in education. Republika Srpska, ten cantons in the B&H Federation and B&H Brčko District all have full and undivided competencies in education. The B&H Ministry of Civil Affairs is in charge of performing duties and tasks within the competency of B&H, as related to the establishment of the main principles for coordinating activities, harmonizing plans of entity-level authorities and defining an international strategy; this is true in many subjects, as well as for education, which means that there is no state-level ministry of education. All laws in the RS entity, cantons and B&H Brčko District, as well as other regulations in the field of education should be harmonized with provisions of framework laws in B&H.

Jumaah Prayer Attendance

Flexibility of some employers (mostly in Muslim majority parts of the country) decreases the dimensions of this problem in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but it is still present, both in private and public employment sectors. The right to attend jumaah prayer has not systematically been resolved in education either, and thus teachers and other staff in schools encounter problems in this matter. Students in B&H schools and universities are also faced with problems, as classes and exams are organized at the time of jumaah prayer and they are unable to obtain permission for absence. Currently the resolution of this issue mostly depends on the good will of the management in the educational institutions.

Two Schools under the Same Roof

Another problem in education in B&H is the issue of "two schools under the same roof." This is a form of ethnic segregation of children, where pupils and students from two ethnic groups attend education in the same school building. These two groups are Bosniaks and Croats, but they are physically separated, mostly using sep-

arate entrances to the school building, and following two different educational curricula (a FB&H one and the neighbouring Croatia one). They often learn different things about the recent history and conflict in the country.

c. Politics

Local or general elections were not organized in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2015, and thus political parties did not run active political election campaigns which had often previously abounded with offensive and Islamophobic contents.

The social and political environment, characterized by the poor economic situation and the legacy of armed conflicts from the period of aggression against B&H favours dissemination of hatred and intolerance, especially in the entity of B&H known as the Republika Srpska. Bosnian Serbs have full and effective power and dominance in this entity, and returnees (Bosniaks and Croats) who return to their pre-war homes face various types of difficulties in exercising their rights; these sometimes include evident discrimination.

Nevertheless, it is important to highlight here that the previously mentioned Law on Freedom of Religion and Legal Position of Churches and Religious Communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina defines general rights and obligations related to the freedom of religion, churches and religious communities. However, in addition to this, the Catholic Church, or the Holy See which is its universal authority, first joined the contractual regulation of religious issues with Bosnia and Herzegovina on 19 April, 2006. Another religious community that has entered into an agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina is the Serbian Orthodox Church; this agreement dates back to 3 December 2007.

The Islamic community is in process of negotiating signing an agreement between B&H and the Islamic community, but until now the agreement has not been signed. The absence of such agreement significantly impedes Muslims in exercising their right to freedom of religion. The Islamic community submitted its draft proposal in 2010, but the content is still being negotiated. The negotiated draft agreement has only been adopted by the council of ministers of B& H during 2015, and now should be discussed and adopted by the three-member presidency (representing three constitutive peoples/ethnic groups) and the B&H parliament. There is no objective reason for the Islamic community not to sign the agreement. Unfortunately, political parties with a Serb majority have used the situation to fight amongst themselves. The draft agreement includes allowing Muslims to have time to perform jumaah prayer during working hours or to be able to take unpaid leave once in their life time to perform Hajj. The agreement is compatible and consistent with other agreements that have been signed with other two major religious communities. But Milorad Dodik's SNSD (Union of Independent Social-Democrats), a Serb national party, accused Serb representatives in the Council of Ministers (who do not belong

to this party, but to Savez za promjene/Union for Change) that they are making way for a "Sharia dictatorship".[11] Due to these tensions, Mladen Ivanić, a Serb member of the three-member presidency (also from Union for Change) stated that the agreement will not be signed if not approved by the other two major religious communities. Such approval is not foreseen for any other regulation and such approval was not necessary for the other two agreements. It remains to be seen what will happen next.[12]

d. Media

During 2015, leading print and electronic media in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina shaped the image of Islam and Muslims in their own way, presenting them mostly in two ways: the first treats Muslims and the IC in B&H institutionally and solemnly on the occasion of holidays, whereas the other deals with the topic of Muslims and the official IC in B&H through press releases and appearances after certain incidents or events, e.g. the January attack at the Charlie Hebdo editorial office in Paris; an attack on a Serb policeman and police station in Zvornik in May; autumn bomb attacks in Paris and the murder of two members of the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Rajlovac. Media outlets are partly responsible for anti-Muslim and Islamophobic sentiment due to their insufficiently balanced and sensationalist approach, unprofessional attitude and inconsiderate and inflammatory rhetoric. The shiftlessness of B&H media when the attack in Zvornik took place, and especially after the attack in Rajlovac, was immense. The media have demonstrated that they use sensationalism, that they rushed to qualify the offenses as "terrorism" and established connections with certain religious and ideological movements without much proof. For example, following the Zvornik attack, the RS police arrested and persecuted 32 Bosniaks in an operation "Rubin"; this was carried out under terrorism charges. All were released without being indicted.

The first way of focusing on Islam and Muslims was present in both the media in the federation and in the RS. While print and electronic media in the federation highlighted important dates in the life of Muslims and the IC both on the cover pages and in breaking news (beginning of Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, Hijri New Year, birthday of Prophet Muhammad - peace be upon him), and through special shows and contents, some of these events (mostly Eid) were treated more modestly in the RS, more with a daily informative content.

The second way of thematising Islam, Muslims and the IC of B&H was also in the media focus in both parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina. For example, the entry of FTV cameras into apartments and bedrooms of people who were suspected of preparing terrorist attacks was far from journalist professionalism or ethics. At the same

11. E.g.: http://www.atvbl.com/snsd-ugovor-izmedu-islamske-zajednice-bih-diktat-serijata

12. More here: http://www.klix.ba/vijesti/bih/o-navodnom-uvodjenju-serijata-u-bih-kako-su-regulisana-prava-na-hadz-dzumu-i-odijevanje/151009046

time, media in the RS used the aforementioned events to present severe Islamophobic appearances of Serb politicians, especially the president of RS, Milorad Dodik, who used several opportunities before RTRS cameras to, e.g. "proclaim the Islamic Community as a dangerous and radical Islamic organization," thus instigating religious and ethnic hatred that severely undermined attempts to stabilize coexistence in the RS. While such statements were aimed at diverting attention from important economic and social issues, the most exposed victims in the RS were Muslim-Bosniak returnees, their property, imams and their families; this was due to a dissemination of prejudice, intolerance and fear, as well as insults and mocking of religious ceremonies and sentiment, physical attacks on mosques and cemeteries, discrimination attempts in education, discrimination in employment, putting Islamic terminology, symbols, as well as putting the profession of the imam in improper context. Similar inflammatory and irresponsible statements were given by some other political representatives and political analysts, e.g. the statement by Srđan Trifković, foreign politics editor of the US Chronicles in the talk show "Aspekt", which has been aired since 23 November, 2015 on the RTRS.[13] Here he stated that the events in Europe and B&H are "ideologically motivated by a 14 centuries-long tradition",that "Muslims are the enemies of Europe" and that "Muslims are not French, German, etc...". ANohter statement, that is, that it is necessary to "make a triage among refugees" was stated by Miroljub Jeftić, a scholar of politics and religion. These are some of clear examples of anti-Muslim racism. Similarly, in his column in Press magazine Nenad Kecmanović stated that: "Not all Bosnian Muslims are Islamic terrorists, but all local Islamic terrorists are Bosnian Muslims".[14] Also, Radio Free Europe and the National Endowment for Democracy produced a show with a secondary school student Ante from Mostar who fearfully spoke about dark-skinned and wild Bosniaks from the other side of Neretva (the other side of the town). Books about Al-Qaida could be seen on the shelf behind Ante. Other media include Poskok.info, GlasSrpska,Blic, Press RS, RTRS (e.g. airing documentaries about the danger of radical Islam and mujahedeen in Bosnia or showing films such as Nož at Christmas). Some web pages have propagated Islamophobic stereotypes more than others; most are viewed in B&H, but also in the region, like Croatian the newspapers Slobodna Dalmacija portal (slobodnadalmacija.hr), e.g. "Me an Islamophobe? Why not!"[15] or "Nest of militant wahabis only 100 km from Croatian border".[16]

There are two bodies that monitor the media in B&H. The first is a press council in B&H which is a self-regulatory body for print and online media. They supervise

13.http://rtrs.tv/vijesti/vijest.php?id=177423

14.http://pressrs.ba/info/kolumne/nenad-kecmanovic-rizik-antiteroristickog-udruzivanja-30-11-2015

15.http://www.slobodnadalmacija.hr/Hrvatska/tabid/66/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/308311/Default.aspx

16.http://www.slobodnadalmacija.hr/BiH/tabid/68/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/309116/Default.aspx

the application of the BH Press Code.[17] During 2015 173 complaints in total were received. Of these, three reported headlines seem pertinent for this report. In January, 2015 a complaint was received against the online "portal depo.ba"; they had published a cover with cartoons depicting Prophet Muhammad. The complaint was not upheld, and the Council did not establish that any violation of the code had occurred. In March, 2015 a complaint was received against the online portal "poskok.info" due to their article "Wahabis: Islamic state is close to Sarajevo". The complaint referred to incitement to inter-ethnic and inter-religious hatred. The complaint was not upheld, and the council was unable to establish that any violation of the code had occurred. In July, 2015 seven complaints were received in relation to an article in the newspaper Oslobođenje, entitled "Reich-ul-ulema Adolf ef. Hitler", alluding to the reisu-l-ulema (grand mufti of B&H). The complaint was not upheld, and the council was unable to establish that any violation of the code occurred.

The second body is the Communications Regulatory Agency, whose competences include among others "development and promotion of rules in the sectors of telecommunications and broadcasting".[18] While this report was being written, it was stated in correspondence with the agency that there were no cases relating to hatred against Muslims reported during 2015.

e. The Justice System

As mentioned before, generally speaking B&H is signatory to a number of major international human rights documents. Article 11 of the Anti-Discrimination Law states that any person or group of persons who think that they have been discriminated against can seek protection of their rights through the existing judicial and administrative proceedings. In addition, the law provides that any person or group of persons who has been exposed to any form of discrimination is authorized to file a lawsuit for protection against discrimination. That is, the lawsuit would initiate civil proceedings and the entire system of granting legal protection would be applicable in civil cases. Therefore, this procedure is initiated by the injured party and not ex-officio. Unfortunately, victims of discrimination have to date rarely decided to file such suits, so there is virtually no experience or practice of such cases. What is particularly important and something that is an absolute novelty in the B&H legal system is the introduction of the transfer of the burden of proof in cases of discrimination, as provided in Article 15 of the Anti-Discrimination Law. The main objective of this is to protect the weaker party; this is important as very often the victim of discrimination would not have access to all the relevant information necessary to prove discriminatory actions.

17. More here: http://english.vzs.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=218&Itemid=9&lang=en

18. More here: http://rak.ba/eng

Nevertheless, there are several laws in the country which, if interpreted in a biased manner, could limit freedom of religion and thus directly influence the position of Muslims. Such laws are not in line with international human rights standards on freedom of religion or belief and should be amended accordingly. Generally, the main concern here is related to laws which stipulate that public officers or officials "shall refrain from public manifestation of their religious beliefs". Although there is no official interpretation of what this means, often in practice it happens that employers prohibit their Muslim employees from fasting or take a break for the daily prayers or wearing the headscarf. The most flagrant case that occurred in the HJPC (High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council) was described above.

There are three possibilities with the agency in B&H to initiate a complaint related to human rights violations: at the B&H Ombudsman's office,[19] the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees and in regular courts.

The Ombudsmen Office in B&H stated that there were no claims of discrimination against Muslims in 2015. The Ministry for Refugees and Human Rights in B&H stated that there had not been one single case of discrimination against Muslims in connection with being prevented from attending the jumaah prayer during working time.

f. Security, CVE

Following the recommendations of the Council of Europe for EU member states and neighbouring states on launching Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) projects, several states and international organizations allocated significant funds to this end. The preparations for several such projects were conducted in B&H. The new 2015-2020 National Strategy for Fighting Terrorism was adopted at the 14th session of the B&H Council of Ministers on 08 July, 2015, foreseeing several activities in this regard. What is noticeable in most of these strategies is their exclusive focus on violent extremism inspired by the abuse of Islam. Indeed, numerous radical, extremist and violent groups inspired by svetosavlje (Orthodox ideology) and Croat and Serb nationalism that are active in B&H have not been included in such strategies or security measures. This creates a justified feeling among Muslims that they are subjects of special measures, and thus additionally labelled and stigmatized. Although official Islamic religious and political authorities support the fight against terrorism, the CVE project primarily focus on Islam.

It is important to mention here that Husein Bilal Bosnić was arrested in the police operation code-named "Damascus". He was charged with public incitement to terrorist activities in connection to recruitment of persons for terrorist activities and organizing terrorist groups. In November, 2015 he was sentenced to 7 years in prison. This case allowed an opportunity for occasional Islamophobic public and media statements about an alleged inherent connection with Islam and violence.

19. Report for 2014: http://www.ombudsmen.gov.ba/documents/obmudsmen_doc2015052909224950eng.pdf

OBSERVED CIVIL SOCIETY ASSESSMENTS AND INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN TO COUNTER ISLAMOPHOBIA

- Centre for education and research Nahla[20] from Sarajevo is a member of the European Forum of Muslim Women, which is a partner on a project entitled "Forgotten Women: the Impact of Islamophobia on Muslim Women," which was implemented by European Network Against Racism (ENAR) and will last until April, 2016.
- Centre for Advanced Studies[21] from Sarajevo in 2014 published a useful collection of texts entitled "Islamophobia: terms, occurrence, response"; here there are many texts written by experts on various issues related to Islamophobia. In 2015 the Centre published a valuable "Deskbook: Freedom of Religion or Belief".[22]

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Cooperation between governments (state level, entity level, and district Brčko level), the Islamic community and NGOs in fighting discrimination against Muslims should be fostered.
- Cooperation between parliaments (state level, entity levels and District Brčko level), the Islamic community and NGOs in fighting discrimination against Muslims should be fostered
- Public awareness about human rights and freedom of religion and belief (NGOs, media, etc.) should be raised
- Methods of documentation of cases of violation of the rights of Muslims (Islamic community, NGOs, police and judiciary) should be enhanced
- Awareness about hate crimes against Muslims, their proper registration and prosecution (Islamic community, NGOs, police and judiciary) should be raised
- Hate speech (on-line and off-line) for media, politicians, etc. should be raised
- Awareness about Islamic practice (prayer, jumaah, and headscarf) and available ways to accommodate this in education and employment should be raised. Regulations should be adjusted accordingly.
- Laws that stipulate that public officers or officials "shall refrain from public manifestation of their religious beliefs", which discriminate against Muslim employees in fasting, taking a break for daily prayers or wearing of the headscarf should be amended. The most flagrant case should be referred to the HJPC (High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council).
- Awareness of citizens and NGOs about reporting offensive media language to the

20.www.nahla.ba

21.http://cns.ba/vijesti/novo-izdanje-islamofobija-pojam-pojava-odgovor

22.http://cns.ba/cns-izdanja/prikaz-sloboda-vjere-ili-uvjerenja-prirucnik

Press Council in B&H and Communications Regulatory Agency should be raised.
- Awareness of citizens and NGOs about filing complaints related to human rights violations at the B&H Ombudsman's office, Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees and in regular courts should be raised.
- There should be a commitment to countering violent extremism, but not at the expense of freedom of religion and not solely focusing on Islam or Muslims

CHRONOLOGY

January

- Bijeljina (Republika Srpska), offensive graffiti
- Bijeljina (Republika Srpska), mosque desecrated

March

- Višegrad (Republika Srpska), offensive language/hate speech
- Doboj (Republika Srpska), offensive language/hate speech
- An employee of a state company prohibited from performing the noon prayer in the workplace during a break

May

- Višegrad (Republika Srpska), hand grenade found in the yard of a mosque

June

- Doboj (Republika Srpska), offensive language/hate speech, at iftar
- Zvornik (Republika Srpska), offensive language/hate speech, at prayer
- Tomislavgrad, offensive graffiti
- Bijeljina (Republika Srpska), desecrated cemetery and commemorative monument

July

- A petition against a public kindergarten teacher for wearing a headscarf in Srebrenica, Republika Srpska
- Bijeljina (Republika Srpska), offensive language/hate speech, at prayer
- Bijeljina (Republika Srpska), offensive language/hate speech, at imam
- Kotor Varoš (Republika Srpska), Nermin Hanifić attacked with "four S" engraved on his stomach.
- Vlasenica (Republika Srpska), a Bosniak returnee beaten up
- Čelić (in Federation of B&H, bordering with Republika Srpska), offensive graffiti

August

- Tomislavgrad, a gas released next to the mosque entrance door

October

- Prohibition of wearing religious symbols for all employees in judicial and prosecutorial institutions by HJPC (High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council)

November

- Ljubuški, mosque desecrated
- A lady working in a Federal public institution is told that she should refrain from public manifesting of her religious beliefs and stop wearing the headscarf
- The draft agreement between B&H and the Islamic community adopted by the Council of Ministers of B&H

December

- Cantonal hospital stipulates that if an employee wants to wear a uniform that is adjusted for cultural or religious reasons, he/she must request approval from their immediate supervisor and that only if the immediate supervisor agrees, shall the employee get approval to wear a different uniform
- An employee in a cantonal ministry of the interior was prohibited from going to the mosque to perform prayers

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN CROATIA
NATIONAL REPORT 2015

VEDRAN OBUĆINA

THE AUTHOR

Vedran Obućina is a researcher and secretary at the Society for Mediterranean Studies at the University of Rijeka, Croatia. He is political scientist, and finishes his PhD about the political semiotics of Islamic Republic of Iran. He is guest lecturer at the Faculty of Political Sciences at University of Zagreb, Croatia, and was visiting University of Tehran and University of Mofid, Qom. He works also in Matrix Croatiae, the oldest Croatian scientific and cultural institution. He published more than 15 scientific articles, and is authoring two books (Political Semiotics of Tehran Murals; Political system of the Islamic Republic of Iran). He participated in numerous international and Croatian scientific conferences, seminars and projects. His narrow scientific interest includes political semiotics, Islamic Studies, and Iranian Studies, but has done work on radical right parties and movements in Europe, nationalism, broader Middle East studies, comparative politics, and political culture. v_obucina@yahoo.com

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions. No representation, either expressed or implied, is made of the accuracy of the material in the national reports. The editors of the European Islamophobia Report cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The reader must make his or her own evaluation of the accuracy and appropriateness of the material.

To cite this report: Vedran Obućina (2016): *Islamophobia in Crotia: National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2015, Islamophobia was on rise due to numerous terrorist attacks, instability in the Middle East, and the so-called 'refugee crisis'. There were several cases of Islamophobia in this period in Croatia, connected to the murder of a Croatian citizen in Egypt, the refugee route through Croatia, and the use of Islamophobic discourse for political purposes. However, one can claim that the historical relations with Muslims, the media and political awareness, and a solid legislative framework block the appearance of stronger popular forms of Islamophobia in the country. This experience might be used as a 'Croatian model', an example of a country with a positive legislative framework and the presense of cooperation with the Islamic community instead of its alienation as a separate and hostile minority. This model can also act as a boundary for potential Islamophobia in the future based on Zagreb's Declaration of European Muslims.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY IN CROATIAN

Islamofobija je tijekom 2015. bila u porastu uslijed brojnih terorističkih napada, nestabilnosti na Bliskom istoku i izbjegličke krize. Hrvatska je u to vrijeme doživjela nekoliko slučajeva islamofobije, povezane s ubojstvom Hrvata u Egiptu, izbjegličke rute preko Hrvatske i upotrebe islamofobije u političke svrhe. Ipak, povijesni odnosi s muslimanima, svjesnost medija i politike, te dobar zakonodavni okvir spašavaju Hrvatsku od snažnije islamofobije. Potrebno je iskoristiti to iskustvo kako bi se postavio "hrvatski model" a ujedno spriječila pojava islamofobije u budućnosti.

INTRODUCTION

In 2016, Croatia will celebrate the 100th anniversary of Islam as a state-recognised religion. In 1916, Islam was recognised as such together with a number of Christian denominations and Judaism. This legal status of Islam is shared by only three other EU member states: Spain, Belgium and Austria. Concrete geographic and demographic circumstances, as well as historical experience, make Croatia unique among EU countries. Although never completely conquered by the Ottoman Empire, large parts of Croatia were historically under its rule. This contributed to a significant Islamic heritage and consequently a distinct Balkan cultural influence, which together with its Mediterranean and Central European components have formed Croatian culture. Croatian continental and coastal areas were the furthermost provinces of the Ottoman Empire. It is only after the Austrian army occupied Bosnia and Herzegovina, and later annexed it to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, that the number of Muslim citizens increased in contemporary Croatia. In 1910, there were only 204 Muslims living in Croatia, but Islam was recognised as one of the official religions of the country in 1916. The first mosque was built in the navy headquarters in the port of Pula.

Croatia is a traditionally multicultural society, where Islamophobia has no deep roots, although the country itself is home to a predominantly Catholic society. However, the historical ambivalences made Croatia a place where people from different regions meet and trade. Thus, Croatia today has more than 22 national minorities. Throughout the last 100 years, Muslims have been regarded as 'friends' of the Croatian people, mainly focusing on Muslims originating from Bosnia or Albanian Muslims from Kosovo. Bosnian Muslims became a separate entity only in 1974; previously they were regarded as either Serbs or Croats of Islamic faith. In the Second World War, Bosnian Muslim leadership sided with the fascist Independent State of Croatia and formed an alliance where Croats were regarded as one nation with two faiths: Catholic and Islamic. The Vice President of the Independent State of Croatia Džafer Kulenović was the leader of the Yugoslav Muslim Organisation, while the Muslims comprised nearly 12 per cent of the Ustaše military and civil service authority.[1] Stunningly, the first big mosque in the Croatian capital Zagreb was built by Fascist rulers in 1943. Thus, even among the right-wing oriented Croats Muslims don't present a significant threat - an attitude that is valid, however, only in relation to Balkan Muslims. At the same time, the Muslim population was engaged in the anti-fascist movements and in Yugoslavia were recognised as a special ethnic entity, today called Bosniaks. Despite a one-year war between Croatian and Bosniak forces in the 1990s, the two communities were allies against the Serbian invasion, and Croatia alone accepted thousands of Bosniak refugees during the war. Bosnia is still regarded as 'our Islam' and Islamic heritage

1. Velikonja, Mitja (1992) *Religious Separation and Political Intolerance in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Texas A&M University Press, p. 179.

and customs permeate Croatian everyday life – in cuisine, festivities, and cultural life. This is additionally accentuated by the building of mosques without major objections from the majority population, in times when surrounding countries are showing heavy Islamophobia towards the mosques built according to the Muslims standards, the role of the Islamic community in Croatia, and the Croatian legal framework.

According to the population census in 2011, 62,977 Muslims live in Croatia, i.e. less than three per cent of the total population. Muslims are active through the Islamic Community in Croatia, which has 22 local communities and its head office in Zagreb.

Research on public opinion regarding the perception of discrimination positions religious affiliation in the third place of self-identification criteria in Croatia, behind national identity and social status.[2] This is especially accentuated in states where there is one predominant religion versus societies where two or more religious communities with large membership coexist. Key problems recognised in societies with a predominant religion are, hostility in the public sphere and in media, the question of adaptation of religious practice, using or wearing religious symbols, access to schools with visible religious symbols, religious education, as well as hostility in the employment sector. Here members of other religious communities are denied access to jobs, advancement, and they often need to comply with rules which are against their religious beliefs.

This report focuses on Islamophobia in Croatia in 2015. This year witnessed a great shift in Croatia's self-positioning in regional and global terms. For quite some time, Croatian foreign policy was predominantly passive, focusing on its path to membership in the European Union and NATO, and reasserting its relations with neighbours, primarily those in Central and South Eastern Europe. However, political and social developments in the Middle East started to affect every day decision-making in Croatia, as the so-called 'refugee crisis' emerged stronger, and a Croatian citizen was killed in Egypt. Several significant incidents and developments occurred in the country during the period under review. A Croatian citizen, Tomislav Salopek, was beheaded by the Daesh terrorist group in Egypt in the middle of summer 2015, making him the first Croatian victim of extremist ideology. He was abducted by terrorists from his car and after short diplomatic and military measures, he was killed. This event provoked discussions about Islam and Islamic behaviour in various internet forums, where standard prejudices were voiced. Public media, however, stressed the messages by governmental bodies and various human rights organisations, which focused on explaining that public terrorism is not synonymous with Islam.

Croatia also experienced a large migration flow through its territory. When Hungary decided to close its borders with Serbia, effectively stopping migrants from

2. Istraživanje o stavovima i razini svijesti o diskriminaciji i pojavnim oblicima diskriminacije (Survey on attitudes and awareness levels of discrimination and manifestations of discrimination); Ombudsman Office in the Republic of Croatia, Zagreb, 2012.

entering the European Union, refugees and other immigrants diverted to Croatia. More than half a million people crossed Croatia. The government, army, NGOs, and local people helped them with organised transportation, camps, medical help, translations, advice, etc. However, it also provoked a national discussion about refugees from Syria and migrants from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Migrants were also part of discussions where direct Islamophobia was detected. After the elections in November some right-wing political parties expressed rising Islamophobic standpoints, using the migration flow as a threat against local traditions, customs, and way of life. Direct international discussions in this regard also took place in late spring when the visiting theatrical production of Michel Houelbueq was cancelled due to security reasons, which made reference to the author's and the show's Islamophobic standpoints.

DISCUSSION OF ISLAMOPHOBIC INCIDENTS AND DISCURSIVE EVENTS IN VARIOUS FIELDS

Employment

In terms of employment, there was not a single case reported regarding Islamophobia in the workplace. However, Croatian attitudes changed drastically due to the so-called 'immigration crisis'. In 2015, Croatian citizens participated twice in a Eurobarometer survey on immigration. In the span of just half a year, their answers drastically changed. From spring 2015 until the end of the year, negative answers on migration rose by 10 per cent. Before, 43 per cent of the population had negative views on immigrants from outside the EU; now this has risen to 53 per cent. Positive attitudes are present in 41 per cent of population, which is again 4 per cent lower than in the previous survey. This is due to the fact that more than half a million immigrants, mostly from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq passed through Croatia.

According to the EU agreement on quotas for refugees in EU member countries from September 2015, Croatia should accept up to 1,600 economic and political migrants. The rise of negative attitudes toward these migrants is partly connected to fear of change in the employment market. Entrepreneurs and unions are calming the situation. They remind the public that Croatia will accept a small number of migrants, who will not endanger workplaces, simply because there are fewer and fewer jobs available. They point to the necessity of integrating them in society and not placing them in a ghetto. However, in ten years Croatia will face a significant shortage of manual workers[3] and one policy to combat this problem will certainly be the acceptance of manual workers from abroad. Deficits are already visible in certain

3. "Unions: Refugees are not a threat", http://www.vecernji.hr/hrvatska/sindikati-izbjeglice-nisu-prijetnja-1045951, accessed:5.1.2016

artisan workplaces; this shortage will be predominantly addressed with the labour of Muslim population from Asia and Africa and with technology solutions.

Education and culture

History and religion are only two high school subjects where Islam is mentioned in the Croatian school curriculum. History lessons offer only basic knowledge of the Islamic world in the Middle Ages. Islam is introduced in a succinct manner as a religion based on the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad, and five pillars of the Islamic religion are mentioned. In the history class on the Arab conquests, a sentence states "The idea of holy war against the infidels (jihad) had a very important role in the Arab conquests",[4] thus giving a wrong impression of jihad and prejudicing students at an early age against jihad, jihadists, and the role of war in Islam. A substantial part of historical lessons is devoted to the Ottoman period in the Balkans, and especially to the Ottomans in Croatia and Bosnia. These lessons depict the Ottoman Empire as a strong state with a cruel ruling system in its provinces. They focus on battles and life under Ottoman rule and stress the conscription of janissaries and the transportation of local children to Istanbul. The Ottoman village system and economy are given a fair share of attention, as well as an analysis of the millet system for non-Islamic communities in the Empire. The rest of the history lessons are devoted to the fight against the Ottomans. Overall, the Ottoman Empire is considered to have had a negative influence on Croatian history, and on the history of the Balkan Peninsula, where they are presented as aggressors. The same role, however, is given to Venice, Italy, Hungary, and Austria during the various periods throughout history. An interesting turn of events in the Croatian understanding and perception of the Ottomans occurred with the Turkish soap opera Suleyman the Magnificent, which was aired in Croatia in 2014 and 2015. It quickly became one of the most viewed soap operas on Croatian national television and started a trend of learning the Turkish language.

Religion class is offered through various options. A student can choose between religious study and ethics study. Those who opt for religious study, can join the regular class of Roman Catholic religion study or may choose to have verified Sunday School class in their own religious community. The majority of students choose Roman Catholic religion study, where Islam is mentioned and discussed together with other religions in terms of interfaith dialogue and the dogmatic attitude of the Catholic Church to these religions. Overall, there is no Islamophobic content - notwithstanding the lack of discussion of Islam or the offer of any substantial knowledge of it.

In spring 2015, the staging of Michel Houellebecq's play in Dubrovnik's annual summer theatrical season provoked a discussion of his Islamophobic standpoints and

4. *History* 3 (Povijest 3), a reader for the third year of high school, Školska knjiga.

the issue of Islamic terrorism. Michel Houellebecq is a French writer, poet and laureate; his play was cancelled due to security reasons. His true name is Michel Thomas, and he is one of most controversial writers in France because of his attitude towards Islam. His play Elementary Particles caused massive debates in Croatia and his anti-Islamic attitudes came to the fore.[5] In Croatia, many writers supported Houellebecq's right of free speech, although nobody clearly pointed to the Islamophobic content of his work. The artistic director of Dubrovnik's summer plays Mani Gotovac made a public statement against the cancellation of Elementary Particles, stating it is "returning Croatia to the Middle Ages".[6]

The analytical work of the Croatian Security and Intelligence Agency (SOA) concluded that the play posed a security risk in the highly touristic environment of the old city of Dubrovnik. The document issued by SOA, which set a precedent in Croatian cultural history, pointed to the danger of "Islamic extremism" from neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina.[7] A short time before the document was issued, a terrorist attack on Zvornik's police station in Bosnia and Herzegovina was carried out.[8] Based on a confirmed suspicion that there were active cells of militant fundamentalists there, SOA's security check concluded that the staging of the play posed too many dangers for the audience in Dubrovnik, based on its proximity to the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina. The SOA document, however, did not request that the play be removed from the programme, although the document clearly pointed to the fact that this would be a desirable outcome. The Ministry of Internal Affairs made only a sentence-long statement: "We inform you that the staging of Elementary Particles presents a security risk".[9] The Islamic Community of Dubrovnik, and the main office of the Islamic Community in Croatia, reacted negatively to the play. The final decision was correlated with the high tourist season and the importance of security as a criterion for choosing a holiday destination. The police and intelligence services researched in particular the history of Michel Houellebecq's Islamophobic activities and the reactions to them, and made this somewhat controversial decision. Elementary Particles was staged, however, but in another Croatian town.

5. Houellebecq started to describe Islam as "the most stupid religion" in 2001. He was accused of religious discrimination and of causing offence based on the adherence to the Islamic faith. He later made startling statements about the relationships between Jews and Muslims, favouring the Jewish side. He claims Islamophobia is an imagined concept and wrote a highly Islamophobic novel after the *Charlie Hebdo* terrorist attack.

6. "Mani Gotovac: Forbiddin Houellebecq is invitation to terrorists": http://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/mani-gotovac-zabrana-houellebecqa-u-dubrovniku-je-poziv-teroristima/819856.aspx, accessed: 4.1.2016

7. For information on what the secret service wrote in its report on the play of the controverial Frenchman in Dubrovnik see http://www.telegram.hr/politika-kriminal/procitajte-sto-je-tajna-sluzba-napisala-u-svom-izvjescu-o-zabranjenoj-predstavi-kontroverznog-francuza-u-dubrovniku/, accessed.4.1.2016

8. "Bosnia: Gunman kills officer in Zvornik police station", http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-32491026, accessed 4.1.2016

9. "Because of security risk, Houellebecq's play canceled", http://dnevnik.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/dubrovnik-zbog-sigurnosnog-rizika-skinuta-predstava-m-houellebecqa---385019.html, accessed 4.1.2016

Politics

Croatia held its parliamentary elections in November 2015. Two major parties, the conservative Croatian Democratic Union (Hrvatska demokratska zajednica, HDZ) and the Social Democratic Party (Socijaldemokratska partija, SDP) formed two large coalitions. HDZ led the Patriotic Coalition, a union of Christian democrats, conservatives, right liberals, and right-wing parties. SDP formed a coalition of leftist parties, left liberals, and regional parties. The surprise of these elections was the major success of a third party, MOST – a list of independent politicians. For almost two months MOST negotiated with both coalitions in an effort to make a grand coalition government. In the end, MOST agreed to form a government with the Patriotic Coalition led by a non-partisan economic expert.

Among the parties represented in the Patriotic Coalition, Hrast stands for the most right-wing and conservative political options. It labels itself a popular and Christian movement which introduces Croatian politics with new people, new ideas and new strategies. These new people are mostly unknown to the broader public and most of them have never taken part in the political arena. They feel Croatia has become a spiritual and material wasteland and want to fight against society's political, economic and moral crisis. The president of the Hrast Party – Movement for Better Croatia, and member of the Patriotic Coalition Ladislav Ilčić made several strong Islamophobic statements in the course of discussions over the government formation. His comments were made in a time of great influx of migrants through Croatia. Ilčić is an academic musician, born in the northern Croatian town of Varaždin. He is one of the founders and president of the NGO Grozd –Voice of Parents for Children, an organisation promoting the conservative upbringing of children and a conservative understanding of family, based on the TeenStar programme in the USA.

According to Ilčić, the refugees from Asia and Africa are stronger biologically than Europeans and millions of them will cross over to Europe. He made a controversial public statement on N1 TV stating that refugees' children are equal but not the same with children of European descent. The reason for this, explained Ilčić, is that the refugees have a different mentality which can change Croatian culture. He stated "There is a big difference between Muslims and Croats, in work habits, in worldview, ideals, attitude toward women. We are different. We are equally worthy, but we are different. Multiculturalism is dead, Angela Merkel said it too. States have to think about their own identity".[10] Ilčić believes Croatia should build a barbed wire around its borders, like Hungary. In this way, sovereignty and security can be established with entrance through gates. Otherwise,

10. "Ilčić from Karamarko's coalition: Muslims are biologically stronger than Croats, imagine millions of them come", http://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/ilcic-iz-karamarkove-koalicije-muslimani-su-bioloski-jaci-od-hrvata-zamislite-da-ih-dodje-milijun/860212.aspx, accessed 6.1.2016

he claims, Croatia will be overcrowded with "millions of Muslims, with different mentality, which will change Croatian culture".[11] Ilčić also stressed that the refugees will call their friends in the Middle East and invite them over because Croatia is letting refugees freely pass through.

The statements made by Ilčić were strongly discussed in public. The leader of the biggest Croatian political party and the head of the Patriotic Coalition Tomislav Karamarko stressed that this is not the stand of the coalition. Later on, Ilčić tried to further explain his standpoints. He said that the Muslims in Croatia have a similar mentality to Croats, but Arab Muslims do not, and there are strong problems of their socialisation and integration. Regarding the inflow of migrants, Ilčić clarified that he wants to close the borders to economic migrants and let in only refugees from Syria, whose lives are verifiably in danger. The Hrast party also made an official statement. Firstly, the party will make court objections against individuals who publicly accused Ilčić as a racist, fascist, Nazi or xenophobic person. The official statement claims Ilčić did not offend anyone and that the higher birth rate among Muslims is considered by Ilčić and the party as a positive phenomenon. It also stresses that his other statements were misunderstood and taken out of context.

Ilčić was also a guest in the popular political talk show Otvoreno (Open) on Croatian Radio-Television (HRT), together with the chief imam of Zagreb Mosque Mirza Mešić; the researcher from the Centre for Peace Studies Sandra Benčić; and demographer Stjepan Šterc. Ilčić again explained that he did not endorse extreme right attitudes, stressed he was telling the truth and that he was politically correct. Ilčić repeated that he believes in cultural differences and reminded everyone that they should act according to the constitution which states that Croatia is a country of Croatian people and national minorities. He also made another controversial statement: "We cannot say that it is the same if Croatian Muslims, Hungarians, Australians, Mexicans, or Iraqis live here. We have to keep to the constitution and build a responsible immigration policy. Muslims have weaker work ethics and it is a fact that they have more children".[12] Mešić, an imam, said on the show that Ilčić should apologise to all Muslims in Croatia, which are fully integrated, as well as to the mothers of the 1,160 Muslims who died defending Croatia in the Homeland War of 1990-1995. Mešić reminded him that Muslims in Croatia are worried because the political right uses Islam and Islamic values for their own causes. ISIL, he stressed, "has taken a billion and half Muslims hostages and uses them as a political tool, while extreme right is counting more votes. Only an ignorant and extremely bad person can put Islam

11. Ibid.

12. "Ilčić: I am not an extremist, but Muslims have a weaker work ethic and more children", http://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/ilcic-nisam-ekstremist-ali-muslimani-imaju-slabije-radne-navike-i-vise-djece/861195.aspx , accessed 6.1.2016

in the context of terrorism and violence".[13] Ilčić responded that he does not want to have bad relations with the Islamic community in Croatia. He reminded him that the Hrast party, while it was still an NGO, took part in five initiatives with the Islamic community that were oriented towards the protection of family, marriage and children. Ilčić also reminded the public that he had received the award for promoting religious freedom in 2013.

There were no political statements more radical than Ilčić's about migrants and Muslims. His comments about barbed wire brought back deep and highly disturbing memories for the Croatian people. He forgets that concentration camps also had barbed wire alongside the door through which people entered in a civilised manner - much like how he described the potential barbed wire on the Croatian borders. Ilčić fails to see the resemblance of the barbed wires on borders today with the barbed wires on the borders of ex-Communist states. A vast portion of European citizens today associate barbed wire with the times of the totalitarian rule of their countries. When Hungary and Slovenia started to build barbed wire, citizens organised themselves and discouraged this troublesome decision. On the Croatian-Slovenian border citizens from both sides put Christmas decorations on the wires and played volleyball and tennis, ridiculing the decisions of the Slovenian government.

Ilčić's biological determination of Muslims is also worrisome. His idea of a million Muslims in Croatia is problematic, as only 20 people asked for asylum in Croatia, and there is no proof that they are all Muslims. However, Ilčić continues to express doubts only about Muslims coming to Croatia and Europe; if a million non-Muslims and non-Croats come to Croatia, wouldn't they also change Croatia dramatically? The problem with Ilčić's statement is that he deliberately focuses exclusively on a single religious community and makes discriminatory claims about it. Furthermore, the argument of biological strength is a racially dubious idea, similar to the totalitarian ideas of Nazism, fascism, and racial segregation in the USA and South Africa. Birth rates are demographically based on the development of a country's social and pension systems and Ilčić does not take into account that the third and fourth generations of Muslims living in Europe have the same number of children as their non-Muslim compatriots.

The stress on the cultural closeness with Croatian Muslims has further right-wing connotations. The vast majority of Croatian Muslims are of Bosnian descent. In a way, Bosnian and Croatian Muslims are regarded as 'our own', a fact that also has some positive consequences: namely, Croats are traditionally close to the Muslim customs and it is customary for state officials to celebrate Muslim holidays. Croatian national symbols such as Ante Starčević have stated that the Islamic faith is not a negative influence on the Croatian spirit, but a positive one. In his words, religion

13. Ibid.

does not determine a nation: "A Croat can be a Catholic, an Orthodox, a Protestant, a Muslim, an atheist... but let him be a Croat".

Media

In response to the debates provoked by Ilčić, several commentaries were made. Among them, one oriented in his defence was written by conservative public commentator Ivica Šola and published in the daily newspaper Slobodna Dalmacija, a regional daily widely read in Dalmatia and southern Croatia, where Šola is a guest columnist. The newspaper sells over 35,000 copies daily and has a solid standing as the primary voice of the important region of Dalmatia. In this article Šola claims that political correctness is the "AIDS of thought, a virus of Orwellian new speech, causing auto-censorship".[14] In his opinion, the suffix 'phobia' is an invention in the service of the political and social agendas of people who don't have the same opinions as others and can cause havoc. In the case of Islamophobia, Šola believes it has two major functions: to silence not only critical but tolerant Europeans and also Muslims themselves. He writes "when a European points to the problematic things in the Islamic faith, he becomes an Islamophobe".[15] According Šola, this term is oriented against the Muslims who criticise their own faith and its integrity, who ask for family reforms, equality between the sexes, and who defend the Muslim right to apostasy. These voices are challenged by fatwas, sometimes even murder. Šola believes this is the right Islam, because it is backed by the Qur'an and Islamic law tradition. He calls on Islamic religious dignitaries to display more self-criticism and less self-defence. He especially pointed to Mešić, who he believes makes a dichotomy between the morally decadent West and the proud and authentic Islam. Mešić wrote an article in a daily newspaper where he claimed Europeans will suffer a demographic deficit due to their materialism, hedonism, lust, homosexual lifestyle, and the limited care for their children and parents. As an alternative, Mešić pointed to the youth of Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan who care for family relations, marry early, love their family and their faith. As a result, Mešić claimed Muslims become "a danger" for old Europe, making the way for the rise of xenophobia, Islamophobia, racism, etc. Šola makes a clear attack on this way of thinking, pointing to the fact that Mešić can freely express his worldview, but in Islamic states many can't. He compares Western countries, where Muslims can freely build mosques and the Islamic world where it is "a sensation to build a church"; also reminding his readership of the suffering of Christians in the Middle East today. Šola wonders

14."I, an Islamophobe Šola? Why not!", http://www.slobodnadalmacija.hr/Hrvatska/tabid/66/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/308311/Default.aspx, accessed 6.1.2016

15. Ibid.

why Muslims come to Europe, if it is a land of decadent, morally corrupt, racist populations. He ends this contentious article with the claim: "Regarding the 'tolerant' treatment of non-Muslims in the Islamic states, which rational man could not be an Islamophobe? In this context, I am Islamophobe, why not!"[16]

Overall, in 2015, Islam was massively present in the media, which carries the risk of different understandings, misinterpretations and misuses, both from the media networks and from those who wish to achieve their own goals by misusing the media space and religion. This risk potentially can provoke a deeper divide between cultures and civilisations, and can provoke a negative perception of Islam. Discriminatory and hate speech in Croatia is predominantly oriented towards members of the national minorities and is an activity against the Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities in the Republic of Croatia. This is especially evident in the media world, even when there is no influx of news. Among the 145 radio stations in Croatia (only 10 are non-profit radios), none belonging to national minorities or religious minorities, although national TV and radio stations have programs and feature shows about the religious and national minorities, and in their languages. The massive presence of Islam and Islamic topics is related to the political and social turmoil in the Middle East, Daesh terrorism, and the so-called 'refugee crisis'. Most reported news is agency news from foreign (predominantly Western) news agencies. As such they bring mainstream Western information to the Croatian public. The uncritical choice of words and audiovisual content brings prejudices with it. Images from war zones often depict ruined old medieval cities catering to the ethnically colourful European collective imagination of Muslims; exclusively crying veiled women; exclusively bearded armed men. In the backgrounds mosques, religious buildings or bazaars are often shown. The visual content brings together the Islamic call "Allahu Akbar" and the warrior call among terrorists. Everything points to a picture in which the media presents the Islamic world as backward, violent, authoritarian and repressive.

Uncritical wordings often follow such images and videos. Most media uncritically use and abuse the term 'jihad' and call terrorists 'jihadists'. The same wording is present when naming terrorists 'Islamist militants' or 'Islamic fundamentalists', giving the impression there is not a sufficient understanding of the difference between Islamism as a political-social movement and Islam as a religion. The media very rarely uses terms such as 'Wahhabi' and 'Salafi'; as a result they are not considered as schools of thought in Islam but as violent and ultra-conservative movements and terrorist ideology.

The Internet became more oriented towards Islamophobic content in the time of the tragic event of the killing a Croatian professional in Egypt by a Daesh terrorist group. Strong fears of a possible outbreak of Islamophobia were felt in July, after a Cro-

16. Ibid.

atian worker in Egypt, Tomislav Salopek, was abducted, held hostage and decapitated by the terrorist organisation ISIL or Daesh. For ten days, institutions knew nothing about him and on 5 August, Daesh released a video in which the group claimed they would execute Salopek if the Egyptian government did not release "Muslim women" from jails within 48 hours. The video showed Salopek who confirmed his abduction. The group identified themselves as the 'Sinai Province of the Islamic State'. Almost instantly a diplomatic initiative from the Croatian side started to develop. The Croatian Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Vesna Pusić travelled to Cairo with Salopek's wife and talked to the Egyptian Foreign Minister Saleh Shoukry. In the meantime, the 48 hours ended and there was no news regarding the fate of Salopek. The Croatian President Kolinda Grabar Kitarović talked to Egyptian President Abdul Fatah al-Sisi about the matter and Croatian Chief Mufti Aziz Hasanović contacted the religious and state institutions in Egypt. A hard period without any news followed. In the end, Daesh released photographs of a decapitated man, claiming it was Salopek. The photo was not published in Croatian media out of respect for the victim.

Internet forums are full of prejudices toward Muslims, using the words 'terrorism', 'terrorist', 'fundamentalists', 'extremists' and '"backward' in connection to the words 'Islam' and 'Muslim'. References are made to Muslims as those who cannot "enjoy alcohol" or wondering how anyone can make such tough regulations forbidding the enjoyment of Croatian pork specialties such as prosciutto, thus expressing strong prejudice toward the Islamic diet. In 2015, the Centre for Halal Certification partook in large media and public campaigns in an effort to change the views on halal foods and many Croatian companies achieved halal certification - although mostly as a way to export halal products and services to the Balkans and the Middle East. Sensationalist web portals, particularly dnevno.hr promoted these prejudices throughout the year. This specific web portal expresses a dominant nationalist and Catholic orientation, is opposed to leftist political forces and liberalism, as well as to Serbian nationalism. Its feature stories are sensational and focus on conspiracies, Masonic traitors and communist threats. The website's owner, Michael Ljubas, has a dubious business background and also owns dnevno.rs, a web portal in Serbia with a similar style but with a stress on Serbian Orthodoxy and Serbian nationalism. Other media outlets throughout the year tried to discover more information about extremist groups, using predominantly the contents of foreign and Western sources. Few local experts, including the author of this report, were helpful in making this debate and reports as truthful as possible. Most media tried to divert anger and prejudices toward simplistic explainations of Islamic beliefs and the Croatian government tried to expose these attitudes as well. Direct accusations and slanderous labelling was attached to Wahhabism and Salafism in reports, although there was no substantial evidence that their authors in fact understood what these terms really mean.

Justice system

Croatia hosts one of the most advanced legal frameworks regarding the position of religious communities. The latter have the right to independently and freely set their internal organisation, management, hierarchy, representation and content of faith; to establish connections with members of their faith abroad; and to control whether a religious community spreads intolerance and hatred toward other religious community or citizens. The law stipulates free exercise of religion in religious institutions and in open space. Religious communities can freely and in accordance with the law open schools and universities, as well as special religious schools. The pre-school generation can also have, upon request, a special upbringing in religious kindergartens. All religious communities can have their leaders in medical and social institutions, in prisons, armed forces, police, etc.

An important aspect of the Croatian legislative model is the fact that the Islamic community in Croatia is not an immigrant one, but a native one. In other European countries, Muslims usually gather in special national groups, for example Turkish or Algerian Muslim communities. This adds to the inconsistency in the understanding of the faith and its weaker standpoint in wider society.

The Croatian ombudsman is the prime medium for tackling Islamophobia at the state level. Its office presented an initiative for regulation change based on the objections recieved by the institution. In one specific step, the ombudsman office made concrete changes based on the objections of people who could not use their photographs with hijabs for driving licences or identity cards. In 2015, the Ministry of Internal Affairs accepted religious or medical reasons for covering parts of one's head.[17] The ombudsman's office also points to the need for better implementation of existing regulations, for the use of horizontal directives and for the strengthening of national bodies with mandates on fighting discrimination based on religious affiliation. In the end of the year, Lora Vidović, the ombudsman, became president of the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions with plans to also focus on tackling the Islamophobia. In an interview given in December 2015 she admitted, however, there was no official research by her office on rising Islamophobia in Croatia.[18]

This legal framework pleases the Islamic community and Muslims in Croatia.[19] Muslim leaders often point to the fact that this legal model can be used as a role model for European Islam. In 2006, a Declaration of European Muslims was signed in Zagreb. It is based on the Rawlsian principle that a free and rational

17."Discirimination based on religion: experiences of Equality Institutions in Europe", http://www.ombudsman.hr/hr/dis/cld/674-diskriminacija-na-osnovu-vjere-iskustva-tijela-za-jednakost-diljem-europe, accessed.29.12.2015

18. "Vidović: We don't have concrete data of rising Islamophobia in Croatia", http://hr.n1info.com/a90312/Video/Vidovic-Nemamo-konkretne-podatke-o-povecanoj-islamofobiji-u-Hrvatskoj.html, accessed29.12.2015

19. "Muslims satisfied with their position in Croatia", http://www.index.hr/mobile/clanak.aspx?category=vijesti&id=831294, accessed 15.12.2015

person concerned with furthering his or her own interests is accepted in an initial position of equality as defining the fundamental terms of their association, thus making Europe "a house of social contract".

CONCLUSION

Policy recommendations for politics and NGOs

As can be seen in the previous sections, due to the number of Muslims living in Croatia, and the lack of immigrants residing permanently in the country, Croatia has comparatively fewer cases of Islamophobia. There is a strong divide between the approach to the local Muslims, mostly originating from Bosnia and Kosovo and now second- or third-generation Croats, and to the Muslims from around the world. Bosnian and Kosovo Muslims are regarded as 'our neighbours', although with a kind of backward background, in some instances. Muslims from other countries were until recently quite a distant occurance. In 2015, this changed as thousands of immigrants passed through Croatia and after a Croatian citizen was killed by a Daesh terrorist group. This dichotomy is vividly evident in the discussion between Ilčić and Mešić in a live TV debate. The former points to Muslims from the Middle East and regards 'them' as different ('us' versus 'them' dichotomy), thus giving a political impetus to the prejudicial characterisations of Muslims as backward, terrorists, fundamentalists, extremists, violent toward women, bearded, and savage; Mešić meanwhile draws attention to the illogical approach to Muslims and Islam. On the one hand, there is a right-wing politician who despises and fears the arrival of Muslim immigrants, who "bear many children" and "posit a threat to Croatian culture". On the other, the exact same right-wing politics favour Bosnian Muslims as a part of the Croatian nation with an Islamic faith and describe them as part of the Croatian cultural heritage.[20]

The lack of serious debate in the broader public sphere, however, is a worrying sign of the possibility of more Islamophobia in the future in Croatian society. Many news reports focus on sensationalist and stereotypical coverage of events and personalities from all around the Islamic world. The broader public might be under the influence of a Turkish historical soap opera that offers a new portrayal of history (the grand vizier is a Croat, albeit a rather negative character in the series), but the fear of migrants is based on the overall negative news reports from the Middle East and beyond. Islam is always presented in the media as connected to war, terrorism and accidents, such as the big accident during the Hajj in Mecca. A small section of the public orients itself to the more quality media and to academic discussions. Out of all the Islamic states, only Turkey and Iran enjoy a fairly positive image, mostly in terms of their economic advancements.

20. Croatian culture is based on three cultural traditions: Catholic Central European, Catholic Mediterranean and Catholic-Muslim Balkan.

Given that the legal framework and the role of the Islamic community in Croatia are regarded positively by Muslims, there is a need to strengthen public awareness of these achievements, to make a horizontal approach and to promote more public-oriented actions in recognising the present and past characteristics of Islam in Croatia and abroad. The year 2016 will be paramount in this regard, as it is the year when the Islamic community and Croatia will celebrate the 100 years of Islam as a nationally recognised religion.

The Croatian state should:

- Give institutional focus to the Croatian legislative integrative solutions on the EU level.
- Support the national standardisation of halal products and make this the role model in the EU.
- Continue the Islamic education of Croatian soldiers serving in various international missions in Islamic countries, such as Afghanistan.
- Respect the rules and guidelines giving legislative exceptions based on religious beliefs.
- Work harder on detecting hate speech and discrimination based on religion, especially in the political and media realms.
- Give the ombudsman additional power and financial means to conduct regular and official national reports on Islamophobia on a yearly basis.
- Support the creation of local interdisciplinary groups, consisting of local authorities, local religious leaders and NGOs, oriented towards the resolution of Islamophobic and other discrimination cases in the field. The example given in Kosovo is helpful in this manner. With the involvement of decision makers in society a solid bridge between the political and religious spheres can be built and special teams dedicated to the inter-religious dialogue can tackle any negative situations that occur.

The Croatian education system should:

- Include religion study in schools apart from faith-based teaching. The political and public support of different interpretations of religious teachings that reduce misunderstanding and conflict can also be supported in this way, as well as the visits to mosques and Islamic centres.
- Give substantially more length to the information offered at high school on Islam, in cooperation with the Islamic community in Croatia.
- Introduce Islamic studies to Croatian universities, either by making it a subject of special study or adding specialised subjects in various faculties (e.g. Islamic Law, Islamic Economics, Islamic Culture, Comparative Religious Studies, etc). Without this education, Croatian citizens lack basic understanding and knowledge of Islam, leading to ignorance, prejudices, and consequently the rise of Islamophobic attitudes.

NGOs should:

- Foster and facilitate interfaith dialogue and cooperation. The role of the religious clergy and laity can be increased, as well as the awareness of policymakers and their receptivity to the potential contributions in fighting the discrimination, marginalisation, and victimisation of the religious minority.
- In cooperation with cultural and educational institutions, and the embassies of Islamic countries organise substantially more public events focused on understanding Islam and Muslims, through art, discussion, food, music and movies. The old tradition of exchanging greetings on Eids (bayrams, religious holidays) and sharing iftar meals during the holy month of Ramadan, is a good starting point.
- Work on independent reports on Islamophobia on the local and state levels.

The media should:

- Provide education for journalists, including visits to Muslim countries.
- Control hate speech and hidden Islamophobia in reports.
- Insist on broadening horizons through networking, mutual learning, fostering common values and making quality ethical and spiritual decisions within universal values. The media itself can contribute significantly to these processes by keeping an objective and critical approach and not employing sensationalism which gives rise to different phobias and damages peace and stability. The openness of religious communities to the media and their perseverance in preventing deviant interpretations is also necessary for achieving the goals of this process.

The Syrian philosopher Sadiq al-Azm has remarked that the question remaining about the future of Europe is "Will it be an Islamised Europe or a Europeanised Islam?" (Lewis, 2007:19). The question – and the answer – clearly has the Muslim advantage in sight. Bernard Lewis argues the Muslims have fervour and conviction, which in most Western countries are either weak or lacking. Muslims are mostly convinced of the rightness of their cause, whereas Westerners spend their time in self-denigration and self-abasement. Muslims have loyalty and discipline, as well as demography. But, Muslims are also painfully aware that they lack solid education and come from relatively underdeveloped countries. The difference in the terminology of freedom is as well a sign of the troubled understanding between East and West. This troubled understanding is evident in the Zagreb Declaration of European Muslims, albeit with propositions that are becoming increasingly more and more utopic. Instead, it seems the Europe is really turning more and more Islamophobic, with mainstream governments issuing drastic anti-immigration laws and moving against religious traditions. As Islam is not recognised as an official religion in many countries, Muslim communities are left without the possibilities of choosing their places of worship,

without standardised halal certification and without many other things that sustain the practical life of a believer. In these circumstances it is vital to point to the different solutions, as the one offered in Croatia. Using art, culture, and the legal framework, the Croatian solution is trying to focus European societies on the notion that Islam is part of Europe and not something alien to it. After all, Christianity, Judaism - both regarded as the foundations of modern European cultures - and Islam stem from the same environment and the same geographic location. In a way, all that is Western is in fact Eastern. Architecture is definitely the most visible sign of societal relations. European cultural landscapes are the product of centuries of architectural and cultural traditions residing in the particular environment of national cultures. With the exclusion of the Balkan countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia or Albania, most of these national cultures are either non-religious or they adhere to some form of Christianity coupled with the influence of the Jewish European tradition. In the last 50 years, and particular in the last 20 years, these countries have experienced the immigration flows from all around the world, and Islam became the largest growing religion in Europe. In time, it caused problems in the urban design. Muslim places of worship have particular layouts that follow precise religious rules. Recently, European countries refused to acknowledge the rights of Muslim communities to build mosques with minarets, apparently because it ruins the cultural landscape of their countries. The Alpine countries Switzerland and Austria were very loud in expressing their views that minarets cannot be built under the Alps. A similar Catholic society, Croatia, however, has three mosques in a country where Muslims count for less than two per cent of the population. Croatia lies at the crossroads of East and West and although nominally Western and a Catholic country, it understands the notion of 'raw cosmopolitanism', where cultures and religions mix into what the Iranian administration called a "dialogue among civilisations". As a consequence, the urban design in Croatia is characterised by the incorporation of Muslim symbols and mosques in its cultural and natural environment, best seen in the case of the Rijeka Mosque. As such, Croatia might become a case study for the solution of many multi-religious and multicultural problems in contemporary Europe. Rijeka Mosque is a symbol of the strength of architecture. It follows the approach defined by the active relationship of architecture and its social context, and mediates between society, politics, economy, philosophy, on one side, and the form, art and faith, on the other. On the micro level, this transcoding gives a vital idea of how it should be done on the macro level. It involves the legal framework, government approval, but also the duties and responsibilities of the Muslim community living in a particular place, town or country. Foremost, it is the compliance with the loyalty to one's country of residence and the understanding of the local culture. Architectural visibility makes a perfect blend of both.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books and Articles

History 3 (Povijest 3), a reader for the third year of high school, Školska knjiga

Istraživanje o stavovima i razini svijesti o diskriminaciji i pojavnim oblicima diskriminacije (Survey on attitudes and awareness levels of discrimination and manifestations of discrimination); Ombudsman Office in the Republic of Croatia, Zagreb, 2012

Velikonja, Mitja (1992) Religious Separation and Political Intolerance in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Texas A&M University Press

Web sources

"Because of security risk, Houellebecq's play canceled", http://dnevnik.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/dubrovnik-zbog-sigurnosnog-rizika-skinuta-predstava-m-houellebecqa---385019.html

"Bosnia: Gunman kills officer in Zvornik police station", http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-32491026

"Discirimination based on religion: experiences of Equality Institutions in Europe", http://www.ombudsman.hr/hr/dis/cld/674-diskriminacija-na-osnovu-vjere-iskustva-tijela-za-jednakost-diljem-europe

„I, an Islamophobe Šola? Why not!", http://www.slobodnadalmacija.hr/Hrvatska/tabid/66/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/308311/Default.aspx

"Ilčić from Karamarko's coalition: Muslims are biologically stronger than Croats, imagine millions of them come", http://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/ilcic-iz-karamarkove-koalicije-muslimani-su-biloski-jaci-od-hrvata-zamislite-da-ih-dodje-milijun/860212.aspx

"Mani Gotovac: Forbiddin Houellebecq is invitation to terrorists": http://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/mani-gotovac-zabrana-houellebecqa-u-dubrovniku-je-poziv-teroristima/819856.aspx

"Muslims satisfied with their position in Croatia", http://www.index.hr/mobile/clanak.aspx?category=vijesti&id=831294

"Unions: Refugees are not a threat", http://www.vecernji.hr/hrvatska/sindikati-izbjeglice-nisu-prijetnja-1045951

"Vidović: We don't have concrete data of rising Islamophobia in Croatia", http://hr.n1info.com/a90312/Video/Vidovic-Nemamo-konkretne-podatke-o-povecanoj-islamofobiji-u-Hrvatskoj.html

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN CZECH REPUBLIC

NATIONAL REPORT 2015

SELMA MUHIČ DIZDAREVIČ

THE AUTHOR

Selma Muhič Dizdarevič is an assistant professor at Charles University, Faculty of Humanities, Department of Civil Society Studies in Prague, Czech Republic. She is also a visiting scholar on Fulbright scholarship at UC Berkeley, School of Social Welfare in California, United States. Her main research interests are nonprofits, immigration and integration policies, feminism, social exclusion and intersectionality. She holds degree in public policy and political philosophy. selma.muhic@gmail.com

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions. No representation, either expressed or implied, is made of the accuracy of the material in the national reports. The editors of the European Islamophobia Report cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The reader must make his or her own evaluation of the accuracy and appropriateness of the material

To cite this report: Selma Muhič Dizdarevič (2016): *Islamophobia in Czech Republic: National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The most significant developments in 2015 related to Islamophobia are the increase in public display of aggressive intolerance in the form of demonstrations, which took place repeatedly in numerous cities across the Czech Republic and the change from groups that are active only on social media and occasional demonstrations (in much smaller numbers than online) to the establishment of a future political party (currently still registered only as an association) called 'Block Against Islam', led by the leading representative of Islamophobia, Associate Professor of Entomology, Martin Konvička. His party entered a coalition with other two parties to compete at the coming regional elections with support of their Islamophobic worldview from the highest level of power in the country, namely the President of the Czech Republic Miloš Zeman. It should be stressed, however, that the Prime Minister, the Minister for Human Rights, and the Minister of Justice condemn the polarising and simplified views of the President. President Zeman however gave support to extremists by standing on the same stage with Mr. Konvička during the National Day celebration on 17 November, 2015.

Islamophobia has become connected to the issues of the so-called 'refugee crisis'. In the minds of many, refugees are Muslims only and arguments against immigration and asylum policy become one with arguments against Muslims and Islam. Incidents of violence directed at mosques, mostly vandalism and Islamophobic obsessions with pigs have occurred. In addition, it seems that a few women who wear hijabs or even non-Muslim women who use scarves, for example, for medical reasons, have become subjects of harassment and verbal abuse which has increased the polarisation of society. On a positive note, 2015 saw the development of voluntary groups and initiatives helping refugees and countering extremist discourse. Czech volunteers have gained international acclaim for their efforts in helping refugees both in their country but especially abroad (Hungary, Serbia, Croatia, Macedonia). Czech academics signed a petition against xenophobia. Certain Christian groups expressed their views in the petition, which stated "We refuse every initiative to provide help to refugees based on ethnic or religious adherence. Dividing people in need based on faith or ethnicity goes against the humanist tradition and spirit of the Czech Constitution. It also goes against the Biblical testimony and Christian tradition not to limit help to one´s fellow people to co-religionists only."

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY IN CZECH

Nejdůležitější aspekty týkající se islamofobie v roce 2015 jsou: Nárůst veřejných projevů agresivní intolerance v podobě opakovaných demonstrací v různých městech v České republice

Změna ze skupin aktivních převážně na sociálních sítích a při příležitostných demonstracích (které ovšem většinou přitahovaly daleko menší počet osob, než-li tomu bylo online) na etablování politického hnutí pod názvem Blok proti Islámu, pod vedením hlavního představitele islamofobie, docenta entomologie, pana Martina Konvičky. Jeho hnutí vstoupilo do koalice s dalšími dvěma subjekty a hodlá se ucházet o hlasy voličů v nadcházejících krajských volbách.

Podpora islamofobních názorů ze strany nejvyšších pater moci, a sice ze strany samotného prezidenta ČR, pana Miloše Zemana. Nutno dodat, že předseda vlády, ministr pro lidská práva a ministr spravedlnosti odsuzují polarizující a zjednodušující názory prezidenta. Pan Zeman však poskytl podporu extremistům tím, že při oslavách 17.listopadu vystupoval na podiu společně s nimi, resp. současně s panem Konvičkou.

Islamofobie splynula s xenofobií, která je namířená převážně proti uprchlíkům. Mnozí se domnívají, že všichni uprchlíci jsou muslimové a argumenty proti imigraci obecně a proti azylové politice se sloučily s argumenty proti muslimům a Islámu.

Objevují se incidenty násilí zaměřeného na mešity, většinou ve formě vandalismu a incidenty tykající se islamofobní obsesi vepřový masem. Kromě toho, oběťmi verbálního obtěžování se stávají ženy, které se zahalují, ať už se jedná o muslimky (kterých je velmi málo) nebo ne-muslimky, zahalující se z jiných, např. zdravotních, důvodů. Většinou se jedná o verbální, ale někdy i o fyzické útoky.

Zvyšuje se polarizace postojů ve společnosti, což vede (jako pozitivní důsledek) k rozvoji dobrovolnických hnutí a iniciativ pomáhajících uprchlíkům a bojujících proti extremismu. Českým dobrovolníkům se dostalo mezinárodního uznání díky jejich úsilí pomáhat uprchlíkům, a to jak v ČR, zvláště pak ale v zahraničí (v Maďarsku, Srbsku, Chorvatsku, Makedonii). Čeští akademici iniciovali a podepsali petici proti xenofobii. Některá křesťanská hnutí vyjádřila svůj pohled na věc v petici, říkající: „Odmítáme jakoukoli iniciativu poskytující pomoc uprchlíkům na základě jejich etnicity nebo náboženského přesvědčení. Rozlišování lidí na základě víry nebo etnicity je v rozporu se zásadami lidskosti a duchem české Ústavy. Takové rozlišování je zároveň v rozporu s biblickými svědectvími a křesťanskou tradicí, které odmítají, aby byla pomoc poskytována pouze spoluvěrcům."

INTRODUCTION

Regarding the situation of the broadly defined term 'Muslim', authors agree that the best way to describe the current state of affairs in the Czech Republic is "Islamophobia without Muslims". This formula pertains to the low number of actual Muslims in the country that include visible and invisible Muslims (e.g. converts or Bosnian Muslims). According to the last census of 2011, 1.943 persons declared Islam as their faith and 1.442 were registered as members of the Center of Muslim Communities.[1] Given that declaring religious denomination is entirely voluntary according to Czech law, there are estimates that there are approximately 19.000 Muslims in the Czech Republic.[2] This number includes Czech converts (a very small number), spa tourists, asylum applicants, refugees, immigrants with various residence permits and Czech citizens of migrant background. The Muslim migration to the Czech lands has a complex history; currently most Muslims are from Bosnia and Herzegovina - a consequence of the war in Bosnia during the 1990s-, from ex-Soviet republics, mostly from Caucasus, but also from Egypt, Syria and other Middle-Eastern countries. According to another source, the Muslim community has 11.235 members living in the country, which constitutes 0,1 per cent of the total population. The same source, quoting a sociological study on the life of Muslims in the Czech Republic commissioned by the Ministry of Interior, states that most of its members are university graduates and secondary-school leavers who arrived in then Czechoslovakia in the 1980s and 1990s to study. Most of them came from Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Yemen. According to the same study, Muslims are economically successful thanks to their education and their number, unlike in many other European countries, is not expected to grow.[3]

According to the magazine Týden, there are four mosques and nine Muslim places of prayer in the Czech Republic; mosques can be found in Prague, Teplice – Nové Lázně, Hradec Králové, where the locals have initiated a petition against it, and Brno. There is a house of prayer in Brno, which is connected with a language school. In Karlovy Vary, in Western Bohemia, it is situated in the Thermal Hotel. In Kolová, near Karlovy Vary, the house is administered by Kazakh Muslims, Týden writes. In Prague there are five houses of prayer. One is situated in a hall of residence, another is visited mainly by Turks. One near the centre of Prague is operated by the Islamic Foundation in the Czech Republic. The newest house of prayer was opened nearby, and another

1. Český statistický úřad," Obyvatelstvo podle náboženské víry v krajích", https://vdb.czso.cz/vdbvo2/faces/cs/index.jsf?page=vystup-objekt-vyhledavani&str=&evo=&verze=-1&pvokc=&nahled=N&sp=N&nuid=&zs=&skupId=&filtr=G~F_M~F_Z~F_R~F_P~_S~_null_null_&katalog=all&zo=N&vyhltext=n%C3%A1bo%C5%BEenstv%C3%AD&udIdent=&pvo=SLD9100PU-KR&pvoch=&z=T#w=, accessed 20 January, 2016.

2. Daniel Topinka, Tomáš Janků, Lenka Linhartová, Jan Zadina,"Muslimové imigranti v České republice: etablování na veřejnosti", http://www2.tf.jcu.cz/~klapetek/janku2.pdf, accessed 15 January, 2016.

3. Prague Post, Czech Muslims are numerically negligible, http://www.praguepost.com/czech-news/43767-czech-muslims-are-numerically-negligible, accessed 15 January, 2016.

one in Prague is connected with an education centre. Plzeň, the Western Bohemian regional capital, also has one Muslim house of prayer in a hall of residence.

Given that the current number of inhabitants in the Czech Republic is 10.546.120,[4] we can see that Muslims, even according to the estimates, represent a tiny fraction of the total number of people living in the Czech Republic. Thus we may conclude that the Muslim community in the Czech Republic is both small and very heterogeneous and diverse.

Another important contextual remark is that, unlike Western Europe, the primary source of migration to the Czech Republic is labour, entrepreneurship and study, not so-called humanitarian migration or migration due to family reunifaction rights. Therefore, people of immigrant background are hardly ever recipients of welfare services and are employed in percentages higher than the nationals.[5] The biggest migrant groups are from Ukraine, Vietnam, Russia and other EU states.

SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COUNTRY

It is important to understand that, due to the low numbers and visibility of Muslims in the Czech Republic, a huge portion of the incidents of Islamophobia happen online. Cyber hate speech and cyber hate crime are the main settings in which we encounter Islamophobic discourse. It is also true that this kind of aggressive intolerance toward Muslims spills over to concrete acts of violence or attacks on Muslims and their symbols but its main source is online. However, the open and unlimited hate gave rise to the creation of a new political coalition comprising of three subjects: the Block Against Islam, the Dawn of National Coalition and the Freedom Party, which hopes to gain votes at regional elections in 2016. While discourse on migrants and asylum seekers was a part of election campaigns in previous periods, it has never become a major subject and it was impossible to gain votes based solely on promises to become tougher with migrants. Compared to the West, in the Czech Republic there have been very few to none election debates on immigration. The country has a very restrictive asylum policy but it is also necessary to stress that it is rarely the target country for migrants. Even during the current unprecedented migration wave, we can see that refugees seek to leave the country and proceed to Germany and other Western states. This is partly due to the aforementioned lack of generous welfare programmes. At the same time, the Czech Republic has a relatively open labour-driven immigration policy, hence the number of immigrants is not dramatic but is growing moderately. All these factors have

4. Český statistický úřad, https://www.czso.cz/, accessed 19 January, 2016.

5. Jana Vavrečková, Ivo Baštýř, Indicators of the integration of the third-country nationals into Czech society in the context of requirements of European institutions", Výzkumný ústav práce a sociálních věcí.

contributed to the lack of the political manipulation of the subject of immigrants and Muslims up to now. For the first time recently we see the development of institutional political structures which focus almost exclusively on stopping an 'Islamic invasion' and closing the borders - and as a side effect the reduction of constitutionally guaranteed civil liberties. The current migration wave, despite the fact that again it failed to bring any significant numbers of refugees, gave rise to the mobilisation of some Czechs on the grounds of national defense, on the one hand, and, on the other, the great mobilisation of volunteers who help refugees.

Some authors believe that the main target of hate in the Czech Republic has changed: while previously it was the national minority of Roma, currently the group is Muslims, Muslim immigrants, and immigrants from Africa in general. Even the Czech Security Information Service, the counter-intelligence body, states in its annual report for 2014 that anti-Romani events decreased while extremist agitation against Muslims increased.[6]

Before turning to specific forms of Islamophobia in the country, we should stress that, due to the low number of Muslims, not all its forms defined in this report are relevant and due to the prescribed format not all incidents in the given period (2015) can be mentioned.

DISCUSSION OF ISLAMOPHOBIC INCIDENTS AND DISCURSIVE EVENTS IN VARIOUS FIELDS

Employment

Muslims as well as migrants generally come to the Czech Republic mostly for work. They are often successfully employed and those Muslims, who studied in the country, are sometimes engaged in professions that are socially highly esteemed. We are not aware of any systematic discrimination in employment based on an affiliation to Islam. It should be stressed though that migrants coming from Muslim-majority countries are often self-employed, work in businesses run by members of their own group and are concentrated in certain professions/businesses.

Education

The Czech Republic is among the most secular countries in the world with one of the largest percentage of people without faith. Information about religion is, therefore, offered in social science-type subjects and focuses more on the history of religions rather than the dogmas themselves. Religions are in this sense treated equally, although there is a Christian tradition in the country.

6. Romea, Czech counter-intelligence says number of anti-Romani events fell in 2014, extremists agitating against Islam instead, http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/czech-counter-intelligence-says-number-of-anti-romani-events-fell-in-2014-extremists-agitating-against-islam-instead, accessed 13 January 2016.

There is no openly Islamophobic curriculum in education materials, however, there is a tendency to block information about Islam found in mainstream media that offers a narrative of a dangerous, backward religion. Thus a concise handbook and course for secondary-school students aimed at providing information about the country's Muslim community and the history of Islam was derailed by the Education Ministry. Initially, the project - which also touches upon contemporary problems and developments - was backed by the Education Ministry, which, however, later withdrew support. The handbook was titled Muslims Through the Eyes of Czech Students and one of its authors, Shadi Shaanah, the founder of Czech Arab Centre for Cultural Dialogue, speculated that the Education Ministry bowed under pressure of anti-Muslim groups in the wake of the senate elections.[7]

Politics

As mentioned above, the Czech President openly professes his disdain for Islam, describing all Muslims as belonging to an "anti-civilization" that the West and Israel – portrayed as the last European cultural bastion against the Muslim invasion – have to fight.

On the more local level, Daniel Kalenda, a local councilor in the town of Liberec and member of the Czech Christian Democratic Party (KDU-ČSL) who made hateful, pejorative remarks about the refugees who perished in a truck in eastern Austria near the Hungarian border, has been stripped of his party membership by party leaders. Kalenda posted the following remarks, among others, on social networking sites: "God, 71 dead on a highway in Austria... And should we be crying? They say they ran out of air the minute the doors were closed. What do you expect? You shouldn't be so stupid as to get into a truck like that. The very best thing of all would be for them to stay home. They say the world is crushed [by this news]... I am not mourning them, I'm not sorry for them... Not at all! This element doesn't belong here, they are filth and scum."[8]

Media

Printed media have been divided into boulevard yellow press, which publishes usually sensationalist information mostly on refugees but generally emphasises news related to Muslims, to the mainstream media, which provide some context information, and to the minority press, which tries to transmit a more nuanced and complicated message, plus supports groups that advocate help to refugees and learning about Islam.

The situation regarding Islamophobic discourse is much worse on social media and media that publish only electronic versions. This will be discussed in length in the section on cyberspace, but here we can quote an example of a woman who is

7. Český rozhlas, "A project for schools about the Czech Muslim community and Islam which a local group tried to derail" http://www.radio.cz/en/section/czech-life/a-project-for-schools-about-islam-and-the-czech-muslim-community-which-a-vocal-group-tried-to-derail, accessed 23 January, 2016.

8. Romea, "Daniel Kalenda", http://www.romea.cz/en/stitek/daniel-kalenda, accessed 23 January, 2016.

currently under investigation for claiming on her Facebook page that a group of Arab refugees killed all the cattle of a local farmer and that only a horse that was safely locked in a barn survived. She further claimed that police arrested 10 people and further 80 were caught when they forcibly occupied a local house. Needless to say, none of this actually happened and the police have indicted the woman for spreading false information and fearmongering.[9]

Justice system

The justice system has not seen many cases involving Muslims so far but there are ongoing systemic issues related to the registration of the main Muslim organisation as representative of Islam in the Czech Republic. Namely, the Muslim community is the only religious community that has been registered in the Czech lands since the 1930s but whose registration was not automatically extended in 1991.

The Centre for Muslim Communities was registered in 2004, however, as a religious organisation without special rights. These special rights include teaching at schools, concluding marriages, establishing religious schools, sending religious representatives to the army and having access to public finance according to a special law. In order to attain these special rights a religious organisation has to be present on the Czech territory for at least 10 years (something Islam meets already for decades) and have 10.000 registered members.[10]

There has been a petition initiated to prevent Muslims from reaching this stage and the possibility of Islam obtaining the special rights enjoyed by other religions in the country is one of the Islamophobes' fearmongering tactics.[11]

Generally, justice and the political representation system in the Czech republic are guided by laws and even when power is involved, such as the case of the Czech Senator Vladimír Dryml, who verbally abused a medical doctor from Yemen, the state reacted by, in this case, ordering the senator to pay a fine.[12]

Cyberspace

The bastion of Islamophobia is online. Due to anonymity (or difficulties in establishing the identity) and to cyberspace's interactive nature, Islamophobes, racists and other proponents of hate speech and advocates of collective punishment have found a thriving environment online. The limited nature of this report allows us to focus on only a few and the most visible such instances.

9. Lidové noviny, " Arabští uprchlíci podřezali sedlákovi zvířata, lhala žena na síti. Hrozí jí trest." http://www.lidovky.cz/zena-sirila-poplasnou-zpravu-o-migrantech-hrozi-ji-stihani-p4j-/zpravy-domov.aspx?c=A150721_130707_ln_domov_ELE, accessed 23 January, 2016.

10. Ministerstvo kultury, "Zvláštní práva církví a náboženských společností". http://www.mkcr.cz/cz/cirkve-a-nabozenske-spolecnosti/zvlastni-prava-cirvi/zvlastni-prava-cirkvi-a-nabozenskych-spolecnosti-223918/, accessed 8 February, 2016.

11. Islam v ČR nechceme, "Proč petice proti přiznání zvláštních práv Ústředí muslimských obcí?", accessed 8 February, 2016.

12. The case dates from 2014.

The Facebook page 'We Don´t Want Islam in the Czech Republic (IVCRN)'[13] serves as an open space for expressing intolerance, hatred, playing random YouTube clips, presenting news without context, and verbally punishing people who oppose xenophobia and Islamophobia. The page is also used to mobilise its followers for anti-Islam demonstrations - as mentioned in the list of incidents - and has currently over 50.000 followers.

The IVCRN´s Facebook page led to the presence of another Facebook page titled 'Block Against Islam (BAI)', which has been recently removed by Facebook administrators for breaching unspecified terms of use. It is not clear why this page was removed and not IVCRN. 'Block Against Islam', however, has ambitions to become a registered political organisation and to participate in local elections.

In terms of actions stemming from hatred against, among others, Muslims, the hacker group called 'White Media' has challenged current laws regarding protection of privacy. This group not only published details about individual foreigners, including their personal IDs, pictures and where they can be found but hacks into activists' emails and the web pages of their organisations and then publishes pictures of their children or their intimate conversations with their partners. The Czech law proved unwilling or unable to deal with this breach. Recently, however, this group, which is registered like many similar ones in the US, hacked private emails of the Prime Minister. There is now hope that something will finally change in this respect.

Central figures in the Islamophobia network

Apart from institutionalising Islamophobia via the aforementioned political coalition, the worrisome development is the institutional support given to Islamophobic attitudes by some members of the establishment, most notably by the Czech President Miloš Zeman. President Zeman has become notorious internationally for his openly Islamophobic remarks. The 8th Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Islamophobia Report of 2015 took notice of President Zeman's remarks: "Following the derogatory statements made by the Czech President, Miloš Zeman, on 26 May 2014 saying that 'Islamic ideology rather than individual groups of fundamentalists was behind violent actions similar to the gun attack at the Jewish Museum in Brussels', the OIC Secretary General expressed disappointment, underlining the Czech President's statements on Islam were in line with his statements in the past, when he linked believers in the Quran with anti-Semitic and racist Nazis. The Secretary General declared that such statements not only show President Zeman's lack of knowledge and misunderstanding of Islam, but also ignore the historical facts that anti-Semitism and Nazism were European phenomena through and through, while they had no roots in Islam, neither as a religion nor as a history or civilisation; and

13. https://www.facebook.com/ivcrn.news/, accessed 8 February, 2016.

that President Zeman's statements were nothing more than misinformed stereotyping and Islamophobic."[14]

It is significant how in 2015 'Block Against Islam' transformed from a social media phenomenon into a Facebook group/page called 'We Don´t Want Islam in the Czech Republic' (the Czech acronym IVCRN) and led by associate professor and entomologist Mr. Martin Konvička into a future political party. Konvička was charged on 18 November with inciting hatred against Muslims because of remarks he posted on Facebook. These remarks include sending Muslims to concentration camps, promising to grind Muslims into a meat and bone meal after winning the elections, etc. He also calls Islam a "freak show", says Islam is bad and ugly and that Muslims lie when interpreting the Quran. Konvička's Bloc has been called a xenophobic sect by Czech Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka (Czech Social Democratic Party - ČSSD). However, the Czech President stood on the podium with Prof. Konvička for the celebration of 17 November, the country's National Day. Several politicians, university rectors and students subsequently criticised the event, asserting that President Zeman had politically exploited the occasion and behaved like an enemy of democracy.[15] The president's spokesperson later claimed that he was unaware of who he had shared the podium with. It is nonetheless worrisome that, apart from the open call for the annihilation of Muslims, the president's views coincide with views of a representative of extreme Islamophobia.

A recent interview (January 2016) states the following: "According to Czech President Miloš Zeman, the mass migration of refugees to Europe has been organised by the Muslim Brotherhood. In an interview for Czech Radio Plus on Monday, the head of state suggested that the Sunni Islamist organisation could not declare war, so it was trying to gain an upper hand through the migrant crisis. As in his recent Christmas address, the president referred to the influx of refugees as an 'invasion'. Mr Zeman cited two sources as having apparently confirmed his view: Morocco's foreign minister and the crown prince of the United Arab Emirates. The former, he said, recently told him that the Muslim Brotherhood had ambitions of ruling not only the Muslim world but the entire globe."[16] Despite the fact that the president's ideas sounds slightly less radical than the claims of 'Block Against Islam', which is now banned on Facebook, the former are far more significant and influential. It should be stressed, however, that his views are countered by the prime minister and other

14. Eight OIC Observatory Report on Islamophobia, http://www.oic-oci.org/oicv2/upload/islamophobia/2015/en/reports/8th_Ob_Rep_Islamophobia_Final.pdf, p. 50., accessed 25 January, 2016.

15. Romea, Czech authorities indict leader of anti-Islam movement for inciting hatred on Facebook, http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/czech-authorities-indict-leader-of-anti-islam-movement-for-inciting-hatred-on-facebook, accessed 17 January, 2016.

16. Český rozhlas, "Zeman tells Czech Radio mass migration to Europe organized by Muslim Brotherhood" http://www.radio.cz/en/section/news/zeman-tells-czech-radio-mass-migration-to-europe-organized-by-muslim-brotherhood, accessed 18 January, 2016.

ministers in the government. He does remain, nonetheless, a source of concern when it comes to the future of Czech society.

Another important actor for xenophobia and Islamophobia is Member of Parliament Tomio Okamura, who is half-Japanese half-Czech, who provoked by endorsing a highly questionable text by his deputy on his Facebook page. In it, he suggested Czechs should shun Muslim-owned businesses or should provoke Muslims by walking pigs in the vicinity of mosques. At first, part of the Muslim community shrugged off the rhetoric; later though, representatives considered filing charges for hate speech which at the end they did not.[17]

OBSERVATIONS ON CIVIL SOCIETY, POLITICAL ASSESSMENTS AND INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN TO COUNTER ISLAMOPHOBIA

There are two types of initiatives that counter Islamophobia: one is by formally registered civil society organisations and the other is by the voluntary sector.

Among the former we could stress the 'Hate Free Culture' initiative, which is partly funded by the Czech government and which introduces awareness by raising campaigns on how to recognise and fight hoaxes, which are often the main weapons of Islamophobia. There are many others, too.

The volunteer sector saw the rise of an incredible phenomenon, in which people mobilised, organised, donated money, goods and time to helping refugees, who are mostly from Syria but also other Muslim-majority countries. According to Prague Daily Monitor, "over 1,500 volunteers from the Czech Republic have been helping the refugees abroad since early September, Zuzana Lenhartova, from the 'We Are Helping Fleeing People' group, told CTK yesterday. They have organised help at the border crossings through which the refugees are coming, providing them with food and clothing, Lenhartova said. The operation and material for the people in need costs them on average 20,000 crowns a day, she added. The help by Czech volunteers has been praised by Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka (Social Democrats, CSSD) and Deputy Prime Minister Pavel Belobradek (Christian Democrats, KDU-CSL). Human Rights Minister Jiri Dienstbier (CSSD) said the work rendered by Czech men and women in the camps and on the borders was very visible. Without it, the influx of refugees would be uncontrollable, he added. Groups of volunteers work alternately abroad. They pay their trips from their own means. They gain the money for material help to the people in need mostly from their families, relatives and friends."[18]

17. Český rozhlas,"Muslim community weighs charges against Okamura over anti-Muslim statements" http://www.radio.cz/en/section/curraffrs/muslim-community-weighs-charges-against-okamura-over-anti-muslim-statements, accessed 19 January, 2016.

18. *Prague Daily Monitor* "Over 1,500 Czech volunteers helping refugees abroad, http://www.praguemonitor.com/2015/11/27/over-1500-czech-volunteers-helping-refugees-abroad, accessed 15 January, 2016.

CONCLUSION: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLITICS AND NGOS

Based on the report the following recommendations can be formulated:

- It is necessary to diversify information about Islam and Muslims in general and particularly information pertaining to local Muslims. This is an area that media and civil society organisations are already partly engaged in but where they can play a decisive future role This should be an assignment for the Czech Muslim community as well.
- Politicians and publically engaged persons should be held responsible for their statements. If someone is advocating for concentration camps for anyone, including Muslims, that person should be held legally and socially responsible for their words.
- Czech volunteers, who have shown enormous courage and willingness to serve, should become more visible in public space, their stories and motivations studied and shared more widely.
- The system of monitoring incidents of hate toward Muslims online should be established following the example of the UK-based system called 'Tell Mama'. With the help of such a system it would be possible to monitor and studytrends in Islamophobia in the Czech Republic.

CHRONOLOGY

16 January, 2015

- In the evening, some 300 people attend a protest against Islam on Prague's Hradčany Square. The event was organised by the group 'We Do Not Want Islam in the Czech Republic' who have been increasingly vocal in protesting the presence of Muslims in the country.

31 January, 2015

- Some 400 people attend a protest against Islam at Prague's Old Town Square organised by the group 'We Do Not Want Islam in the Czech Republic'. After the gathering, the protesters are set to march to the seat of the Interior Ministry in Prague's Letná. Among those who attended the protest are a number of politicians, including Tomio Okamura, leader of the controversial Dawn Party, and Jana Volfová, head of the non-parliamentary Czech Suverenity movement. Around forty people also attend a gathering in support of minorities.

14 February, 2015

- Some 600 demonstrators take part in an event in Brno on Saturday protesting against Islam, while not far away around 200 people demonstrate in favour of religious freedom and tolerance. Neither event saw any incidents requiring police intervention. Organisers of the larger protest said they wanted to stop the spread of Islam in the Czech Republic; protestors carried placards featuring a mosque and minarets inside a ban circle. Populist politicians such as the Dawn movement's Tomio Okamura in recent weeks stoked anti-Muslim sentiments, suggesting Czechs, for example, should boycott kebab stands.

12 August, 2015

- In the morning, followers of 'We Do Not Want Islam in the Czech Republic' and the 'Bloc Against Islam' groups instal replicas of the torsos of women stoned to death in order to warn of the danger of Islam.

1 July, 2015

- Several hundred people demonstrated in Prague the day before against the Czech Republic receiving refugees. They claimed that the recent decision of the Czech government to voluntarily receive several hundred migrants was a 'dirty trick'. The 'Anti-Islam Bloc', which convened the demonstration together with the 'We Don't Want Islam in the Czech Republic' movement, plans to run candidates in next year's regional elections. About 30 counter-protesters also turned out, with some even throwing eggs at a speaker addressing the demonstration.

17 August, 2015

- Scientists and other staffers of the Czech Republic's academic and research institutions signed a petition against the growth of xenophobic sentiment in Czech society. They also expressed their disturbance by the activity of extremist groups, which in their view is not being sufficiently counterbalanced. Their challenge, entitled Academics against Fear and Indifference was published online on this day and was signed by more than 400 researchers and university staff.

19 August, 2015

- Unidentified assailants break two windows at a mosque on Vídeňská Street in Brno. They are said to have used iron bars to smash the mosque's windows.

3 September, 2015

- Human rights advocates and Jewish groups express outrage after the authorities in the Czech Republic wrote numbers on the skin of migrants who were pulled off trains this week, a move they said summoned memories of the Nazi era. The Czech officers used felt-tip pens to write the numbers on the hands of some of more than 200 mostly Syrian migrants at Břeclav railway station.

28 October, 2015

- In Brno, Prague, and several other cities in the Czech Republic, hundreds of people gather for demonstrations against migration, with police in Brno estimating that about 1.500 people turned out. Most of the events (in Brno, Ostrava, Prague and Ústí nad Labem) were convened by the 'Bloc against Islam' (Blok proti islámu) and Dawn National Coalition (Úsvit-Národní koalice).

13 November, 2015

- CTK news reports that unknown perpetrators vandalised the Brno mosque on the night of 12 November pouring motor oil on the building's façade and doors. Security cameras reportedly show two people, a man and a woman, pouring something on the walls and door of the mosque before making off.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN FINLAND NATIONAL REPORT 2015

LINDA HYÖKKI, PIA JARDI

THE AUTHORS

Linda Hyökki is a PhD Student at the Alliance of Civilizations Institute at the Fatih Sultan Mehmet Waqf Univeristy in Istanbul. She graduated in the Masters Program "Language, Culture and Translation" from the University of Mainz, Germany. She has worked as a freelance translator and is a certified teacher of German as a Foreign Language. Her postgraduate studies and research interests are focused on Muslims in European contexts, multiculturalism and plurality, identity formation, qualitative research methods and Islamophobia particularly in Finland. Besides her native language Finnish she speaks English, German, Swedish and Turkish and reads French. lindahyokki@gmail.com

Pia Jardi is secretary working currently as debt collection secretary in the Social- and Health department in the City of Helsinki. She has been activist in the Islamic orgnizations from 2006 after establishment of Islamic Council in Finland. She has been active in the graveyard issues in Finland and moved to other matters as general rights of Muslims in Finland. She is a member of the OECD/ODIHR network for preventing hate crimes against Muslims in Europe. She is a manager in the project to build a Grand Mosque and Multipurpose Center to Helsinki. She is member of the Network of Muslim affairs in Finland. piajardi@hotmail.com

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions. No representation, either expressed or implied, is made of the accuracy of the material in the national reports. The editors of the European Islamophobia Report cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that have been made. The reader must make his or her own evaluation of the accuracy and appropriateness of the material.

To cite this report: Linda Hyökki (2016): *Islamophobia in Finland: National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Finland has a relatively proportionally small amount of Muslims, about 60.000-65.000 in a country of 5,5 million people. The largest ethnic Muslim group residing in Finland are Tatars who came to the country at the end of the 19th century. Today though, most Muslims are from Arab countries, Somalia or the Balkans. The amount of converts is also growing.

The results of data analysed in this report show that Islamophobia is rising in an alarming way throughout public discourse, including media, politics and especially in the realm of cyberspace and social media. Other academic research cited in this report has shown that Islamophobia is one of the reasons of Muslim radicalisation and why some Muslims decide to leave Finland and move to Syria.

In particular it is important to note the role of populist right-wing politics and how different politicians and other actors associated with the Finns Party are actively involved in spreading or supporting Islamophobic discourse.

The report draws attention especially to the nature of the arguments that are used in Islamophobic discussions; cyberspace especially reveals itself as a problematic field to combat Islamophobic content. Fake news websites such as MV-Lehti and expressively Islamophobic websites and blogs are increasingly popular. It is alarming that some politicians refer to these websites and thus as 'authoritative persons' lead people to give them special attention and recognition.

A particularly popular topic of discussion is the feared 'Islamisation' of Finland firstly through refugees and secondly through measures and actions taken to raise the awareness of Islam and to combat misinformation, such as broadcasting readings of the Quran on national radio. Projects that are run under the umbrella of multiculturalist policies such as a planned construction of a Central Mosque receive negative feedback and raise unease.

There are NGOs that are trying to fight racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia through different projects and initiatives, but in general there is an alarming need for education about Islam and Muslims in all areas of society including schools (teachers and non-Muslim pupils), politicians and media reporters. Similarly, Muslim citizens need training and access to information on their rights and the possibilities to fight hate speech and, for example, discrimination in the job market.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Suomessa on väkilukuun nähden suhteellisen pieni muslimivähemmistö. Maassa asuu n. 60 000 – 65 000 muslimia, maan n. 5.5 miljoonan henkilön väkilukuun verrattuna. Ensimmäinen Suomessa vakituisesti asunut ja edelleen asuva etninen muslimiryhmä ovat tataarit, jotka tulivat maahan 1800-luvun loppuvaiheessa. Nykyään suurin osa Suomessa asuvista muslimeista on kuitenkin kotoisin alun perin arabimaista, Somaliasta tai Balkanin alueelta. Islamiin kääntyvien etnisten suomalaisten määrä on nousussa.

Raportin analyysit tuovat esille, miten islamophobiset asenteet ovat Suomessa hälyttävissä määrin nousussa niin julkisessa diskursissa, politiittisessa keskustelussa, mediassa sekä eritoten internetin maailmassa ja sosiaalisessa mediassa. Tieteelliset tutkimukset, joihin tässä raportissa viitataan, ovat tuoneet esille, miten islamofobia on yksi osasyistä nuorten muslimien radikalisoitumiseen ja täten myötävaikuttanut heidän päätöksiinsä lähteä Suomesta ja muuttaa Syyriaan.

Populistinen oikeistopolitiikka ansaitsee islamofobian kannalta erityishuomiota. Kuten raportin analyysit tuovat esille, varsinkin Perussuomalaisten poliitikot ja puolueeseen liittyvät muut henkilöt ovat aktiivisesti osallisina islamofobisen diskurssin levittämisessä.

Raportti ottaa huomioon erilaiset argumentit, joita käytetään islamofobisessa keskustelussa. Internet on osoittautunut erittäin vaikeaksi alueeksi taistella islamofobiaa vastaan. Feikkiuutissivustojen (esimerkiksi “MV-Lehti”) sekä peittelemättä islamofobista sisältöä levittävien nettisivustojen ja blogien suosio on kasvanut vuoden 2015 aikana. Hälyttävää tässä on se, että muun muassa poliitikot viittavat ja jakavat linkkejä tällaisille sivustoille omissa kirjoituksissaan ja täten ”johtohahmoina” antavat kyseisille sivustoille erityishuomiota ja hyväksyntää.

Erityisen usein keskusteluissa viitataan pelättyyn Suomen islamisaatioon, jonka sanotaan johtuvan sekä pakolaisten suuresta määrästä että myös sellaisista toimenpiteistä ja aktiviteeteistä, joiden on tarkoitus lisätä tietoa ja tarjota parempaa ymmärrystä islamista, kuten YLE:n radiossa järjestetty Koraanin luenta. Projektit, joita järjestetään monikulttuuristen toimintalinjojen muodossa, kuten Helsinkiin suunniteltu suurmoskeija, saavat monet ei-muslimit rauhattomiksi ja projektia on kritisoitu negatiiviseen sekä islamofobiseen sävyyn.

Vuoden 2015 aikana muutamat kansalaisjärjestöt ovat järjestäneet tapahtumia sekä projekteja, joiden avulla on koitettu kitkeä rasismia, muukalaispelkoa sekä islamofobiaa. Mutta, raportin analyysit tuovat kokonaisuudessaan ilmi sen, että Suomessa niin kouluissa (opettajien sekä oppilaiden osalla), politiikassa sekä mediassa työskentelevien henkilöiden saralla on hälyttävä tarve valistaa kansalaisia islamin opeista ja muslimeista, jotta yhteiseloa aiheuttavat väärinkäsitykset saadaan kitkettyä. Myös muslimien on saatava koulutusta ja tietoa oikeuksistaan ja heille tarjolla olevista mahdollisuuksista taistella vihapuhetta sekä esimerkiksi työmarkkinoilla esiintyvää syrjintää vastaan.

INTRODUCTION

Muslim presence in Finland dates back to the early 19th century, as the first permanent Muslim residents (Tatars and Kazakhs) came to the country as soldiers of the Russian army. Through the Freedom of Religion Act that came into force in 1923, Islam was legally recognised as a religion.[1] Today the Tatars in Finland are a well-established religious, cultural and linguistic Turkic minority community with approximately 600 members.[2]

Finland has neither a colonial past nor did it receive immigrants as guest workers after the Second World War. It was only in the 1990s that the Muslim population started growing rapidly due to UNCHR refugee quotas. Most of the non-ethnic Finnish Muslims are Arabs (Iraqis), Somalis, Kurds, Turks, Kosovo Albanians, Persians and Bosniaks. Therefore, most of the foreign Muslims in Finland have a refugee background; family reunification, study, work purposes and other private reasons have also contributed to the immigration of Muslims to Finland. This differentiates Finland's Muslim population profile from that of many Central European countries.

According to The Statistics Finland (Tilastokeskus) in 2014, the overall amount of Muslims by 31 December, 2014 was 12.327.[3] The problem of defining the number of Muslims in Finland lies in the absence of census data based on religious affiliation. Moreover, the national statistics include only those individuals who are registered as practitioners of Islam and are members of Islamic congregations or communities. But the majority of Muslims in Finland are not officially registered in state-recognised religious (Islamic) organisations - by the end of 2015, 36 such organisations were registered with the National Board of Patents and Registration (Patentti- ja rekisterihallitus).[4] Thus, the total amount of Finland's Muslim population has been estimated by Finnish researchers of Islam at 60.000-65.000; the majority are Sunni and only 10 per cent are Shi'i (Pauha & Martikainen 2014: 218-219).

So far there have been no academic studies or surveys conducted on Islamophobia in Finland, but a recent study on radicalisation and social exclusion of

1. Teemu Pauha and Tuomas Martikainen, "Finland," in Yearbook of Muslims in Europe, Volume 6, ed. Nielsen et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 218.
See also, Martikainen, Tuomas, "Muslimit suomalaisessa yhteiskunnassa," in Islam Suomessa. Muslimit arjessa, mediassa ja yhteiskunassa, ed. Martikainen et al. (Helsinki: SKS, 2008), 62-84.

2. Teemu Pauha and Tuomas Martikainen, "Finland," in Yearbook of Muslims in Europe, Volume 6, ed. Nielsen et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 219.

3. Based on a retrieval from the population structure PX-Web database. All age groups and both sexes included. http://pxnet2.stat.fi/PXWeb/pxweb/en/StatFin/StatFin__vrm__vaerak/065_vaerak_tau_206.px/table/tableViewLayout1/?rxid=fa508304-89bd-4a2e-acce-4957c20f2ceb (last accessed 6.1.2016).

4. http://yhdistysrekisteri.prh.fi/ryhaku.htx (last accessed 6.1.2016). Retrieval from the register was conducted among religious communities with names containing the words 'Islam' or 'Muslim' and their derivatives.

the Muslim youth and its effects on young Muslims' motivation to leave for Syria in order to join the rebel fighters or ISIS has established how Islamophobia has played a role in this social phenomenon.[5]

For the purpose of this study, fourteen Muslim individuals whose relatives or friends have left for Syria, were interviewed.[6] The results show, how an Islamophobic atmosphere manifested in the media, politics, Internet forums and discussion groups resulted in the radicalisation of these individuals (SYPONUR p. 18-19). Especially the political right-wing party True Finns (Perussuomalaiset) were seen as Islamophobic and using an Islamophobic discourse "as a shortcut to publicity" (SYPONUR p. 25). Also there have been incidents of harassment and violent attacks against Muslims in public spaces, especially women wearing the Islamic headscarf (SYPONUR p. 18, 22).

The respondents believe that the rising Islamophobia in society has had a "central role" in comparison to other factors such as the socio-economic situation of the "foreign fighters" in motivating individuals to go to Syria and that many Muslims have started to question whether they want to stay in Finland with their children whose future scares them (SYPONUR p. 18-19). Moreover, the respondents explained how many ordinary Muslims fall victims to Islamophobic harassment because of ISIS. The media is said to be an important tool for the radicalisation of Finnish people against Muslims as news reporting from the Middle East is claimed to be poor. Some of the respondents compared the atmosphere of the 1990s to the current situation and explained how before prejudices and xenophobic ideas were not explicitly directed towards Muslims (SYPONUR p. 19-20). Thus, today Muslims are seen as 'the enemy', not 'Finnish' and without human dignity (SYPONUR p. 21).

SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COUNTRY

The planning of a central mosque in Helsinki

The construction of a large central mosque in Helsinki - up to 20.000 m2 - is a joint project of the Forum for Culture and Religion FOCUS, the Finnish Muslim Union and other Muslim associations. It has been endorsed by the deputy mayor and other relevant actors in Helsinki. The Network for the Muslim Affairs has also endorsed it. The necessity for such a mosque has been explained by the Muslim population's need to feel fully included in Finnish society and on equal footing with Christians and Jews who all already have their respective houses of worship. So far the only building constructed as a mosque is in the town of Järvenpää, but as it belongs to the Tatar community, the membership of its congregation is limited to Tatars.

5. For the full SYPONUR report, see http://sockom.helsinki.fi/info/notat/notat_1505.pdf (last accessed 10.1.2016).

6. The authors claim that by the time of the study approximately 70 individuals were known to have left for Syria by the Finnish Security Intelligence Service (SUPO).

Since the news about the project started spreading to the media in May 2015 the responses on many accounts have been antagonistic. Only a few days after the first news report, a citizens' initiative for a legal draft against the mosque construction was proposed. It was argued that the planned mosque would only increase the radicalisation of Muslims and cause noise, pollution and disorder. The organiser further argued that "In no other religion other than Islam has there been as much violence and hate as well as killing and terrorism. Thus the mosque would be a disturbance and an insult for the representatives of other religions as it would force people to listen to Islamic preaching which is a violation of freedom of worship." The initiative, however, had received only 10.566 statements of support by the last possible date of collection (30.11.2015) and it would have needed 50.000 signatures to be submitted to parliament.[7]

There has been at least one demonstration against the mosque project organised by the non-governmental organisation Finnish Defense League (Against radical Islam - for freedom and democracy), which however gathered only around 150 participants. The youth branch of the right-wing party True Finns published a statement against the mosque and called the plan "mad and something that only a senile person or a social-democrat would support". According to the Chairman Jarmo Keto "Islam as an ideology is responsible for many conflicts and terror attacks. Thus such a mosque project is an irresponsible idea."[8]

The involvement of Bahrain's royal house in the project as a financial supporter has especially been criticised. This has served as a point for Helsinki's Shi'i community to connect the mosque project to Salafism - Bahrain is being supported by Saudi Arabia to fight the Shi'i in the country - and to possible threats of radicalisations.[9] Hereby news about the Sunni-Shi'i fights were used to support the idea that the planned mosque project would not be inclusive. Also rumors about violent clashes between the Sunni and Shi'i communities on the streets spread; these rumors aimed at making Finnish people afraid of Muslims. The Islamophobic blogger Paavo Tajukangas wrote that this would be the time "to differentiate between Muslims and Muslims as it is not the Tatars or Finnish converts who want the mosque but 'real' Muslims from 'real' Muslim countries such as Somalia, Pakistan and Afghanistan." Tajukangas gave examples from neighbouring Sweden where he claimed mosques are the source of extremist jihadists and the Islamisation of Finland should be stopped since after one mosque there will be more.[10]

7. For the citizens' initiative in the Finnish language, see https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/1303 (last accessed 22.1.2016).

8. For the statement in the Finnish language, see http://www.ps-nuoret.fi/helsinki/files/2015/07/2015_07_22_kannanotto_suurmoskeija.pdf (last accessed 10.1.2016)

9. For an interview with Madjid Bahmanpour, secretary for culture of the Shi'i Resalat Association, see http://www.hs.fi/kaupunki/a1438228003618 (last accessed 22.1.2016).

10. http://paavotajukangas.com/2015/05/28/suomeenko-suurmoskeija/ (last accessed 10.1.2016).

Radio broadcasts of the Quran

In March 2015, the Finnish public broadcasting company YLE started a programme in which 60 episodes featuring the Finnish translation of the Quran by Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila were broadcasted. The aim of the programme according to YLE was to raise awareness and spread cultural knowledge in a diverse world.[11] The programme was welcomed with different sentiments and Islamophobic discourse was also present. As can be seen in the discussion on the official YLE Facebook page[12] the main criticism was based on the argument that YLE is funded by public tax money thus Quran readings should not be broadcasted as the majority of Finnish society is non-Muslim.[13]

Some of the more radical discussions can be seen, among others, in the openly anti-Islamic blogs Ibn Matti and James Gonzo. The former, which also provides its readers with links to radically Islamophobic websites such as Islamin aikapommi, sarcastically argues that the programme serves the purpose of public education in general knowledge as it is necessary for everyone to know "how ISIS follows the path of Muhammad when they force their prisoners to be sex slaves".[14] James Gonzo, who calls himself a "politically incorrect repository of truth" is rather more straightforward in his rhetorics. While commenting on the Quran-reading programme, he argues, that Islam has nothing to do with Finnish culture or history (as Mein Kampf by Hitler also does) but is a fascist and a sexist worldview. Moreover, James Gonzo wonders, whether the staff of YLE brought trouble on themselves by taking the risk of reading the Quran publicly as it is such a holy book for Muslims that "if anyone cuts anything out of the Quran, it provides enough reason for Muslims to murder that person".[15]

The programme was also discussed in an Islamophobic way by political personalities who are representatives of the True Finns Party (Perussuomalaiset). The topic was brought into discussion by the MP Maria Tolppanen on her personal Facebook page as a public post when she argued that the reading of the Quran on radio would provoke more fighters to join ISIS as they would get acquainted with Islam through the programme.[16] In addition, one of the candidates in the 2015 parliamentary elections, Meiris Suominen, commented on her blog that the Quran reading constitutes an incitement to hatred against Christians since the Quran "states that the infidels should be killed".[17]

11. http://yle.fi/radio/yleradio1/ohjelmat/tunnetko_koraania_nyt_siihen_voi_tutustua_yle_radio_1ssa/7823613 (last accessed 10.1.2016).

12. https://www.facebook.com/suomenyleisradio/posts/10152769948211902 (last accessed 10.1.2016).

13. It is worth noting that the YLE broadcasts the Lutheran mass weekly and the Orthodox liturgy twice a month.

14. http://ibnmatti.blogspot.com.tr/2015/03/koraani-kuuluu-suomalaisen.html (last accessed 10.1.2016).

15. https://jamesgonzo.wordpress.com/2015/02/23/yle-pakkoverolla-antisemitismia-seksismia-islamofasismia-ja-pedofiliaa/ (last accessed 10.1.2016).

16. https://www.facebook.com/maria.tolppanen.7/posts/10205928353954146?pnref=story (last accessed 10.1.2016).

17. https://blogit.perussuomalaiset.fi/meiris-suominen/monikulttuurin-edistamista-vai-vihanlietsontaa/ (last accessed 10.1.2016).

DISCUSSION OF ISLAMOPHOBIC INCIDENTS AND DISCURSIVE EVENTS IN VARIOUS FIELDS

Employment

In general there is no explicit discrimination against Muslims in job markets; there are no laws prohibiting Muslims from applying for any jobs. It is, thus, possible to wear the Islamic headscarf in governmental positions. In hospitals the staff is allowed to wear a headscarf and some hospitals provide their own scarves for hygienic purposes.[18] Moreover, there are no restrictions for teachers to wear the Islamic headscarf at work.

There are nevertheless some individual cases from time to time, where for the most part Muslim women have faced discrimination. A case that was resolved in 2013 was first taken to the ombudsman and then to court where the employer was sentenced to pay fines. Two supervisors had to pay fines: one 620 Euros and the other 640 Euros. Yet, both denied charges. The court decided that the headscarf was not a justifiable reason to annul a contract as it does not hinder the performance of an employee in packing tasks or as a salesperson.[19]

Discrimination against Muslim women also sometimes occurs in vocational schools, when women are told (without legal justification) that one cannot wear the hijab when working in customer service such as in hairdressing salons or as a cosmetologist. The incidents have been reported to the Islamic Council of Finland.[20]

In 2014, one distinctive case become public when a woman was rejected in the application process for the Police Academy due to her headscarf. She did pursue the case against the police, only informed the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman and gave an interview for the press in which she discussed whether a Muslim woman with a headscarf should be accepted into the police forces. Then Minister of the Interior, Päivi Räsänen, stated that police officers should represent the public authority and not a particular religious community through their uniform and should thus show their neutrality. Moreover, she asserted that "surely some of the Muslim women could take off their headscarves while performing their job tasks".[21]

Most victims of discrimination in the job market, however, are ethnic foreigners. In these cases employers sometimes think that the foreign jobseeker does not know his/her rights or does not have the strength to fight the case in court. In general, these cases are indeed not taken forward to authorities but reports are heard directly from the affected persons in personal communications.

18. See, for example, how medical professionals are instructed to clean their headscarves when applicable in the Helsinki area hospitals http://www.hus.fi/ammattilaiselle/hoito-ohjeet/infektioidentorjuntaohjeet/Documents/2.4%20TY%C3%96VAATETUS.pdf (last accessed 10.1.2016).

19. http://www.hs.fi/kaupunki/a1395632489645 (last accessed 22.1.2016).

20. www.sine.fi (last accessed 12.2.2016).

21. http://yle.fi/uutiset/voisiko_suomalainen_poliisi_nayttaa_talta/7145449 (last accessed 22.1.2016).

Education

Finland offers religion lessons from primary school to high school and each child has the right to attend lessons of his/her own particular religion if there are more than three students from the same religion in the school.

Isra Lehtinen, a frequently cited Muslim activist and a school teacher of Islam, notes that after the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris, she got complaints from her pupils stating that even other teachers had asked Muslim pupils while referring to the terroristic attacks "Why are you doing this?" Similarly, other pupils had made rude comments and accused the children or their fathers of "shooting people". She tried to empower her Muslim pupils.

Two years ago Lehtinen conducted a non-published seminar work on depictions of Islam in the three most common books in the 'world religions' course at the upper secondary education level (Lutheran religion teaching). Her analysis revealed a stereotypical and Orientalist presentation of Islam, especially regarding the role of women (two out of three books).[22]

Politics

Perussuomalaiset (Finns Party)

The Finns Party whose current chairman is Timo Soini was founded in 1995 and emerged in the 2015 Finnish parliamentary elections as the second largest party in terms of seats and thus joined the government coalition. The party endorses openly ethnic-nationalist and populist ideologies and several of its members on occasion have given Islamophobic statements. One of the party's prominent figures is Jussi Halla-Aho, who has now transferred to the European Parliament as a party representative. He still continues to comment on national issues, however, in his personal blog Scripta, where for example in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo attacks he compared Islam to Nazi Germany - an ideology, he claimed, whose adherents commit violent acts which at the time seem "normal and logical".[23]

Especially during 2015 the chairman of the party's youth wing, Sebastian Tynkkynen, has been in the headlines of news magazines. Tynkkynen, who has also previously published Islamophobic writings in his personal blog stating that "Islam is a threat to the whole world"[24], was interviewed in January 2015 to explain the caricature competition under the topic 'Islam' that the Finns Party Youth had announced would commence on 13 January.[25] According to Tynkkynen, the campaign was a necessary sign to show how his organisation did not approve of the self-censorship of certain journals and

22. Isra Lehtinen, personal communication (24.1.2016). Isra Lehtinen teaches Islam in primary school, secondary school and upper secondary level.

23. http://halla-aho.com/scripta/muutama_sana_pariisista.html (last accessed 7.1.2016).

24. http://blogbook.fi/sebastiantynkkynen/islam-on-uhka-koko-maailmalle-myos-suomelle/ (last accessed 7.1.2016).

25. For the full-length podcast see https://www.radiohelsinki.fi/podcast/34822/?Perussuomalaisten+nuorten+islam-pilapiirroskilpailu+puhuttaa (last accessed 7.1.2016).

newspapers following the incidents in Paris and was thus an effort to defend freedom of speech and to raise awareness on the "true nature of Islam". In the interview he stated that "Islam is difficult for Western countries" and on several occasions he referred to the "teachings of Islam" which he finds violate human rights.

Tynkkynen argued, that Islam along with suppressing women, is violent since many Muslims follow the example of Muhammad whose life "was violent and who had many people killed and married underage girls". He labelled the teachings of Muhammad as gross. Tynkkynen's antipathy towards Muhammad can also be seen in later comments such as one of his blog postings where he calls Muhammad "a prime butcher".[26] Moreover, Tynkkynen argued in the interview that Muslims would try to set their own requirements for societal life (for example the unlawfulness of homosexuality) "as soon as Muslims become the majority or if there are enough of them". Thus, alongside the typical generalisations and stereotypes Tynkkynen uses in his speech, he also manifests the fear of a "manipulative Islam" and "a creeping sharia".

The caricature campaign was eventually cancelled a week after its announcement, without any further comments from Tynkkynen regarding the reasons behind the decision.

Muutos 2011 (Change 2011)

The Muutos 2011 party was founded in 2009 but did not receive enough votes to enter the parliament in the 2011 or the 2015 parliamentary elections. Thus it was removed from the party register in 2015 and operates currently under the name 'Muutospuolue' (Change Party).[27]

Especially during the 2015 parliamentary elections the party's campaign material consisted of Islamophobic images and slogans. The materials promoted nationalistic-ethnic agitation that was combined with Islamophobic stereotypes. For the campaign of the party's Chairman Jari Leino a picture of a woman wearing a black face veil was published as a poster in the newspaper Vantaan Sanomat. The poster was entitled "Finland belongs to the Finns, Somalia belongs to the Somalis. Vote in support for Somalis returning back home." Although, the aimed juxtaposition of the veiled Muslim woman and the slogan about Somalis seemed rather paradoxical since the woman behind the veil had blue eyes, the message created an image of a Finland where (Muslim) Somalis were not welcomed.

26. http://sebastiantynkkynen.com/2015/11/16/vakivalta-islamin-hyvaksi-on-tutkitusti-laajasti-hyvaksyttya-muslimien-keskuudessa/ (last accessed 7.1.2016).

27. http://muutospuolue.fi/ (last accessed 10.1.2016).

The blue-eyed woman with a face veil was also used as a model in other campaign material (see below) such as the poster for the candidate James Hirvisaari with the rhetoric question "Tomorrow's Finland?" and "Get immigration under control!" as slogans. The second poster implies the Islamophobic idea of a "creeping sharia": not only does Muslim immigration have to be stopped but in addition Islam is seen as manipulative and as causing an Islamisation of Finland.

James Hirvisaari

James Hirvisaari became a member of Parliament with the Finns Party in 2011 but was dismissed from the party in 2013 due to his visitor, Seppo Lehto, taking a picture of himself in parliament while giving the Nazi salute. Hirvisaari then joined Muutos 2011 and was able to found a one-person parliamentary group. In the 2015 elections he did not receive enough votes to continue as an MP and thus his political career came to an end. Hirvisaari is openly racist and stated in his personal blog that Finland should follow the example of Swiss immigration policies and prevent the number of Muslim immigrants from exceeding 1 % of the total population because "Muslim culture does not respect Western culture after the Muslim population has increased over the critical amount."[28] On 12 March, 2015, Hirvisaari held several speeches at the plenary session of parliament and commented on the report of the government on human rights. Among other things in this specific hate speech targeting Muslims he argued that "Islam poses a security threat in Finland"; "the Islamic invasion is knocking at our doors"; "Islam is a dangerous religion that will destroy this nation" and that "If the world would be healthy, surely practicing Islam would be forbidden completely".[29]

Media

Due to the increased number of incoming refugees public discourse has shown signs of a growing unease from the side of 'ethnic Finns' who have expressed their fears of an increase of criminality and especially of rapes by refugees. These fears as well as the fear of radical Islamism have been discussed on several TV shows broadcasted by the National Broadcasting Company YLE. The perceived threat of increasing criminality or rape cases in these instances is explained by the refugees' 'cultural background'

28. https://jameshirvisaari.wordpress.com/2015/01/12/148-pyhan-lehman-teurastus-prosenttikin-voi-olla-liikaa/ (last accessed 10.1.2016).

29. For the plenary session protocol, see https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/vaski/poytakirja/Documents/ptk_172+2014.pdf (last accessed 10.1.2016).

which is grounded in Islam that is seen as a violent religion that does not respect women.[30] As most of the refugees come from majority-Muslim countries, Islamophobia has been among the topics discussed in these programmes and the focus has been on arguing whether or not the refugees can be integrated into society based, for example, on statistical evidence about how prone to violence people from certain countries are and how their values are not compatible with Finnish ones.

There were also several headlines in the press about the talk show 'Enbuske 360' (MTV3 Channel) which aired on 21 November[31] and where the moderator Tuomas Enbuske had inivited the businesswoman Lenita Airisto and the writer Jari Keränen as guests. The programme started with a discussion on the so-called 'refugee crisis' and its solutions but then diverted to the topic of Muslim women and their integration. Airisto started to compare the integration of men and women and commented how she sees the integration of the latter impossible because Muslim women in Islamic clothing are unable to play football or basketball (Muslim men are able to do so), which has been used as an integration tool. She also claimed Muslim women were unaware of their religion's teachings and mentioned that the Feminist Association Union (Naisasialiitto Unioni) should start teaching Muslim women that the Quran does not prohibit playing ball games.

Thereupon Tuomas Enbuske started talking about the "chauvinistic practices" in Muslim countries, referring to women's Islamic dress and called the black abaya and the face-covering niqab a "damn black frock" and claimed that Muslim women would not wear these kind of clothes voluntarily.

The programme caused much unease among the Muslim community of Finland and the Nuoret Muslimit ry (Association of Muslim Youth) published a critical statement[32] which expressed their hope that MTV3 Channel would rethink their stance in regards to racism, Islamophobia and discrimination, and that similar discussions would not be broadcasted in the future.

As an answer to the criticism the following week Tuomas Enbuske invited the Muslim activist Maryam Askar to his programme together with Lenita Airisto so as to talk about the "hassle", as Aristo had called the responds to her and Enbuske's comments. Whereas Enbuske at the end apologised for his generalising statement about Islamic dress not being a voluntary decision of Muslim women, Airisto stated that the Muslim women "should not be allowed to dress in the Islamic dress" because the veil "takes away a woman's identity".

30. These programmes are 'Pelottava ääri-islam' broadcasted on 22 January; 'Kioski' broadcasted on 24 February and 'A2 pakolais-ilta' on 6 October.

31. The recorded programme 'Huomenta Suomi' (12.11.2015) can be found online at http://www.katsomo.fi/#!/ohjelma/33001003/huomenta-suomi (last accessed 8.1.2016).

32. https://www.facebook.com/nuoretmuslimit/posts/995608900461655 (last accessed 8.1.2016).

Justice system

The Constitution of Finland guarantees rights for all citizens, regardless of one's religion. However, some issues are not guaranteed equally to every religious group/community. The Constitution offers two religious communities legal status: the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Orthodox Church. These two, for example, have a right to collect membership fees by taxes and are entitled to support from governmental financial sources for their services; other religious communities are not entitled to these privileges. This legal situation cannot be interpreted as Islamophobic per se as it does not only affect the Islamic community, but nonetheless it is worth mentioning as it puts Muslims in a disadvantaged position regarding, among others, the facilitation of prayer rooms and burial grounds. Also it is worth considering the legal status of the Muslim organisation entitled Islamic Council of Finland (SINE), which has obligations towards the government such as cooperation and reporting similar to the Orthodox and Lutheran Churches, but the unequal status of Islam before the law means that the Muslim community's work is unpaid while workers of the other religious communities receive salaries from the state.[33]

Islamophobic arguments in legislative motions

Motion to ban circumcision as part of a religious tradition

In December 2015, the Member of Parliament Vesa-Matti Saarakkala (Finns Party) submitted a motion to change the Criminal Law Article 21 to criminalise the circumcision of boys under the age of 18 for religious reasons and referred in his motion to previous cases concerning Muslim boys' circumcisions. The reasoning for this motion was that under Finnish law an individual has the right of physical integrity and parents should not be allowed to decide on behalf of their children in questions concerning such medical operations; children should have the right to make such decisions when they have reached 18 years of age.[34]

If a parent takes his/her child to a doctor because a circumcision has negatively affected the child's health, the doctor is obliged to make a child welfare complaint to the Social and Health Department. The Social and Health Department then examines the announcement and acts according to protocol. If the parents can prove that the doctor has performed the circumcision in an appropriate manner, they rest the case. If they find the opposite, charges can be brought against the parents in court. Two such cases have been taken to court. In the first, the parents were not sentenced because the judge ruled the circumcision was properly (medically) performed but in the second, the par-

33.The special status of the Lutheran Church is formulated in the Constitution of Finland, Section 76 entitled The Church Act. For the unofficial English translation of the constitution, see http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/kaannokset/1999/en19990731.pdf (last accessed 12.2.2016). Finnish legislation also includes a special act regarding the Orthodox Church, http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/2006/20060985 (last accessed 12.2.2016). Pia Jardi, vice-chairwoman of the Finnish Islamic Council, personal communication (12.2.2016).

34. Motion LA 52/2015 vp: https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/vaski/Lakialoite/Documents/LA_52+2015.pdf

ents were sentenced to pay fines because the circumcision had not been performed in a proper place by a doctor. Both cases were reported to the Islamic Council of Finland.

Citizens' initiative to ban religious slaughter and to change Animal Protection Law Article 33 by removing Article 33 b.

Kevin Magnus Servin[35] started to collect signatures for the legislative motion OM 192/52/2015 on 25 November, 2015, to ban religious slaughter in Finland. His reasoning for the motion is based on the argued cruelty of religious slaughter practices. In his initiative he referred to Islam and Judaism, but only gave examples from Islam. The motion has collected 3.742 signatures between 21 November, 2015 and 20 January, 2016. [36] To be submitted to parliament it needs to reach 50.000 signatures within 6 months of its initiation. In 2013, the Islamic Council of Finland[37] gave a statement to the Committee of Agriculture and Forestry about religious slaughter which was taken into consideration when the law was last reviewed.

The Bilal Philips case

In March 2014, the media published news about the Muslim lecturer Bilal Philips coming to visit Finland for an Islamic event. In the press, he was pictured as a radical and homophobic person and right-wing politicians argued in favour of refusing him entry to Finland. The former Member of Parliament and current Member of European Parliament Jussi Halla-Aho (Finns Party) submitted a written question and requested for a report from then Minister of the Interior Päivi Räsänen on the matter. His question was whether the government was aware of the kind of religious preaching that takes place in the events that are visited by the Muslim minority and whether the government thinks that such internationally well-known radical Muslim preachers such as Bilal Philips whose entry into several other countries has already been refused would facilitate the integration of Muslims in Finnish society or pose a threat to internal security.[38] Halla-Aho furthermore argued that all radical Islamic organisations should be banned and the immigration law should be changed so that radical Muslim lecturers' entry into the country could be refused at the border. The issue here is who should be the one to determine radicalism in these cases.

The Finnish National Broadcasting Company (YLE) discussed the case in the prime-time programme 'A-studio'; the invited guests were Jussi Halla-Aho and Mo-

35. Servin is a private person. Any Finnish citizen entitled to vote can organise a citizen's initiative for a bill or a proposal for a bill drafting process. See https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/ohjeet/briefly-in-english (last accessed 12.2.2016).

36. The citizens' initiative OM 192/52/2015 in Finnish: https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/1697 (last accessed 22.1.2016).

37. Mentioned in parliamentary documents https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/vaski/sivut/trip.aspx?triptype=ValtiopaivaAsiakirjat&docid=mmvm+5/2013 (last accessed 22.1.2016).

38. Official document KK 170/2014 vp: https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/vaski/Kysymys/Documents/kk_170+2014.pdf (last accessed 22.1.2016).

hamed Abdirahim Hussein from the Center Party.[39] In the end, Bilal Philips entered Finland, held his lectures and a press conference.

Cyberspace

MV-Lehti (MV-Magazine)

MV-Lehti is a so-called fake news website that functions as a counterpart to the traditional journalistic news services and claims to deliver the "truth that the mass media is hiding".[40] It was founded in 2014 by Ilja Janitskin who currently resides in Spain. Charges have previously been pressed against MV-Lehti for defamation, yet so far the Finnish police has not been able to pursue any criminal charges as the provider of the magazine is not located in Finland and it is rarely known who is behind the published articles. According to a survey conducted by the Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE) the attractiveness of fake news websites such as MV-Lehti is based on the public's disappointment in the "manipulation, control and lies" of traditional journalistic news services.[41]

Alongside presenting Islam as barbaric and Muslims as prone to violence, an example of the 'Islamisation of Finland' discourse spread by MV-Lehti is an article written by a member of the Finns Party (Perussuomalaiset) Jaana Pedersen who in her text criticises the current Finnish government's actions regarding refugee politics. As in many of MV-Lehti articles, the use of statistics and phrases like 'studies have shown' intend to give the reader a reliable picture of the 'truth' that is provided by the magazine. Pedersen claimed that at the time (September 2015) the refugee flow into the country was 1.000 persons per day and if each of the refugees with the help of the family reunification programme later brings 10 new immigrants to Finland, it will increase the amount of immigrant citizens to 3.6 million which would mean that the Finnish population would become a minority. Thus, Pedersen argued that politicians support the Muslim invasion of Finland and the future Islamisation of the country. She believes that even if the refugees get Finnish citizenship "they will never become such Finns like the autochthonous population."[42] The 'creeping sharia' argument is also evident in Pedersen's text as she anticipates that as a result of the current refugee politics even she will be forced to wear a burka in the future.

Paavo Tajukangas

Paavo Tajukangas is a website administered by an anonymous writer who seems to be based in Sweden, as most of the website's articles concern issues on immigration

39. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EUSW13Y2mxE

40. The name of the magazine is an abbreviation of the Finnish equivalent for "what the f**k" (Mitä vittua).

41. http://yle.fi/uutiset/kansa_on_kyllastynyt_manipulointiin_kontrolliin_ja_valehteluun__taman_vuoksi_mv-lehtea_luetaan/8409302 (last accessed 10.1.2016).

42. http://mvlehti.net/2015/09/19/lakimies-suomen-tyhmin-hallitus-toteuttaa-suomen-islamisaatiota-ja-miehitysta/ (last accessed 9.1.2016).

and Islam in Sweden.[43] The website, however, is in the Finnish language and the writer comments frequently on similar issues concerning Finland. The aforementioned MV-Magazine frequently reposts texts from Paavo Tajukangas. The website has, for example, a subtopic entitled "Why does the Islamic world not develop?"[44] in which the writer has posted a translated text from the article "Cultural psychology: How Islam managed to stay medieval for 1,400 years" by a rather prominent Danish Islamophobe, Nicolai Sennels, which was published at http://10news.dk/ a fake news website similar to MV-Lehti. In this publication, Sennels argues that among other things Muslims live according to traditions that are "criminal and inhumane", that Muslim parents raise their children by constantly threatening them with violence and death so that the children do not leave their religion and traditions, and that Muslim wives are treated by their husbands like slaves and they have no rights to education.[45]

Islamin aikapommi (Timebomb Islam)

Islamin aikapommi (Timebomb Islam) is a website/blog containing subtopics such as "Punishment of Allah", "What is Islam really?" and "What the West should know".[46] This site is commonly referred to in other Islamophobic websites and even by the politician and MEP Jussi Halla-Aho in his personal blog Scripta; its writer and/or administrator is unknown. The contents of the site are through and through anti-Islamic. The subtopic "What the West should know", for instance, is a Finnish translation of the book Islam 101 written by Gregory M. Davis, who is a film producer with no academic background in Islam.

Borrowing from the book, Islamin aikapommi uses concepts such as taqiyyah to prove the evilness of Islam arguing that Muslims are trying to deceive the West in regards to Islam's true nature by using lies. The website states "Due to the state of war between dar al-Islam and dar al-Harb, ruse de guerre, i.e., systematic lying to the infidel, must be considered part and parcel of Islamic tactics. The parroting by Muslim organisations throughout dar al-Harb that 'Islam is a religion of peace,' or that the origins of Muslim violence lie in the unbalanced psyches of particular individual 'fanatics,' must be considered as disinformation intended to induce the infidel world to let down its guard."[47]

The blog section on the website contains postings about topics such as 'Islam and Pedophilia' and 'Islam is not a religion'; the latter arguing that "Islam is not in the first place a religion but a political ideology similar to fascism and militaristic-expansionist apocalyptic death cult, which aims at the oppression of the whole world

43. http://paavotajukangas.com/ (last accessed 10.1.2016).

44. http://paavotajukangas.com/miksi-islamilainen-maailma-ei-kehity/ (last accessed 10.1.2016).

45. For the original article in English, see http://10news.dk/?p=675 (last accessed 10.1.2016).

46. https://aikapommi.wordpress.com/ (last accessed 9.1.2016).

47. Original English can be found at http://www.jihadwatch.org/islam-101 (last accessed 9.1.2016).

under Allah's law, shari'a."[48] In many sections, the website refers to the American Islamophobic website Jihad Watch and uses the Salafist website Islam Q&A as a source, a kind of 'fatwa bank'. This and the website's general attitude towards source criticism is manifested also in the way the site encourages its readers to quote from the website without giving any reference to the source.[49]

Alongside those individuals already mentioned in different sections of this report, another figure who frequently has something to say is Seppo Lehto, who claims to be a nationalist patriot. In the past, he has been sentenced to prison for his gross and racist writings about racial, ethnic, and religious minorities, but he continues to have several blogs[50] and frequently posts videos on Youtube. The contents of his posts contain radical, brutal and vulgar language and deal mostly with immigration criticism and the Islamisation of Finland. He is the creator of caricatures depicting Muhammad as a pig which he has published on his blogs. Before the Finnish parliamentary elections in April 2015, he published an endorsement video in which, among other things, he objected to the planned construction of the central mosque in Helsinki and told Muslims to "go to hell". Considering Lehto's previous criminal sentences regarding hate speech on the Internet, the fact that his blogs are hosted under a URL specific to the Turkish provider of the service should protect him from getting his writings removed from the Internet.

Observations on civil society, political assessments and initiatives undertaken to counter Islamophobia

Similarly to many other European countries, a public social experiment was organised in Finland in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo attacks. Because of the vast media coverage of the terror attack and the fears and suspicions towards Muslim populations that emerged in its wake, this social experiment aimed at creating a bond of trust between strangers, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. In Finland the experiment was initiated by the programme 'Kioski' which is broadcasted by the National Broadcasting Company YLE.

The first experiment was conducted by one of Kioski's journalists, Petski, who is an ethnic Finn. He stood in a square in front of a big shopping mall with two signs that had the messages "Muslim, I trust you" and "I am a white Finnish man, if you trust me, hug me!"[51] For the second experiment two young Muslim activists, Sadek Elwan and Maryam Askar stood for the same purpose in the hall of the main railway station in Helsinki. Their signs had the message "I am a Muslim whom the world has

48. https://aikapommi.wordpress.com/2008/01/17/islam-ei-ole-uskonto/ (last accessed 9.1.2016).

49. https://aikapommi.wordpress.com/voit-siteerata-vapaasti/ (last accessed 9.1.2016).

50. http://ajatuksia-maahanmuutosta.blogspot.com.tr/ , http://maahanmuuttorealisti.blogspot.com.tr/ , http://tampereen-kuntavaaliehdokas.blogspot.com.tr/ and http://maahanmuuttokriitikko.blogspot.com.tr/ (last accessed 10.1.2016).

51. To watch the video of the experiment, see https://vimeo.com/120477690 (last accessed 9.1.2016).

labelled terrorist. If you trust me, hug me!"[52] Both experiments received vast amount of positive feedback.[53] Maryan and Sadek were very happy with the result and said that the individuals who showed them friendliness by participating in the hug campaign had said encouraging words in solidarity with the two young Muslims.

RASMUS Ry is a national association that fights racism and xenophobia as well as hate speech in the media and in people's everyday lives. Their 'KAAMOS' initiative aims especially at influencing youth attitudes towards diversity and multiculturalism. In 2015, the 'KAAMOS' initiative launched a project for schools, youth centres and diverse events with a poster exhibition. RASMUS Ry Executive Director Mona Magi explains that Muslims and Islam were taken into account in the posters aimed at pointing out the Muslim Tatar soldiers' contribution to the Winter War.[54]

USKOT-Foorumi (National Forum for Cooperation of Religions in Finland)[55] has been active in giving positive statements alongside other religious leaders in efforts to fight against hate and discrimination, and in support of the Muslim community. Different Islamic communities have also made efforts to open the dialogue with all parties and the government by arranging dialogue events. The Islamic Council of Finland has been giving statements invoking the nation to come out in public, show solidarity and firmly support Islam as a religion of peace.

The National Movement against Racism "Meillä on unelma avoimen ja monikulttuurisen Suomen puolesta" ("We have a dream for a multicultural and open Finland") was able to organise an event in only a few days where approximately 15.000 people participated in support of all those who have been victims of racist attacks and hate speech, mostly Muslims.

During the writing process of this report, Linda Hyökki, the author, was harassed in an Islamophobic manner due to her activities while researching this report. Hyökki requested information on Islamophobic websites and Facebook groups in a Facebook group of the national anti-racist association RASMUS RY. This request was picked up by a private person who posted a screenshot of her message on his Facebook wall. From there, the post spread to the aforementioned blog Paavo Tajukangas and the fake news website MV-Lehti. On both platforms Hyökki was verbally harassed and slandered, and she also received death threats.

52. To watch the video of the experiment, see https://vimeo.com/120698737 (last accessed 9.1.2016).

53. An anonymous source sent a letter to Kioski's redaction and explained that the campaign was an effort to understand how difficult the life for those who are labelled as terrorists can be http://kioski.yle.fi/omat/nain-halaus-kosketti (last accessed 9.1.2016).

54. The Winter War was fought between the Soviet Union and Finland in 1939-1940.

55. http://www.uskot-resa.fi/

CONCLUSION

Policy recommendations for politics and NGOs

The refugee influx is stirring up the debates and as a result Muslims of Finnish and other ethnicities are inevitably falling victim to hate speech even though they might not have anything to do with the refugees. Considering the Islamophobic attack against the author of this report, Linda Hyökki, the alarming aspect of the nature of the current Islamophobic discourse is that it has become so straightforward, vulgar and brutal. It is not about a mere criticism of Islam as a religion and questioning its principles, but individual people are attacked in ways that would have been unthinkable 10 to20 years ago, when the frustrated xenophobic discussions were still conducted anonymously on different platforms. Moreover, Muslim persons are labelled terrorists based solely on their religious affiliation; the labelling of convert Muslims as traitors of the Finnish nation who should be executed for treason is also common.

Recommendations for policymakers would be thus:

- Empowering the police force to combat hate speech.
- Re-considering the current definition of hate speech which is rather vague in Finnish criminal law.
- More effective monitoring of social media such as the monitoring of Facebook and net-etiquette.
- Monitoring of websites such as MV-Lehti and reporting their harmful contents to the police.
- Workshops organised by NGOs for the Muslim community on how to counter hate speech and discrimination and regarding their rights in the case of being discriminated or harassed on grounds of their religious affiliation.
- Workshops organised in collaboration with NGOs and Muslim communities, targeting the non-Muslim population in order to provide authentic information on Muslims and Islam.
- Politicians, public officials and local authorities should participate in educational seminars on Islam so that they can rely on authentic information instead of stereotyping and misleading information from weak sources.
- Misinformation disadvantages the projects that the Muslim community is trying to develop which leads to a need of tighter cooperation between public offices and Muslim communities. Especially when the government, local authorities or NGOs plan programmes on counter-terrorism or special youth programmes they need to be in close contact with the Muslim community at large and not only with one mosque community or association. When inclusion becomes an integral part of policies, misinformation and conflicts between individual Muslim groupings can be avoided.

CHRONOLOGY

January 2015

- Charlie Hebdo shootings occur in France.
- The youth branch of the Finns Party announce a caricature competition under the title 'Islam'.
- The 'Scary radical Islam' (Pelottava ääri-islam) programme is broadcasted on TV (YLE).

February 2015

- The 'Kioski' programme (YLE) posts the videos of the social experiments 'If you trust me, hug me!' on social media.

March 2015

- Radio broadcasts (YLE) of the Quran start.
- Member of Parliament James Hirvisaari (Muutos 2011 –party) holds an anti-Islamic speech in the plenary session of parliament.

April 2015

- Seppo Lehto, an Islamophobic citizen, published an endorsement video for the Finns Party in which he told Muslims "to go to hell".
- Muutos 2011 party uses campaign materials with Islamophobic contents.
- Finnish parliamentary elections are held and the Finns Party emerge as the second largest party in terms of seats.

May 2015

- Construction plans for a central mosque in Helsinki are published in the press.
- A citizen's initiative against the central mosque starts collecting signatures.

July 2015

- 'We have a dream' (Meillä on unelma) event/demonstration collects 15.000 participants who support the idea of a multicultural Finland.

September 2015

- Several Islamophobic discussions on different channels of social media are stirred up by the increasing number of refugees in the country.
- MV-Lehti publishes an article on the Islamisation of Finland written by a member of the Finns Party Jaana Pedersen.

October 2015

- MV-Lehti and the blog Paavo Tajukangas start an Islamophobic campaign against the author of this report, Linda Hyökki.
- A special talk show night on refugees is broadcasted on TV (YLE).

November 2015

- 'Enbuske 360' (MTV3 Channel) invites Lenita Airisto and Jani Keränen as guests. The discussion diverts from the so-called 'refugee crisis' to Islamophobic comments on Muslim women.
- The Association of Muslim Youth (Nuoret Muslimit ry) release a statement against the programme 'Enbuske 360' and MTV3.
- Muslim activist Maryam Askar is invited to a review of the programme's episode.
- Kevin Magnus Servin starts to collect names for the legislative motion OM 192/52/2015 as a citizen's initiative to ban religious slaughter in Finland.

December 2015

- Member of the Parliament Vesa-Matti Saarakkala (Finns Party) submits a motion to change Criminal law Article 21 to criminalise the circumcision of boys under 18 years of age for religious reasons.
- The SYPONUR report on Muslim youth is released naming Islamophobia as one of the reasons behind Muslim radicalisation.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN FRANCE NATIONAL REPORT 2015

OLIVIER ESTEVES

THE AUTHOR

Oliver Esteves, is a professor of British studies at Lille University. He works on the sociology and history of immigration and race relations in Britain, and on British intellectuals (George Orwell, Bertrand Russell). He is the author of Une Histoire populaire du boycott, Paris : L'Harmattan, 2006 (two volumes). He edited with Denis Lacorne et Emmanuelle Le Texier Les Politiques de la diversité : expériences anglaise et américaine (Paris : Presses de Sciences-Po, 2010). He also published De l'invisibilité à l'islamophobie: musulmans britanniques (1945-2010), Presses de Sciences-Po, 2011, with a preface by Gérard Noiriel. He has edited, with Jean-Jacques Rosat (Collège de France) and translated into French, with Claire Esteves, Bertrand Russell's World War I texts: Le Pacifisme et la révolution, texts politiques (1914-1918), Marseille: Agone, 2014. His last book is with Sébastien Lefait, La Question raciale dans les séries américaines (Presses de Sciences-Po, 2014).
He is currently doing research on the history of (ethnic) bussing in England for a book entitled Babylon by Bus? Dispersal and the Desegregation of English schools (1960s-1970s), which will be published by a British press by 2018-9. He frequently publishes press articles in Le Monde, Libération, Rue89, Huffington Post (France), on issues of racism and Islamophobia in France and Britain. He is a member of the editorial board of the sociological news website : www.laurent-mucchielli.org founded by sociologist Laurent Mucchielli. olivier.esteves@univ-lille3.fr

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions. No representation, either expressed or implied, is made of the accuracy of the material in the national reports. The editors of the European Islamophobia Report cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The reader must make his or her own evaluation of the accuracy and appropriateness of the material.

To cite this report: Olivier Esteves (2016): *Islamophobia in France: National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The year 2015 was chronologically framed by two events taking place in France but whose resonance was instantly global: the Charlie Hebdo terrorist attacks on 7 January and the Paris and Saint- Denis attacks on 13 November. These tragic events fuelled an already widespread Islamophobic feeling in a country that has the largest Muslim group in Europe. After the Charlie Hebdo attacks, an inclusive public discourse laid emphasis on the need not to confuse Muslims in general and the tiny minority of terrorists. Yet, after 13 November, public authorities, notably by raiding mosques, Muslim associations and by targeting certain imams, bolstered the by now largely shared view that Muslims are a security issue in the country. Despite this distinction between January and November, it is clear that assaults against Muslims, mosques and Islamophobic discourse more generally skyrocketed both after the Charlie Hebdo and the Bataclan attacks.

The national context in which these events are set is ominous: an ever-growing far right with a Front National setting the tone of the political debate, a large number of Islamophobic bestsellers weighing heavily on public debate, a further entrenched urban and schooling segregation jeopardising national cohesion (ten years after the 2005 urban disturbances) and, just as worryingly, a French articulation of secularism (laïcité) which is promoted by many as a bulwark against Islam (i.e. the belief that religion should be excluded from public space altogether).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY IN FRENCH

L'année 2015 a commencé et s'est terminée avec deux événements français dont l'impact a été instantanément mondial : les attentats contre Charlie-Hebdo (7 janvier) et les attentats de Paris et de Saint-Denis prenant notamment pour cible la salle de concert du Bataclan, le 13 novembre. Ces faits tragiques ont puissamment alimenté une Islamophobie déjà forte dans un pays qui compte le groupe musulman le plus important en Europe. Juste après les attentats de Charlie-Hebdo, le discours officiel a insisté sur la nécessité de ne pas confondre la composante musulmane de la société française et l'infime minorité de terroristes en son sein. Mais la donne a changé après le 13 novembre, notamment parce les autorités ont perquisitionné des mosquées et des associations musulmanes, et ont ciblé des imams, ce qui a corroboré l'idée selon laquelle les musulmans eux-mêmes constituent un problème de sécurité publique. Mais, malgré cette différence entre janvier et novembre, on a de toute façon assisté à l'accroissement exponentiel du nombre d'attaques contre les musulmans et les mosquées, et à une recrudescence du discours islamophobe, à la fois après janvier (Charlie-Hebdo) et après novembre (Bataclan).

Le contexte national où il nous faut replacer ces événements est lui-même inquiétant : montée de l'extrême droite avec un Front National qui impose de nombreuses thématiques du débat politique, nombre important de best-sellers islamophobes qui pèse sur le débat public, ségrégation urbaine et scolaire qui met à mal la cohésion nationale du pays (dix ans après les violences urbaines de 2005) et, tout aussi inquiétant, laïcité qui semble de plus en plus appréhendée comme un rempart contre l'islam (l'idée selon laquelle la religion n'a tout simplement pas sa place dans l'espace public).

INTRODUCTION

Islamophobia in France has been chronologically framed by two events one occurring very early and the rather late in the year: the terrorist attacks targeting Charlie Hebdo on 7 January and the still much deadlier attacks targeting the Stade de France as well as café and restaurant terraces and the Bataclan Concert Hall, resulting in the death of 130 civilians. Both events have also shaped Islamophobic discourse outside France, as is testified by the other contributions to this report.

RELUCTANCE TO USE 'ISLAMOPHOBIA' IN FRANCE

Abstract concepts and the French. The legitimacy of Islamophobia as a concept has been challenged ever since 1997, when it was introduced in public debate following the publication of the Runnymede Trust report Islamophobia: A Challenge For Us All. Although such debates find obvious echoes elsewhere, their resonance in France is probably stronger because of a specifically French penchant for abstract ideas and concepts[1] - regardless of how painful the consequences of Islamophobia may be. This interest was tragically rekindled in January: the editor in chief and cartoonist of Charlie Hebdo Charb, who died in the attacks, had just completed a pamphlet entitled Letter to the Islamophobia Cheats Who are Fuelling Racism. This was published in mid April 2015, and confirmed for some that Islamophobia is a dangerous concept that is the darling of Muslim extremists.

Hollande, Valls and Islamophobia. For all that, 'Islamophobia' as a concept did make some headway in 2015. President François Hollande, in the wake of the Charlie Hebdo attacks, declared in his New Year greetings to the foreign diplomatic corps that "France is an implacable opponent of racism, of anti-Semitism, of Islamophobia",[2] a statement which commentator Claude Askolovitch was right to consider as a breakthrough of sorts.[3] Yet, Manuel Valls, the French prime minister, obdurately refuses to use the word: as home secretary, he went as far as to claim on 31 July, 2013 that the word is a Salafist Trojan horse, whose late 1970s origin is linked with some Iranian Mollahs' willingness to silence all critique of Islam and Muslims. This mistaken etymology owes much to the diatribes of media-savvy commentator Caroline Fourest.[4]

1. Sudhir Hazareesingh, *How The French Think: An Affectionate Portrait of an Intellectual People* (Philadelphia : Basic Books, 2015).

2. For the full translation into English of this speech that took place on 16 January, see http://www.elysee.fr/declarations/article/ new-year-geetings-to-the-foreign-diplomatic-corps/

3. I-Télé, 16 January, 2015.

4. Marwan Mohamed, Abdellali Hajjat, *Islamophobie: comment les élites françaises fabriquent le problème musulman* (Paris : La Découverte, 2013), 71-72.

The French state's ambivalence towards the concept is probably reflected in the yearly report The Fight Against Racism, Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia issued by the CNCDH (Commission Nationale Consultative des Droits de l'Homme). In 2013, the report had already included a debate on Islamophobia, admitting that none of the concepts mobilised to engage with racism are themselves totally satisfactory and that Islamophobia was no exception. In the 2014 report, published on 21 March 21, 2015 and therefore partly taking into account the consequences of the Charlie Hebdo attacks, Islamophobia is indeed used, alongside "aversion to Islam", "aversion to Muslims" and "anti-Muslim acts".[5] But the word is much less used than xenophobia or anti-Semitism and it does not find its way into the actual title of the report, nor does it appear in the very detailed table of contents of this long, 574-page document.

Dodging the painful issue. Nevertheless, Islamophobia is more and more commonly used, and polemics around it might ultimately be a way to dodge the very real issue of the consequences of Muslim-hatred in France, as is argued here by one C.C.I.F. (Collectif Contre l'Islamophobie en France) spokesperson: "This polemic is a ludicrous political strategy to lose sight of the reality of the problem. It's like a jam jar with a weird colour. Instead of spending hours squabbling over what it may contain, let's open the jar and see what's inside".[6] M'hammed Henniche, a Muslim association leader in Seine-Saint-Denis, and president of the Pantin Mosque, stresses that "Muslims in France don't give two hoots about what this is called, really. What they simply can't stand is when they're told that there's no problem that hostility against Muslims doesn't really exist or is clearly exaggerated".[7]

ISLAMOPHOBIC ACTS IN 2015: A WORRYING PICTURE

Le Monde published an article on 23 January revealing that since the beginning of the year, anti-Muslim acts within one month had been almost as numerous as over the previous year as a whole. This is according to the Observatory of Islamophobia, itself a branch of the state-sponsored C.F.C.M. The figures given by C.C.I.F., a bottom-up association dealing with legal counselling for Muslims who are assaulted, discriminated against or abused, draw a similar picture. C.C.I.F. published a report on 1 July indicating that during the first six months of 2015, anti-Muslim physical assaults (necessitating at least 8 days of temporary work interruption) had skyrocketed by 500 %, whilst verbal abuse had increased by 100 %. Physical acts against

5. In Commission Consultative des Droits de l'Homme, *La Lutte contre le racisme, l'antisémitisme et la xénophobie* (Paris, La Documentation française, 2015); Islamophobia (16-17, 218, 415-7, 422), anti-Muslim (89, 418), aversion to Islam/aversion to Muslims (223, 232-233).

6. *Slate*, 17.01.2015.

7. Interview, 17.12.2015.

mosques had soared by 400 %. As can be expected, 75 % of assaulted persons are women, while 25 % are men (both in 2015 and 2014). All these figures are drawn from individual contacts made with the C.C.I.F. by wronged Muslims.[8] Few of these victims ultimately file complaints against their aggressors, either because they think the police will hear none of it, or because they know that if condemned at all, the wrong-doers will be meted out mild sentences.

Many of the consequences of the horrendous terrorist attacks of 13 November can only be guessed since it is probably too early in late December to make a rational assessment of all the acts perpetrated. One of the first decisions taken by C.C.I.F. was to hire three extra legal counsellors in the expectation that the already impressive figures given above would themselves increase anew. Some of these consequences are looked into in the last part of this report.

"SORRY BUT … YOU LIVE TOO FAR": ASSESSING ISLAMOPHOBIA ON THE JOB MARKET

An unknown known. France is both the European country with the largest Muslim group and a Republic that has no ethnic or religious statistics, because it is seen as anathema to the very idea of a Republic that does not recognize communities but individual citizens. Consequently, it has been very difficult to gauge the actual extent of racial and/or religious discrimination. On top of this, it is generally way more difficult to identify anti-Muslim discrimination on the job market than explicit anti-Muslim aggressions, or overtly Islamophobic discourse. This is probably why the Conseil Français du Culte Musulman (C.F.C.M) gathers statistics on anti-Muslim acts, but stops short of collecting information on religious discrimination on the job market, which the C.C.I.F does. What compounds this difficulty is the double-standard largely interiorised by some Muslims, especially those who believe they will inevitably look "too Muslim" to recruiters. Many hijab-wearing women are painfully aware of how slim the chances are for them to get jobs outside their own community businesses. Therefore, discrimination must also be apprehended in terms of positions not even applied for, itself a tendency which by definition is impossible to quantify.

An unprecedented research. These difficulties notwithstanding, economist Marie-Anne Valfort and the public policy think tank Institut Montaigne launched a totally unprecedented testing experiment, released as a report entitled Les Discriminations religieuses à l'embauche: une réalité. It consisted of sending applications to 6.231 job offers in the bookkeeping departments of companies all across the country,

8. The short January-June 2015 report is available at http://www.islamophobie.net/sites/default/files/Rapport-CCIF-2015.pdf

from September 2013 to September 2014.[9] So, although the results were made public in October 2015, the study does not take into account the recent anti-Muslim backlash following the January and November terrorist attacks.

To identify the extent of religious (rather than racial) discrimination, six CVs were sent by 6 distinct applicants, all French citizens of Lebanese origins, 3 young men and 3 young women who were taught in Lebanese schools: 2 Christian (Michel and Nathalie), 2 Jewish (Dov and Esther), 2 Muslim (Samira and Mohammed). The results are edifying: Michel had to send 5 CVs before getting a job interview, Nathalie 4, Dov 7, Esther 5, Samira 6 and Mohammed 20. Faith markers could be obtained thanks to the applicants' names, the type of schools they attended, their native tongue and/or the faith-based associations they were involved in. In order to further gauge the stereotypes associated with faith-oriented people (especially Muslims), the study included CVs sent by secular as well as practising Christians, Jews and Muslims. In addition, some CVs were just 'ordinary' applications whereas others were clearly 'outstanding ones'.

To appear secular for Muslim males enables them to escape discrimination. By default then, it would seem that recruiters often associate them with extreme religiosity, thereby reducing their chances of getting a job interview, let alone being hired. For practising Christian and Jewish females, having an outstanding profile is enough to neutralize discrimination. But discrimination against outstanding and practising Muslim males is strong, so much so that practising Muslim males are not promoted when indicating their excellence. The study, interestingly, does not include hijab-wearing females. Marie-Anne Valfort's testing initiative also concludes that Muslim males are discriminated against in firms both in the private and public sector, as well as in small and large businesses. She draws an alarming conclusion: "France is caught into a vicious circle wherein discrimination against minorities fuels their inward-looking character, which in turn exacerbates the very discrimination they are the victims of".[10] Probably more alarming is the fact that the French government is clearly reluctant to take the bull of religious discrimination by the horns, that this report itself was barely reported in the media, and that the Institut Montaigne itself has been willing to diagnose a real problem, not to find ways to actually address it.

HIGHER EDUCATION, EXCLUSIVE LAÏCITÉ AND 'THE SOCIAL APARTHEID'

Banning veils on campuses? For some, the 2004 law banning religious signs in French schools did at least clarify matters on this issue, but more than ten years later

9. Download at http://www.institutmontaigne.org/res/files/publications/20150824_Etude%20discrimination.pdf

10. *Ibid*., p. 94.

reality seems to suggest otherwise. It is a fact that the law does not affect higher education. And yet, since 2004, there have always been zealous academics -including a substantial proportion of self-styled feminists- who have banned or excluded Muslim students wearing a veil. The issue erupted again after State Secretary for Women's Rights Pascale Boistard publicly stated on 2 March, 2015: "I am not sure the veil belongs in higher education",[11] before admitting she was in favour of such a ban on French campuses. In so doing, she echoed similar viewpoints expressed by Manuel Valls before he was prime minister, and a recommendation made by the High Council for Integration back in 2013.[12]

Boistard's declaration seems to have vindicated the illegal decision to refuse to admit such female students. Jihane Abdoune, a PhD student who deals with discrimination cases for the French Muslim Students association (Étudiants Musulmans de France), witnessed, just days after Boistard's statement, a soaring number of similar cases, and has had to defend the French legislation across the country. Interviews with local branches of E.M.F. at Lille, Poitiers, Rouen and Lyon confirm this evolution in the wake of Boistard's declaration. Many bitterly lament being dismissed as an almost "foreign presence" ("what are you doing in France?" is sometimes demanded of these mostly French-born students) whilst having to remind French academics of the actual contents of French legislation. Jihane Abdoun also states that "because they're afraid for their exams and often have a low profile themselves, those students generally don't end up issuing complaints. And they often say nothing to their parents".[13] Eventually, on 15 December, the government-led 'Observatoire de la laïcité' issued a statement that "it is neither useful nor timely" to introduce a ban, since out of a total of 2,5 million students, only 130 isolated cases of "religious disagreements or conflicts" [14] have appeared.

Freedom of religion or freedom from Islam? These isolated controversies on French campuses are rooted in a harmful misunderstanding on the meaning of secularism, or laïcité. The CNCDH 2014 survey of 1,020 people reveals that laïcité is associated with three distinct dimensions: living together in society (54 % of respondents), the outlawing of religious displays in public space (50 %) and the separation between church and state (47 %). Whilst students and highly qualified people generally associate French secularism with state neutrality and freedom of religion, the French that live in rural areas, are unqualified and at least middle-aged more often have a restrictive view of secularism. Lastly, practising Catholics are more inclined to

11. *Le Talk Figaro* (online broadcast), 02.03.2015; http://video.lefigaro.fr/figaro/video/pascale-boistard-j-en-appelle-a-la-mobilisation-de-l-electorat-de-gauche/4088146795001/

12. Abdellali Hajjat, Julien Beaugé, "Elites français et construction du 'problème musulman', le cas du Haut Conseil à l'Intégration ", *Sociologie*, 5 (2014), 31-59.

13. Interview, 26.11.2015.

14. *Le Figaro*, 15.12.2015.

see secularism as a bulwark against Islam, or a way to preserve an ethnically defined French identity.[15]

It is precisely this misunderstanding which irritates a growing number of Muslims in France. Hassan Oufkir, head teacher of Lycée Averroès (Lille) is thankful to a French legislation system which, owing to the country's state neutrality, makes it possible for Catholics, Jews and Muslims to have their own state-financed schools. Oufkir makes it clear that "public authorities don't have the same reaction as the public at large on secularism; civil servants read the texts and apply the texts. There's a legal arsenal that protects us".[16] But many Muslims are critical of what they see as a dangerous deviance, a reversal of roles whereby people making use of certain public services (town halls, transports) should not be wearing religious signs whereas in fact it behoves the public service providers themselves (teachers, etc) to be neutral under a secular regime. Mohamed Meniri, in charge of the association running the Bondy Mosque in Seine-Saint-Denis, states that because of this twisting of laïcité Jean Jaurès, one of the four architects of the 1905 legislation of state-church separation, "must be turning in his grave".[17] Maged Osmane, the main imam at Montreuil's Great Mosque (east of Paris) regrets that secularism in France "has become like a civil extremist religion"[18] losing sight of what it primarily is about. A great deal of irritation is expressed by the interviewees of this report. This is fuelled by a few recent high-profile cases: in April 2015, in the Ardennes town of Charleville-Mézières, Sarah, a 15-year-old high school student who wears a hijab but removes it before reaching her school, was twice refused entry at her Collège Léo Lagrange because she was wearing "too long a skirt", construed as "an ostentatious religious sign".[19] Najjat Vallaud-Belkacem, the education minister, indicated that the teaching staff had reacted with "discernment" in the whole matter.[20]

"We want blond-haired pupils with our kids". If laïcité often serves to legitimise a respectable form of anti-Muslim hostility, certain reforms under President Sarkozy further entrenched Muslim, ethnic-minority and working-class exclusion. One such reform was the relaxing of the catchment areas for state schools, which strengthened an actual education market driven by parental choice. As could be expected, the Sarkozy reform further weakened banlieues schools with a large intake of ethnic minority pupils, including many Muslims. These have been threatened with becoming ghetto schools altogether, devoid of the social mix at the root of a 'living

15. For further details, see op. cit., 39-40, 229-234.

16. Interview, 17.12.2015.

17. Interview, 14.12.2015.

18. Interview, 04.12.2015.

19. *L'Ardennais*, 28.04.2015 ; *Le Monde*, 29.04.2015.

20. RTL Radio Station, 30.04.2015.

together' (vivre ensemble) which is constantly promoted in public debate. In spring 2015, in Montpellier, citizens from the northwest neighbourhood of Petit Bard actively engaged with the ghettoisation of their schools; Las Cazes High School has a 95 % intake of French of Moroccan origins and mothers of pupils there have exposed the government's Janus-like attitude towards the 'social Apartheid' exposed by Prime Minister Manuel Valls in the wake of the Charlie Hebdo attacks. The leaders of this local movement are all female Muslims originating from Morocco, housewives who wear hijabs. One of them, Safia, argues "We want our children, who are French citizens, to be regarded and educated like others. How do you expect them to feel French if they grow up exclusively with people from their own group? We wish there were a few blond- and red-haired people on the school photos".

These local developments at Montpellier in 2015 have little to do directly with Islamophobia, but the capitalistic rationales in education and housing policies have generated certain urban consequences too often attributed to Muslims because they are Muslims (under the name of communautarisme in French, or self-ghettoisation). The ghettoisation directly challenged by these Montpellier Muslim women is conducive to an urban separateness which, in turn, begets the conditions of Islamophobia. The Montpellier situation itself is little different from the urban geography of other major cities in France. Lastly, such mobilisations testify to the agency of working-class veil-wearing Muslim females, at a remove from well-worn stereotypes.

Culture wars in Corsica. In southern Corsica, an elementary school teacher in the town of Prunelli-di-Fiumorbu, Annelyse Hallard, is a woman with much teaching experience and grassroots knowledge of Corsica. For her year-end school party, she organised, months ahead, the singing of Imagine by John Lennon in five languages either taught in the school or spoken in the community: French, English, Corsican, Spanish and Arabic. She never anticipated the furore this would bring about. Repeatedly threatened, the teachers had to recoil and even made use of their 'right of withdrawal' (a labour legislation allowing one not to go to work when one's physical integrity is menaced) [21] in mid June 2015. This shows that, in France (and here in Corsica), Islamophobia bears a strong anti-Arab racist dimension, itself a leftover of French colonial history. It is also possible to construe this event as a 'White Backlash' incident of sorts, itself an unsatisfactory phrase since the great bulk of Muslims in France see themselves as 'white'. But what is meant here is that, as in 'White Backlash' elsewhere (the U.S, Britain), this Corsican incident unleashed indignant feelings that ethnic minorities get preferential treatment by public authorities, feelings that are intensified by decreasing public resources and an ethnic-linguistic dimension specific to Corsican nationalism writhing under French Republicanism. Annelyse Hallard recalls hearing a barrage of wild rumours, all of the 'White Backlash' type: "we don't

21. *Libération*, 16.06.2015.

even get breaded fish fillet at the canteen", "our daughter will have to wear a veil at school", "we'll again have to struggle to get a crèche in the Town Hall", "we can't even wear uniforms at the base "[22], "we're tired of halal food at the yearend party" - all of which were utterly fallacious, all of which are often fed by sheer ignorance. The substantial Moroccan community in the town was silent during the whole incident, or merely said "we never asked anything".[23] The issue of racism (and Islamophobia) in Corsica was raised again months later, after Christmas Day, in the wake of the grisly attack against a Muslim prayer room in the town of Ajaccio.

THE FRONT NATIONAL, AN ISLAMOPHOBIC PARTY SETTING THE TONE OF PUBLIC DEBATE

A needless campaign. As they checked the many headlines on young French Muslims going to Syria, on the so-called 'migrant crisis' in Europe, and of course on the January and November terrorist attacks, Front National leaders very quickly realised they barely needed to campaign for the regional elections. This was illustrated by the near absence of debate on the financing of high schools and of public transports which are primarily the prerogatives of the French regions. It turned out that the campaign was totally focused on issues which are outside the remit of regions: immigration issues, law and order, anti-terrorism, and Islam. Amazingly, any foreigner arriving in France during the campaign could have been forgiven for thinking this was a presidential election, not (merely) a regional one.

The Front National going mainstream? The 2015 regional elections introduced new territorial boundaries in an effort to reduce the number of regions from 22 to 13 in the French metropolis. The results of the second round leave the Front National without a single region, but very clearly this has been no defeat for the far right party that has put Islamophobia at the heart of its electoral campaign. Indeed, on 13 December, the party managed to garner 6,82 million votes, improving its first round total of 6,01 million, and surpassing even its best ever total, at the 2012 presidential elections (first round), which had been 6,42 million. No surprise then, that on the night of the second-round results, it was all smiles in the local headquarters of the far right party, despite the absence of a regional victory. This was largely thanks to a successful 'Republican Front' (Front Républicain) which made many left-wing people vote for what they painfully realised was the lesser of two evils: Xavier Bertrand in the north, Christian Estrosi in the south. It is no secret that some of the 'Républicains' who are indefatigable Sarkozy allies have very dangerously promoted Islamophobic causes, especially (albeit not exclusively) in the southeast (Lionel Lucas, Christian Es-

22. The Corsican town is 20 miles from the major airbase of Solenzara, in this largely agricultural area.

23. Interview, Annelyse Hallard, 05.12.2015.

trosi, Eric Ciotti). Conversely, the Front National has painstakingly tried to boost its political respectability, for instance by shedding its former anti-Semitic dimension. One key decision in this respect was the sacking, on 20 August, of Jean-Marie Le Pen from the party he had created back in 1972. This gesture must be apprehended as part of an effort to make the Front National a real mainstream party.

In the current French context though, 'mainstream' actually includes bearing an overtly Islamophobic character. At grassroots level, since 2010, campaigning Front National militants are repeatedly being told to avoid making any comment on Jews, and are advised to have a field day against Muslims, Islam, and Roma people. This attitude has been thus summarised by Louis Alliot, the Front National's vice-president: "One must be clear about this de-demonisation process: this only affects our alleged anti-Semitism. It doesn't affect immigration or Islam, two issues on which it might be a good thing to be demonised, as Nicolas Sarkozy has shown".[24] For one thing, these aggressive sound bites bolster the view that the Front National is a plain-speaking party at a remove from the 'political-correctness' of 'bleeding-heart liberals', often labelled 'Bobos' (Bourgeois Bohemians) in France.

Professor Nonna Mayer exposes the "myth of the Front National's de-demonisation", in a very detailed study based on an ethnocentrism index with ten questions on immigration, integration, and cultural diversity in France. Two of these questions are directly about Islam/Muslims: (1) "French Muslims are French people like others"; (2) "We should allow French Muslims to practise their faiths in good conditions". The ethnocentric index is calculated according to the interviewee's attitude towards these questions. By narrowing down the ethnocentrism index to respondents who are Front National sympathisers, one finds that, quite unambiguously, they break all ethnocentric and intolerance records on these questions. These findings are important since they scientifically question the validity of the 'de-demonisation'/'mainstreaming' process at work within the Front National, too often taken for granted by the French media. This near-consensus is reflected in the vocabulary itself: the French word 'dédiabolisation' (solely associated with this specific question in mind) actually found its way into the Larousse dictionary in 2015.[25]

Illegal statistics that stigmatise. Repeatedly in 2015, the Muslim/Islamist/immigrant threat has seemed to loom so large that some locally elected figures have decided to jettison republican traditions or rules in order, precisely, to save the Republic from alleged foreign chaos. Two examples may suffice: Robert Ménard, mayor of the southern, economically run-down city of Béziers (71,000 inhabitants),

24. Dominique Albertini, Albert Doucet, *Histoire du Front National* (Paris: Tallandier, 2013), 311.

25. Alexandre Dézé, " La Dédiabolisation " in *Les Faux semblants du Front National: sociologie d'un parti politique"* edited by Sylvain Crépon, Alexandre Dezé, Nonna Mayer (Paris: Presses de Sciences-Po, 2015), 27-50.

which serves as a laboratory for the far-right,[26] stated on a major TV broadcast on 4 May that in his city "64.6 % of the children at primary and elementary level are Muslims", a statistic he came up with on the basis of the names of the pupils on roll. A scandal ensued, because those statistics are illegal in France and are evocative of the Vichy Régime's holding of ethnic statistics against Jews.

Christian refugees, please. Another major breach of French republicanism occurred when certain mayors readily accepted to welcome refugees, but were willing to prioritise Christian ones. Such was the case of the right-wing mayor of the eastern town of Belfort Damien Meslot, and of another conservative, Yves Nicolin, who is mayor of the town of Roanne near Lyon. Meslot argued that "Christians were the most persecuted ones", and that he wanted "to do something for the most persecuted ones" in Syria and Iraq.[27] Such a moderately Islamophobic move in a humanitarian cloak was curtly dismissed by Home Secretary Bernard Cazeneuve: "France is about universality. Whoever is being persecuted can rightfully be welcome here".[28] On the ground in Roanne and Belfort, many Muslims understood such declarations as stigmatising comments against Muslims. The imam of the An Nour Mosque in Roanne, Madi Ounis, met Nicolin, and echoed the minister's universalist stance, by telling the mayor "if a refugee is dying, will you ask him whether he's Christian or Muslim?" before reminding him that "as mayor he represents all Roanne people, Christians, Jews, Muslims and others. I said I perceive in your declarations a real religious segregation".[29]

Two types of discourses sustain these differentialist statements on religious statistics and Christian refugees which strikingly clash with France's universalist republicanism: one is a nostalgic discourse that harks back to the supposedly glorious times before France was threatened by foreign, inassimilable people (mostly Muslims), the other is a doom-saying discourse about the rampant Islamisation of France, of Europe, and the idea of the 'grand remplacement', itself a paranoid notion of some conspiracy wrought by Africans and Muslims to oust Western civilisation at its best, i.e. as it is embodied in universalist France.

PUBLIC DEBATE IN 2015, A STIFLING MANICHAEISM

Who is Charlie? Unsurprisingly, the January killings of some well-known public figures in France (cartoonists Charb and Cabu, economist Bernard Maris among

26. Although not a member of the Front National, Ménard was elected mayor in 2014 with the full support of the party.

27. This was during a TV interview on 7 September, 2015, for the local channel France-3 Franche-Comté.

28. On "Télématin", France-2 TV Channel, 08.09.2015.

29. Interview, 19.11.2015.

others) in the very heart of Paris made conditions extremely difficult for Muslims to both express their detestation of the deadly attacks as well as their critical distance from a weekly magazine -Charlie Hebdo- that had pandered to and fuelled Islamophobic prejudices at large in French and European society. To venture to do this was to sound suspicious, especially for those who had Muslim-sounding names. It is with this critical intent in mind that a group of nine Muslim academics published a text on the Mediapart news website, starting with the classical W.E.B. Du Bois 1903 question "How Does It Feel To Be a Problem?" [30]

The national trauma of the attacks meant that freedom of expression was as it were limited to those who were ready to proclaim "Je suis Charlie". This, in turn, inspired journalist Pierre Rimbert, who entitled an article "Soyez Libres, c'est un ordre" ("Be Free, it's an order").[31] So it came as a shock that across the country, some French were not ready to embrace the now international motto. Hearing that in some run-down banlieue schools the commemoration of the victims was sometimes disrupted, a few politicians from various parties started to doubt among others those students' Frenchness, their understanding of laïcité, their integration and their embrace of the symbols of the Republic. Prime Minister Manuel Valls bluntly stated that there is in France "a territorial, social, ethnic Apartheid", before dismissing the very concept of 'integration' as "not meaning anything any more" and arguing that the "stigmata" and "tensions" that had sparked the 2005 urban disturbances throughout the country were "still there".[32] But absolutely no ambitious plan was suggested to address this "social Apartheid" issue.

A useful idiot. On 7 May, demographer Emmanuel Todd published his essay Qui est Charlie? Sociologie d'une crise religieuse. Here was the long-awaited critique of the Manichean reading of post-Charlie France. Todd is well-known in the country as an eccentric anti-European, left-wing academic who despite his radicalism on many issues is a very media-friendly figure. Sadly though, his grossly simplistic interpretation of the huge demonstrations of 11 January ultimately reinforced the 'Je suis Charlie' Manichaeism. Todd deterministically attributed those demonstrations to Catholic, upper-middle-class people in their fifties, to a peripheral France who had primarily Islamophobic, reactionary motives. As Nonna Mayer and Vincent Tiberj argued, Todd's analysis was a gross "ecological fallacy".[33] Mayer and Tiberj's survey on post-Charlie political attitudes for the CNCDH seems to indicate that among those most likely to demonstrate on 11 January were people without religion, practising Catholics and people who identify as Muslims. The huge media hype around

30. See https://blogs.mediapart.fr/edition/les-invites-de-mediapart/article/210115/qu-est-ce-que-ca-fait-d-etre-un-probleme

31. *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 02.2015.

32. *Le Monde*, 20.01.2015.

33. *Le Monde*, 19.05.2015.

his flawed book only served among others to expose his views as simplistic and to denounce his methodology. Thanks to Todd then, one could almost be forgiven for thinking that anybody taking critical distance from the 'Je suis Charlie' mantra was ludicrously wrong-headed.

Best-selling Islamophobia. Prior to and after the January attacks, a few best-sellers with a pronounced Islamophobic character, delineating an ethnic definition of white/Christian Frenchness and buying into conspiracy theories about the Islamisation of France or Europe, hit the headlines on a mind-numbingly regular basis. The best known are Eric Zemmour's Le Suicide français, Alain Finkielkraut's L'Identité malheureuse and Michel Houellebecq's novel Soumission. Zemmour, who was sued by anti-racist associations because he defended the deportation of Muslims back to "their home country" in an interview, allegedly sold about 5,000 copies of his book a day in late 2014, a few weeks before the Charlie Hebdo attacks. Finkielkraut, a media-savvy intellectual, has been at the centre of a national debate, following the publication of L'Identité malheureuse, in which he warned of the dangers to French national identity from mass immigration and multiculturalism; as Sudhir Hazareesingh has argued,[34] Finkielkraut is a typical reactionary pundit in France since he almost never leaves the very posh Paris arrondissements but spends a great deal of time denouncing French banlieues he knows nothing about. This is also the point made in the text by nine Muslim scholars ("How Does It Feel To Be a Problem ?").

It is impossible to tell whether these few bestselling authors create or reflect public opinion, and one always should beware of media-centrism, i.e. the belief that the media form public opinion. What is sure is that, as the graph below indicates, Islamophobia is a major business asset for publishing houses going through a real crisis. The total sales of these books amounts to 1,022,448 as of mid December 2015, against a total of 49,980 for books sympathetic to Muslims in France,[35] or which purport to analyse Islamophobia in the country. All of the below titles were published by major presses, except for Islamophobie: la contre-enquête. The book has sold little, but this laughably flawed essay by two journalists having nothing to do with the study of Muslims or Islam (Isabelle Kersimon wrote a book on tackling obesity!) was regularly seen in mainstream Paris bookshops on end-aisle displays. Notice, too, the reasonable success enjoyed by Edwy Plénel's pamphlet Pour les musulmans, a passionate defence of Muslims by the former editor in chief of Le Monde. These sales, though, pale into insignificance when compared with Islamophobic juggernauts by Zemmour, Finkielkraut and Houellebecq.

34. Op. cit., 349.

35. The titles in red are broadly Islamophobic, although Islamophobia may not be the only theme developed in these books; titles in blue take issue with Islamophobia. The sales figures have been provided to the author by Edistat, a company calculating general sales throughout the country (corporate bookshops, independent bookshops, supermarkets selling books). They run up to 20 December, 2015.

Author	Title	Translated title	Publication date	Sales as of 15.12.2015
Eric Zemmour	Le Suicide français	The French Suicide	01.10.2014	289,985
Alain Finkielkraut	L'Identité Malheureuse	The Unhappy Identity	09.10.2013	112,809
Michel Houellebecq	Soumission	Submission	07.01.2015	554,537
Caroline Fourest	Eloge du Blasphème	In Praise of Blasphemy	29.04.2015	33,017
Charb	Lettre aux escrocs de l'islamophobie qui font le jeu des racistes	Letter to the Islamophobia Cheats Who Are Fuelling Racism	16.04.2015	31,576
Isabelle Kersimon & Jean-Christophe Moreau	Islamophobie : la contre-enquête	Islamophobia: The Counter-Investigation	23.10.2014	524
Abdellali Hajjat & Marwan Mohamed	Islamophobie : comment les élites françaises fabriquent le problème musulman	Islamophobia: How the French Elites are Fabricating the Muslim Problem	26.09.2013	2,920
Edwy Plénel	Pour les musulmans	For the Muslims	18.09.2014	44,092
Claude Askolovitch	Nos mal-aimés : ces musulmans dont la France ne veut pas	The Unloved Among Us: Those Muslims that France Doesn't Want	18.09.2013	2,968

SINCE THE STATE OF EMERGENCY (13 NOVEMBER) GOT INTRODUCED

The usual suspects. As has become routine in the wake of Jihadist terrorist attacks in Western countries, politicians and some media have summoned Muslims to unambiguously criticise the attacks. Understandably, the repetition of such summons has irritated a growing number of Muslims. To receive these orders to criticise such deeds hurt many, who felt that yet again the doings of a tiny minority gave a bad name to the whole Muslim group. Hassane Oufkir (Lille, Lycée Averroès) states that "our jobs, our contribution shows we have nothing to do with those people".[36] Hatem Nafti, a consultant who lives in Paris very close to the places where the shooting occurred on 13 November, published an open letter to Alain Juppé, a right-wing leader who was President Chirac's Prime Minister (1995-1997). Juppé had just declared that "the Muslims must clearly say that they don't want this sort of religion". Hatem Nafti insists on the very frequent use of the verb se désolidariser (to break with) which implies a former alliance, agreement of sorts. This, Nafti says, is deeply hurtful: one reason is that there were Muslims, and practising ones, among the victims. But even that argument is dismissed by others, among whom Oufkir, who says that the 'Muslims among the victims argument' is invoked as though Muslims had to hear about this fact in order to be overtly critical of horrendous acts against fellow human beings. Mes-

36. Interview, 17.12.2015.

kine Daouh, the head teacher at École de la Réussite ('Achievement School', north of Paris) is much saddened that though often with the best of intentions, "certain imams are belly-dancing to the media, falling into the trap"[37] that contributes to a further stigmatisation of a very heterogeneous group. Worryingly, public institutions partake of such stereotyping, for instance in the Seine-Saint-Denis area. There, on 30 January and then 19 November, all Muslim associations were called in by the administrative office (prefecture) and were told to publicly criticise these terrorist attacks. The Pantin Mosque (north of Paris) president laments that "we were about to do it by ourselves, but the mere fact of being told to do so by public authorities instantaneously labels us as suspect".[38]

Targeting mosques and imams. Probably in order to placate a restive French public opinion, French police forces have raided numerous mosques and Muslim associations. It is noteworthy that in some cases (Pontoise, Lagny-sur-Marne near Paris, Arbresle and Vénissieux in and near Lyon) some places labelled as 'closed mosques' were merely prayer rooms, generally closed with flimsy justifications, or for technical reasons (unregistered renting of premises, etc.) having little or nothing to do with the actual radicalisation of regular attendants. The closing of the Gennevilliers Mosque (northwest of Paris) offers a very interesting case in point: nothing was really found in it, but public authorities had wanted to make the place into an impoundment lot since 2010, and the mosque is strategically located at the port of Paris, thus making it dangerous in the hypothetical event of a radicalisation. The mere fact that Cherif Kouachi, one of the key architects of the January Charlie Hebdo attack, had lived in Gennevilliers and did not attend the mosque is already a hint that radicalised Muslims in the area were not attracted to the place.

In the eyes of the most Islamophobic activists in France, those raids and closures seem to legitimate a free-for-all against mosques. In 2015, at least 63 attacks against mosques have been recorded, all across the country: seven were the objects of arson, four were totally or partially destroyed and three terrorist attacks against them have been avoided. Corsica, where six incidents have been recorded, is the region with the greatest number of attacks.[39] There, as we have seen above, Islamophobia takes a sinister dimension, fuelled as it is by a very defensive, anti-Arab Corsican nationalism at grassroots level.[40]

To be sure, some spectacular raids will be counter-productive in the long run: some of those who saw how the doors to the Aubervilliers Mosque (north of Paris)

37. Interview, 22.12.2015.

38. Interview, 17.12.2015.

39. For further details, http://www.desdomesetdesminarets.fr/2015/12/27/au-moins-63-mosquees-ont-ete-visees-par-des-actes-islamophobes-en-2015-la-liste-complete/

40. Marie Peretti N'Diaye, *Le Racisme en Corse, quotidienneté, spécificité, exemplarité* (Bastia: Albiana), 2014.

were smashed to gain access to a building for which a key could have been used and where nothing was eventually found claimed that the French state was paving the way for terrorist attacks to take place in ten years' time.[41] More generally, the closures of prayer rooms in regions where praying space is pathetically limited will more deeply entrench among Muslims the feeling of being second-class citizens: such is particularly the case in the southeast, where prayer rooms in Drap, Beausoleil and Nice were raided and closed for administrative reasons. In Nice, a large, brand new mosque (An-Nour Islamic Centre) to be inaugurated soon was pre-empted in late December by Mayor Christian Estrosi in order to make the building into a day nursery. The same had happened in Mantes-La-Ville on 29 June, where the Front National mayor made the very same pre-emption decision, which has sparked a litigation battle. All in all, in the month that followed the attacks of 13 November, 25 mosques or prayer rooms were raided, 10 were closed and 1 was destroyed (Vénissieux, east of Lyon). Virtually nothing of interest was found.

A very unsecular control of sermons. The C.F.C.M. (Conseil Français du Culte Musulman), which was founded in 2013, illustrates the French government's willingness to deal with an official institution representing the wrongly-termed 'Muslim community' in the country. Like the Muslim Council for Britain across the channel, the C.F.C.M. has been criticised by Muslims since its foundation. And yet for political as well as media elites it has been seen as a key 'representative'. Its leaders have been only too happy to act as intermediaries between the state authorities and the bulk of Muslims. But they are secular figures with many of their connections abroad (Algeria, Morocco) and not enough links with the grassroots. It therefore came as a surprise when Anouar Kbibech, its president, left the Home Ministry on 1 December and declared that henceforth, the C.F.C.M. would certify the imams and make sure that the certified ones would only deliver peace-loving, non-radical sermons. Interestingly, among the first to react were Muslims from the Indian Ocean island of La Réunion, which prides itself on having the oldest mosque in any French département. Houssen Amode, a local Muslim leader, regrets that this decision had not been discussed beforehand, before making it clear that "if a change is introduced which leads to some form of outside tutelage, we won't accept it", and that "it is the state's prerogative to look for a representative to deal with, but this state that promotes secularism is not supposed to interfere in the organisation of a specific faith".[42] The French state is therefore walking a political tightrope, torn between the legitimate necessity to clamp down on extremist sermons and the legitimate Muslim claim that the

41. Interview, M'Hammed Henniche, 17.12.2015.

42. L'info.re, 26.11.2015, see http://www.linfo.re/la-reunion/societe/681738-des-imams-certifies-la-reponse-de-houssen-amode

government, via the C.F.C.M., is certainly not meant to remote-control sermons. What compounds this situation is that the C.F.C.M. has precious little expertise in Muslim theology. Its current leader, Anouar Kbibech, works as an engineer for a major telecom corporation (SFR) and its former leader, Dalil Boubakeur, is primarily a general practitioner, though also the rector of the Paris Mosque. Understandably, such credentials impress but few imams across the country.

CONCLUSION

The attacks carried out on 13 November caused 130 deaths. They were unprecedented in France since 1945. After the Charlie Hebdo attacks, some police vans were seen outside certain mosques (even in Seine Saint-Denis, which is something of a comfort zone for many Muslims) to protect Muslims from Islamophobic assaults. Since the Bataclan attacks though, the police have been raiding the very same mosques (Pantin, Aubervilliers, Gennevilliers) they had been protecting ten months earlier. This speaks volumes about the French government's change of appreciation: from potential victims to be sheltered, most Muslims have now become suspects. Manuel Valls epitomises this U-turn most patently: whereas he had referred to a "social apartheid" in the wake of the Charlie Hebdo attacks, by mid November he made it clear that what had just happened had no "social, sociological or cultural excuses".[43] Instead of looking into the systemic roots of radicalisation (overcrowded prisons, academic under-achievement within working-class areas, discrimination on the job market), or in ideological ones (a faithless environment in which the one available 'romantic' cause on the market of ideas is Jihad, to quote Olivier Roy), [44] the French state has decided to suggest, rather than to state explicitly, that the real problem is in the nature of Islam itself, illustrated in radical imams, mosques having something to hide, or mainstream Muslims that baulk at embracing laïcité. But the truth of the matter is a tedious list of French Jihadists born and bred in what are often the most rundown banlieues in the country. Among the high-profile cases in 2015 and the few years before: Mohamed Merah from a Zone Urbaine Sensible [45] in Toulouse; Amedy Coulybaly from another Z.U.S. south of Paris; Ismaël Omar Mostefaï from another Z.U.S. also south of Paris; Foued-Mohamed Aggad from a Z.U.S. in Strasbourg; Hasna Aït Boulahcen from a Z.U.S. north of Paris and in the east of the country; Mehdi Nemmouche from yet another Z.U.S. in Roubaix, in the north of France. This boring litany could of course go on. The only exceptions are those born and

43. Statement made in the French *Assemblée Nationale*, 25.11.2015.

44. See the interview Valls gave to *Libération*, 03.10.2014.

45. These deserve, because of their high levels of poverty and social exclusion, to receive extra funding from the state. They concentrate about 7 % of the French population, in some 720 areas.

bred in Belgium (Molenbeek, north of Brussels), in areas wholly comparable to these listed here. Ten years after the 2005 urban disturbances in France, it is somewhat easier to expose religious problems in certain areas rather than look into the social and political causes of this worrying urban wound at the heart of the French Republic. As the year drew to a close, François Hollande confirmed he would move on with the introduction of a dual-nationality plan to strip citizenship from binationals convicted of terrorism. A few weeks after his party had actively campaigned in favour of a republican bulwark against the Front National in the regional elections, the French president promoted a largely inefficient dent into the Republic championed so far only by the Front National. The year 2015 therefore ended on a fairly ominous note.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

A solely get-tough approach on radicalised Muslims is doomed to fail or even to be counter-productive in the long term.

The strengthening of an educational market (resting on parental choice and on a weakening of catchment areas) is doomed to further entrench the ghettoisation of French banlieues and the immense majority of French Jihadists come from such banlieues all across the country.

Discrimination on the job market (which is very harmful to French Muslim males in particular) must not only be identified but also seriously addressed, by informing companies that such practices are not in their economic interests, and if need be by imposing deterring fines on these companies.

Secularism (laïcité) must be unceasingly clarified as meaning: (1) the neutrality of the state and (2) freedom of religion rather than freedom from religion (or from Islam). As it is understood today laïcité too often serves as a respectable justification for Islamophobia.

Muslim women wearing veils: the multiplicity of reasons to wear one must urgently be acknowledged by public opinion. Scholars (especially sociologists) working on the question must be more visible than conservative pundits with little or often no knowledge of the grassroots.

Violent extremism and Jihadism must also be apprehended as issues unconnected with the question of the integration of ethnic minorities. In a Western world shorn of political causes to promote and where faith has been on the decline for many decades, Jihadism attracts a substantial proportion of French people whose names are Jean-François and Marie, not Mohamed or Samira.46

46. Anthropologist Dounia Bouzar, whose consulting agency is paid by the government to deradicalise Muslims coming back from Syria (www.cpdsi.fr), states that she has been contacted by 847 non-Muslim families wanting some help to solve the radicalisation issue of their primarily non-Muslim children. See *Le Monde*, 29.12.2015.

The French state must learn to deal with a Muslim group having a multiplicity of voices; to obdurately insist on dealing with official representatives having little credibility among the bulk of Muslims which only serves to compound the French Muslim feeling of being misunderstood, or of being an object of discourse rather than a subject of discourse.

Public services provided to Muslims (from state-financed Muslim schools to imams in prisons) must be further improved urgently; it is only through such improvements that the feeling of being second-class citizens will be efficiently addressed. Quite a few Jihadists have become radicalised in prison where religious offer is lacking.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN GERMANY NATIONAL REPORT 2015

ANNA-ESTHER YOUNES

THE AUTHOR

Anna-Esther Younes has finished her PhD on "Race, Colonialism and the Figure of the Jew in a New Germany" at the Swiss Graduate Institute for International and Development Studies, IHEID, Geneva. Her research topics include Critical Race Theory, Post-Colonialism, Psychoanalysis, and Critical German Studies. Anna-Esther Younes is currently based in Berlin and taught at the Gender Institute of Humboldt University. She was the recipient of a research fellowship from the Tokyo Foundation for the University of San Diego with Prof. Fatima El-Tayeb and is currently applying for post-doc positions in Europe and elsewhere. Younes has also recurrently published journalistic articles. anna.younes@graduateinstitute.ch

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions. No representation, either expressed or implied, is made of the accuracy of the material in the national reports. The editors of the European Islamophobia Report cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The reader must make his or her own evaluation of the accuracy and appropriateness of the material.

To cite this report: Anna-Esther Younes (2016): *Islamophobia in Germany: National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The year of 2015 has seen a quantitative and qualitative intensification of Islamophobia in Germany. The topics included in this report cover the PEGIDA movement, the situation of national data on Islamophobia, media and reporting biases around gender and feminism, as well as the influx of refugees and asylum seekers from the Middle East and Afghanistan.

One of the most concerning aspects about the most recent developments of Islamophobia is the continuing absence of reliable and nationwide data on Islamophobic incidents. For this, this survey compels the government of Germany to take active measures to guarantee a countrywide collection of data.

Throughout 2015, the PEGIDA movement almost single-handedly questioned the fringe status of Islamophobia in Germany, whilst nevertheless being portrayed by politicians as an extremist phenomena not representative of mainstream society. This report thus demands a more comprehensive and serious undertaking at the level of German society and the government to promote ample discussion about racism (instead of obscurantist discourse only about PEGIDA), amongst which Islamophobia is the most dominant form at the present moment.

A specific image of womanhood, vague claims of sexual and gender equality, and very specific nationalistic ties (most notably with Israel) seem to all be primary features of a public and politicised Islamophobia in 2015, to be found in right-wing milieus just as much as in German mainstream policy and legal debates. Like the PEGIDA discourse, these politicised debates deflect very necessary national conversations (like those about gender, sexuality and contested European political complicities) while intensifying the negative associations between Islam, Muslims, discrimination and violence. This report thus calls for policymakers to cease locating the problems of sexism, anti-Semitism or homophobia only in the Muslim 'Other' and to undertake a sober assessment of enduring forms of discrimination in contemporary Germany society.

Furthermore, the discriminatory legal environment that either only slowly admits, does not welcome, or even prohibits the wearing of the headscarf still persists throughout Germany, despite the positive legal stride of the lifting of the ban for Muslim headscarf-wearing teachers which occurred in 2015. Besides a comprehensive overhaul of civil rights law, this report also advocates concrete protections for Muslim women and men vis-à-vis the labour market.

Finally, the continuing influx of refugees and asylum seekers into Germany, the majority of whom come from predominantly Muslim societies, has unfortunately granted Islamophobia a licence to operate under ostensibly reasonable and legitimate concerns with regards to the 'defense' of German and European sovereignties. Compounded by the ongoing gains Islamophobia has made in 2015, the so-called

'refugee crisis' has had the deleterious effect of merging anti-refugee sentiment, Islamophobia and patriotic nationalism into a fuse set to be ignited imminently, as will be shown in the report. The year 2015 is then sadly the year Islamophobia became an undeniable force within German society, and continuous efforts and data like the following report will thus be assuredly necessary in the years to come.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das Jahr 2015 hat eine quantitative und qualitative Intensivierung der Islamophobie in Deutschland gesehen. Die Themen, die in diesem Bericht besprochen werden sind die Folgenden: die PEGIDA-Bewegung (Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes); nationale Daten über Islamophobie; Genderfragen und Feminismus; sowie die Geflüchtetenwanderungen und Asylsuchenden aus dem Mittleren Osten und Afghanistan.

Einer der schwierigsten Aspekte bezüglich der Entwicklung von Islamophobie ist das anhaltende Fehlen von zuverlässigen und flächendeckenden Daten von islamphobischen Vorfällen in Deutschland. Daher merkt dieser Report an, dass die Regierung aktiv Maßnahmen ergreifen sollte, um eine landesweite Erfassung von Daten zu gewährleisten.

Während des Jahres 2015, schaffte es PEGIDA in einer fast schon Art und Weise, die sogenannte Randerscheinung der Islamophobie in Deutschland, in die Mitte Deutschlands zu rücken. Gleichzeitig wurde PEGIDA von Politikern weiterhin als extremistisches Phänomen tituliert und nicht als repräsentativ für die Mainstream-Gesellschaft dargestellt, mit der dennoch gesprochen werden muss. Dieser Bericht fordert eine umfassendere und ernsthafte Verpflichtung auf der Ebene der deutschen Gesellschaft und der Regierung eine umfangreiche Diskussionen über Rassismus zu führen (anstatt nur über PEGIDA), unter dem Islamophobie die dominierende Form heutzutage darstellt.

Ein sehr spezifisches Bild von Weiblichkeit, vage Ansprüche an was sexuelle Befreiung und Gleichstellung der Geschlechter bedeutet, und sehr spezifische nationalistischen Bindungen (vor allem mit Israel) scheinen im Jahr 2015 die Hauptmerkmale für eine öffentliche und politisierte Islamophobie zu sein, die in rechten Milieus genauso zu finden ist, wie in der deutschen Mainstream-Politik und legislativen Debatten. Dieser Bericht fordert daher, die Probleme des Sexismus, Antisemitismus oder der Homophobie nicht nur im „muslimischen Anderen" zu verorten. Stattdessen ist eine nüchterne Einschätzung andauernder Formen von Diskriminierung im heutigen Deutschland einzunehmen.

Trotz der teilweisen positiven rechtlichen Schritte zur Aufhebung des Verbots für muslimische Kopftuchträgerinnen im Jahre 2015, hat sich das rechtliche diskriminierende rechtliche Umfeld entweder nur sehr langsam, gar nicht oder nur

widerwillig über das Tragen von Kopftüchern ausgesprochen. Dieser Bericht ruft somit auch immer noch zu konkreten Schutzmaßnahmen für muslimische Frauen (im Besonderen) und Männern vis-à-vis dem Arbeitsmarkt auf.

Schließlich hat die Flüchtlingswanderung nach Deutschland, von denen die meisten Menschen aus muslimisch geprägten Ländern kommen, Islamophobie die Lizenz gewährt unter einem angeblich vernünftigen und berechtigten Bedenken zu operieren. Abschließend ist das Jahr 2015 somit leider das Jahr, in dem Islamophobie eine unbestreitbare Kraft in der deutschen Gesellschaft geworden ist. Kontinuierliche Anstrengungen und Daten wie der folgende Bericht werden in den nächsten Jahren weiterhin genauso notwendig und wichtig.

INTRODUCTION

Germany is the economically strongest state in Western and Central Europe. When it comes to foreign policy, Germany's military prowess augments its stark economic supremacy, which is thus also important for a broader analysis, although Germany is still perceived as less militaristic and violent than other European states such as England or France. This perception of Germany as economically dominant yet markedly reserved in its deployment of violence to further national interests overlooks ongoing ethnic conflicts inside of Germany, some of which are discussed below, and it occludes Germany's active participation in the global arms trade, which has opportunistically played rivaling powers in the Middle East, such as Kurds and the Saudi state, while funneling weapons into high-conflict zones like Syria and Egypt. It is thus also essential to understand Germany's long-standing involvement in Middle East conflicts in conjunction with Islamophobia and interethnic conflicts in Germany.

Germany has been ruled by Angela Dorothea Merkel, the chancellor and head of the Christian Democratic Party (CDU), since 2005. Long known for her conservative, quiet politics, Chancellor Merkel steadfastly held to her party's austerity politics in her dealings with the Greek credit crisis in the first part of 2015, bringing a wave of international criticism as well as consolidating domestic support for the synergy between German economic and political governance. She then rejuvenated her political legacy with her handling of the so-called 'refugee crisis' in the late summer, refashioning her image as strong, calm and committed, typified in her mantra, "Wir schaffen das" (We can do it). In July 2015, her encounter with a Palestinian refugee girl on a talk show, in which Merkel explained to her that she – and many others – will need to leave Germany no matter how long they have been here, lead to criticism and even ridicule within the media and throughout society. In the months that followed, Merkel and her alliance of industry and business leadership managed to keep Schengen borders open, despite Eastern European calls to shut them. Posturing this policy as a commitment to human rights, Merkel's wager was to strike a balance between the necessities of Germany's powerful export economy with the domestic and European concern with taking in too many refugees. In the final months of 2015, the high rate of refugees coming to Germany persist, and anti-refugee sentiment has become a primary political grievance of German voters. European unity seems ruptured as to how to deal with the political development. Despite its refugee-welcoming rhetoric, it is thus also reasonable to question whether Merkel's style of governing Germany during 2015 will not also be the stumbling block for her future political career.

This report maps Germany's policies and social events in 2015 in order to understand Islamophobic structures as historical and contextual. In other words, policies and events seemingly local to Germany will be framed and assessed within a

broader historical context, which goes beyond 2015.

It makes little sense to think of the context of Islamophobia in 2015 without thinking about the influx of people fleeing war or economic desolation in countries (formerly) invaded or economically strangled by Europe. In fact, it should be noted that also in Germany, the racialised figure of the 'Muslim' has gained new momentum with predominantly Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis seeking refuge in Germany - what is not new, however, are the stereotypes levelled against the !Muslim Other'. Instead, what has changed a bit is the extent of Islamophobia and how it has moved further into a legitimate and dominant discourse in long-standing mainstream media and German political parties, such as the CDU.

The so-called 'refugee crisis' has been ceaselessly reported as a 'migrant problem', and its framing within a 'security' (i.e. both national and European) discourse must also be seen as part and parcel of Europe-wide racist discourse. But it is to the specificities of Germany that this report turns next.

ISLAMOPHOBIA

Before we can engage in the analysis of 2015, the goal of the report, we need to first define the grounds for our terminology. Islamophobia/anti-Muslim racism is an established object of NGO, academic and media analysis for the last decade in Germany. This report emphasises Islamophobia inside Germany as one of the strongest racist problems in German society to date. Islamophobia brings together a number of stereotypes and biases that circulate around the figure of the supposed Muslim or Islamist. The outcome of such societal and historical discourse is an idea that Islam or Muslims are inherently different and thus incompatible with local German culture. Most importantly, what characterises this discourse writ large, is that Islamophobia is expressed via 'culturalising' discourse, giving illegitimate reason to believe that the 'dislike' of or hatred toward Muslims is not a phenomenon of racism, but of a justified cultural incompatibility or just individual biases.

Another way of explaining the ostensible, inherent incompatibility of what is perceived to be 'Muslim culture' with German values finds expression in the post-WWII German discourse of a 'Judeo-Christian culture'. The latter paradoxically views itself as secular and timeless at the same time that it asserts a questionable cultural affinity to the German-European Judeocide. This discourse also makes its way into German Islamophobic discourse in 2015, as we will see shortly.

In the context of its economic and political domination of Europe, German 'native culture' apprehends itself as free from the social disequilibrium of gender, race and class discrimination, when in fact gender discrimination, sexual biases, class inequalities and racial fantasies and dominations are regnant issues in contemporary Germany. For this reason, Islamophobia, and the events it generates and inspires,

are particularly conspicuous for a society which in these instances does not take responsibility for its problems. Islamophobia thus doubly impacts German society; on the one hand, by stigmatising Muslims and those perceived as Muslim, while at the same time falsely exonerating German society from other, ongoing social problems.

In January 2015, the Bertelsmann Foundation issued its report on religions[1] showing that 61 % of Germans believed that Islam as a religion does not fit into the Western world and that 57 % of all Germans find Muslims threatening. And already before the influx of asylum seekers, 24 % of Germans were of the opinion to deny 'Muslims' immigration to Germany. Thus, Islamophobia has important implications for domestic and international politics, even extending European or German borders.

This Islamophobic attitude is mirrored by the internationally renown PEGIDA movement (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident), which came into existence in autumn 2014 and thus falls in line with a longer discourse of anti-Muslim racism. According to the Ministry of the Interior, around 25,000 people took part in the weekly demonstrations in Dresden alone (Deutscher Bundestag. Drucksache 18/4067). It is not mentioned, however, how many people took part in other local PEGIDA demonstrations all over Germany throughout 2014 and 2015. Next to the unreliable data, we also witnessed a general social confusion over the 'true' constituency of PEGIDA: discussions in Germany thus revolved around the recurrent questions as to whether the phenomena of PEGIDA is only one of the 'Wutbürger' (enraged citizens) who feel neglected and tricked by German politicians and the media. Or, are they a more mainstream version of the right-wing extremist ideologies inside of Germany?

In its anniversary demonstrations in October 2015, again around 20,000 people took to the streets in Dresden. In line with the aforementioned, PEGIDA views 'Muslims' as more criminal, sexist, homophobic and terrorist than white Germans. PEGIDA discourse tries to disarm any allegation of racism through the positive evocation of Judeo-Christian values, sometimes expressed by the waving of Israeli flags or inviting orations by Israeli speakers. PEGIDA also claims that Muslims and refugees endanger the German economy and welfare state permitting free rides in an already precarious economy from which many PEGIDA supporters consider themselves to be "left out" or "neglected".

So far, all mainstream political parties have verbally distanced themselves from PEGIDA, dismissing their demonstrations at times even as vulgar racial populism. PEGIDA, for their part, responded to these allegations by pointing out that their opinions don't divert that much from Chancellor Merkel's statements, who declared "multi-culturalism as failed", already in 2010. PEGIDA spokespersons have relentlessly tied their policy appeal to conservative German discourse. In this sense,

1. Bertelsmann Stiftung, "*Religions Monitor*", 8 January, 2015, last accessed 6 January, 2016, https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/topics/aktuelle-meldungen/2015/januar/religion-monitor/.

PEGIDA almost single-handedly questions the fringe status of Islamophobia, trying to posit it instead in the mainstream of German society. Thus, with the frustration of being called a vulgar mass movement along with their consistent feeling of not being taken seriously, some PEGIDA demonstrators paraded gallows designed for Chancellor Merkel as well as Vice Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel, in their October 2015 demonstration.[2]

PEGIDA is not just responsible for discursive violence, but also for interpersonal violence. For instance, during PEGIDA demonstrations in Berlin, attacks on people taken to be 'Muslims' increased throughout 2015. In an interview with the anti-racist NGO ReachOut[3] it was stated that most incidents of recorded Islamophobic violence in Berlin in 2015 happened in the vicinity of PEGIDA demonstrations (BärGiDa is the name of the Berlin branch). It was also stated that the concentration of refugees in asylum accommodations has made it easier to target and plan attacks throughout Berlin, especially with the improvement of social networks enabling better collective communication. ReachOut also stated that at least since the refugee influx the common assumption that East Germany is more prone to racist violence than West Germany was finally falsified. According to ReachOut, in Berlin alone, the majority of verbal or physical attacks against Muslims/mosques and refugees have primarily occurred in Berlin's centre (Stadtteil "Mitte") and on the fringes of (i.e. BärGiDa) demonstrations.

Islamophobia finds expression in the domain of the Internet as well. The website "Politically Incorrect" (PI-News[4]) advocates its PEGIDA-like ideology successfully, receiving up to 100,000 hits per day. In line with an increasingly savvier European-wide network of interlinked right-wing movements, PI-News has also introduced an English version of its homepage as well as a PI-TV, a collection of online videos. According to their website, local PI groups are predominantly located in the West of Germany. Even before PEGIDA became a movement, PI-News had positioned itself as an online portal dedicated to "reporting the truth" about social ailments in German society using the danger of Islam and Muslims as a rallying argument. It is here where the constituency of PI-News and PEGIDA supporters probably finds their common ground.

Next to the sexist images of a blond and a brown voluptuous woman with banners saying "Islamophobic but sexy"/"Maria instead of Sharia" and their bikinis stating "Burka Free Zone", PI-News posts a blurb at the end of their homepage

2. Spiegel Online, "*Demo in Dresden: Staatsanwaltschaft ermittelt wegen Pegida-Galgen*", 13 October, 2015, Spiegel.de, last accessed 8 January, 2016, http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/pegida-demo-staatsanwaltschaft-ermittelt-wegen-galgen-a-1057524.html

3. "*ReachOut Berlin* - Opferberatung und Bildung gegen Rechtsextremismus, Rassismus und Antisemitismus", http://www.reachoutberlin.de/

4. "*Politically Incorrect* – News gegen den Mainstream. Proamerikanisch. Proisraelisch. Gegen die Islamisierung Europas. Für Grundgesetz und Menschenrechte", http://www.pi-news.net/

stating "This blog supports a strong and secure Israel and appreciates its virtues." In that narrative, PI-News, much like PEGIDA, uses the support of the Israeli nation state and its politics in order to avoid accusations of racism. Instead of racism, it presents the fantasised fear of a 'clash of civilizations' as a reality, which in turns for them extends from Israel to Germany with the 'Muslim' as the ultimate threat. Considering this consistency between PEGIDA and (online) movements such as PI-News, and maybe even for the 57 % of the respondents in the Bertelsmann poll who reportedly feel threatened by Muslims/Islam, permissive sexualised images of women, vague claims of sexual and gender equality, and very specific nationalistic ties seem to all be primary features of a public and politicised Islamophobia in the contemporary moment of 2015.

ABSENCE OF DATA REGARDING ISLAMOPHOBIA

As for 2015, Germany still suffers from a nationwide condition of an absence of data concerning Islamophobia. The absence of data on racism became a public debate only in the wake of an attack on a Synagogue in Düsseldorf. Shortly after the attack, in October 2000, then-Chancellor Gerhard Schröder famously called for an "uprising of the decent [people]" ["Aufstand der Anständigen"].[5] From then onwards, national funds were allocated for the establishment of Opferberatungsstellen (victims' counseling services) in order to coordinate counseling for victims of racist, anti-Semitic or right-wing violence, monitoring of xenophobic, anti-Semitic and right-wing extremist attacks, as well as the collection and distribution of raw data regarding the same offenses. Unfortunately, Schröder's goal was far from being implemented nationwide. For whatever reason, all former East German states made use of these funds to establish the victims' counseling services, whereas only within the last 3-5 years have formerly West German states also established the same victims' counseling services. This imbalance in data collection has resulted in a distorted picture of racism and other forms of discrimination and violence. This distortion is consistent with the common discourse of East Germany being the problematic location for right-wing extremism.

One important but totally local outcome of Schröder's call are the Registerstellen[6] (victims' registrars) of Berlin, charged with the collection of data on racism, anti-Semitism, lbgtiq-phobia, anti-roma/sinti racism, right-wing extremism and other

5. Spiegel Online, "Anschlag auf Synagoge: Schröder fordert ‚Aufstand der Anständigen'", *Der Spiegel*, 4 October, 2000, last accessed 11 January, 2016, http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/anschlag-auf-synagoge-schroeder-fordert-aufstand-der-anstaendigen-a-96537.html

6. *Register zur Erfassung rechtsextremer und diskriminierender Vorfälle in Berlin*, http://www.berliner-register.de/. The *Registerstellen* are civil society-based agencies charged with collecting and making public citizens' reported instances of acts of discrimination (including sexism, homophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, etc.). These agencies have limited investigative powers and community rapport; their success is entirely dependent on individual or community rapport. Interestingly, both the Opferberatungsstellen and the Registerstellen are not widely known among residents and citizens.

discriminating events and acts of vandalism in Berlin reported to them by citizens. Even in Berlin, however, data specifically collected about Islamophobia was introduced in 2015. An official and reliable idea about the changing extent and quality of Islamophobia is still missing.

One possible pathway to useable data on attacks against Muslims or Muslim institutions, can be found in the record of recurrent "kleine Anfragen" (minor requisition) to the Bundestag (Federal Parliament) by the left-wing party "Die Linke" which can gather quarterly data on police/state statistics. The data given in the answers of the Bundestag are however limited – for years many NGOs or organisations representing Muslims have asked for a special category for Islamophobia in police statistics. So far, any arson attack against a mosque, for instance, is too broadly categorized as 'arson attack'. That way, there are no specific indications about the crime and its intent as a possibly racist incident targeting specifically Muslims or Muslim institutions. For instance, "Die Linke" had asked in one of their "minor interpellations" from November 2015 (Deutscher Bundestag. Drucksache 18/6762: 1-2):

> "However, the full extent of Islamophobia and Islamophobic motivated crimes remain in the dark, because federal and state authorities have refused so far, to expand the catalog of 'hate crime' with a subtopic on 'Islamophobia' or 'anti-Muslim racism' - as particularly Muslim associations and criminologists have demanded for a long time so far – and which is already the case for the sub-theme 'anti-Semitism'" (Bundestagsdrucksachen 17/13686 and 18/1627).

In order to broaden the categorical possibilities, which could include 'anti-Muslim racism' as a criminal offense, it would take the Conference of the Federal Ministers of the Interiors (Innenministerkonferenz) of all states to formally change the acceptable categories police are currently allowed to use. This seems to thus be more of a problem of political will than of legal possibilities.

DITIB – Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs– for instance is the biggest representation of Muslim communities and oversees the majority of mosques in Germany. DITIB combines data from all the aforementioned 'minor interpellations', as well as police statistics, as well as reports given to them from their own mosques and their staff. From 2013 until 2015, the attacks on (DITIB) mosques were 12 in 2013; 73 in 2014; and 77 in 2015. The crimes were verbal abuse (2013:7; 2014:33; 2015:32), vandalism (2013:5; 2014:34; 2015:34) and physical attacks on people (2013:0; 2014:6; 2015:11). When comparing the DITIB data over these three years, a clearly worrisome increase in willed violent behaviour emerges.

The aforementioned data collection centres operate independently from state institutions; however, neither the Registerstellen nor the victim counseling NGOs have a policy of data sharing yet. As for those civil society structures, they are still underfunded and understaffed. It is nonetheless important to have two ways of col-

lecting data: one from the state institutions such as the police and one from civil society centres. This is because there is still widespread distrust toward the police as an institution among marginalised residents and citizens in Germany. Furthermore, the report to the police entails a legal process many are unwilling – for various reasons – to undergo. Many times it is also the case that police does not believe the victims' accounts of what happened to them and some victims in the first instance are primarily looking for a place where people can "understand them" and counsel them. The latter aspects make it important to maintain civil society centres independent from state institutions such as the police. However, in both structures, a yearly report on local and national statistics is a necessity. Needless to say, the condition of absent reporting and missing data erroneously seduces policymakers to believe that there is "no problem".

Gender and the headscarf

A vociferous debate centred on the headscarf has been occuring ever since Muslim women advanced into upper- and middle-class German society. In many circles it has for a long time been debated as a symbol of sexist repression, of political extremism, or simply Islamism, with an underlying argument of incompatibility with German norms.

Such is also the case for the headscarf in public state institutions such as legal institutions, the police and schools. Women who wear a Muslim headscarf have been excluded from all three spheres based on various arguments about 'neutrality' (when representing the state), 'ideological influence' and 'religious symbolism'. The headscarf has been publically and legally debated ever since the case of Fereshta Ludin who went to the Federal Constitutional Court after she was rejected for a teaching position in Baden-Württemberg due to her headscarf. On the issue of the headscarf the Constitutional Court gave legislative rule back to the federal states (2003) and the issue remained nationally unresolved until March 2015.

In March 2015, the Constitutional Court decided to give schools the primary power to decide whether to accept teachers with headscarves or not, if schools deem the person and the headscarf not to be a "direct threat" (konkrete Gefahr) to the school or to the neutrality of the institution. The reception of the new law has been mixed, varying drastically, and it will take some more time to see the impact of the new policy due to the different federal school laws that are in place so far. Some federal states prohibit any religious symbol in schools (Berlin and Bremen); eight states never had laws concerning the headscarf; and Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg and Hessen will probably take issue with the new openness to religious symbolism.[7] The year 2015 then marks an important moment for the ability of headscarf-wearing women who are employees to contest their employment discrimination by being

7. Markus Deggerich, Jan Friedmann, Dietmar Hipp, "Sieg mit Tücken", *Der Spiegel*, 21 March, 2015, last accessed 2 January, 2016, http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-132696516.html

able to appeal to the law. Nordrhein-Westfalia, for instance, has changed its federal law and toppled the general headscarf ban in 2015.

On 3 June, 2015 another famous headscarf debate started in Berlin. Betül Ulusoy, a young law student on her way to the second state examinations, needed to start her legal clerkship and was put on hold – after an initial acceptance of her application without a photo – after her headscarf was seen when she appeared for signing her work contract. That day, she made a public statement about her discrimination on Facebook and the case went viral. Public interest was sparked because she applied to work at Bezirksamt Neukölln (district office of Neukölln), a district famously branded as the centre of the Arab-Turkish 'parallel society' of Berlin, but also because it was formerly administered by the infamous Islamophobic demagogue Heinz Buschkowsky. However, because the district office is precisely not a judicial domain but rather a municipal administrative one, the headscarf ban was without merit, but rather a remnant in the local organisational culture of Buschkowsky's legacy. In the wake of public debate, the district office accused Ulusoy of willfully creating and manipulating a media scandal.[8]

Although Ulusoy was finally offered a post in another state institution in Berlin, the case for young law students wearing the Muslim headscarf remains unresolved. Although the state has the duty to educate the young female-identified students, they will eventually face the normative walls of 'neutrality' still demanded in legal positions where one represents the state such as in a courtroom, etc. This means that young women wearing a headscarf are educated to become lawyers, while the possibilities of them undergoing all legal formative experiences are limited due to the visibility of their headscarf. A gendered, if not even sexist, bias toward religious Muslim women who wear headscarves is visible here – whereas religious (Muslim) men would be able to work in any German state institution, Muslim women are barred from it, even after having received the costly and long education by the state or the city of Berlin.[9] The employment discrimination facing Muslim women who wear the headscarf exceeds the state labour market. As we have seen, contemporary Islamophobia traffics in gendered and racialised discourses. For Muslim women who wish to be employed, this is particularly disadvantageous because gendered and racialised norms regarding the permissibility of the headscarf leave them at the whim of intersecting discriminatory policies and politics.

8. Jost Müller-Neuhof, "Neukölln droht neuer Ärger ums Kopftuch - Der Fall Betül Ulusoy in Berlin", *Der Tagesspiegel*, 18 July, 2015, last accessed 8 January, 2016, http://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/der-fall-betuel-ulusoy-in-berlin-neukoelln-droht-neuer-aerger-ums-kopftuch/12073570.html

9. Marlene Grunert, "Mit Kopftuch im Referendariat - Neutralität im Gericht", *Legal Tribune Online*, 24 February, 2014, last accessed 10 January, 2016, http://www.lto.de/recht/studium-referendariat/s/referendariat-kopftuch-verbot-neutralitaetsgesetz/

Feminism and Islamophobia

A further gendered dimension of Islamophobia finds expression in public anxieties about the 'safety' of German women. This can be understood as the flipside of the anxiety about the headscarf in which a specific ideology about women's agency is negotiated. Such a historical debate reached again another peak on the last day of 2015. Around the main train station in Köln, an unknown group of men reportedly encircled women of varying age groups and robbed them whilst sexually harassing them. This event has ratcheted up Islamophobic vitriol and it will most likely inform future policy and legal affairs in Germany for months and years to follow. The reason to suspect its deep policy significance lies in the strong rhetoric provoked by initial media reports: several commentators and intellectuals jumped to conclusions around "packs of men attacking women" liking it to "Tahrir-like scenes", epitomised in the (white) feminist magazine EMMA, founded by the famous German feminist and writer Alice Schwarzer.[10]

As of mid January, the actual numbers are not clear, yet reports have circled in the national and international press that 1,000 men of "North African" and "Arab" background were involved. The numbers reported in the media vary widely from those of the police who state that so far it could be a group between 3 to 20 men[11], with no consistent evidence about the background of the perpetrators. So far there have been around 400 complains to the police in Köln, with other cities such as Frankfurt, Düsseldorf, Hamburg and Stuttgart following heed. On 9 January there were 31 suspects identified including Germans, Americans, a Serb and 18 asylum seekers from the Middle East.[12]

Henriette Reger, the mayor of Cologne who was stabbed in October during her mayoral campaign by a man for her pro-refugee stance, stated that there is no clear evidence of the identities of the perpetrators.[13] During the first week, the media was criticised for not reporting 'the truth' about the events immediately, but rather tiptoeing around it due to a fear of inflaming anti-refugee sentiments. Another criticism levelled against the media was its sensationally racist portrayal of the situation; for instance, covers such as the one by Focus, which depict a white female figure, naked, with black handprints on her body, a half-open mouth, her

10. Emma, "Frauen berichten EMMA vom Terror", *Emma Online*, ticker, last accessed 7 January, 2016, www.emma.de/artikel/koeln-frauen-berichten-emma-vom-terror-331129

11. Hengameh Yaghoobifarah, "Willkommen in der Hölle, Ladys - Gewalt gegen Frauen", *taz.de*, 6 January, 2016, last accessed 10 January, 2016, http://m.taz.de/Gewalt-gegen-Frauen/!5263311;m/

12. Anna Sauerbrey, "Germany's Post-Cologne Hysteria", New York Times online, 8 January, 2016, last accessed 10 January, 2016, www.nytimes.com/2016/01/09/opinion/germanys-post-cologne-hysteria.html; The Associated Press, "Protests in Cologne After Assaults; Merkel Pledges New Laws", *New York Times online*, 9 January, 2016, last accessed 10 January, 2016, www.nytimes.com/aponline/2016/01/09/world/europe/ap-eu-germany-cologne-crimes.html

13. Kate Connolly, "Tensions rise in Germany over handling of mass sexual assaults in Cologne", *The Guardian online*, 7 January, 2016, last accessed 10 January, 2016, www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/06/tensions-rise-in-germany-over-handling-of-mass-sexual-assaults-in-cologne

body covered by the headlines stating "Women complain. After the sex-attack by migrants: Are we still tolerant or blind already?"

Some critics have pointed out that sexualised violence against women has not been eliminated in Germany. In fact, some claim, that "German rape culture" has been tolerated for a long time. For instance, the example often used is that of the sixteen-day long Oktoberfest. During the German festivities, every day a rape is reported to local police – the shadow numbers are higher – and that figure does not include other forms of sexualised violence and harassment.[14] According to Terre des Femme Germany there are around 160,000 rapes per year with around 8,000 complaints to the police and 1,000 convictions. Overall, according to Terre des Femme, in 2014, the likelihood for a man to be held responsible and persecuted for rape in Germany is thus lower than 1 %.[15] PI-News, however, has already made use of the fear with a logo, which can be downloaded from their homepage stating "Rapefugees not welcome".

In the following weeks, Merkel promised a strengthening of laws that would allow people convicted of felonies (such as rape or burglary) to be summarily deported. Hilal Sezgin wrote in her critique about the way the New Year's Eve incidents were reported and used: "What is of interest [for those in power] is only in what way sexualised violence can be instrumentalised for other topics; in this case it means what the sexist incidents can mean for the acceptance of refugees and [the legalities of] Schengen".[16] Just like narratives about an imported anti-Semitism or homophobia, women's rights are also a site for the consolidation of the claim that the 'Muslim Other' imports dangerous values.

Citizenship and citizen rights vs. cultural norms

A change in German citizenship law was approved in 1999 and came into effect in January 2000. The new law changed the old Wilhelminian jus sanguinis (rights

14. Andi Hörmann, "Bier, Promille und Vergewaltigungen - Aktion 'Sichere Wiesn' will Frauen vor sexueller Gewalt schützen", *Deutschlandradio Kultur*, 22 September, 2014, last accessed 10 January, 2016, http://www.deutschlandradiokultur.de/oktoberfest-bier-promille-und-vergewaltigungen.2156.de.html?dram:article_id=298239

15. Terre des Femmes, "Erfolg: Bundesjustizministerium will Vergewaltigungsparagraf § 177 StGB verschärfen", Archiv, *Terre des Femmes online*, last accessed 10 January, 2016, www.frauenrechte.de/online/index.php/themen-und-aktionen/haeusliche-und-sexualisierte-gewalt/aktuelles/archiv/1640-erfolg-bundesjustizministerium-will-vergewaltigungsparagraf-177-stgb-verschaerfen

16. Hilal Sezgin, "Ich bin es Leid - Sexuelle Übergriffe", *Die Zeit Online*, 6 January, 2016, last accessed 10 January, 2016, www.zeit.de/kultur/2016-01/koeln-sexuelle-uebergriffe-sexismus

based on blood descent) to a jus soli (rights based on territorial descent).[17] Already then, an ethical 'loyalty oath' was added, requiring the support of "a free and democratic order of the Constitution" for citizen applicants.

Ever since the change in citizenship rights, normative claims about possible belonging and assimilation moved into the foreground, such as a zero-tolerance toward sexism or gender bias, as well as homophobia, all being deemed important values upon which citizenship was supposed to be granted (or denied). Back in 2006, Baden-Württemberg proposed a citizenship test asking the person's views on forced marriage, homosexuality and women's rights.[18] The same happened in Hessen in the same year, adding several questions about the Holocaust and Israel, finally asking the applicants to "Explain the term 'Israel's right to existence'."[19] From 2009 onwards, all federal states seemingly erased the already mentioned parameters of moral legitimacy from their tests.[20]

In the third and fourth quarter of 2015, the fear of an 'imported anti-Semitism' due to refugees from predominantly Muslim-majority countries intensified and was publicly discussed. Most of the articles and debates circled around an alleged anti-Semitic and anti-Israel critique that was purported to form part of socialisation in places like Syria and Iraq. Jewish institutions and bodies and German democratic ideals where perceived to be menaced by the new refugee population.[21]

In November 2015, the head of the CDU in Rheinland-Westfalia Julia Klöckner proposed to introduce a contract between 'migrants' (refugees) and 'state' for the next party congress in mid December titled "A plan for integration" (Integrationsplan). Her proposals were accepted and include a cut in social welfare and the possibility of a revocation of the right to stay, if the given 'norms' are violated, including the acceptance of gender equality and homosexuality, the acceptance of

17. The new citizenship law that came into effect in 2000 reduced the residency requirements from 15 to 8 years tied to a valid residence permit, gainful employment, no criminal convictions, as well as the will to give up former citizenship. German language tests became obligatory.

18. Deanne Corbett, "Testing the Limits of Tolerance", *Deutsche Welle Online*, 16 March, 2006, last accessed 10 January, 2016, http://www.dw.com/en/testing-the-limits-of-tolerance/a-1935900

19. Spiegel Online, "Becoming German: Proposed Hesse Citizenship Test", *Spiegel onlin*e, 9 May, 2006, last accessed 9 January, 2016. http://www.spiegel.de/international/becoming-german-proposed-hesse-citizenship-test-a-415242.html The original questions and answers in German are accessible at *Hamburger Abendblatt*, 16 March, 2006, "Deutscher werden? 100 Fragen, 100 Antworten", *abendblatt.de*, last accessed 10 January, 2016. http://www.abendblatt.de/politik/deutschland/article107098676/Deutscher-werden-100-Fragen-100-Antworten.html

20. Einbürgerungstest-online.eu, last accessed 20 January , 2016. http://www.einbuergerungstest-online.eu/fragen/

21. Martin Niewendick, "Sorge fvor neuem Antisemitismus wegen Flüchtlingen - Juden in Berlin", *Der Tagesspiegel online*, 15 October, 2015, last accessed 10 January, 2016, www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/juden-in-berlin-sorge-vor-neuem-antisemitismus-wegen-fluechtlingen/12455444.html; Michael Brenner, "Bringen die Flüchtlinge mehr Antisemitismus nach Deutschland?" 20 September, 2015, *Süddeutsche Zeitung Online*, last accessed 10 January, 2016, www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur/debatte-bringen-die-fluechtlinge-mehr-antisemitismus-nach-deutschland-1.2655933;
FAZ, "Schuster warnt vor mehr Antisemitismus durch muslimische Flüchtlinge - Zentralrat der Juden", 8 October, 2015, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung online*, last accessed 10 January, 2016, www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/fluechtlingskrise/zentralrat-der-juden-schuster-warnt-vor-mehr-antisemitismus-durch-muslimische-fluechtlinge-13846554.html

German legal supremacy above Sharia law, the support for Israel's right to exist as well as the rejection of "any form of anti-Semitism" (CDU, 15.12.2015).[22] This latter aspect of anti-Semitism included "any form of anti-Semitism" that could be seen in the culmination of various events, most recent of which was the war against Gaza in 2014. During this war, Merkel publicly stated that "the recent alleged critique against the politics of the state of Israel uttered on pro-Palestinian demonstrations, were nothing but the expression of hatred against Jews […]" (Merkel, 2014).[23] In 2015, it seems Merkel's statement has hardened into national policy with respect to refugees and in conjunction to rising Islamophobia.

Islamophobia and the so-called 'refugee crisis'

The EASY-System of the Ministry for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) has estimated that around 1 million people were registered as refugees in Germany in 2015. Reports in Germany switch between reporting a "flood", a "migrant crisis" or a "refugee crisis". Throughout the year, the immigration of people primarily from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan has led to physical, material and verbal attacks throughout Germany. To give a satisfying overview is not possible in this report and we will confine ourselves to the analysis of only two events. To this date, there is also no truly reliable nationwide overview of all attacks against refugees or asylums. Until October 2015, there have been around 850 attacks on refugee asylum homes and in the third quarter of the year, 13 people have been injured in those attacks.[24] In 2014, the Amadeo Antonio Foundation and PRO ASYL have counted 153 attacks on refugee asylum homes.[25] The pogrom-like demonstrations and violent events in 2015 have been compared to the events lasting several days right after German unification[26] (1989-1991) in Hoyerswerda (1991); the years of unification were marked by the massive outbreak of racist violence. Hoyerswerda became the synonym for racist mobs attacking refugees or migrant workers and their homes.

Over the course of several weeks, the city of Heidenau in Saxony has seen the mobilisation of racist demonstrations starting in August 2015. The strongest erup-

22. CDU, 28. Parteitag, Karlsruhe, "*Beschluss. Karlsruher Erklärung zu Terror und Sicherheit, Flucht und Integration*", 14-15 December, 2015, last accessed 10 January, 2016, https://www.cdu.de/system/tdf/media/dokumente/beschluss-karlsruher-erklaerung.pdf?file=1&type =field_ collection_item&id=3888

23.Die Bundesregierung, "*Rede von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel anlässlich der Kundgebung des Zentralrats der Juden in Deutschland gegen Antisemitismus am 14. September in Berlin*", 14 September, 2014, last accessed 10 January, 2016, www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Rede/2014/09/2014-09-14-merkel-kundgebung-judenhass.html

24. Deutscher Bundestag. "Übergriffe auf Flüchtlingsunterkünfte. Inneres/Antwort", *Bundestag Online*, 16 November, 2015, last accessed 10 January, 2016, https://www.bundestag.de/presse/hib/2015-11/-/395984

25. Mut gegen Rechts. Meldung. "*Rechte Hetze gegen Flüchtlinge - Eine Chronik der Gewalt 2014*", 31.12.2014, last accessed 9 February, 2016. https://www.mut-gegen-rechte-gewalt.de/news/meldung/rechte-hetze-gegen-fluechtlinge-eine-chronik-der-gewalt-2014-03

26. Matthias Meisner and Lars Radau, "Vergleiche mit Hoyerswerda sind angebracht - Anti-Asyl-Proteste in Freital", *Die Zeit Online*, 23 June, 2015, last accessed 10 January, 2016, http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2015-06/freital-fluechtlinge-asyl-proteste

tion of violence happened at the end of August, when around 1,000 demonstrators marched through the city, finally blocking the street on which 600 refugee seekers were brought. The unrest erupted in violence when the mob attacked the police protecting the refugees on their way into the asylum home, leaving 31 police officers injured and one of them with severe wounds.[27]

In June 2015, upon arrival of a few hundred refugees, Freital (Saxony) attracted media attention due to the intensity of anti-refugee violence; the city had already witnessed clashes between opponents and supporters of an asylum home for months. The city also became the scene of a stand-off between the German Minister of the Interior Thomas de Maizière, amongst others, and 'concerned citizens' on the other side, along with supporters by the PEGIDA movement (including their then-main organisers Lutz Bachmann and Tatjana Festerling), representatives of the neo-liberal conservative party AFD and the right-wing party NPD. People critical of the anti-refugee sentiments were screamed down and verbally harassed to "shut up".[28] Violent fantasies such as burning buses with refuges were expressed online and on the Facebook homepage of PEGIDA.[29]

The continuing influx of asylum seekers into Germany, the majority of whom come from predominantly Muslim countries, has granted Islamophobia a licence to operate under ostensibly reasonable and legitimate concerns around the Muslim 'Other' and Islam writ large. The year 2015 saw Islamophobia become an undeniable force within German society.

CONCLUSION

Policy recommendations

There remains much to be done in terms of institutional mapping of Islamophobic incidents, as well as in supporting those people, institutions and NGOs already working on the intersections of education, statistical mapping and counseling. For this important work, the categories of 'Islamophobia' or 'anti-Muslim racism' are necessary instruments. The intersections between the influx of asylum seekers and refugees and an already existing and longstanding Islamophobia should be better analysed and tackled by government authorities. The inherent sexism in the slow legal progress toward headscarf-wearing Muslim women should be seen as such, tackled and worked against. Feminists, women and LGBTGQI NGOs should be supported

27. Matthias Meisner, "Der braune Mob von Heidenau - Flüchtlinge", *Die Zeit Online*, 22 August, 2015, last accessd 10 January, 2016, http://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2015-08/heidenau-fluechtlinge-ausschreitungen-polizei

28. Zeit Online, "Tumulte bei Bürgerversammlung in Freital - Flüchtlinge", *Die Zeit Online*, 7 July, 2015, last accessed 10 January, 2016, http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2015-07/freital-buergerversammlung-tumulte

29. Peter Maxwill, "Streit über Asylbewerberheim in Freitag: Pöbel-Pingpong im Pegida-Land", *Spiegel Online*, 25 June, 2015, last accessed 10 January, 2016, http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/fluechtlingsheim-in-freital-poebel-pingpong-im-pegidaland-a-1040544.html

in breaking down the violent and false portrayal of women/feminist/LGBTQI issues as being diametrically opposed to racism issues.

Below are further policy recommendations to ameliorate the context of contemporary Germany:

- Registerstellen (victims' registrars) must be implemented in all federal states. They should be kept separate from state institutions. Forms of categorisations must be standardised and include the category of Islamophobia/anti-Muslim racism as already happened in Berlin in 2015.
- Opferberatungsstellen (victims' counseling services) must also be extended in all federal states.
- Registerstellen and Opferberatungsstellen should be in close proximity to each other, if not even in the same agency in order to facilitate timely data exchange, devoid of victim shaming.
- The introduction of the category 'Islamophobia/Anti-Muslim Racism' in all national statistics including police and legal statistics.
- National and local statistics by state authorities have to be routinely and annually presented to the public.
- Police and legal authorities have to be sensitised to Islamophobia.
- There is dire need of better logistics of refugee registration and housing.
- The state has to guarantee bodily safety to refugees.
- State funds must also be allocated for security personal to guard mosques and other Muslim institutions as it is already the case for Jewish institutions and synagogues.
- Legislators must swiftly and comprehensively address the civil rights violations experience by headscarf-wearing women.
- Reform of the traineeship possibilities for young legal students with headscarves.
- In order to avoid the media debacle of New Year's Eve, funds must be allocated for a media watchdog, independant from the state, that monitors media reportage in real time and with specific foci such as Islamophobia, homophobia, etc.
- It is pressing that feminist, women's and LGBTQI institutions are supported in their effort to confront the instrumentalisation and misuses of their causes by anti-Muslim racists.
- Migrant and LGBTQI of colour, women's and feminist NGOs should receive proper funding for staff and institutional infrastructure, in order for them to broaden and strengthen their impact in terms of educational training and publications.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN GREECE
NATIONAL REPORT 2015

ALEXANDROS SAKELLARIOU

THE AUTHOR

Dr Alexandros Sakellariou is a post-doctoral researcher at Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences of Athens. He holds a PhD on Sociology from Panteion University. He studied at the School of Philosophy of the University of Athens and he obtained his M.A. from Panteion University. He has worked as a researcher in a 4 year research project on young people's socio-political engagement MYPLACE 2011-2015 (Memory, Youth, Political Legacy and Civic Engagement. He currently works in two European research projects on young people's well-being, MYWEB (Measuring Youth Well-Being); and on the evaluation of innovative policies, InnoSI (Innovative Social Policies: Strengthening Communities in Europe). His scientific interests include among others politics and religion, religious communities in Greek society, religious freedom, religion and globalization, youth activism and civic participation, and right-wing extremism. He is a member of the Network against the far-right of the Athens Friedrich Ebert Foundation. Since 2014 he is a co-author of the national report regarding Islam in Greece for the Yearbook of Muslims in Europe (Brill). sociology.panteion@gmail.com

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions. No representation, either expressed or implied, is made of the accuracy of the material in the national reports. The editors of the European Islamophobia Report cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The reader must make his or her own evaluation of the accuracy and appropriateness of the material.

To cite this report: Alexandros Sakellariou (2016): *Islamophobia in Greece: National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines Islamophobia in Greece during 2015 taking under consideration all the European and global developments that might have influenced the appearance or the rise of Islamophobia, including the refugee and migrant flows, the rise of Daesh/ISIL and the terrorist attacks in Paris, to mention the most important ones. The report is based on data collected from electronic media, the press, the Internet, communication with NGOs (e.g. The Hellenic League for Human Rights), with the General Secretariat for Human Rights of the Ministry of Justice, and from interviews with people specialising on Islam in Greece. Furthermore, interviews were conducted with representatives of Muslim groups and organisations.

Islamophobia in Greece is present in specific fields, for example the far right and particularly the neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn and in other circles such as parts of the Orthodox Church of Greece. The Greek authorities cannot be characterised as Islamophobic, but due to their inability to implement the existing legislation, e.g. on the construction of an official mosque in Athens, they are perceived as such. According to the existing data and information, Islamophobia is marginal in education, in the workplace and in the justice system, but seems to be on the rise in the media, the Internet and social media, which are privileged places for such views to flourish.

On the counter-Islamophobia level a central state policy is lacking and there have been only secondary and fragmented initiatives. This vacuum could be addressed through principal measures taken towards confronting Islamophobia. First of all, there is a need for an observatory authority that will monitor and record Islamophobic incidents either of violent character or on the level of public discourse. Especially for schools and for the media this vacuum is crucial. Seminars could be organised for groups of civil servants, who have frequent contacts with Muslims, like police officers, coastguards, migration officers, but also for journalists who directly or indirectly might reproduce Islamophobic views. The Orthodox Church of Greece could also play a crucial role, ceasing to reproduce or accept Islamophobic views and ideas and taking a firm moderate stance on the issue. Overall, the lack of knowledge about Islam seems to play a fundamental role in the emergence of Islamophobia; this lack causes people to turn to other sources of information and this may have serious implications in their understanding of Islam.

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ ΣΤΑ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΑ

Η παρούσα έκθεση εξετάζει την Ισλαμοφοβία στην Ελλάδα για το έτος 2015 λαμβάνοντας υπόψη όλα τα σημαντικά γεγονότα τα οποία έλαβαν χώρα σε ευρωπαϊκό και παγκόσμιο επίπεδο και τα οποία ενδεχομένως να συνέβαλαν στην εμφάνιση ή στην αύξηση της Ισλαμοφοβίας, όπως οι μεταναστευτικές και προσφυγικές ροές, που κορυφώθηκαν στη διάρκεια της χρονιάς, η ενίσχυση του λεγόμενου Ισλαμικού κράτους, αλλά και οι τρομοκρατικές επιθέσεις στο Παρίσι (Ιανουάριος και Νοέμβριος). Το υλικό που παρουσιάζεται στην έκθεση προέρχεται από τα ηλεκτρονικά ΜΜΕ, τον τύπο, το διαδίκτυο και τα κοινωνικά δίκτυα, επικοινωνία με ΜΚΟ (π.χ. την Ελληνική Ένωση για τα Δικαιώματα του Ανθρώπου), με τη Γενική Γραμματεία Ανθρωπίνων Δικαιωμάτων του Υπουργείου Δικαιοσύνης, αλλά και από συνεντεύξεις με ειδικούς σχετικά με το Ισλάμ στην Ελλάδα. Επίσης, διενεργήθηκαν συνεντεύξεις με εκπροσώπους Μουσουλμανικών ομάδων και οργανώσεων.

Το κύριο συμπέρασμα της έκθεσης είναι ότι η Ισλαμοφοβία στην Ελλάδα διαπιστώνεται, κυρίως, σε συγκεκριμένους κύκλους, όπως για παράδειγμα στους χώρους της ακροδεξιάς και ειδικότερα στο κόμμα της Χρυσής Αυγής, αλλά και σε άλλες ακροδεξιές ομάδες, καθώς και σε χώρους, όπως η Ορθόδοξη Εκκλησία, όπου καταγράφεται στον δημόσιο λόγο ορισμένων Μητροπολιτών. Από την άλλη μεριά οι ελληνικές κρατικές αρχές δεν χαρακτηρίζονται από Ισλαμοφοβικές απόψεις, τουλάχιστον όχι σε κεντρικό επίπεδο. Παρά ταύτα η κωλυσιεργεία τους στην εφαρμογή νόμων, όπως εκείνου για την κατασκευή ενός Ισλαμικού τεμένους στην Αθήνα, που έχει ψηφιστεί από το 2006 και ακόμα εκκρεμεί, ενδέχεται να δημιουργεί την εντύπωση ότι βασίζεται σε Ισλαμοφοβικές αντιλήψεις. Με τα υπάρχοντα ελλιπή δεδομένα, η Ισλαμοφοβία φαίνεται να είναι περιθωριακή στους χώρους της εκπαίδευσης, της εργασίας και της δικαιοσύνης. Από την άλλη μεριά φαίνεται να έχει ισχυρά ερείσματα και να αυξάνεται στα ΜΜΕ, στο διαδίκτυο και στα μέσα κοινωνικής δικτύωσης, τα οποία αποτελούν εύφορους χώρους για την ανάπτυξη και την καλλιέργεια αυτών των απόψεων.

Ως προς την αντιμετώπιση της Ισλαμοφοβίας απουσιάζει μια κεντρική κρατική πολιτική και λαμβάνουν χώρα μόνο δευτερεύουσες και αποσπασματικές δράσεις από ιδιωτικούς και δημόσιους φορείς. Μεταξύ των πιθανών δράσεων θα μπορούσαν να είναι η δημιουργία ενός κοινού ή περισσότερων παρατηρητηρίων για την καταγραφή Ισλαμοφοβικού λόγου και πράξεων στους χώρους της εκπαίδευσης, της εργασίας και των ΜΜΕ, διότι διαπιστώνεται ότι υπάρχει ένα σημαντικό κενό. Η διοργάνωση σεμιναρίων για δημοσιογράφους και δημόσιους υπαλλήλους που έρχονται σε επαφή με Μουσουλμάνους, όπως οι αστυνομικοί, οι λιμενικοί, υπάλληλοι των γραφείων μετανάστευσης, θα ήταν μια άλλη πρόταση προς εφαρμογή . Επίσης, η Ορθόδοξη Εκκλησία θα μπορούσε να διαδραματίσει έναν σημαντικό ρόλο ελέγχοντας και εμποδίζοντας την αναπαραγωγή Ισλαμοφοβικού λόγου από συγκεκριμένους Μητροπολίτες και λαμβάνοντας μια περισσότερο μετριοπαθή στάση. Συνολικά, θα μπορούσε να υποστηριχθεί ότι η έλλειψη γνώσης για το Ισλάμ, φαίνεται να αποτελεί σημαντικό παράγοντα για την άνοδο της Ισλαμοφοβίας καθώς σε συνδυασμό με τις διεθνείς εξελίξεις στρέφει τους ανθρώπους σε άλλες αμφιλεγόμενες πηγές πληροφόρησης, προκειμένου να ενημερωθούν και αυτό ενδέχεται να έχει σοβαρές επιπτώσεις στην κατανόηση του Ισλάμ.

INTRODUCTION

When talking about Islamophobia in Greece, it is crucial to have in mind that debates on Islam are deeply rooted in and strongly intertwined with the experience of a long Ottoman occupation and its collective interpretations. The Ottoman rule was a serious trauma and crucial juncture in the creation of the collective identity of the Greek people and the Ottoman past is still present in the predominant memories of the national self and 'Other'. This was moreover bolstered by ongoing conflicts between Greece and Turkey such as the Greek-Turkish war of 1897, the 'Asia Minor Catastrophe' of 1922 and the Turkish intervention in Cyprus in 1974, as well as more recent crises during the 1980s and 1990s. As a consequence, despite all the contemporary developments that are related with the rise of 'radical Islam', this historical past should always be taken under consideration when it comes to the issue of Islamophobia in the country.

In Greece there are three main fields that have played a crucial role in the reproduction of Islamophobia in the public domain: the political field, i.e. political parties and organisations mainly of the right and the far right; the religious field, i.e. certain Church figures of the Orthodox Church of Greece; and finally the media.

This report is based on various data that were collected during 2015 and takes under consideration European and global events that might have influenced the appearance or the rise of Islamophobia. The collected material came from electronic media, the press, the Internet, communication with NGOs[1] (e.g. Amnesty International/Greek division and The Hellenic League for Human Rights), the General Secretariat for Human Rights of the Ministry of Justice, and from interviews conducted with people specialising on Islam in Greece and whose views on the issue could be useful. Finally, interviews were conducted with representatives of Muslim groups and organisations. However, it is almost impossible to cover every aspect of the issue and moreover collect every single existing material on Islamophobia especially when it comes to the Internet. This report's main goal is to map Islamophobia in Greece covering the main fields (education, workplace, media, politics, justice, etc.) and examine the gaps in policies towards countering anti-Islamic discourse and attitudes.

SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN GREECE DURING 2015

There are three main developments that have influenced discourses and attitudes about Islam in Greece during the year under review. The first was the issue of the construction of an official Islamic mosque in Athens. The problem of the construction

1. Following research it has emerged that NGOs do not have any data regarding Islamophobia in Greece - an issue that has to be addressed since such a data collection mechanism could be useful.

of a central mosque in Athens dates back to the 1970s.[2] Given the lack of a proper mosque in Athens, Muslims operate prayer houses on their own in former warehouses or basements of buildings. In the past some researchers have argued that there were around sixty such prayer houses[3] while more recent estimates put their number at around 100 all over the country.[4] All these unofficial and in many cases illegal places are situated in neighbourhoods near the centre of Athens, where most migrants live. The first official prayer house in Athens was established in the early 1990s, on the roof of a luxury hotel located in the city centre and served the devotional needs of Muslim businessmen from the Middle East.[5] There have been at least five laws since 1890 on this issue, the latest voted in 2006 and followed by various amendments. To this day, however, the mosque has not yet been constructed. During 2015, the new left government decided to proceed with the construction of the official mosque and in that direction voted an amendment of the existing legislation regarding certain technical issues. This caused furious debates in the public sphere and in parliament, especially by the far right, which will be discussed in the following sections. The majority of MPs have agreed on these amendments; those who reacted and didn't vote in their favour were the MPs of GD and of Independent Greeks (ANEL). All other MPs from the left, the communist party, the conservative party (New Democracy), the socialists (PASOK) and the centre (Potami) voted in favour of the amendment. In these debates MPs of all parties argued that the construction of the mosque is a necessity and that the Greek state has delayed proceeding with its establishment.

The second major event was, and of course still is, the so-called 'refugee crisis' that started in the spring and escalated during the summer. It has to be noted that during the first eight months of 2015 more than 700,000 refugees and migrants came to Greece searching for a path to other European destinations[6] while in December this number reached 800,000.[7] This development was used by political agents, particularly of the far right, who immediately connected the migration/refuge issue with Islam.

The third event - or actually two events - has been the attacks in Paris, the first in January and the second in November 2015. These events had an immediate impact

2. Konstantinos Tsitselikis, "Religious Freedom of Immigrants: The Case of Muslims," in *Greece of Immigration*, eds. Miltos Pavlou and Dimitris Christopoulos, (Athens: Kritiki, 2004), 267-302 [in Greek].

3. Mehmet Imam and Olga Tsakiridou, *Muslims and Social Exclusion* (Athens: Livanis, 2003) [in Greek].

4. Personal interview with the President of the Pakistani-Hellenic Cultural Association conducted on 23 July, 2015 in Athens.

5. Dimitris Antoniou, "Muslim Immigrants in Greece: Religious Organization and Local Responses", *Immigrants & Minorities*, 22 (2-3) (2003): 165.

6. For more information see the UNHCR database http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/country.php?id=83, accessed 29 December, 2015.

7. For more information see the IOM http://www.iom.int/news/irregular-migrant-refugee-arrivals-europe-top-one-million-2015-iom, accessed 22 December, 2015.

on the Greek context. After these attacks the rise of Islamophobic discourse was obvious in the media and in other fields (e.g. among politicians and Church figures), a fact that is highlighted in this report. Especially the attack in November was linked to the so-called 'refugee crisis' since, as it was argued, some of the suicide bombers entered France through Greece as Syrian refugees or had travelled to Greece in the past before the attacks. This interconnection gave rise to various voices asking for the country's protection from the thousands of migrants and refugees that are Muslims in their vast majority, implying that terrorist attacks are possible in the future in the case that some of them were to remain in Greece.

DISCUSSION OF ISLAMOPHOBIC INCIDENTS AND DISCURSIVE EVENTS

Employment

There have not been any reports of Islamophobic attitudes in the field of employment in Greece. Muslims themselves mentioned in the interviews conducted for this report that they don't face such issues in their workplace. The only issues raised are related to the lack of flexibility from the part of their employers regarding the exercise of their religious duties, namely prayer and especially the Friday prayer. It is highly possible that discriminations in the workplace are mostly related with the migrant identity first and foremost and secondly, if any, with the religious identity of the person involved.

Education

Education is also a field where no data is available since the Ministry of Education lacks an observatory authority on issues related to religious discrimination in schools. Sporadic references are made about verbal disputes among students of different religions, but again no specific data is available and no conclusions can be drawn. Though the Orthodox religion has a central and dominant place in Greek schools including the curriculum, Islam has a separate, albeit marginal, place in school religious textbooks and generally is presented in an objective way. However, Islam receives negative connotations when it comes to history textbooks, since it is directly related with the Ottoman past and the Greek-Turkish relations, and this was evident especially in the past.[8]

Politics

Islamophobia has played a crucial role in the political domain in 2015 and is linked to two critical issues that are still causing ferocious debates in the Greek public

8. Loris Koullapis, "The presentation of the period 1071-1923 in Greek and Turkish textbooks between 1950-2000*", Internationale Schulbuchforschung, Das Osmanische Reich im Schulbuch/The Ottoman Empire in Textbooks* 24 (3) (2002): 279-304.

sphere. The first one is the issue of the construction of an official mosque in Athens and the second is the issue of the migrant and refugee waves - the two issues are usually interconnected.

The major player in this field is Golden Dawn (hearafter GD) a far right political party with neo-Nazi ideology. GD's power and electoral success erupted at the peak of the economic crisis in 2012, but the first signs were obvious earlier in the 2010 local elections when the party gained 5.29 % of the votes and elected a city counsellor in Athens. In the 2012 June elections, GD succeeded in winning 6.92 % of the votes and gaining 18 seats in the Greek Parliament, while in the first elections in May it won 6.97 % of votes and 21 seats. In January 2015, GD won 6.28 % of the votes and 17 seats, while in September 2015 it won 6.99 %t of the votes and 18 seats. In the European elections of 2014, GD scored its highest percentage with 9.39 % and 3 seats in the European Parliament. Regarding the issue of the construction of a mosque in Athens during the relevant discussions in the Greek Parliament in May, a GD MP argued that, if the mosque is built, Greece will become Islamised and Greeks will listen to the muezzin from the minarets experiencing in this way a new Ottoman rule. GD thus argues that it will fight against the Islamisation of Greece, a course that contradicts Greek tradition and culture.[9] The party also complained against the government in regards to the migration/refugee issue:

> "You [the government] want to eliminate values like fatherland, religion, family, Orthodoxy. You are the best companion of our enemy, Turkey, which is very happy seeing hundreds of thousands of illegal migrants coming to Greece."[10]

In May 2015, after the government passed an amendment for the existing legislation on the mosque of Athens, GD reacted and voted against it. They also declared their disagreement during their annual commemoration rally for the fall of Constantinople on May 29.[11] Furthermore they declared their negative stance through the party's official newspaper. (Figure 1)

During the electoral campaign of the second elections of 2015, in September, a GD MP, Ilias Kasidiaris, during his visit in the island of Kos, where thousands of migrants and refugees were arriving, argued that the citizens of Kos should vote for GD if they don't want their island to become "Pakistan",[12] referring to a place full of Muslims. This kind of rhetoric is very common in the party's public discourse and is used to intimidate society and present Islam and Muslims as a threat to Greece, to

9. Parliament Proceedings, 27 April 2015, Session ΚΗ [28], 49; Parliament Proceedings, 8 May 2015, Session ΛΗ [38], 264.

10. Parliament Proceedings, Session ΞΒ [62], 24 June 2015, 336.

11. Golden Dawn, "The Hellenic Dawn for Athens Says a Sound NO to the Mosque in Votanikos", accessed 30 December, 2015, http://www.xryshaygh.com/enimerosi/view/hchhro-ochi-ths-ellhnikhs-aughs-gia-thn-athhna-sto-tzami-sto-botaniko.

12. Stohos, "If You Vote for SYRIZA You Will Become Pakistani",26 August, 2015, accessed 14 December, 2015, http://www.stoxos.gr/2015/08/blog-post_6624.html.

the country's sovereignty and national identity. The same arguments were presented in September 2015 during a discussion in the Municipal Council of Athens, where GD is present since 2010. In this discussion the mayor of Athens was accused of supporting 'illegal' migrants and turning huge parts of Athens into "Islamabad".[13]

Figure 1: The official Newspaper of GD. The headline reads "A mosque in Greece? Neither in Athens, nor in any other place!"

Throughout the year, as in the previous ones, and on a regular basis, GD reproduced this kind of Islamophobic discourse through the party's official website, especially in regards to the aforementioned critical issues, but also after any terrorist attack in Europe or other Western societies by the members of the so-called 'Islamic State' or other radical groups. More references to this kind of discourse will be presented in the relevant section on cyberspace.

However, it is not only GD that equates migrants and refugees with the threat of Islam thus reproducing a sense of panic about Islam and Muslims. During this summer a moderate MP of the conservative right-wing party Nea Dimocratia (New Democracy), Nikitas Kaklamanis, argued through his Twitter account that what takes place on the Greek islands is not an influx of migrants, but a guided invasion of Islamists.[14] Anti-Muslim discourse was also expressed by MPs of the right-wing party of New Democracy during the discussion on the Mosque of Athens arguing that Muslims are against the Western way of life.[15] Furthermore, MPs of ANEL (Independent Greeks, a right-wing populist party which participates in the coalition government with the left), similarly argued that Muslims can't be acculturated and cannot adjust to Greek society.[16] Christos Nikolopoulos, who is now an independent MP but was formerly an MP of ANEL, also argued that through refugees Islam threatens to alter the Christian synthesis of the Greek and European populations.[17]

13. Golden Dawn, "Kasidiaris to Kaminis: You Turned Athens into Islamabad", accessed 14 December, 2015. http://www.xryshaygh.com/enimerosi/view/kasidiarhs-se-kaminh-ekanes-thn-athhna-islamampant...-eisai-lathrodhmarchos.

14. Newsit, "Nikitas Kaklamanis: A Guided Landing of Islamists is Taking Place in Our Islands", accessed 14 December, 2015, http://www.newsit.gr/politikh/Nikitas-Kaklamanis-Sta-nisia-mas-ginetai-kateythynomeni-apovasi-islamiston-/425307.

15. Parliament Proceedings, 24 June 2015, Session ΞΒ [62], 71.

16. Parliament Proceedings, 12 May 2015, Session Μ [40], 176.

17. See http://www.nikosnikolopoulos-anatropi.gr/?section=14954&language=el_GR&itemid751=5076&itemid730=19237&detail730=1, accessed 8 February, 2016.

Islamophobic discourse is central in the far right political circles but marginal in other political formations. However, there isn't a strong opposition to these Islamophobic views and the majority of other parties are mostly silent, with the minor exception of some MPs of the left and the Communist Party, who oppose labelling migrants and refugees as 'dangerous' and 'terrorists'. Nevertheless, in the course of 2015 and based on the political developments, politicians especially of the conservative party - moderate ones and not ones with an extremist background - have more frequently expressed Islamophobic opinions. It seems that probably due to the strengthening of GD, right-wing parties are trying to follow their xenophobic agenda in order to maintain their political power, especially in areas where many migrants and refugees are living or arriving.

Media

Before referring to the Islamophobic discourse that has been reproduced through the media in Greece during 2015, the lack of an observatory authority that would monitor all media (television, radio, Internet and the press) and document possible cases of anti-Islamic discourse, has to be noted.

In some cases, like the crash of the airplane of German Wings in the Alps in March 2015, a mainstream television station (Mega Channel) in the first two days of the incident reproduced unconfirmed rumours that the plane might have been crashed by Islamists or that the co-pilot was suspected of having links with Daesh/ISIL. Of course, this was directly related to the international climate of fear of Islam: it was first reported in international media and only taken up by the Greek media, which, it has to be noted, follows international precedents. The majority of TV stations in 2015 reproduced for the most part news and videos of the violent acts of Daesh/ISIL, e.g. propaganda videos of decapitations, of other forms of execution, of the military training of children, the destruction of antiquities, etc. In opposition to these barbaric acts, there was an almost complete lack of positive images of Islam.

Apart from TV stations, certain newspapers focused primarily on the supposed 'violent character of Islam', especially after the two terrorist attacks in Paris, in January and November 2015. The majority of the articles or news reports dealt exclusively with the brutal acts of Daesh/ISIL, thus creating and reproducing the image that Islam and Muslims are violent. In addition, the majority of mainstream media usually relate the issue of the flows of migrants and refugees with Islam and the threat their presence might pose for the country. In contrary to this, only a few articles in the press in 2015 presented alternative images.[18]

Mainstream newspapers host views of columnists who reproduce Islamophobic discourse. After the November attack in Paris a well-known author who has

18. Olga, Klontza, "After Paris You Will See Us with Suspicion", *To Vima*, 22 November, 2015, accessed 14 December, 2015, http://www.tovima.gr/politics/article/?aid=755951 and Maria, Louka, "Islam in Greece", *To Vima*, 19 October, 2015, accessed 14 December, 2015. http://www.tovima.gr/vimagazino/views/article/?aid=746397.

spoken against Islam and the multicultural model before, wrote a brief article in the newspaper Athens Voice attacking Islam. In this article she argued that Islam is not a religion like every other, that its nature is warlike and envious and that it is a political programme and an ideology of barbarisation. Furthermore, she argued that moderate Muslims are very rare if any and she added that she agrees with a saying of Marco Polo, that a fanatic Muslim is the one who cuts your head, while a moderate one holds your head for it to be cut. In her view, Islam is monolithic and has remained the same since the Middle Ages and the West should react against this threat.[19] She expressed similar views in her interview in a mainstream newspaper, Kathimerini, about two weeks later, supporting the argument that violence is an endogenous problem of Islam and that it is Muslims' fault that they were unable to be incorporated in Western societies.[20]

Another well-known columnist in the same newspaper, Kathimerini, argued that despite the fact that Islam should not be completely identified with terrorism it is clear that it is closely related with terrorism, arguing that the answer to the question of why young Muslims are becoming violent is not an issue of inequalities but of the religion of Islam and of the imams and their preaching. He additionally argued that not all cultures and civilisations are able to evolve and surpass these fundamentalist trends that exist in every religion, implying that Islam belongs to this category. He wondered where these peaceful Muslims everyone mentions are and why they are not reacting.[21]

Figure 2: Front page of Eleftheri Ora (16 November, 2015) a few days after the attack in Paris. Among others we read "Be prepared for defence and survival! You have no idea the hell Greece will face!"

On the other hand, what should be underlined is that newspapers of the far right, like, among others, the official newspaper of GD that was mentioned above, present a clear Islamophobic discourse. The far right newspaper Eleftheri Ora (Free Hour), for example, has used headlines like the following when referring to Islam: "Islam declared war on Europe"; "The antichrist will come from

19. http://www.athensvoice.gr/article/city-news-voices/%CF%80%CE%BF%CE%BB%CE%B9%CF%84%CE%B9% CE%BA%CE%B7/rock-and-roll-will-never-die, accessed 14 December, 2015.

20. Sissy, Alonistiotou, "Moderate Islam is a Myth", *Kathimerini, Arts & Letters*, 29 November, 2015, 4.

21. Takis, Theodoropoulos, "Imam's Language", *Kathimerini*, 19 November, 2015, accessed 14 December, 2015, http://www.kathimerini.gr/839161/opinion/epikairothta/politikh/h-glwssa-toy-imamh and Takis, Theodoropoulos, "What about Islam's Responsibilities?" *Kathimerini*, 18 November, 2015, accessed 14 December, 2015. http://www.kathimerini.gr/839026/opinion/epikairothta/politikh/kai-oi-ey8ynes-toy-islam.

ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΗ ΩΡΑ

ΤΡΙΤΗ

ΕΝΘΕΤΟ ΕΓΚΛΗΜΑΤΑ ΠΟΥ ΣΥΓΚΛΟΝΙΣΑΝ ΕΛΛΑΔΑ ΚΑΙ ΚΟΣΜΟ

ΤΟΥΡΚΙΚΟ ΓΕΩΤΡΥΠΑΝΟ ΣΤΟ ΑΙΓΑΙΟ!

ΕΓΚΛΗΜΑΤΑ

ΕΛΛΗΝΕΣ ΞΥΠΝΑΤΕ ΚΑΙ ΔΕΙΤΕ ΠΟΙΟΥΣ ΨΗΦΙΣΑΤΕ

ΡΑΒΙΝΟΣ ΙΜΑΜΗΣ ΚΑΙ... ΤΣΙΠΡΑΣ ΙΣΛΑΜΟΠΟΙΟΥΝ ΤΗΝ ΕΛΛΑΔΑ!

Figure 3: "A rabbi, an imam and Tsipras [the Greek PM] are Islamising Greece", Eleftheri Ora (22 September, 2015).

Islam"; "The massacre of the Europeans by the Islamo-Fascists just began: Hell is coming for Greece" and "Illegal migrants in Kos were shouting Jihad-Jihad".

Another far right newspaper Empros (Forward) continuously reproduces such views and ideas on Islam directly connecting the migrant-refugee issue with terrorism and violence, with headlines like "Greece in the mercy of Islamists: Mosques are nurseries for terrorists".[22]

From the above examples, which are just a fraction of the whole, we can conclude that not only the circles of the far right or other extremists are currently expressing Islamophobic views, but also people from the political centre and columnists of mainstream media.

Justice system

There are no laws and regulations with an Islamophobic background in the Greek justice system. On the contrary, with the anti-racist law of 2014 anyone who publicly, through the Internet or the press excites or incites others to acts of violence, discrimination or hatred based on religion, among others, is punished with a fine and imprisonment. However, the non-implementation of the law in regards to the construction of a mosque seems to reproduce inequality regarding religion in Greek society. Keeping in mind the aforementioned debate in Greek parliament on the construction of a mosque in Athens, it would appear that this issue has been used for Islamophobic purposes especially by the far right. It should be stressed, though, that according to other views the delays in the mosque's construction are unrelated to Islamophobia and are a result of state bureaucracy. Thus, although the state has decided on the construction, the implementation of the law might find various obstacles either technical such as permits or financial such as lack of funding.

Cyberspace

Cyberspace is the place where one can find a variety of anti-Islamic views but at the same time it is very difficult to study and monitor every website, Facebook page, blog or Twitter account. As it might be expected websites and blogs of the far right

22. Golden Dawn, "Read the Newspaper Empros Published on Saturday 10, 2015", accessed 14 December, 2015, http://www.xryshaygh.com/enimerosi/view/diabaste-sto-empros-pou-kukloforei-to-sabbato-10-ianouariou-2015.

are dominated by Islamophobic views, particularly connected with the flows of migrants and refugees and with the terrorist attacks that took place during 2015 in Paris. Because of the quantity of the material, only a random selection of cyberspace Islamophobic discourse is going to be presented in this report.

A website that repeatedly reproduces this kind of discourse is the official website of GD, that actually contains the arguments and ideology of the party mentioned in the above relevant section.[23]Another website that reproduces such discourse is ethinikismos.net (nationalism.net). This is another website defending and reproducing nationalist and racist ideas. It is not clear who is behind it, but it is related with GD since one can find its link in GD's official website, while in ethnikismos.gr there are many references to GD's activities presented in a positive manner. Here one can find similar views and arguments about Islam and Muslims. Articles like "Islam out of Europe!" or "When we say no, we mean no! No to a mosque in Athens",[24] are only some of the many that have been uploaded in this website. Most of the articles are accompanied by images that reproduce Islamophobia. (Figure 4) This website reproduces all possible stereotypes e.g. that Islam means violence, that all Muslims want to impose Sharia in Europe, that Islam accepts pedophilia or that a Muslim man should beat his wife, etc.[25]

Figure 4: Image from the website ethnikismos.gr.

Other websites or personal blogs follow the same stereotypes about Islam,[26] but space is limited in order to present each one of them, while the vast majority

23. For more information see Alexandros Sakellariou, "Anti-Islamic Public Discourse in Contemporary Greece: The Reproduction of Religious Panic", in *The Revival of Islam in the Balkans: From Identity to Religiosity*, eds. Arolda Elbasani and Olivier Roy, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 54-57.

24. Georgios, Dimitrakopoulos, "Islam out of Europe", *Ethnikismos.net*, 15 May, 2015, accessed 30 December, 2015. http://ethnikismos.net/2015/05/15/%CE%B5%CE%BE%CF%89-%CF%84%CE%BF-%CE%B9%CF%83%CE%BB%CE%B1%CE%BC-%CE%B1%CF%80%CE%BF-%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%BD-%CE%B5%CF%85%CF%81%CF%89%CF%80%CE%B7/ and S. Paidakos, "When We Say No, We Mean No", Ethnikismos.net, 13 May, 2015, accessed 30 December, 2015. http://ethnikismos.net/2015/05/13/%CE%BF%CF%84%CE%B1%CE%BD-%CE%BB%CE%B5%CE%BC%CE%B5-%CE%BF%CF%87%CE%B9-%CE%B5%CE%BD%CE%BD%CE%BF%CE%BF%CF%85%CE%BC%CE%B5-%CE%BF%CF%87%CE%B9/.

25. Koni, Krystalidou, "Cultural Lessons from Islam: How to Beat Up Your Wife", *Ethnikismos.net*, 26 June, 2015, accessed 30 December, 2015, http://ethnikismos.net/2015/06/26/%CE%BC%CE%B1%CE%B8%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%B1-%CF%80%CE%BF%CE%BB%CE%B9%CF%84%CE%B9%CF%83%CE%BC%CE%BF%CF%85-%CE%B1%CF%80%CE%BF-%CF%84%CE%BF-%CE%B9%CF%83%CE%BB%CE%B1%CE%BC-%C2%A8%CF%80%CF%89%CF%83/ and ethnikismos.net, "This is the Legal Pedophilia Islam Promotes: Bridges of Six Years Old!", 11 March, 2015, accessed 30 December, 2015, http://ethnikismos.net/2015/03/11/%CE%B9%CE%B4%CE%BF%CF%85-%CE%B7-%CE%BD%CE%BF%CE%BC%CE%B9%CE%BC%CE%B7-%CF%80%CE%B1%CE%B9%CE%B4%CE%B5%CF%81%CE%B1%CF%83%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%B1-%CF%80%CE%BF%CF%85-%CF%80%CF%81%CE%BF%CF%89%CE%B8%CE%B5/.

26. See for example http://www.pronews.gr/portal/index.php, accessed 30 December, 2015.

use similar wording and up to a certain point similar texts. It is not easy to trace the links between those who are behind them but it is evident that they belong to the far right and that they support GD's activities. In none of these websites are international links traceable. There is a group on Facebook that is against the construction of the Islamic mosque in Athens.[27] Its main slogan is "No to mosques, no to Islamisation, no to the replacement of Greeks [by Muslims]". However, apart from the Islamic focus, various posts are uploaded regarding the economic and political crisis in Greece, as well as ones regarding the flow of migrants and refugees. In short, it should be noted that in cyberspace one can find a great variety of Islamophobic discourses, particularly in the field of right-wing extremism.

Central figures in the network of Islamophobia

Some of the metropolitans of the Orthodox Church of Greece have been outspoken against Islam, considering it a major threat for the West in general and for Greece in particular. The Metropolitan of Piraeus, for instance, is against the construction of a mosque in Athens and against the establishment of a department of Islamic Studies in the Theological School of Thessaloniki. He claims

> "Among religions Islam is the only religion that is aggressive, violent and fundamentalist, because the Koran teaches violence and Holy War (Jihad) against the infidels in order to prevail."[28]

Metropolitan Amvrosios of Kalavryta, a region in central Greece, has expressed similar views arguing that the arrival of Muslim migrants targets the alteration of the country's character, since in two or three decades "Islamists-migrants will dominate Greece and the Greeks will be foreigners in their country. Every village and city will be full of minarets and mosques"; this is why, he believes, the flow of Muslim migrants is considered a great danger for Greece.[29]

Such views among Church officials are not new and can be traced back many years. Meanwhile, the Ottoman rule is used by the Church in order to spread panic about the dangers deriving from Islam.[30] However, not only high-ranking Ortho-

27. See their Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/groups/OxiTzami/?fref=ts, accessed 30 December, 2015.

28. Serafeim, Metropolitan of Piraeus, "Comments on the Conference: Religion and Violence", 6 May, 2015, accessed 30 December, 2015,http://www.imp.gr/home-4/anakoino8enta-deltia-typoy/anakoino8enta-deltia-typoy-2015/50-%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%B1%CE%BA%CE%BF%CE%B9%CE%BD%CF%89%CE%B8%CE%AD%CE%BD%CF%84%CE%B1-%CE%B4%CE%B5%CE%BB%CF%84%CE%AF%CE%B1-%CF%84%CF%8D%CF%80%CE%BF%CF%85-2015/921-%CF%83%CF%87%CE%BF%CE%BB%CE%B9%CE%B1%CF%83%CE%BC%CF%8C%CF%82-%CF%83%CF%85%CE%BD%CE%B5%CE%B4%CF%81%CE%AF%CE%BF%CF%85-%CE%B8%CF%81%CE%B7%CF%83%CE%BA%CE%B5%CE%AF%CE%B1-%CE%BA%CE%B1%CE%B9-%CE%B2%CE%AF%CE%B1.html.

29. Amvrosios, Metropolitan of Kalavryta, "A Collective Effort for the City of Egion", 22 April, 2015, accessed 30 December, 2015. http://mkka.blogspot.gr/2015/04/blog-post_22.html.

30. Alexandros Sakellariou, "Anti-Islamic Public Discourse in Contemporary Greece: The Reproduction of Religious Panic", in *The Revival of Islam in the Balkans: From Identity to Religiosity*, eds. Arolda Elbasani and Olivier Roy, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 49-54.

dox priests reproduce this kind of discourse. Lower-ranking members of the clergy have expressed similar views on Islam and have associated it with the threat they see coming with the growing number of Muslim migrants and refugees. According to an article published this year:

> "If this uncontrolled illegal entrance of migrants in our country continues with the same rapid rate our future will be dark. […] Critical thinking does not exist within the circles of Islam, because Islam is pre-modern. This means that whenever the religious authorities give an order their [i.e. Muslims'] transformation will be immediate and terrifying. When 'Allah Akbar' will be heard in the neighbourhoods of Athens it will be too late for tears".[31]

The Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church, however, has never taken a hostile stance against Islam and Muslims on the whole. It has also never, however, punished or strongly disapproved of Islamophobic statements and announcements. It is worth mentioning that GD very often reproduces these public announcements from Church officials especially on the party's website, arguing in favour of the importance of such views for the Greek nation. On the other hand, there are some Metropolitans like Amvrosios or other lower-ranking priests who are supportive of GD.

Apart from the Church and of course from the far right party of GD, there are also other groups who are fighting against the construction of a mosque in Athens. Residents of Athens and of the region where it has been decided that the mosque will be built have formed a reaction group and a committee against the mosque. In May and June 2015, they organised two rallies in Athens against the construction of the mosque: the first was in front of the Council of State and the second in the War Museum of Athens. In their call for the second rally they argued that there is a conspiracy against Greece and that the main goal is the Islamisation of the country through the arrival of migrants and, of course, through the construction of the mosque.[32] The images that accompanied this call by the committee against the construction of the mosque can be seen below in the form they were distributed in various networks. In the first one (Figure 5) a huge mosque dominates the city of Athens and in the second (Figure 6) one can see the division of Muslims into fanatics and moderates. The fanatics are those who set the fire and the moderates those who hold the bomb.

31. Dimitrios, Theofilou, "The Immigration Issue, its Godless Humanistic Approach and the Orthodox Christian Approach", *Amen*, 13 September, 2015, accessed 30 December, 2015, http://www.amen.gr/article/to-metanastefftiko-zitima-i-athriski-oumanistiki-proseggisi-tou-kai-i-orthodoksi-xristianiki-theorisi-tou?utm_source=nl&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=daynl&utm_content=latest.

32. Greek National Pride, "Invitation to a Rally against the Construction of an Islamic Mosque", 6 June, 2015, accessed 30 December, 2015, http://national-pride.org/2015/06/06/%CF%80%CF%81%CE%BF%CF%83%CE%BA%CE%BB%CE%B7%CF%84%CE%B7%CF%81%CE%B9%CE%BF-%CE%BA%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%B1-%CF%84%CE%B7%CF%83-%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%B5%CE%B3%CE%B5%CF%81%CF%83%CE%B7%CF%83-%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%85-%CE%B9/.

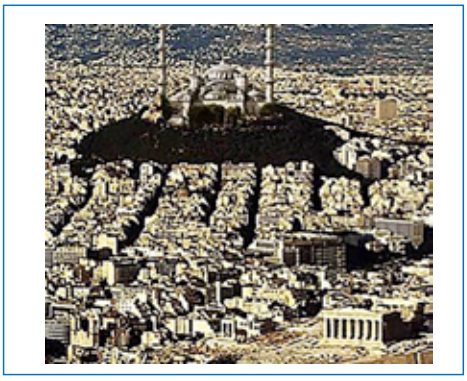


Figure 5: A huge mosque dominates Athens.

Figure 6: Moderates - Fanatics

Islamophobia in everyday life

Islamophobia is an aspect of the everyday lives of Muslims living in Greece. First of all, it has to be noted that no major attacks have been noticed, however, there are some minor ones during the year that need to be mentioned. At least two attacks took place in two prayer houses, one on the island of Crete and the other in Komotini, in Northern Greece where a native Muslim minority lives.[33] According to those specialising on Islam in Thrace, which differs from Muslim migrants, the attack in Komotini is related primarily with nationalism and only on a second level, if any, with religious motives. Since the Muslims of Thrace are of Turkish origin issues of national identity come first.

Figure 7: Arson targeting a mosque in Komotini, Western Thrace, in April 2015.

In addition, some of the Muslim interviewees mentioned they face Islamophobic verbal attacks, e.g. negative comments, in their everyday lives, particularly women who wear the hijab. These incidents cannot be verified since usually they are not reported to the police and, as it was mentioned, they are reduced to hate speech. Through my contacts with Muslims in Greece it became evident that not all of them perceive Islamophobia as a hate crime. This is probably one reason behind the lack of any existing data. The other reason might be that many Muslims are afraid to go to the police and mention such oral or even physical attacks. That is probably why the Racist Violence Recording Network[34] has not recorded any racist attacks based on religious prejudices to this day.

33. "Arson Attack in a Prayer House for Muslims in Heraklion", *Flashnews*, 23 November, 2015, accessed 30 December, 2015, http://flashnews.gr/post/250367/epithesh-me-gkazakia-kai-krotida-se-xwro-proseyxhs-moysoylmanwn-sto-hrakleio, and "A Mosque in Komotini in Flames", *Newsbeast* , 17 April, 2015, accessed 30 December, 2015, http://www.newsbeast.gr/greece/arthro/811114/stis-floges-tzami-stin-komotini.

34. http://rvrn.org/.

OBSERVATIONS ON CIVIL SOCIETY, POLITICAL ASSESSMENT AND INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN TO COUNTER ISLAMOPHOBIA

No specific actions have been taken in order to counter Islamophobia on a central level by state authorities, but some initiatives have occured nonetheless. In 2015, the Guidelines for Educators on Countering Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims: Addressing Islamophonia through Education was translated into Greek under the auspices of the National Commission for Human Rights and the Centre of Intercultural Research and Educational Intervention of the University of Athens. These guidelines were conducted by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and more particularly the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) in collaboration with the Council of Europe and UNESCO. The guidelines were presented to the public in Athens on 28 April. However, to this moment the guidelines have not been used to educate teachers at schools and have not reached the educational community in any way. They are only available online and have been sent to certain networks and individuals.[35]

Furthermore, in April the Journalists' Union of Athens Daily Newspapers organised a seminar under the topic "Xenophobia and the Mass Media" in which the author of this report made a presentation on Islamophobia and anti-Islamic discourse in the media and in the public sphere in general. In this seminar not only journalists, but teachers, police officers and members of NGOs participated. In addition, in September the network against the far right of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Athens in its regular meeting discussed the issue of Islamophobia after a presentation delivered by the author of this report.

On the civil society level, discussions about Islamophobia, what it is and how it could be confronted, have been organised by leftist and anti-fascist groups and organisations. The Muslim Association of Greece has participated in discussions about Islam and Islamophobia that have been organised in Athens and Volos, a city in central Greece, in March and May 2015 respectively. On 31 October a "Walk against Islamophobia" was organised in a central neighbourhood of Athens by an LGBTQ group in collaboration with the Allies against Islamophobia, i.e. a group of human rights NGOs.[36]

35. OSCE/ODIHR, "Guidelines for Educators on Countering Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims: Addressing Islamophonia through Education", accessed 30 December, 2015. http://www.osce.org/el/odihr/120161?download=true.

36. Sunday School for Migrants, "Walk against Islamophobia", 25 October, 2015, accessed 29 December, 2015, http://www.ksm.gr

CONCLUSION:

Policy recommendations

The main conclusion of this report is that Islamophobia in Greece is not dominant in the public sphere. It is present in certain circles like the far right and particularly the neo-Nazi party of GD and in various other circles like the Orthodox Church of Greece. As in other societies, the Internet and social media are a privileged space for such views to flourish. On the counter-Islamophobia level there have been only secondary and fragmented initiatives. A central policy is lacking and this could be addressed by some basic measures that could be taken in the direction of confronting Islamophobia. First of all, there is a need for an observatory authority that will monitor and record every Islamophobic incident either of violent character or on the discourse level. Especially for schools and for the media this vacuum is crucial. This is a first step in order to then be able to take policy measures against Islamophobic attitudes. Education could play a major role through seminars organised for teachers. In addition, the recently translated guidelines of OSCE/ODIHR must be used in the same direction. Seminars should be offered to other groups of civil servants as well who have contact with Muslims like, among others, police officers, coast-guards and migration officers - and, of course, journalists. These seminars could include both information on Islam and on how one should deal with Islamophobia. The Orthodox Church of Greece could also play a crucial role by ceasing to reproduce and accept Islamophobic discourse. Overall, and based on previous opinion polls, the lack of knowledge about Islam seems to play a fundamental role in the emergence of Islamophobia; the absence of accurate information makes people turn to mass media or the Internet so as to be informed and this may have serious implications for their understanding of Islam.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alonistiotou, Sissy. “Moderate Islam is a Myth”. Kathimerini, Arts & Letters, November 29, 2015, 4.

Amvrosios, Metropolitan of Kalavryta. “A Collective Effort for the City of Egion”. 22 April, 2015. Accessed 30 December, 2015. http://mkka.blogspot.gr/2015/04/blog-post_22.html

Antoniou, Dimitris. “Muslim Immigrants in Greece: Religious Organization and Local Responses”. Immigrants & Minorities, 22 (2-3) (2003):155-174.

Dimitrakopoulos, Georgios. “Islam out of Europe”. Ethnikismos.net, 15 May, 2015.

Accessed 30 December, 2015. http://ethnikismos.net/

Ethnikismos.net. “This is the Legal Pedophilia Islam Promotes: Bridges of Six Years Old!” Ethnikismos.net, 11 March, 2015. Accessed 30 December, 2015. http://ethnikismos.net/

Flashnews. “Arson Attack in a Prayer House for Muslims in Heraklion”. 23 No-

vember, 2015. Accessed 30 December, 2015. http://flashnews.gr/post/250367/epithesh-me-gkazakia-kai-krotida-se-xwro-proseyxhs-moysoylmanwn-sto-hrakleio

Golden Dawn. "The Hellenic Dawn for Athens Says a Sound NO to the Mosque in Votanikos". Accessed 30 December, 2015. http://www.xryshaygh.com/enimerosi/view/hchhro-ochi-ths-ellhnikhs-aughs-gia-thn-athhna-sto-tzami-sto-botaniko

Golden Dawn. "Kasidiaris to Kaminis: You Turned Athens into Islamabad". Accessed 14 December, 2015. http://www.xryshaygh.com/enimerosi/view/kasidiarhs-se-kaminh-ekanes-thn-athhna-islamampant...-eisai-lathrodhmarchos

Golden Dawn. "Read the Newspaper Empros Published on Saturday 10, 2015". Accessed 14 December, 2015. http://www.xryshaygh.com/enimerosi/view/diabaste-sto-empros-pou-kukloforei-to-sabbato-10-ianouariou-2015

Greek National Pride. "Invitation to a Rally against the Construction of an Islamic Mosque". 6 June, 2015. Accessed 30 December, 2015. http://national-pride.org/

Imam, Mehmet and Olga Tsakiridou. Muslims and Social Exclusion. Athens: Livanis, 2003 [in Greek].

International Organization for Migration. "Irregular Migrant, Refugee Arrivals in Europe Top One Million in 2015: IOM". Accessed 22 December, 2015. https://www.iom.int/news/irregular-migrant-refugee-arrivals-europe-top-one-million-2015-iom

Klontza, Olga. "After Paris You Will See Us With Suspicion". To Vima, 22 November, 2015. Accessed 14 December, 2015. http://www.tovima.gr/politics/article/?aid=755951

Koullapis, Loris. "The presentation of the period 1071-1923 in Greek and Turkish textbooks between 1950-2000". Internationale Schulbuchforschung Das Osmanische Reich im Schulbuch/The Ottoman Empire in Textbooks, 24 (3) (2002): 279-304.

Krystalidou, Koni. "Cultural Lessons from Islam: How to Beat Up Your Wife". Ethnikismos.net, 26 June, 2015. Accessed 30 December, 2015. http://ethnikismos.net/

Louka, Maria. "Islam in Greece". To Vima, 19 October, 2015. Accessed 14 December, 2015. http://www.tovima.gr/vimagazino/views/article/?aid=746397

Newsbeast. "A Mosque in Komotini in Flames". 17 April, 2015. Accessed 30 December, 2015. http://www.newsbeast.gr/greece/arthro/811114/stis-floges-tzami-stin-komotini

Newsit. "Nikitas Kaklamanis: A Guided Landing of Islamists is Taking Place in Our Islands". Accessed 14 December, 2015. http://www.newsit.gr/politikh/Nikitas-Kaklamanis-Sta-nisia-mas-ginetai-kateythynomeni-apovasi-islamiston-/425307

OSCE/ODIHR. "Guidelines for Educators on Countering Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims: Addressing Islamophonia through Education". Accessed 30 December, 2015. http://www.osce.org/el/odihr/120161?download=true

Paidakos, S. "When We Say No, We Mean No". Ethnikismos.net, 13 May, 2015. Accessed 30 December, 2015. http://ethnikismos.net/

Sakellariou, Alexandros. "Anti-Islamic Public Discourse in Contemporary Greece: The Reproduction of Religious Panic." In The Revival of Islam in the Balkans: From Identity to Religiosity, edited by Arolda Elbasani and Olivier Roy, 42-61. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

Serafeim, Metropolitan of Piraeus. "Comments on the Conference: Religion and Violence". 6 May, 2015. Accessed 30 December, 2015.

http://www.imp.gr/

Stohos. "If You Vote for SYRIZA You Will Become Pakistani". 26 August, 2015. Accessed 14 December, 2015. http://www.stoxos.gr/2015/08/blog-post_6624.html

Sunday School for Migrants. "Walk against Islamophobia". 25 October, 2015. Accessed 29 December, 2015. http://www.ksm.gr/

The UN Refugee Agency. "Refugees/Migrants – Emergency Response, Mediterranean, Greece." Accessed 29 December, 2015. http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/country.php?id=83

Theofilou, Dimitrios. "The Immigration Issue, its Godless Humanistic Approach and the Orthodox Christian Approach". Amen, 13 September, 2015. Accessed 30 December, 2015. http://www.amen.gr/article/to-metanasteftiko-zitima-i-athriski-oumanistiki-proseggisi-tou-kai-i-orthodoksi-xristianiki-theorisi-tou

Theodoropoulos, Takis. "Imam's Language". Kathimerini, 19 November, 2015. Accessed 14 December, 2015. http://www.kathimerini.gr/839161/opinion/epikairothta/politikh/h-glwssa-toy-imamh

Theodoropoulos, Takis. "What about Islam's Responsibilities?" Kathimerini, 18 November, 2015. Accessed 14 December, 2015. http://www.kathimerini.gr/839026/opinion/epikairothta/politikh/kai-oi-ey8ynes-toy-islam

Triandafyllou, Soti. "Rock and Roll Will Never Die". Athens Voice, 14 November, 2015. Accessed 14 December, 2015. http://www.athensvoice.gr/article/city-news-voices/%25CF%2580%25CE%25BF%25CE%25BB%25CE%25B9%25CF%2584%25CE%25B9%25CE%25BA%25CE%25B7/rock-and-roll-will-never-die

Tsitselikis, Konstantinos. "Religious Freedom of Immigrants: The Case of Muslims." In Greece of Immigration, edited by Miltos Pavlou and Dimitris Christopoulos, 267-302. Athens: Kritiki, 2004 [in Greek].

Greek Parliament Proceedings

27 April 2015, Session ΚΗ [28]
8 May 2015, Session ΛΗ [38]
12 May 2015, Session Μ [40]
24 June 2015, Session ΞΒ [62]
24 June 2015, Session ΞΒ [62]

Contacts/ Interviews

1. Amnesty International, Greek division
2. Hellenic League for Human Rights
3. The Racist Violence Recording Network
4. General Secretariat for Human Rights of the Ministry of Justice
5. Muslim Association of Greece
6. Pakistani-Hellenic Cultural Association
7. Arab-Hellenic Cultural Centre
8. Ptolemaios Cultural Centre/islamforgreeks.gr
9. George Mavrommatis, Associate Professor at the Democritus University of Thrace, Department of Education Sciences in Early Childhood, specialist on the Muslim Minority of Thrace
10. Konstantinos Tsitselikis, Professor at the University of Macedonia, Greece, Department of Balkan, Slavic & Oriental Studies, specialist on Islam in Greece

CHRONOLOGY

28 March, 2015.

- Public discussion in Athens entitled "Islam in the West: Victimization, Fear and Exploitation".

April-May 2015.

- Refugee and migrant flows through the Aegean Sea start to rise.

1 April, 2015.

- Seminar organised by the Journalists' Union of Athens Daily Newspapers entitled "Xenophobia and the Mass Media" including a presentation "Islam, Islamophobia and the Understanding of the Religious Other".

17 April, 2015.

- Mosque arson in Komotini, Thrace.

28 April, 2015.

- Presentation of the translation of the Guidelines for Educators on Countering Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims: Addressing Islamophonia through Education.

12 May, 2015.

- Rally against the construction of a mosque in Athens.

15 May, 2015.

- Public discussion in Volos, Central Greece, entitled "Muslim World and Islamophobia".

May 2015.

- An amendment on the legislation for the construction of a mosque in Athens voted by the Greek Parliament. Reactions by populist and far right parties and groups.

8 June, 2015.

- Rally against the construction of a mosque in Athens.

June-August 2015.

- Refugee and migrant flows continue to rise and surpass 100,000 during August.

25 September, 2015.

- The network against the far right of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Athens discussed the issue of Islamophobia in "Islamophobia and anti-Islamic Discourse in the Public Sphere: Definitions, Agents, Confrontation".

31October, 2015.

- Walk against Islamophobia in Athens organised in a central neighbourhood of Athens by an LGBTQ group in collaboration with the Allies against Islamophobia, a group of human rights NGOs.

November 2015.

- Mosque arson in a prayer house on the island of Crete.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN HUNGARY

NATIONAL REPORT 2015

ZSOLT SEREGHY

THE AUTHOR

Zsolt Sereghy is a doctoral candidate at the Institute for Political Science, Vienna University, Austria. His current research focuses on the nexus between Europe's Muslim communities, migration, and political and medial securitisation. He holds a Magister degree in Oriental Studies from the Vienna University and an M.Litt. degree in Middle Eastern and Central Asian Security Studies from the University of St Andrews, Scotland. His research interests include the securitisation of Islam and Muslim migrant communities in Europe, as well as Middle East politics in general and Lebanese politics, educational policies and pop culture in particular. Sereghy published a number of articles, most recently 'Vienna Must Not Become Istanbul – The Securitization of Islam and Muslims in Austria' (in: Suleiman, Yasir (ed.), Muslims in the UK and Europe , Centre for Islamic Studies of the University of Cambridge, May 2014). Currently, Sereghy is also working on a project exploring socio-political activism in Lebanese pop culture. He resides in Beirut and Vienna. zsolt.sereghy@gmail.com

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions. No representation, either expressed or implied, is made of the accuracy of the material in the national reports. The editors of the European Islamophobia Report cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The reader must make his or her own evaluation of the accuracy and appropriateness of the material.

To cite this report: Zsolt Sereghy (2016): *Islamophobia in Hungary: National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Hungary is a country with a very small but well-integrated Islamic community and historically rather positive public attitudes towards Islam. Until recently, there has been no considerable public or political interest in the religion per se or in Muslims in the country or elsewhere in the world. For the larger part of the 20th century, the image of Islam in Hungary was largely formed by Orientalist essentialisations and imported stereotypes based on world affairs; however, due to the lack of the country's colonial experience and following waves of Western European style Muslim immigration, Islam remained fundamentally more distant, exotic and less known. However, as a result of global events and increasing exposure to Western European debates surrounding the religion and its followers, Hungary has been experiencing a slow but gradual shift towards adopting Islamophobic perceptions and discourses in the past decade. This slow process found new winds to its sails this year, as global events hit closer to home and Europe's unfolding so-called 'refugee crisis' tunred the Hungarian public into a witness that was directly involved rather than a distant observer as it had been up to this point. By 2015, the debate on Islam - mainly in the context of the so-called 'refugee crisis' and immigration - became one of the most prominent and omnipresent topics in Hungarian media and politics. As a general observation, the lack of popular knowledge about Islam seems to have rendered the religion susceptible to popularist fearmongering by the current conservative government and created the space for an increasing number of Islamophobic utterances that remain uncontested in the country's current political atmosphere. This report investigates discursive events in connection with anti-Muslim attitudes which occurred in Hungary in the past year and aims to put them into their domestic and transnational contexts. The report is based on a survey of relevant discourses taking place in Hungarian media outlets and the country's political arena as well as on a number of expert interviews from the fields of journalism, NGOs and the country's Islamic community conducted in November 2015 in Budapest.

ÖSSZEFOGLALÓ

Nagy általánosságban Magyarország, egy igen kis létszámú, ám általánosan jól integrálódott muszlim kisebbség hazájaként történelmileg inkább pozitívan tekintett az iszlámra. Egészen a közelmúltig a magyar közvélemény nem mutatott különösebb érdeklődést sem az iszlám vallás, sem annak hazai vagy külföldi követői iránt. A XX. század legnagyobb részében a magyarországi iszlámképet leginkább az orientalista tradíció romantizáló leegyszerűsítései és a világ eseményein alapuló importált sztereotípiái formálták, viszont a magyar történelem a nyugat-európaival ellentétes fejleményei, mindenek előtt a gyarmatosítás és az azt követő nagyarányú muszlim bevándorlás elmaradása miatt nagyon sokáig egy távoli, egzotikus, kevéssé ismert vallásként kezelte az iszlámot. Azonban az elmúlt évtized globális eseményeinek, valamint a Nyugat-Európával való fokozottabb kapcsolat hatására a magyar közvélemény muszlimokról alkotott nézetei és a közéltet iszlámról folytatott vitái lassan iszlámellenes irányba kezdtek elmozdulni látszani. Ezen folyamatot nagyban felgyorsították az elmúlt év terrorcselekményei valamint európai menekültválsága, mely utóbbi Magyarországot immár az események színhelyévé változtatta. 2015-re az iszlámról, az esetek túlnyomó többségében a menekültválság és a tömeges bevándorlás kontextusaiban folytatott társadalmi viták a magyar média és politikai élet legfontosabb és leggyakoribb témájává vált. Általánosan megfigyelhető, hogy az iszlámot övező nagyarányú informálatlanság következtében a vallás és követ0i egyre inkább a hatalmon lévő konzervatív kormány populista félelemkeltő politikájának eszközévé degradálódnak, mely egyre inkább teret enged iszlámellenes megnyilvánulásoknak. Ezen jelentés számot vet az elmúlt év magyarországi iszlámellenes diszkurzív eseményeivel és azok hazai és nemzetközi kontextusával. A jelentés alapjául a hazai média és politikai élet meghatározó vitáinak elemzése illetve 2015 novemberében a sajtó, a hazai iszlám közösség illetve civil szervezetek egy-egy képviselőjével folytatott szakértői interjúk szolgáltak.

ISLAM IN HUNGARY

Despite continuous presence since the 10th century onwards, 150 years of Ottoman rule over large parts of the country and the legal recognition of its community as early as 1916,[1] Islam in Hungary today has a very low number of followers and no historically indigenous community comparable to those of, for example, Romania or Poland.[2] During the most recent official census of 2011, 5.579, or 0,056 per cent of the country's legal residents indicated their affiliation to, almost exclusively, Sunni Islam.[3] Of these, 4.097 (73,4 %) declared themselves Hungarian, while 2.369 (42,5 %) as Arab by ethnicity.[4] However, various estimates put the number of the country's Islamic community between 25.000[5] and 50.000.[6] Even so, with a share of well under 1 per cent (0,1 or 0,3 % respectively) of the overall population, Islam can be considered a marginal and invisible religion in the country. Currently, there are two officially recognised Islamic religious organisations, both Sunni, working in Hungary: the Hungarian Islamic Community (MIK - Magyar Iszlám Közösség) and the Church of Muslims of Hungary (MME - Magyarországi Muszlimok Egyháza).[7] A formerly third organisation -but still the largest-, the Islamic Church (IE - Iszlám Egyház) had its officially recognised status as a church revoked in 2012. On the government level, the community is represented by the Islamic Council of Hungary (MIT -Magyarországi Iszlám Tanács), an umbrella organisation jointly created by the MIK and the MME in 2011 and recognised as one of the country's 32 churches by parliament in 2012.[8]

As earlier studies suggest, until the late 1990s Muslims living in the country or Islam itself as a religion were not receiving much public, media or political attention,

1. The act granting stately recognition to the Hanafi branch of Sunni Islam as one of Hungary's official denominations is the second piece of legislation of this kind in Europe after the Austrian part of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire did the same in 1912. Both acts were the direct result of the incorporation of Muslim-majority Bosnia and Herzegovina into the Empire in 1908.

2. Renata Włoch, "Islam in Poland", *International Journal of Sociology*, 39:3(2009): 58-67.

3. "10. Vallás, felekezet", in: 2011. Évi Népszámlálás (Budapest: Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, 2014), 160.

4. Hungary's Central Statistics Office allows the declaration of more than one ethnicity, thus the sum of residents declaring Hungarian and Arab ethnicity is higher than those declaring their affiliation to Islam. Also, there is no distinction made between the passport countries of residents with Arab ethnicity. "A népesség nemzetiségi, anyanyelv, családi, baráti közösségben használt nyelv és kulturális kötődés szerint", *Központi Statisztikai Hivatal*, 17.04.2013, accessed 29.12.2015, http://www.ksh.hu/nepszamlalas/tablak_teruleti_00.

5. "Muslim Population by Country", *Pew Research Centre*, 2011, accessed 28.12.2015, http://www.pewforum.org/2011/01/27/table-muslim-population-by-country/.

6. Magyarországi Muszlimok Egyháza, accessed 28.12.2015, http://iszlam.com/kerdes-valasz/altalanos-kerdesek/item/2093-magyarorszagon-hany-fore-teheto-az-iszlam-hivok-szama-es-a-tobbseg-siita-vagy-szunnita.

7. According to Hungarian legal practice, all religious organisations, Christian or not, seeking recognition by the state are referred to with the term 'church' (*egyház*) originating from Christian ecclesiastic practice.

8. "Nyilvános a lista az elismert egyházakról", *HVG*, 23.04.2012, accessed 29.12.2015 http://hvg.hu/itthon/20120423_elismert_egyhazak.

nor were they subject to any notable prejudice or negative attitudes.[9] Nonetheless, over the last decade attention on global events such as 9/11, 7/7 and the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East as well as increasingly negative media coverage has largely modified and escalated prejudice within, but also outside of, Western Europe. Even in an East-Central European country like Hungary with a generally rather insignificant emphasis laid on Islam - and on occasion a positive emphasis - and no significant Muslim community, attitudes that are critical towards Islam or overtly anti-Muslim attitudes have increased. Referred to as 'Islamophobic without Muslims'[10] Hungary has been increasingly showing cases of intolerance, negative attitudes, essentialisation and fear towards Islam. Also, not surprisingly, Hungary has not been exempt from the Europe-wide phenomenon of overestimating Islam's demographic strength within the population. As a recent Ipsos MORI poll found, similarly to the publics in all the observed European countries, the Hungarian public has also greatly overestimated the portion of the country's Muslims putting their number at 7 per cent against what in reality is well below 0,1 per cent.[11] This data is all the more remarkable because unlike its Western European counterparts Hungary has not just a differing number of and experience with Muslim minorities, there has also been no violent occurrences committed by Muslims or in the name of Islam.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN 2015

The year 2015 has been an unusually turbulent year for both the country and its Muslim communities. While the observable exposure to and import of Western European perceptions and discourses has been a slow but ongoing process in the past decade, a number of global events and processes including the ongoing war in Syria, the rise of the Islamic State, and, most prominently, the unfolding of the so-called 'refugee crisis' and the resulting debates about resettlement quotas within the EU have been dominating domestic discourses and brought about rapid changes in attitudes.

One of the most significant turning points came with the attack against the offices of the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in Paris on 7 January, 2015. On the fringes of the Paris VIP march held in support of free speech and tolerance on 11 January, PM Viktor Orbán called for an end of economic immigration as "migrants from other cultures bring only trouble and danger" and announced his determination to keep migrants out of Hungary.[12]

9. György Lederer, "Islam in East Europe", *Central Asian Survey* (2001): 12–28.

10. Michał Buchowski and Katarzyna Chlewińska, "Tolerance and Cultural Discourses Diversity in Poland" (Florence: European University Institute, 2010) (project: Accept Pluralism), 32-33.

11. "Daily Chart: Islam in Europe", *The Economist,* 07.01.2015, accessed 30.12.2015, http://www.economist.com/blogs/graphicdetail/2015/01/daily-chart-2.

12. Andrew Rettmann, "Orban demonises immigrants at Paris march", *EUobserver*, 12.01.2015, accessed 30.12.2015, https://euobserver.com/justice/127172.

The Europe-wide so-called 'refugee crisis' was the single most decisive event of the year and continues to have far-reaching consequences. According to Eurostat, the highest number of first-time asylum applicants in the third quarter of 2015 was registered in Germany and Hungary (both with slightly over 108.000 applicants or 26 % each of total applicants of EU member states), with mostly Muslim Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis among the top three citizenships of asylum seekers. With nearly 100.000 more first-time asylum applicants Hungary saw its number of asylum seekers rising notably 13 times compared to the same quarter of 2014.[13] Despite the fact that almost all refugees leave the country for other EU destinations such as Germany or Sweden, for the first time the Hungarian public had a first-hand experience with unidentifiable, foreign, unknown, mostly Muslim masses to the country that generally evoked distrust, fear of cultural estrangement and the perception of being threatened. Both from the side of politics and the media the so-called 'refugee crisis' has been tackled solely in terms of security policy, instead of from social, economic or cultural points of view.[14] On the right end of the political and media spectrum Orbán's 'migrant-Islam-terrorism nexus' and 'Christian Europe must be saved from Islam' doctrines became the standard argument justifying a number of domestic and international measures.

In May, the government launched a questionnaire poll on 'immigration and terrorism' in order to justify its opposition to the EU's refugee policy. The highly unsuccessful populist move was framed by an aggressive billboard campaign urging refugees - in Hungarian - to respect the country's laws, customs and not to take away Hungarians' jobs.[15]

In order to counter the massive influx of refugees during the late summer, Hungary closed its borders first with Serbia and later with Croatia. In response to widespread popular fears from the large number of foreign refugees and the threatening emergence of radical right-wing political forces - most prominently the notorious right radical Jobbik party - the government's rhetoric has been increasingly employing the 'Islamophobia card' in order to secure popular support. The same attitude keeps informing the government's vehement opposition to the EU's proposed refugee resettlement quota system, heavy critique on Germany's refugee policy and the demonisation of Western European multiculturalism.[16]

13. "Asylum Quarterly Report", *Eurostat,* 09.12.2015, accessed 03.01.2015, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_quarterly_report.

14. Interview conducted with Omar Adam Sayfo, publicist on Islam, Budapest: 12.11.2015.

15. Nick Thorpe, "Hungary's poster war on immigration", *BBC News,* 14 June, accessed 03.01.2016, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-33091597.

16. "Orbán Viktor: A multikulturalizmus párhuzamos társadalmakat hoz létre Európában", *Híradó,* 23.10.2015, accessed 03.01.2016, http://www.hirado.hu/2015/10/23/orban-viktor-a-multikulturalizmus-parhuzamos-tarsadalmakat-hoz-letre-europaban/#.

DISCUSSION OF ISLAMOPHOBIC INCIDENTS AND DISCURSIVE EVENTS

Politics

Hungary's self-image as a battered, ethnically uniform Christian nation-state prevails as a result of the country's ethno-religious homogeneity coupled with its relative linguistic and cultural isolation through its non-Indo-European native tongue and unique culture, a national psyche based on historical 'victim narratives' of subsequent foreign invasions and the constant struggle for national survival. It also offers an explanation why anti-Islamic rhetoric has found so many willing listeners within domestic publics. From early on, the government and the right-wing political spectrum in general started to use Islam as one of the main arguments in the country's standoff with Brussels on handling the so-called 'refugee crisis' and its refusal to accept the proposed EU-wide refugee resettlement quota system. Both towards domestic and foreign audiences Orbán and his allies developed an often repeated mantra referring to Islam in contrast to Christian/European culture and the PM often styled himself as the sole defender of Christian Europe. In frequent media utterances, for instance, Orbán justified the Hungarian people's unwillingness to live with Muslims by evoking the country's 150 years of experience under Ottoman rule;[17] he refused to accept Islam as part of Europe declaring it much stronger than European Christianity;[18] he called for blocking Muslim migrants to "keep Europe Christian";[19] and insisted on Hungary's right to decide with whom it wishes to live. Other government politicians were similarly ferocious in making Islamophobic remarks. For instance, the leader of Fidesz' parliamentary club Antal Rogán warned of a future "United European Caliphate",[20] while former Secretary of State László L. Simon urged Hungarians to return to their Christian spirituality and make more babies in order to counter the negative cultural effects of mass migration such as the envisioned "impending victory of Islamic parties imposing polygamy and destroying the remainder of European culture".[21] However, facing domestic and international critique, from September on Orbán started to make more nuanced remarks on Islam, e.g. acknowledging its

17. Robert Mackey, "Hungarian Leader Rebuked for Saying Muslim Migrants Must Be Blocked 'to Keep Europe Christian'", *The New York Times,* 03.09.2015, accessed 03.01.2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/04/world/europe/hungarian-leader-rebuked-for-saying-muslim-migrants-must-be-blocked-to-keep-europe-christian.html?_r=1.

18. "Orbán: 'Az iszlám nem volt soha Európa része'", *HVG,* 16.10.2015, accessed 03.01.2016, http://hvg.hu/itthon/20151016_Orban_Az_iszlam_soha_nem_volt_Europa_resz.

19. Mackey, "Muslim Migrants Must be Blocked".

20. Károly Villányi, "Azt akarjuk, hogy unokáink egy európai kalifátusban éljenek?", *Magyar Idök,* 14.11.2015, accessed 03.01.2016, http://magyaridok.hu/belfold/azt-akarjuk-hogy-az-unokaink-egy-europai-kalifatusban-eljenek-5035/.

21. "L. Simon: Szaporodjunk!", *Népszabadság Online,* 05.09.2015, accessed 03.01.2016, http://nol.hu/video/lsimon-a-szaporodasban-latja-a-jovot-1573295?utm_source=mandiner&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=mandiner_201601.

"civilisational achievements" and securing friendly relations with Turkish and Gulf partners even if he was not ready to increase the number of Muslims in the country.[22]

The same, if not more, blatantly Islamophobic rhetoric is characteristic of many pockets of the Hungarian conservative and extreme right, and some of the dignitaries of Christian churches.[23] For instance, far right Jobbik who used to sympathise with Islam by connecting its own anti-Semitic agenda with the anti-Israelism of a part of the Muslim world and who had referred to the religion as "humanity's last light in the darkness of globalisation and liberalism" in 2013 has increasingly adopted an Islamophobic stance.[24]

In general terms, as Islam is a foreign, relatively unknown religion for the majority of Hungarians, the current climate enables Islamophobic political rhetoric and fearmongering to serve as a useful tool - not a goal - for political agendas. While tapping into popular fears against 'the unknown other' has traditionally been a more favoured strategy of the far right, the conservative government's fears that the so-called 'refugee crisis' might bring new wind to the sails of Jobbik and the like resulted in its openly declared goal[25] to monopolise Islamophobic sentiments by demonising Islam and depicting the Prime Minister in the role of a strongman in charge.

LEGAL SYSTEM AND AUTHORITIES

According to the president of MME, Zoltan Sulok, Islam being one of the country's long-recognised religions, faces no legal obstacles: Muslims are guaranteed freedom of religion and there are no Hungarian laws contradicting Islamic practices.[26] On the other hand however, the year's so-called 'refugee crisis' made it clear that Hungarian authorities have severe difficulties handling cultural differences. The police and the notoriously underfinanced and underpriotised Immigration Authority have no programmes to train personnel in intercultural interaction or sensitivity about cultural/religious background. Accordingly, dealing with Muslim women or with inmates, for example, during Ramadan remains problematic and there were minor incidents based on mocking religion or mishandling copies of the Qur'an. However, the majority of such incidents are likely to remain unreported.[27] Also, since the beginning of

22. "Orbán "kétkulacsos" muszlimbarátsága", *Népszava,* 02.10.2015, accessed 03.01.2016, http://nepszava.hu/cikk/1071820-orban-ketkulacsos-muszlimbaratsaga.

23. Tamás Velkei, "Az iszlám terjesztésa a migránsok célja", *Magyar Nemzet,* 17.09.2015, accessed 03.01.2016, http://mno.hu/magyar_nemzet_belfoldi_hirei/az-iszlam-terjesztese-a-migransok-celja-1304680.

24. Tibor Lengyel: "A Jobbik kivívta az iszlám haramját", *Origo,* 12.08.2015, accessed 04.01.2016, http://www.origo.hu/itthon/20150812-kivivta-a-jobbik-maga-ellen-az-iszlam-haramjat.html.

25. "Orbán "kétkulacsos" muszlimbarátsága", *Népszava.*

26. Gergely Szilvay, "A szeretet vagy háború vallása az iszlám?", *Mandíner,* 22.04.2015, accessed 03.01.2015, http://mandiner.hu/cikk/20150421_a_szeretet_vagy_a_haboru_vallasa_az_iszlam.

27. Interview conducted with Júlia Iván, senior legal officer at the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, a human rights organization working on the legal protection of refugees, Budapest: 12.11.2015.

the so-called 'refugee crisis' and the government's increasing Islamophobic reactions, both Muslim communities and NGOs sense a deterioration of formerly good and cooperative relations with state authorities.[28]

MEDIA AND CYBERSPACE

Hungary's media environment, a privately owned sector that has suffered from increased state regulation since the Fidesz government's coming to power, continues to be under government pressure to influence coverage.[29] Similarly to the country's political landscape, Hungarian media is also characterised by a stark left-right divide where political and ideological allegiances are more or less the norm. While Islam has only recently been picked up as a topic of heightened interest at all, the so-called 'refugee crisis' led to the securitisation of the religion and allowed for intensive media attention. Not surprisingly, state-controlled and pro-government media outlets serve as the prime tool of spreading the government's anti-Islamic stances. According to the 2015 Islamophobia Report published by MIK, the community has been facing "mass attacks" by certain media outlets,[30] while the community's efforts to support refugee aid efforts[31] have largely been ignored. Self-declared 'experts' are frequent guests who provide simplistic and often highly popularist and Islamophobic answers about current events and Islam itself. Many of these increasingly popular 'independent' commentators, who in reality express right-wing or pro-government ideas, such as György Nógrádi and Georg Spöttle contribute to the spreading of essentialised anti-Islamic stereotypes and calculated fearmongering. Against this backdrop, the report mentions a number of other media outlets that have been seeking to provide more balanced narratives.[32] It has also been observed that in many pockets, media reporting on immigration, and thus Islam, became increasingly more nuanced and managed to move beyond the hitherto uniform authority-style factual reporting of events to covering individual stories that have been better researched.[33] Nevertheless, it has been also observed that liberal outlets often express their fear of Islam and mass immigration.[34] Also, certain

28. Ibid. and interview conducted with István Tóth, vice-president of the Islamic Church of Hungary (MIK).

29. "Hungary: 5-year decline in press freedom" *Freedom House,* 2015, accessed 03.01.2016, https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2015/hungary.

30. These include state radio and television channels *Kossuth Rádio* and *M1*, conservative news channel *Hír TV*, pro-government dailies *Magyar Nemzet* and *Magyar Magyar Idők*, as well as *ATV* channel and *Hetek Magazin* belonging to the Faith Church, a large and influential Pentecostal Christian Zionist sect. "Iszlamofóbia, 2015, Magyarország", *Magyaroroszági Iszlám Közösség,* 02.01.2016, accessed 06.01.2016, http://magyariszlam.hu/mikmagyar/news.php.

31. Robert Samuels: "As hostility flares, Hungary's Muslim community mobilizes to aid refugees", *The Washington Post,* 22.09.2015, accessed 03.01.2015.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/hungarys-tiny-muslim-community-mobilizes-to-help-refugees/2015/09/21/35a8b72a-5a63-11e5-8475-781cc9851652_story.html.

32. These include the private broadcasters *RTL Klub* and *TV2*, *Klub Rádió*, the online news sites *Origo* and *PestiSrácok* as well as the liberal daily Népszabadság and the weekly *HVG*. "Iszlamofóbia, 2015, Magyarország", *Magyaroroszági Iszlám Közösség.*

33. Interview with Dr Júlia Iván.

34. Ibid.

moves from MIK, such as declaring government parties "haram"[35] or calling homosexuals "Allah's filthiest creatures"[36] were rather counterproductive for Islam's media image.

While there is no sign of organised anti-Islamic networks of media outlets or public figures, the so-called 'refugee crisis' has increased the vehemence of traditionally right-wing, xenophobic internet portals and popular 'like hunting' news sites such as kurucinfo.hu or faith- and Church-affiliated vigyazo.hu. It has also led to the creation of explicitly anti-migrant sites such as napimigrans.hu (lit. 'daily migrant') with content bordering on hate speech.[37]

In general terms, the media outlets are plagued with a high degree of misconceptions, misinformation, the lack of knowledge and an oversimplified portrayal of Islam, as well as the absence of scientifically competent, ideologically neutral, non-partisan commentators who would be able to analyse Islam-related content for a generally not too well-informed audience and debunk widespread misconceptions and stereotypes about Muslims.

EDUCATION

It can be argued that Hungary's rich Islamic history and ties to Muslim-majority regions are ignored and omitted from general history curricula. According to a study, the overwhelming majority of history textbooks tend to be Eurocentric and are inadequate in terms of providing students with a balanced knowledge of Islam and Islamic societies. Even if reference is made to, e.g. the rise of Islam, the Ottoman Empire, or de-/colonisation, the portrayal of non-European regions remains marginal, schematic and lacking critical analysis.[38] Also, as István Tóth, vice-president of MIK remarks, contrary to other churches, the Islamic community is not allowed to review the content on Islam in curricula.[39]

While originating in 19th-century philological Orientalist traditions, contemporary Hungarian Orientalist academia consists of two ideologically different camps: a liberal branch represented by Budapest's Eötvös Lóránd University and a Christian-conservative branch centered around Péter Pázmány Catholic University and its doyen, Arabist Miklós Maróth. The latter branch has a heavy research focus on Oriental Christian studies and its researchers often feature in pro-government media as Middle

35. "Harammal, vallási tiltással reagált a Magyar Iszlám Közösség Orbán Viktor miniszterelnök péntek reggeli rádióinterjújára", *Híradó,* 04.09.2015, accessed 04.01.2016, http://www.hirado.hu/2015/09/04/tilalmat-hirdettek-a-fidesz-ellen-a-magyar-muszlimok/.

36. "Magyar Iszlám Közösség alelnöke: A homoszexuálisok Allah legmocskosabb teremtményei", *Mandíner,* 08.10.2015, accessed 04.01.2016, http://mandiner.hu/cikk/20150908_magyar_iszlam_kozosseg_alelnoke_a_homoszexualisok_allah_legmocskosabb_teremtmenyei.

37. Interview with Omar Adam Sayfo.

38. Zsuzsanna Mikáné-Szolnoki, "Az arab világ és az iszlám - A magyar középiskolai történelem tankönyvek összehasonlító elemzése", *Elektronikus Könyv és Nevelés*, Országos Széchenyi Könyvtár, (2003) 5:1

39. Interview with István Tóth.

East experts.[40] For instance, in recent interviews on the so-called 'refugee crisis', Maróth warned against the coming Islamisation of the continent[41] and the loss of Europe's Christian culture.[42] Due to the traditional lack of sociology or political science-oriented liberal Middle East experts in the country, such views usually remain unbalanced.

CONCLUSION

Policy recommendations for political actors and NGOs

Hungary has had a fundamentally different experience with the integration of its Muslims than Western Europe due to their small number, their usually high educational level and for the most part their successful integration. It is important to note however that even if the upkeep of religious practices do play a significant role in the personal lives of foreign-born Hungarian Muslims, the external identification of these immigrant groups by the host society is more likely to be based on their ethnic origin, not religious affiliation. Thus, good relations with one's 'Iraqi GP' or 'Syrian grocer' won't necessarily be translated into or seen as representative to the perceptions of Islam and Muslims in general. This, as well as the low number of Muslims, also means that the average Hungarian is likely to have little or no direct contact with Muslims on a daily basis.

Nevertheless, the past year has shown how as a result of increasing Islamophobic utterances in politics and in many pockets of the media the population's irrational fears of Islam can be framed as a matter of national security. This process made clear that widespread ignorance about Islam among the population makes the religion and its followers prone to being misused as political tools. To counter this, Islam needs to be explained and made familiar both by its community and by non-partisan, politically neutral commentators. Also, Islamophobic utterances need to be countered in meaningful, professional ways both by the community and engaged NGOs or lobby groups. There is a genuine need to address the very existence of Islamophobia and to point at negative perceptions, prejudices and discriminations targeting Muslims. Authorities should be more aware and sensitive to both Islam and Islamophobic incidents; the need for intercultural training as well as a system enabling open and confidential reporting of Islamophobic incidents is much needed. Most importantly, the Muslim community and NGOs cooperating with Muslims in the country should both strive for increased interreligious and intercultural exchanges and dialogues between Muslim and non-Muslim Hungarians to enable more personal and institutional contact.

40. Interview with Omar Sayfo.

41. "Maróth Miklós: Európa megszűnhet Európa lenni", *Mandíner*, 22.09.2015, accessed 03.01.2016, http://mandiner.hu/cikk/20150922_maroth_miklos_europa_megszunhet_europa_lenni.

42. "Valós veszély a párhuzamos társadalmak kialakulása L. Simon szerint", *Mandíner,* 04.11.2015, accessed 03.01.2016, http://mandiner.hu/cikk/20151104_valos_veszely_a_parhuzamos_tarsadalmak_kialakulasa_l_simon_szerint.

CHRONOLOGY

11 January

- At the Paris rally the Charlie Hebdo attacks of 7 January Orbán announces a nexus between immigration, Islam and terror.

May

- The government launches a large-scale billboard campaign against immigrants in support of the National Consultation on Immigration and Terrorism, a questionnaire campaign linking migrants with terrorism.

13 July

- The beginning of the erection of a fence on the border with Serbia.

25 July

- At his speech at the annual Tusványos Summer University in Băile Tuşnad, Romania, PM Orbán announces his determination to "keep Hungary Hungary" and to "avoid becoming the Marseille of East-Central Europe".

3 September

- At a Brussels news conference PM Orbán invokes Hungary's 150 years under Ottoman rule as a reason why "Hungarians don't want to live with Muslims again".

4 September

- In response to PM Orbán's comments, the MIK declares its support and cooperation with the government "haram" for the country's Muslims.

7 September

- At a Budapest diplomats' conference, PM Orbán assures the audience of his appreciation for Islam in a political sense in order to keep up good relations with Hungary's Turkish and Gulf allies even if Hungary "does not wish to increase its Muslim population".

8 September

- The footage of Hungarian camerawoman Petra László tripping a refugee with child at the Serbian border causes global outrage.

15 September

- The government declares a state of emergency in two counties along the Serbian border.

15 September

- In a public broadcaster interview PM Orbán acknowledges Islam's "civilizational achievements" but describes it as a culture and way of life that is not adaptable

to European Christian values and its notions of gender equality, marriage and sexuality. He also warns of "the emergence of parallel societies" and Christianity "losing the demographic game" if Muslims are allowed into Europe en masse.

16 September

- Hungarian police clashes with migrants at the Röszke border station.

17 September

- In a joint interview with Die Presse, Die Welt, The Times and Le Monde, PM Orbán deems Muslims "impossible to integrate" and his determination to avoid the "emergence of parallel societies and Muslim demographic booms as happening in the West".

13 November

- The Paris massacre is heavily condemned by all major parties and is used as justification for the conservative Islamophobic stances.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN IRELAND NATIONAL REPORT 2015

JAMES CARR

THE AUTHOR

James Carr teaches and researches at the Department of Sociology in the University of Limerick. In 2010 he was awarded a three year scholarship from the Irish Research Council to engage in research into racism directed towards Muslim communities in Ireland. He is a well-known speaker on the topics of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism in Ireland. Building on previous publications, in 2016, James published his book Experiences of Islamophobia: Living with racism in the neoliberal era (London and New York: Routledge) which focused on anti-Muslim racism in Ireland set to the international context. James has also recently undertaken and published research with the Immigrant Council of Ireland entitled 'Islamophobia in Dublin: Experiences and how to respond', which was supported by the Open Society Foundations. James.Carr@ul.ie

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions. No representation, either expressed or implied, is made of the accuracy of the material in the national reports. The editors of the European Islamophobia Report cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The reader must make his or her own evaluation of the accuracy and appropriateness of the material.

To cite this report: James Carr (2016): *Islamophobia in Ireland: National Report 2015,* in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ireland is no stranger to Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism.[1] This submission on Islamophobia in Ireland for 2015 provides further evidence of anti-Muslim hostility and discrimination in the Irish context at the interpersonal, structural and discursive levels. Reported experiences of anti-Muslim racism provided here draw on data gathered and provided by the non-governmental organisation (NGO) European Network Against Racism (Ireland) (henceforth ENAR Ireland) through its online racism reporting mechanism;[2] and insights are also drawn from research undertaken with Muslim communities on behalf of the Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI) funded by the Open Society Foundation (OSF).[3] The insights provided by both of these sources detail experiences of physical assault, verbal abuse - on- and offline - as well as institutional discrimination against Muslim men and women in Ireland underpinning a need for broad societal response.

In the context of institutional discrimination, repeated researches have made reference to the manner in which pupils in the Irish education system are exposed to discriminatory enrolment policies, impacting those from minority faith/no-faith backgrounds.[4] Irish Equality legislation allows for educational institutions, primarily those affiliated with a particular faith to refuse entry to those students, who in essence, do not belong to that faith, something particularly problematic in the Irish context as the vast majority of schools remain in the patronage of the Catholic Church.[5] Despite the promise of legislative change in 2015, enrolment policies such as these as well as a lack of national policy in regards to the wearing of the headscarf in school, provides a context wherein Muslim schoolgoers are particularly exposed to institutionalised exclusionary practices. This has to be addressed if the structural underpinnings that facilitate Islamophobia are to be challenged.

The attacks in Paris in January and November, as well as events more locally specific to Ireland resulted with an abundance of media reports in the Irish press of Muslim/Islam related issues. Drawing from a selected sample of print publications,

1. Carr, J. (2016) *Experiences of Islamophobia: Living with Racism in the Neoliberal Era*, London and New York: Routledge.

2. ENAR Ireland (2016) iReport https://www.ireport.ie/

3. See Carr, J. (2016a) *Islamophobia in Dublin: Experiences and how to respond*, Report for the Immigrant Council of Ireland [online] available: http://immigrantcouncil.ie/files/publications/e9837-islamfinal.pdf [accessed 4th March 2016].

4. See Faas, D., Darmody, M. and Beata Sokolowska (2015) "Religious diversity in primary schools: reflections from the Republic of Ireland", *British Journal of Religious Education*, DOI: 10.1080/01416200.2015.1025700; Hogan, C. (2011) "Accommodating Islam in the Denominational Irish Education System: Religious Freedom and Education in the Republic of Ireland," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol.31(4): 554-573. Holland, K. (2015) "Hindu family fails to get place for child in local school", *The Irish Times*, 13 October, 2015; http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/hindu-family-fails-to-get-place-for-child-in-local-school-1.2388898 [accessed: 11 November, 2015].

5. Ibid.

Irish media outlets all too often engage in an 'us vs. them' presentation of Muslim communities in Ireland that incorporates an alleged incompatibility between 'Islam' and European values. While deeper research in this area is required, there is evidence of problematic, at times Islamophobic, uncritical media representations of Muslim communities in the Irish context which need to be addressed.

The year 2015 has witnessed the emergence and increased visibility of groups calling themselves, inter alia, 'Anti-Islam Ireland' and/or 'PEGIDA Ireland'. Some of these have organised campaigns, online and off against the alleged 'Islamification' of Ireland.[6] Although small in number, PEGIDA Ireland and/or 'Anti-Islam Ireland' have organised protests in different locations across the country. On a more positive note, there have also been a number of interventions undertaken by civil society actors to challenge Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism through community engagement and support; efforts at legislative change; and the recognition of anti-Muslim/ Islamophobic hate crime by the Irish police.

6. PEGIDA: 'Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamification of the Occident'; the ideals of the group in Ireland resonate with those of the founding movement. For Ireland see: PEGIDA Ireland (2016) PEGIDA Ireland [online] available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5L6ovASzZGI [accessed: 12 February, 2016]; for the UK see Meredith, C. (2014) "Britain First 'Invade' Crayford Mosque Demanding Removal of 'Sexist' Signs in Bizarre Video", *Huffington Post*, 15July, 2014 [online] available: http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/07/15/britain-first-mosque-video_n_5587353.html [accessed: 7 January, 2016].

INTRODUCTION

Ireland is no stranger to Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism.[7] This study on Islamophobia in Ireland for 2015 provides further evidence of anti-Muslim hostility and discrimination in the Irish context at the interpersonal, structural and discursive levels. Structured in five distinct yet inter-related sections, this submission details the realities of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism in the Irish context for 2015 engaging with: lived reports of anti-Muslim hostility and discrimination; structural exclusion; media discourses; political actors; and finally positive developments in the area of societal challenges to Islamophobia. This report concludes with recommendations on how these challenges may manifest.

REPORTS OF ANTI-MUSLIM HOSTILITY AND DISCRIMINATION

Two sources of experiences of anti-Muslim hostility and discrimination have been drawn on for this report; namely, data provided by ENAR Ireland via its online reporting mechanism which includes self-reported instances of anti-Muslim racism and also those submitted by witnesses and/partner organisations; furthermore, fieldwork undertaken during the summer of 2015 for a research study for the Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI), funded by the Open Society Foundation (OSF), also provided insights for this report.[8]

Reports published by ENAR Ireland over the past number of years have revealed the manner in which Muslim men and women in Ireland experience physical and verbal abuse as well as online instances of hate and graffiti.[9] These reports demonstrate the use of weapons including bottles and sticks, as well as examples of people being spat upon on the basis of being identified as Muslim; in one particularly disturbing incident a 10-year-old Muslim girl was "pushed, shoved and hit" by a gang of youths at a playground.

Analysis of instances of anti-Muslim hostility and discrimination reported to ENAR Ireland for 2015 suggest that this pattern is continuing. In all, anti-Muslim incidents accounted for just over ten per cent of reports (41 reports) made to ENAR Ireland in the period under review. While this figure may seem low, it is worth noting that awareness of the relatively new ENAR Ireland online reporting mechanism is still growing and relationships continue to develop with Muslim communities. Furthermore, people may choose not report their experiences for a range of reasons and as a result insights on such incidents are lost.[10] The following comments were

7. Carr (2016).

8. Carr (2016a) .

9. ENAR Ireland (2016).

10. Carr (2016).

submitted in reports made to ENAR Ireland and briefly demonstrate some of the experiences of anti-Muslim hostility and discrimination in the Irish context.

HOSTILITY

> In the washroom of a mall, this old lady, probably in her sixties looked at me (in a headscarf) and started shaking her head and mumbling "they are everywhere". I said sorry, are you saying something to me and she replied "go back to your country. You are everywhere. Bloody Muslims"(Verbatim account by a Muslim woman)

> I am a Muslim woman wearing a head scarf. While I was at Grafton street [Dublin City centre], a man approached me and said "You are a Muslim, aren't you?". I said "Yes", He said "take your Quran book, tear it apart and use it as a toilet tissue to wipe your ass." (Verbatim account by a Muslim woman).

> I was walking with my friend to my home, a stranger (man) came to us and he spit on us, and he abuses us verbally. He saw us wearing hijab (scarf on head), he spit on us and said bad words to us, he said that he saw something on TV about Muslims but I have no idea about what he was talking. (Verbatim account by a Muslim woman).

One particularly terrifying incident, which the witness believed to have an anti-Muslim element, involved a serious assault leaving the victim unconscious. The incident occurred at:

> ...around 10:30 pm two Irish boys were chasing an Afghan boy, when they caught him, they beat him with a hurling stick and an iron bar…. According to the witness the boy fell unconscious on the ground he had no shoes on and they repeated to strike him. The witness said he ran to assist the boy and he was still unconscious and bleeding…. The boy was found to have had broken ribs, broken nose, bruised face and head injury (Partner Organisation).

In the following comments, the people making the reports refer to Daesh/ISIL and the profound impact of the November Paris attacks on the lives of Muslim communities in Ireland. In the first comment below, the assailant started by asking a group of Muslim students:

> ...why [are] you people killing those people in Paris and keep saying they are ISIS… One of the students [had] been assaulted with the same insult 3 times for past week after the Paris incident and she cry on the scene (Partner Organisation).

> The 2 lady was just walking in the street and one taxi man stop in front of

them start assaulting them and ask them to go back to the country and keep asking why you people kill the people. The lady was surprise by this…. the man stop and start verbally assaulting them with so many things and kept blaming them for the Paris incident and claiming [they are] ISIS associated as they are wearing the scarf. One of the lady is an Irish revert but she is wearing scarf so the men associated her with the ISIS too (Partner Organisation).

Separately in September 2015, media reports detailed the manner in which a Saudi Arabian postgraduate student in Trinity College Dublin was assaulted when using public transport in the city. While travelling by bus, she was confronted by a man with the statement 'Allahu Akbar'; the man then proceeded to physically assault her.

Graffiti/Posters/Social Media

In addition to the experiences of lived Islamophobia described thus far, reports were also made regarding instances of anti-Muslim graffiti, posters and social media posts.

Racist graffiti painted on streets around Wellington Road/York Hill area. 'Blacks Out' 'Islam Out' 'Islam Out of Eire' (Partner Organisation).

Just after the Charlie Hebdo attack racist posters with the picture of Prophet Mohammed were put all over XXXXX College next to the mosque (Partner Organisation).

Such is the level of anti-Muslim sentiment on social media that it is beyond the capacity of this report to document all occurrences made that involve people in Ireland or relate to the Irish context. Suffice to say that the following comment, reported to ENAR Ireland, provides an insight into some of the content online.[11] Identifiers from the following comment have been omitted deliberately:

DISCRIMINATION

The reports made to ENAR Ireland include experiences of discrimination as well as hostility. In the comments that follow below discrimination in the workplace is clearly in evidence. A participant in the ICI study noted the difficulties faced by Muslim women who wear the hijab when trying to secure employment.

Yeah, yeah, it's very hard to get jobs when you are wearing hijab…. My cousin, when she take off her hijab she find job; she work… (Muslim woman).

11. Appendix 1.

Participants in the Immigrant Council of Ireland report noted discrimination when accessing work, but also in the workplace by managers and sometimes from colleagues in the form of comments of 'innocent questions'.[12] Similar examples also arose in the reports made to ENAR Ireland during the course of 2015.

> I am an [South-Asian] Muslim working in a very big multinational company. A … colleague commented today that we should have a black flag of your people here in the office - the ISIS flag. I am very upset. This is the second time the guy has made such a comment (Muslim man).

In December 2015, an incident occurred in Dublin that attracted significant media attention and demonstrated the manner in which Muslim men and women in Ireland can and do experience discrimination in the workplace from clients. In this incident, a hospital patient in Tallaght, Dublin refused treatment from two consultants because they were Muslim. The consultant who initially arrived to assist the patient was a Muslim woman wearing a headscarf. The second consultant was a Muslim man. The incident came to light via a social media post by the patient's daughter which noted how her mother insisted on being treated by a non-Muslim physician.[13] The hospital in question refused to comment on specific patient cases but did state that the values of the hospital "emphasise respect" and the "free profession and practice of religion" and an expectation that patients abide by these principles. Media coverage of this event is discussed below.

Finally, a report made to ENAR Ireland in the aftermath of the November attacks in Paris demonstrates the profiling of a young Muslim girl on the basis of her religious identity by the Irish police service. This is not the first time that such practices have been recorded in the Irish context; however, the proximity to the aforementioned events in Paris arguably should serve as a reminder of potential increases in such practices, policy driven or based on the prejudice of individual members of the service, in the aftermath of such occurrences.[14]

> There was a search in the bus… and the Garda search everyone… just briefly, but when it came to this young secondary school girl as she is wearing scarf/hijab she had been search more thoroughly by the Garda, she was scared but she just do what been instructed to her. She feel embarrassed by this incident and she did not want to talk about it, but she feels that it is not fair to search her more than the others but she is scared so she just go along with it (Partner Organisation).

12. Carr (2016a).

13.Appendix 1; Feehan, C. and Kearns, D. (2015) '"'"I don't want to be treated by someone in a hijab'" – Patient refuses care from two Muslim doctors"', Independent.ie; 10 th December, 2015 [online] available: http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/health/i-dont-want-to-be-treated-by-someone-in-a-hijab-patient-refuses-care-from-two-muslim-doctors-34276594.html [accessed: 5th January, 2016].

14. Carr (2016); Migrant's Rights Centre Ireland (2016) *Singled Out*, Report, http://www.mrci.ie/resources/publications/leaflets-reports/singled-out-exploratory-study-on-ethnic-profiling-in-ireland-its-impact-on-migrant-workers-their-families/ [accessed: 4 January, 2016].

EDUCATION AND STRUCTURAL DISCRIMINATION

Participants in the ICI study on anti-Muslim racism in Dublin repeatedly reported experiences of discrimination in the education context.[15] This manifested when it came to accessing education but also for Muslim pupils already in the education system, in primary and secondary levels.[16] Equality legislation in Ireland permits educational institutions affiliated with a particular faith to refuse entry to those students who do not belong to that faith on the basis that their presence may threaten the ethos of the institution.[17] This is particularly problematic in the Irish context as the vast majority of schools remain in the patronage of the Catholic Church.[18]

Legislative change has been promised in this area in the form of the Education (Admission to Schools) 2015 bill which is yet to be enacted, but even this proposed new legislation is problematic as it maintains the possibility for schools to employ discriminatory enrolment policies.[19] This proposed legislative change may mean little in terms of practice provided schools 'prove' that the refusal of a pupil is essential to maintain its ethos, as has been the position up to now.[20] At this point it is worth underscoring that over ninety per cent of primary schools in Ireland remain under the patronage of the Catholic Church as well as more than half of all secondary schools.[21]

Discriminatory policies such as those outlined here do not just impact upon Muslim communities.[22] Nonetheless, for those Muslim men and women who participated in the 2015 ICI study the issue of exclusionary school enrolment policies arose time and again. Taking just one example, for one participant [P], a white Irish convert/revert to Islam, with a neutral Irish accent, the issue of exclusion from sec-

15. Carr (2016a).

16. Faas et al (2015); Smyth, E., Darmody, M. McGinnity, F. and Delma Byrne (2009) *Adapting to Diversity: Irish Schools and Newcomer Students*, Economic and Social Research Institute; [online] available: http://emn.ie/files/p_201103011110262009_AdaptingtoDiversity_ESRI.pdf [accessed: 7 January, 2015].

17. Holland, K. (2015); Irish Statute Book (2016) Equal Status Act 2000-2008.

18. See footnote 5 above.

19. The Irish Times (2016) "School Admissions Bill: Battle looms over rules on past pupils"; 7 April, 2015 [online] available: http://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/school-admissions-bill-battle-looms-over-rules-on-past-pupils-1.2166728 [accessed: 4 January, 2016]; Department of Education and Skills (Admission to Schools) Bill 2015 – [online] available: https://www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/Legislation/Education-Admission-to-Schools-Bill-2015.pdf [accessed: 4 January 4th, 2015].

20. The Irish Times (2015).

21. Darmody, M., Smyth, E. and Selina McCoy (2012) *School Sector Variation Among Primary Schools in Ireland*, Report. Economic and Social Research Institute; [online] available: https://www.educatetogether.ie/sites/default/files/school_sector_variation_0.pdf [accessed: 5 January, 2016]; Faas et al (2015). Humphreys, J. (2015) "How the Catholic Church Could Solve the Patronage Problem", *The Irish Times*; 27 July, 2015 [online] available: http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/how-the-catholic-church-could-solve-the-school-patronage-problem-1.2297551 [accessed: 7 January, 2016].

22. O'Brien, C. (2015) 'Nearly 1,500 parents appeal decisions to refuse school entry', *The Irish Times*, 14 December, 2015 [online] available: http://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/nearly-1-500-parents-appeal-decisions-to-refuse-school-entry-1.2465394 [accessed: 5 January, 2016].

ondary schools for her children was not immediately apparent as she revealed in an interview with the author [JC]:

> [P]: …we moved to Dublin, straight away they couldn't get into the secondary school and I had to put them in private school...
>
> JC: And why could they not get into the secondary school?
>
> [P]: Because they weren't Catholic.
>
> JC: Was that communicated to you?
>
> [P]: 'We have to take our own [read Catholic] first', and that was actually from a person who is the sister of a vice president of a secondary school… Initially she said 'oh you can put the boys down for that school' and said 'I'd have a word with my brother, he's the vice president or the vice principal there' and it was a good school and whatever. [Later] I rang up, [they said] 'yeah that's great, no problem' …
>
> JC: Would you have been within the catchment [for pupils]?
>
> [P]: Yes...Oh yeah, yeah, yeah and kids from the primary [school] were going into… it was like a feeder... And so then they said… 'we'll send you out a form and fill it out'. So verbally I was accepted on the phone by the secretary and the principal and when I filled out the form and sent it back in I got a letter within a week, 'sorry we don't have any places and we will not have any places until 2015'…
>
> JC: So they were aware of your Muslim identity from the start?
>
> [P]: No, [only] from the form.[23]

As is well established in the literature, Muslim identities are highly racialised in the contemporary context; and as demonstrated here and elsewhere subjected to regular hostility and discrimination that targets people on the basis of their 'Muslimness'.[24] On this basis it is reasonable to argue, although further research is required, that discriminatory policies such as those outlined above in the context of accessing education may have an increased exclusionary effect on Muslims in Ireland. These enrolment policies may not explicitly espouse Islamophobia but provide a context wherein Islamophobic sentiments can have a direct impact on the life-chances of young Muslims in Ireland.

23. Carr (2016a).

24. Allen, C. (2010) *Islamophobia*, Farnham: Ashgate; Carr (2016); Awan, I. and Zempi, I. (2015) *We Fear for Our Lives: Offline and Online Experiences of Anti-Muslim Hostility*, Report, [online] available: http://tellmamauk.org/wp-content/uploads/resources/We%20Fear%20For%20Our%20Lives.pdf [accessed: 7 January, 2016].

A final note on the education context in Ireland relates to the experiences of young Muslims in Irish schools. The findings from the ICI fieldwork undertaken in the summer of 2015 revealed the manner in which pupils in Irish secondary schools experience discrimination and abuse from teachers and classmates. A parent noted how every time her son entered the classroom a classmate would "set this off the bomb" sound. One young Muslim man described for the study how he had once been told to "shut up Allah" by his class teacher during a debate about Islam. For young Muslim women, the issue of wearing the hijab in some schools is problematic. One parent described her daughter's interaction with her teacher:

> ...[my daughter] can't hear the teacher, what he talking on the board. [My daughter] told, "sorry, I can't hear you what you said?" and he told her "when you take off that stupid thing [hijab] on your head you can hear me now, ok"...

A young Muslim woman who had finished second level school in 2015 noted how when she informed her principal that:

> "I'm planning on wearing the headscarf tomorrow", which was the first day of school… she was like "no, absolutely not"… I was just shocked, 'cos I [was] just going in to give her a heads up about it, I didn't think that I wasn't going to be allowed… I was like but "we're allowed wear our scarves in school"... I said that to her and she was like "no you're not allowed [to] wear it around your head"… I was really shocked because I didn't expect that at all… I just said why can't I wear it? And she was like "no you'll be excluded [by others] from school".

The debate on wearing the hijab or 'covering' in schools is not new and the position, or lack thereof, of the Irish government towards religious head covering in the educational context has not changed during 2015.[25] The point remains though that the Irish government's "a policy to not have a policy",[26] permits a context wherein young Muslim women are at the mercy of individual school policies and personalities when it comes to manifesting their faith.

MEDIA

The literature demonstrates that in addition to domestic issues, international events such as those involving Daesh/ISIL, the attacks in Paris and Tunisia in 2015, and the ongoing so-called 'refugee crisis' can act as 'triggers' for anti-Muslim acts and sentiment in societies where Muslims are a minority.[27] The manner in which media report on these issues plays an important role in how these events are interpreted by the

25. Hogan (2011).

26. MacCormaic, R. (2008) "No directive on hijabs in classroom to be issued", *The Irish Times*; http://www.irishtimes.com/news/no-directive-on-hijabs-in-classroom-to-be-issued-1.940516 [accessed: 7 January, 2016].

27. Awan and Zempi (2016); RTE (2016) 'Three Confirmed Dead in Tunisia Attack,' [online] available: http://www.rte.ie/news/2015/0628/711121-tunisia-attack/ [accessed: 7 January 7th, 2016].

general public.[28] There is a pressing need for deeper research that interrogates Irish media outlets and the manner in which they represent Islam and Muslim communities in Ireland. While a detailed analysis of Irish media representations of Muslims/Islam was outside the scope of this report, the Nexis media database search engine was utilised here to study a limited selection of print media reports in the Irish context.[29] This involved the review of content of leading Irish newspapers in the wake of critical international and national events.[30]

News reports and opinion pieces relating to the events analysed and included in this review demonstrate a consistency in the manner in which a selection of articles present Muslims/Islam as a threat in the context of 'us' versus 'them' discourses. The attacks in Europe are portrayed as part of a "clash of civilisations" (November 2015);[31] that in Europe we need to start "flexing our liberal muscles"[32] (June 2015) in the face of attacks premised on a "peculiar brand of Islamania"[33] (January 2015). There is at least some nuance, albeit problematic, in terms of 'good' and 'bad' Muslims in some of the articles reviewed; however the homogenising juxtaposition of 'Islam' and 'Western values' tends to dominate. In the context of the so-called 'refugee crisis' the conflation of Islam and an alleged incompatibility with European values is again in evidence: "Islam. There I've said it, because it seems no one is willing to say the word that is worrying a lot of people" is the first line in an article the headline of which refers to "people [refugees/migrants] whose culture and religion could prove totally at odds with European customs" accompanied by an image of Daesh/ISIL fighters about to execute a Kurdish man.[34]

Arguably more worrying in the publications reviewed is the content published in the section dedicated to readers' letters. As with the rest of this media review, a detailed analysis of these letter sections was not undertaken for this report. However, based on

28. Allen (2010).

29. See Lexis Nexis (2016) Nexis [online] available: http://bis.lexisnexis.co.uk/products/nexis [accessed: 7 January, 2016].

30. National titles reviewed: *Evening Herald*; *Irish Daily Mail*; *Irish Examiner*; *Irish Independent*; *Irish Times*; *Irish Mirror*; *Sunday Business Post*; *Sunday Independent*. Headlines and article leads were reviewed on the date the critical events occurred and for a period of up to eight subsequent days. Events included in the search were: the attacks in Paris in January and November; in Tunisia in July; and the days following the tragic death of Aylan Kurdi. Media reports discussed here were accessed on 21-22 December, 2015.

31. Corcoran, J. (2015) "Paris shows the West has become a soft touch in this clash of civilisations", *Irish Independent*; http://www.independent.ie/opinion/columnists/paris-shows-the-west-has-become-a-soft-touch-in-this-clash-of-civilisations-34222973.html [accessed: 12 February, 2016].

32. Hunt, C. (2016) "I fell in love with the people – but I won't be returning," *Irish Independent*, 28 June, 2016 [online] available: http://www.independent.ie/opinion/columnists/carol-hunt/i-fell-in-love-with-the-people-but-i-wont-be-returning-31335169.html [accessed: 12 February, 2016].

33. Turner, M. (2015) "Charlie Hebdo fought extremism with laughter, satire and free speech", *The Irish Times*, 8 January, 2015 [online] available: http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/martyn-turner-charlie-hebdo-fought-extremism-with-laughter-satire-and-free-speech-1.2058156 [accessed: 12 February, 2016].

34. Flanagan, P. (2015) "Shadow of Isis hangs over horror of refugee crisis", *Irish Mirror*, 11 September, 2015 [online] available: http://www.irishmirror.ie/news/news-opinion/pat-flanagan-shadow-isis-hangs-6422239 [accessed 12 February, 2016]. [my addition]

the small sample reviewed, criticisms must be made in terms of the outright racialising, anti-Muslim language published in this context and the need for editors to exercise greater care when publishing letters that stereotype and stigmatise communities. The provision of balance in terms of opposing opinions does not justify some of the language used. For example that the number of Muslim refugees coming to the West who allegedly do not and will not share the "values of European society" are part of a "creeping Islamisation";[35] in a context wherein "Islam attempts to impose itself on our culture" and by granting refuge to people fleeing conflict "we would be committing cultural and demographic suicide."[36] The connection between Muslim migrant communities and an alleged welfare dependency is also made in one letter where it is also claimed that second/third generation children in the UK "have grown up feckless and full of hate for women, Jewish people, other non-Muslims, gay people and other minorities."[37]

The connection between Muslims/Islam and welfare dependency is not restricted to the letter pages. In November 2015, outside the time frame of the critical events that formed the basis of the heretofore media review, the print edition of the Weekend Herald ran with the headline "Welfare Islamic State: Wanted terror chief is living off benefits in Dublin."[38] However, this is the only instance to the knowledge of the author of this particular trope in the print media proper. It is important to note that there were also instances wherein journalists wrote and warned against making generalisations and anti-Muslim hostility and Islamophobia in the context of the events discussed.[39]

Media reportage of Muslim/Islam issues in the Irish context concluded with the problematic, and unprompted by international events, coverage of the aforementioned refusal by a patient in a Dublin hospital to receive treatment from Muslim

35. Letters (2015) "We need to look to long term consequences of a creeping Islamisation", *Irish Examiner*, 12 September, 2015 [online] available: http://www.irishexaminer.com/viewpoints/yourview/we-need-to-look-at-long-term-consequences-of-a-creeping-islamisation-353377.html [accessed: 12 February, 2016]; Letters (2015) "EU can't take in more migrants", Irish Independent, 3rd September, 2015 [online] available: http://www.independent.ie/opinion/letters/our-selfish-response-to-the-escalating-refugee-crisis-31498660.html [accessed: 12th February, 2016].

36. Letters (2015) "Ireland cannot handle the thousands of fleeing migrants", *Irish Examiner*, [online] [available] http://www.irishexaminer.com/viewpoints/yourview/ireland-cannot-handle-the-thousands-of-fleeing-migrants-352937.html [accessed: 12 February ,2016].

37. Letters (2015) "Muslims, unlike the Jews in the '30s, are resistant to integration", *Irish Examiner*, [online] [available] http://www.irishexaminer.com/viewpoints/yourview/muslims-unlike-the-jews-in-the-30s-are-resistant-to-integration-352531.html [accessed: 12 February, 2016]; According to Power et al (2016, p.3) The Irish Timesin relation to ideological positioning …The Irish Times… has a 'liberal pluralist' ideological orientation. The newspaper and is owned by a trust and is, is widely considered to be the main newspaper in the Republic of Ireland. The other newspapers are privately owned and occupy centre positions (the Irish Examiner; the Sunday Business Post), centre-right (Tthe Irish Independent; Tthe Sunday Independent) and right-wing populist (the Irish Daily Mail) positions.

38. Williams, P. (2016) "IS Terror Leader in Ireland is Living on Welfare," *Weekend Herald*, 21 November, 2015 [online] available: http://www.herald.ie/news/is-terror-leader-in-ireland-is-living-on-welfare-34221156.html; The Herald title is part of the Independent media group – see Independent.ie (2016) 'Contact us,' [online] available: http://www.independent.ie/service/contact-us-26897641.html [accessed: 12th February, 2016].

39. Hughes, I. (2015) "Man describes 'saddest moment' after getting into taxi with crying Muslim driver following Paris attacks", *Irish Mirror*, 15t November, 2015 [online] [available] http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/man-describes-saddest-moment-after-6834933 [accessed: 12 February, 2016].; McCarthy, J. (2015) "Magic of Christmas is absent for too many children on this island", *The Sunday Times*, 20 December, 2015.

consultants. This issue came to light in a number of print media sources after it was released on social media by anti-racism activists in Ireland. These same activists were critical of initial mainstream media reports on the topic which failed to mention that the original post was made in the closed Facebook group of 'Anti-Islam Ireland';[40] thus denying the public a full insight on the context of the issue.[41]

The relationship between Irish Muslims travelling to Syria and Iraq to join the war there, given the notoriety afforded to 'foreign fighters' internationally, did arise in Irish media and political discourse in 2015.[42] According to various sources, it is reported that approximately thirty people may have made the journey to the region. However, despite these claims, reported numbers of Irish 'foreign fighters' attributed to governmental sources can only be an estimate and it cannot be said with certainty that those who have travelled have joined Daesh/ISIL and not other groups, be they military or humanitarian.[43] Reports also claim that Ireland is a transit route for people wishing to travel to Syria/Iraq, an alleged location where recruiters are based and where funds for Daesh/ISIL are raised. Such reports are at times framed in a manner that not only serves to monger fear but also stigmatise Muslim communities through the use of headlines such as "Muslim extremist money men based in Ireland;"[44] and "Irish jihadi fighters."[45]

40. See Appendix 1.

41. Feehan, C. (2015) "Patient refuses care from Muslim doctor," *Herald.ie*, 11 December, 2015 [online] available: http://www.herald.ie/news/patient-refuses-care-from-muslim-doctor-34277609.html [accessed: 7 January, 2016]. Irish Central (2015) "Irish patient refuses to be treated by Muslim doctor with hijab", 12 December, 2015 [online] available: http://www.irishcentral.com/news/Irish-patient-refuses-to-be-treated-by-Muslim-doctor-with-hijab.html [accessed: 7 January, 2016]; Dennehy, M. (2015) "Woman refuses care from Muslim doctor", *The Echo*, 11 December, 2015 [online] available: http://www.echo.ie/tallaght/item/woman-refuses-care-from-muslim-doctor [all accessed: 4 January, 2016]; Sound Migration (2016) "anti-Islam Ireland RTE Liveline 11th December 2015" [online] available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWMbBHVZSj0&feature=youtu.be [accessed: 4 th January, 2016]..

42. Bardon, S. (2015) "Muslim extremist money men based in Ireland set to be targeted by CAB under new powers;" *Irish Mirror,* 15 January, 2015 [online] available: http://www.irishmirror.ie/news/world-news/muslim-extremist-money-men-based-4982432 [accessed: 7 January, 2016]; Dillon, E. (2015) "Isis supporters using Ireland as a base to recruit new followers and raise cash;" *The Sunday World*; 24 November, 2015 [online] available: http://www.sundayworld.com/news/crimedesk/isis-supporters-using-ireland-as-a-base-to-recruit-new-followers [accessed: 7 January, 2016]; Walsh, J. (2015) "ISIS escapee says Irish fighters are used as snipers;" *Irish Central*; 16 February, 2015 [online] available: http://www.irishcentral.com/news/ISIS-escapee-says-Irish-fighters-are-used-as-snipers.html [accessed 12 February, 2016]; O'Keefe, C. (2015) "Frances Fitzgerald 'not surprised' Ireland features in IS video", *Irish Examiner*; 29 November, 2015 [online] available: http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/frances-fitzgerald-not-surprised-ireland-features-in-is-video-367568.html [accessed: 8 January, 2016].

43. International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation (2016) "Foreign fighter total in Syria/Iraq now exceeds 20,000; surpasses Afghanistan conflict in the 1980s;" [online] available: http://icsr.info/2015/01/foreign-fighter-total-syriairaq-now-exceeds-20000-surpasses-afghanistan-conflict-1980s/ [accessed: 8 January, 2016].

44. Egan, C. (2015) "Irish jihadi fighters – police investigate group using Ireland as base", *Irish Central*; 22 August, 2014 [online] available: http://www.irishcentral.com/news/politics/Fear-of-Irish-jihadi-fighters-as-police-investigate-group-using-Ireland-as-base.html [accessed: 8 January, 2016].

45. Ibid.

ANTI-MUSLIM GROUPS AND POLITICAL STATEMENTS

Ireland has been witness to a number of worrying developments over the course of 2015 in terms of the development of Islamophobic groups who coordinate events via social media. The campaigns and events organised by these groups in 2015 arguably mark an increase in terms of their visibility and political anti-Muslim rhetoric/acts in Ireland. Inspired by international events such as the ongoing so-called 'migration crisis', the Paris attacks, and Daesh/ISIL's campaign in Syria and Iraq, groups calling themselves 'Anti-Islam Ireland' and/or 'PEGIDA Ireland' and associates have emerged to organise campaigns, on- and offline against the alleged 'Islamification' of Ireland.[46] A new political party known as 'Identity Ireland', again with an anti-migrant, anti-Islam ethos, has also emerged; its leader recently addressed the PEGIDA movement in Dresden, Germany.[47] The policies of 'Identity Ireland' on immigration state that the party holds a

...zero tolerance approach towards demands to alter national life, culture and traditions to accommodate minority held beliefs and cultures.[48]

These are some of the central figures in the Islamophobia network in Ireland. For example, 'Anti-Islam Ireland' have organised protests in different locations across the country, including Dublin,[49] but also in smaller locations such as Tralee,[50] Killarney (against the building of mosques in both locations, and Muslim migration),[51] and Waterford with the latter being cancelled arguably as a result of a planned counter-demonstration. Footage of these activities can be found on Youtube; including, in addition to other very public protests, an intimidating 'Britain First' style 'mosque invasion' that took place in Kilkenny. In this incident a small number of individuals arrived unannounced and subsequently interrogated a local

46. Pegida Ireland Facebook (2016) https://www.facebook.com/pegida.ireland

47. Pegida Dresden (2016) Pegida Dresden Live [online] available: https://youtu.be/lwJ3nLcppwo?t=17m5s [accessed: 12 February, 2016].

48. Identity Ireland (2016)Home page [online] available: http://identityireland.org/immigration.php [accessed: 12th February 2016]. See also the Celtic People's Party of Ireland (2016) Home page [online] available: http://www.cppireland.org/ [accessed: 16 February, 2016].

49. See Finn, C. (2015) "Protestor tears up anti-Islam banner at Clonskeagh Mosque march," *The Journal.ie*, 1 February, 2016 [online] available: http://www.thejournal.ie/clonskeagh-mosque-protest-1914647-Feb2015/ [accessed: 7 January, 2016].

50. Lucey, A. (2015) "Irish anti-Islamic group protests mosque in Kerry", *Irish Central,* 10 July, 2016 [online] available: http://www.irishcentral.com/news/Irish-anti-Islamic-group-protests-mosque-in-Kerry.html [accessed: 4 January, 2016];

51. Pegida Ireland (2016) Pegida Ireland [online] available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5L6ovASzZGI [accessed: 7 January, 2016].

imam.[52] The questions put to the imam matched those stereotypical anti-Muslim themed tropes of the alleged 'threat' posed by Islam to Ireland and the purported incompatibility of the faith to the country. It is difficult to ascertain the volume of support for these groups but it is believed to be small.

In addition to these fringe groups, it must be noted that established politicians from mainstream political parties in Ireland have also made comments that can be interpreted as Islamophobic in themselves, or, as fuelling fear-mongering about Muslim communities. In response to the attacks in Paris in January 2015, a former Irish Minister for Justice, Alan Shatter stated that:

It's crucial that we do not in any way underestimate the threat posed by terrorism and, in particular, Islamic terrorism…[53]

In the aftermath of the attacks in Paris in November, resonating with media reports discussed above regarding an alleged link between the so-called 'refugee crisis' and Daesh/ISIL, Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny stated that while the majority seeking refuge are "law-abiding", all refugees coming to Ireland would be subjected to a "comprehensive and thorough vetting" by state authorities to ascertain if they pose a terrorist risk.[54]

OBSERVED POLITICAL/CIVIL SOCIETY INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN TO COUNTER ISLAMOPHOBIA

Throughout the course of 2015 various actions, initiatives and policy changes came into being that may have both a direct and indirect role to play in challenging Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism. The most direct of these acts occurred early February with various anti-racism activists holding a counter-protest to an 'Anti-Islam Ireland' demonstration outside of the Islamic Cultural Centre of Ireland in Dublin. The confrontation passed off with only minor scuffles. The response of local Muslim men and women was to offer the 'Anti-Islam' protesters tea and dates.[55]

Throughout the year partnerships have been developed with local communities, Muslim and non-Muslim in Dublin to raise awareness of racism and the options

52. Anti-Islam Ireland (2015) "Anti-Islam Ireland Visit to the Kilkenny imam" [online] available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5b1UI2J3x70 [accessed: 4 January, 2016]; Meredith, C. (2014) "Britain First 'Invade' Crayford Mosque Demanding Removal of 'Sexist' Signs in Bizarre Video", *Huffington Post*, 15 July, 2014 [online] available: http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/07/15/britain-first-mosque-video_n_5587353.html [accessed: 7 January, 2016].

53. Pattison, B. (2015) "Charlie Hebdo: Irish figures react to 'brutal and horrific' killings in Paris, *Irish Mirror*, 8 January, 2015 [Online] available: http://www.irishmirror.ie/news/irish-news/charlie-hebdo-irish-figures-react-4936525 [accessed: 7 January, 2016]. My emphasis.

54. Bray, J. (2015) "Kenny vows 'thorough vetting' of migrants: Paris Carnage: Ireland's Response", *Irish Daily Mail*, 16 November, 2015.

55. Cullen, A. (2015) "Watch Anti-Islam group in clash with counter-protesters at mosque", *Irish Independent*, 2 February, 2015 [online] available: http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/news/watch-antiislam-group-in-clash-with-counterprotesters-at-mosque-30955812.html [accessed: 4 January, 2015].

people have when faced with this pernicious phenomenon. For example, Dublin-based community organisation Canal Communities, working with ENAR Ireland have delivered training on how people can report racism and the supports that are available to them. Partners in this project include the Amal Women's Group and the broader Islamic Foundation of Ireland of which it is part.[56]

As noted above, the ICI, funded by the OSF undertook research in the summer of 2015 to ascertain the perceived needs of Muslim communities vis-à-vis challenging Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism. The research, published in early 2016, provides recommendations that encompass education, policing, media and employment policies and practices. Public awareness campaigns for Muslim and non-Muslim communities also form part of the recommendations.[57]

In July, researchers in the University of Limerick published a report on the need for hate crime legislation which included draft legislative proposals. The proposed legislation, which would place hate crime, including that directed towards Muslims, as specific named offences was presented to government but has not been acted upon.[58] Finally, and relatedly, facility has now been made for members of An Garda Síochána, the Irish police service, to record crimes they believe to be underpinned by anti-Muslim animus through the use of a specific 'anti-Muslim/Islamophobic' category on their crime recording database.[59] Time will tell in terms of its application in practice.

CONCLUSION

Policy recommendations

This report lays out the realities of Islamophobia in Ireland at the interpersonal, structural and discursive levels for 2015. As noted, a number of civil society individuals and organisations engaged in activities during the year that lay down a challenge to Islamophobia in Ireland concomitantly supporting those who live with this phenomenon daily. The following recommendations are by no means exhaustive but they do provide a platform for further action.

- At the time of writing, a united civil society front seems to be coalescing into fighting the challenge to Islamophobia. This front, inclusive of academics, activists, NGOs and Muslim communities should formally align and work together if this challenge is to succeed.
- Working together, civil society actors must advocate for the implementation of

56. ENAR Ireland (2016).

57. Carr (2016a).

58. University of Limerick (2016) "UL study finds hate crime must 'come out of the shadows'," [online] available: http://www.ul.ie/law/news/00%5Bnid%5D-ul-study-finds-hate-crime-must-%E2%80%98come-out-shadows%E2%80%99 [accessed: 8 January, 2016].

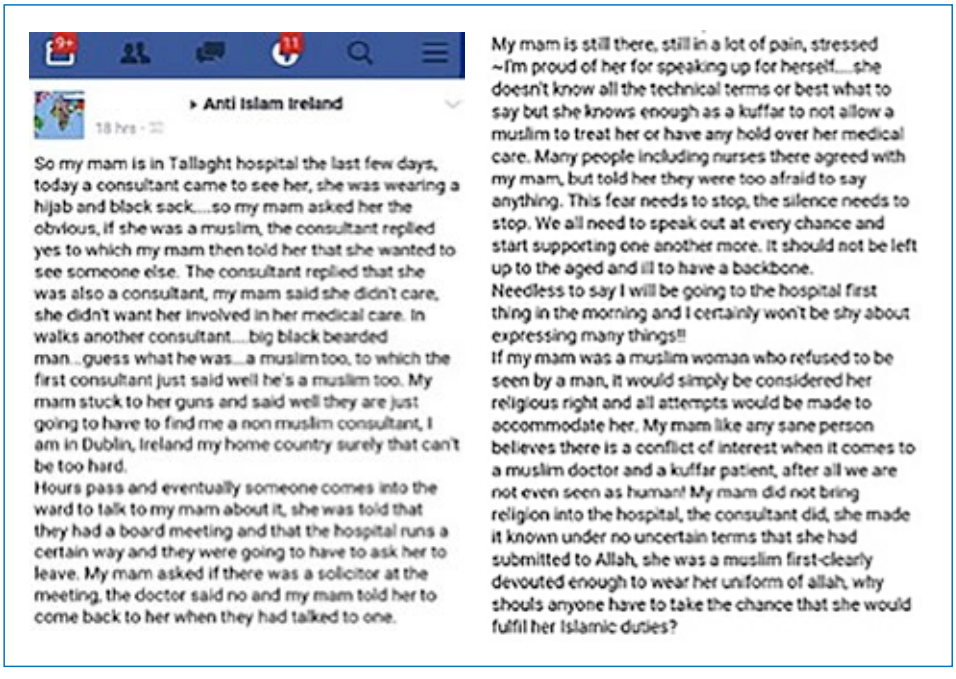
59. Irish Independent (2015) "Gardai recording specific crimes of hate and racism welcomed"; 21 December, 2015 [online] available: http://www.independent.ie/breaking-news/irish-news/gardai-recording-specific-crimes-of-hate-and-racism-welcomed-34304684.html [accessed: 8 January, 2016].

hate crime legislation that acknowledges one's religious identity as being a basis upon which one may be targeted. As noted above, the heavy lifting has been done in this regard and government must be encouraged to take action.

- Civil society actors must also push for legislative change in the context of school enrolment policies so that all members of Irish society are treated fairly when accessing education. Relatedly, the government must be encouraged to draft a policy that ensures the rights of religious minorities to manifest their faith are respected in the school context and not left to the preferences of individual boards of management or principals.
- Civil society actors must engage with Irish media actors/outlets in terms of publication/broadcast standards in order to reduce/minimise the use of racialising discourses vis-à-vis Muslims and other minority communities. Muslim communities are not 'over there' but part of Irish and broader European society, this needs to be the norm reflected in media content.

Appendix 1:

Facebook post relating to the refusal of treatment from Muslim physicians by a patient in Dublin. This post was made by the patient's daughter on the 'Anti-Islam Ireland' Facebook page.



▸ Anti Islam Ireland

18 hrs

So my mam is in Tallaght hospital the last few days, today a consultant came to see her, she was wearing a hijab and black sack....so my mam asked her the obvious, if she was a muslim, the consultant replied yes to which my mam then told her that she wanted to see someone else. The consultant replied that she was also a consultant, my mam said she didn't care, she didn't want her involved in her medical care. In walks another consultant....big black bearded man...guess what he was....a muslim too, to which the first consultant just said well he's a muslim too. My mam stuck to her guns and said well they are just going to have to find me a non muslim consultant, I am in Dublin, Ireland my home country surely that can't be too hard.
Hours pass and eventually someone comes into the ward to talk to my mam about it, she was told that they had a board meeting and that the hospital runs a certain way and they were going to have to ask her to leave. My mam asked if there was a solicitor at the meeting, the doctor said no and my mam told her to come back to her when they had talked to one.

My mam is still there, still in a lot of pain, stressed ~I'm proud of her for speaking up for herself....she doesn't know all the technical terms or best what to say but she knows enough as a kuffar to not allow a muslim to treat her or have any hold over her medical care. Many people including nurses there agreed with my mam, but told her they were too afraid to say anything. This fear needs to stop, the silence needs to stop. We all need to speak out at every chance and start supporting one another more. It should not be left up to the aged and ill to have a backbone.
Needless to say I will be going to the hospital first thing in the morning and I certainly won't be shy about expressing many things!!
If my mam was a muslim woman who refused to be seen by a man, it would simply be considered her religious right and all attempts would be made to accommodate her. My mam like any sane person believes there is a conflict of interest when it comes to a muslim doctor and a kuffar patient, after all we are not even seen as human! My mam did not bring religion into the hospital, the consultant did, she made it known under no uncertain terms that she had submitted to Allah, she was a muslim first-clearly devouted enough to wear her uniform of allah, why shouls anyone have to take the chance that she would fulfil her Islamic duties?

CHRONOLOGY

January

- Problematic media reports in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo attacks.
- Report of verbal abuse towards Muslim woman in shopping mall (Dublin), reported to ENAR Ireland, 24/01/15.[60]
- Report of anti-Muslim posters placed near mosque in Dublin, reported to ENAR Ireland, 08/01/15.

February

- Anti-Islam protest outside Dublin mosque.
- Counter-demonstration against Anti-Islam protest outside Dublin mosque.

March

- Mosque 'invasion' and intimidation of imam in Kilkenny city.
- Report of racist and anti-Muslim graffiti on street (Cork), reported to ENAR Ireland, 04/04/15.

April

- Small protest against building of mosque in Killarney, Co. Kerry by 'Anti-Islam Ireland'.
- Publication of Education (Admission to Schools) Bill 2015.

May

- No events in this report relate to this period.

June

- Problematic media reports in the aftermath of the attacks in a resort in Tunisia.
- Research on Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism – and how to respond - commences with Muslim communities in Dublin.

July

- Research on Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism – and how to respond - continues with Muslim communities in Dublin.
- Launch of Identity Ireland, political party and Irish affiliate of the PEGIDA movement.
- Presentation to government of draft hate crime legislation.
- Small protest and distribution of leaflets by 'Anti-Islam Ireland' against the building of a mosque in Tralee, Co. Kerry.
- Report of physical assault of Afghan Muslim boy (Limerick), reported to ENAR Ireland, 13/07/15.

60. The reports noted in this chronology refer only to those included in the submission proper.

August

- Research on Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism – and how to respond - continues with Muslim communities in Dublin.

September

- Assault on Saudi student on public transport in Dublin.
- Problematic media reports relating to the ongoing crisis of people seeking refuge in the context of the death of toddler Aylan Kurdi and his family members.

October

- Report of verbal abuse towards Muslim woman on Grafton St., reported to ENAR Ireland, 24/10/15.
- Report of verbal and physical abuse towards Muslim women (Dublin), reported to ENAR Ireland, 28/10/15.

November

- Problematic media reports in the aftermath of November 13th attacks in Paris.
- Anti-Muslim, threatening comment on Twitter noted in submission.
- Report of verbal abuse towards two Muslim women (Dublin), reported to ENAR Ireland, 14/11/15.
- Report of profiling by member of An Garda Síochána of young Muslim woman on public transport (Dublin), reported to ENAR Ireland, 17/11/15.
- Report of verbal abuse and multiple physical assaults towards Muslim students (Dublin), reported to ENAR Ireland, 19/11/15.

December

- Patient refuses treatment from Muslim medical consultants in Tallaght hospital.
- Problematic media coverage of Tallaght hospital event.
- An Garda Síochána (Irish police) database enabled to record hate crime against a range of targeted communities including anti-Muslim hate crime.
- Legislation addressing exclusionary school enrolment policies still not enacted.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allen, C. (2010) Islamophobia, Farnham: Ashgate.

Anti-Islam Ireland (2015) 'Anti-Islam Ireland Visit to the Kilkenny imam' [online] available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5b1UI2J3x70 [accessed: 4 January, 2016].

Awan, I. and Zempi, I. (2015) We Fear for Our Lives: Offline and Online Experiences of Anti-Muslim Hostility, Report, [online] available: http://tellmamauk.org/wp-content/uploads/resources/We%20Fear%20For%20Our%20Lives.pdf [accessed: 7 January, 2016].

Bardon, S. (2015) "Muslim extremist money men based in Ireland set to be targeted by CAB under new powers;" Irish Mirror, 15 January, 2015 [online] available: http://www.irishmirror.ie/news/world-news/muslim-extremist-money-men-based-4982432 [accessed: 7 January, 2016]

Bray, J. (2015) "Kenny vows 'thorough vetting' of migrants: Paris Carnage: Ireland's Response", Irish Daily Mail, 16 November, 2015.

Carr, J. (2016) Experiences of Islamophobia: Living with Racism in the Neoliberal Era, London and New York: Routledge.

Carr, J. (2016a) Islamophobia in Dublin: Experiences and how to respond, Report for the Immigrant Council of Ireland [online] available: http://immigrantcouncil.ie/files/publications/e9837-islamfinal.pdf [accessed 4th March 2016].

Celtic People's Party of Ireland (2016) Home page [online] available: http://www.cppireland.org/ [accessed: 16 February, 2016].

Corcoran, J. (2015) "Paris shows the West has become a soft touch in this clash of civilisations", Irish Independent; http://www.independent.ie/opinion/columnists/paris-shows-the-west-has-become-a-soft-touch-in-this-clash-of-civilisations-34222973.html [accessed: 12 February, 2016].

Cullen, A. (2015) "Watch Anti-Islam group in clash with counter-protesters at mosque", Irish Independent, 2 February, 2015 [online] available: http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/news/watch-antiislam-group-in-clash-with-counterprotesters-at-mosque-30955812.html [accessed: 4 January, 2015].

Darmody, M., Smyth, E. and Selina McCoy (2012) School Sector Variation Among Primary Schools in Ireland, Report. Economic and Social Research Institute; [online] available: https://www.educatetogether.ie/sites/default/files/school_sector_variation_0.pdf [accessed: 5 January, 2016].

Dennehy, M. (2015) "Woman refuses care from Muslim doctor", The Echo, 11 December, 2015 [online] available: http://www.echo.ie/tallaght/item/woman-refuses-care-from-muslim-doctor [accessed: 4 January, 2016].

Department of Education and Skills (Admission to Schools) Bill 2015 – [online]

available: https://www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/Legislation/Education-Admission-to-Schools-Bill-2015.pdf [accessed: 4 January, 2015].

Dillon, E. (2015) "Isis supporters using Ireland as a base to recruit new followers and raise cash;" The Sunday World; 24 November, 2015 [online] available: http://www.sundayworld.com/news/crimedesk/isis-supporters-using-ireland-as-a-base-to-recruit-new-followers [accessed: 7 January, 2016]

Egan, C. (2015) "Irish jihadi fighters – police investigate group using Ireland as base", Irish Central; 22 August, 2014 [online] available: http://www.irishcentral.com/news/politics/Fear-of-Irish-jihadi-fighters-as-police-investigate-group-using-Ireland-as-base.html [accessed: 8 January, 2016].

ENAR Ireland (2016) iReport https://www.ireport.ie/

Faas, D., Darmody, M. and Beata Sokolowska (2015) "Religious diversity in primary schools: reflections from the Republic of Ireland", British Journal of Religious Education, DOI: 10.1080/01416200.2015.1025700

Feehan, C. (2015) "Patient refuses care from Muslim doctor," Herald.ie, 11 December, 2015 [online] available: http://www.herald.ie/news/patient-refuses-care-from-muslim-doctor-34277609.html [accessed: 7 January, 2016].

Feehan, C. and Kearns, D. (2015) '"I don't want to be treated by someone in a hijab" – Patient refuses care from two Muslim doctors', Independent.ie; 10 December, 2015 [online] available: http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/health/i-dont-want-to-be-treated-by-someone-in-a-hijab-patient-refuses-care-from-two-muslim-doctors-34276594.html [accessed: 5 January, 2016].

Finn, C. (2015) 'Protestor tears up anti-Islam banner at Clonskeagh Mosque march,', The Journal.ie, 1 February, 2016 [online] available: http://www.thejournal.ie/clonskeagh-mosque-protest-1914647-Feb2015/ [accessed: 7 January, 2016].

Flanagan, P. (2015) "Shadow of Isis hangs over horror of refugee crisis", Irish Mirror, 11 September, 2015 [online] available: http://www.irishmirror.ie/news/news-opinion/pat-flanagan-shadow-isis-hangs-6422239 [accessed 12 February, 2016].

Hogan, C. (2011) "Accommodating Islam in the Denominational Irish Education System: Religious Freedom and Education in the Republic of Ireland," Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs, Vol.31(4): 554-573.

Holland, K. (2015) "Hindu family fails to get place for child in local school", The Irish Times, 13 October, 2015; http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/hindu-family-fails-to-get-place-for-child-in-local-school-1.2388898 [accessed: 11 November, 2015].

Hughes, I. (2015) "Man describes 'saddest moment' after getting into taxi with crying Muslim driver following Paris attacks", Irish Mirror, 15 November, 2015 [online] [available] http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/man-describes-saddest-mo-

ment-after-6834933 [accessed: 12 February, 2016].

Humphreys, J. (2015) "How the Catholic Church Could Solve the Patronage Problem", The Irish Times; 27 July, 2015 [online] available: http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/how-the-catholic-church-could-solve-the-school-patronage-problem-1.2297551 [accessed: 7 January, 2016].

Hunt, C. (2016) 'I fell in love with the people – but I won't be returning,' Irish Independent, 28 June, 2016 [online] available: http://www.independent.ie/opinion/columnists/carol-hunt/i-fell-in-love-with-the-people-but-i-wont-be-returning-31335169.html [accessed: 12 February, 2016].

Identity Ireland (2016)Home page [online] available: http://identityireland.org/immigration.php [accessed: 12 February, 2016].

Independent.ie (2016) 'Contact us,' [online] available: http://www.independent.ie/service/contact-us-26897641.html [accessed: 12 February, 2016].

International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation (2016) "Foreign fighter total in Syria/Iraq now exceeds 20,000; surpasses Afghanistan conflict in the 1980s;" [online] available:; http://icsr.info/2015/01/foreign-fighter-total-syriairaq-now-exceeds-20000-surpasses-afghanistan-conflict-1980s/ [accessed: 8 January, 2016].

Irish Central (2015) "Irish patient refuses to be treated by Muslim doctor with hijab", 12 December, 2015 [online] available: http://www.irishcentral.com/news/Irish-patient-refuses-to-be-treated-by-Muslim-doctor-with-hijab.html [accessed: 7 January, 2016]

Irish Independent (2015) "Gardai recording specific crimes of hate and racism welcomed"; 21 December, 2015 [online] available: http://www.independent.ie/breaking-news/irish-news/gardai-recording-specific-crimes-of-hate-and-racism-welcomed-34304684.html [accessed: 8 January, 2016].

Irish Statute Book (2016) Equal Status Act 2000-2008 http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2000/act/8/section/7/enacted/en/html [accessed: 4 January, 2016].

Letters (2015) "We need to look to long term consequences of a creeping Islamisation", Irish Examiner, 12 September, 2015 [online] available: http://www.irishexaminer.com/viewpoints/yourview/we-need-to-look-at-long-term-consequences-of-a-creeping-islamisation-353377.html [accessed: 12 February, 2016].

Letters (2015) "EU can't take in more migrants", Irish Independent, 3 September, 2015 [online] available: http://www.independent.ie/opinion/letters/our-selfish-response-to-the-escalating-refugee-crisis-31498660.html [accessed: 12 February, 2016].

Letters (2015) "Ireland cannot handle the thousands of fleeing migrants", Irish Examiner, [online] [available] http://www.irishexaminer.com/viewpoints/yourview/ireland-cannot-handle-the-thousands-of-fleeing-migrants-352937.html [accessed: 12 February, 2016].

Letters (2015) "Muslims, unlike the Jews in the '30s, are resistant to integration",

Irish Examiner, [online] [available] http://www.irishexaminer.com/viewpoints/your-view/muslims-unlike-the-jews-in-the-30s-are-resistant-to-integration-352531.html [accessed: 12 February, 2016].

Lexis Nexis (2016) Nexis [online] available: http://bis.lexisnexis.co.uk/products/nexis [accessed: 7 January, 2016].

Lucey, A. (2015) 'Irish anti-Islamic group protests mosque in Kerry', Irish Central, 10 July, 2016 [online] available: http://www.irishcentral.com/news/Irish-anti-Islamic-group-protests-mosque-in-Kerry.html [accessed: 4 January, 2016];

MacCormaic, R. (2008) "No directive on hijabs in classroom to be issued", The Irish Times; http://www.irishtimes.com/news/no-directive-on-hijabs-in-classroom-to-be-issued-1.940516 [accessed: 7 January, 2016].

Matharu, H. (2015) 'UK Pegida leader Tim Scott struggles to explain why radical Islam is a threat,' Independent, 4 December, 2015 [online] available: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/uk-pegida-leader-tim-scott-struggles-to-explain-why-radical-islam-is-a-threat-a6760221.html [accessed: 4 January, 2016].

McCarthy, J. (2015) "Magic of Christmas is absent for too many children on this island", The Sunday Times, 20 December, 2015.

Meredith, C. (2014) 'Britain First 'Invade' Crayford Mosque Demanding Removal of 'Sexist' Signs in Bizarre Video', Huffington Post, 15 July, 2014 [online] available: http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/07/15/britain-first-mosque-video_n_5587353.html [accessed: 7 January, 2016].

Migrant's Rights Centre Ireland (2016) Singled Out, Report, http://www.mrci.ie/resources/publications/leaflets-reports/singled-out-exploratory-study-on-ethnic-profiling-in-ireland-its-impact-on-migrant-workers-their-families/ [accessed: 4 January, 2016].

O'Brien, C. (2015) 'Nearly 1,500 parents appeal decisions to refuse school entry', The Irish Times, 14 December ,2015 [online] available: http://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/nearly-1-500-parents-appeal-decisions-to-refuse-school-entry-1.2465394 [accessed: 5 January, 2016].

O'Keefe, C. (2015) "Frances Fitzgerald 'not surprised' Ireland features in IS video", Irish Examiner; 29 November, 2015 [online] available: http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/frances-fitzgerald-not-surprised-ireland-features-in-is-video-367568.html [accessed: 8 January, 2016].

Pattison, B. (2015) "Charlie Hebdo: Irish figures react to 'brutal and horrific' killings in Paris, Irish Mirror, 8 January, 2015[Online] available: http://www.irishmirror.ie/news/irish-news/charlie-hebdo-irish-figures-react-4936525 [accessed: 7 January, 2016]. My emphasis.

Pegida Dresden (2016) Pegida Dresden Live [online] available: https://youtu.be/lwJ3nLcppwo?t=17m5s [accessed: 12 February, 2016].

PEGIDA Ireland (2016) PEGIDA Ireland [online] available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5L6ovASzZGI [accessed: 12 February, 2016].

Pegida Ireland Facebook (2016) https://www.facebook.com/pegida.ireland [accessed: 7 January, 2016].

RTE (2016) 'Three Confirmed Dead in Tunisia Attack,' [online] available: http://www.rte.ie/news/2015/0628/711121-tunisia-attack/ [accessed: 7 January, 2016].

Smyth, E., Darmody, M. McGinnity, F. and Delma Byrne (2009) Adapting to Diversity: Irish Schools and Newcomer Students, Economic and Social Research Institute; [online] available: http://emn.ie/files/p_201103011110262009_AdaptingtoDiversity_ESRI.pdf [accessed: 7 January, 2015].

Sound Migration (2016) "anti-Islam Ireland RTE Liveline 11th December 2015" [online] available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWMbBHVZSj0&feature=youtu.be [accessed: 4 January, 2016].

The Irish Times (2016) "School Admissions Bill: Battle looms over rules on past pupils"; 7 April, 2015 [online] available: http://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/school-admissions-bill-battle-looms-over-rules-on-past-pupils-1.2166728 [accessed: 4 January, 2016].

Turner, M. (2015) "Charlie Hebdo fought extremism with laughter, satire and free speech", The Irish Times, 8 January, 2015 [online] available: http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/martyn-turner-charlie-hebdo-fought-extremism-with-laughter-satire-and-free-speech-1.2058156 [accessed: 12 February, 2016].

University of Limerick (2016) "UL study finds hate crime must 'come out of the shadows'," [online] available:; http://www.ul.ie/law/news/00%5Bnid%5D-ul-study-finds-hate-crime-must-%E2%80%98come-out-shadows%E2%80%99 [accessed: 8 January, 2016].

Walsh, J. (2015) "ISIS escapee says Irish fighters are used as snipers;" Irish Central; 16 February, 2015 [online] available: http://www.irishcentral.com/news/ISIS-escapee-says-Irish-fighters-are-used-as-snipers.html [accessed 12 February, 2016];

Williams, P. (2016) 'IS Terror Leader in Ireland is Living on Welfare,' Weekend Herald, 21 November, 2015 [online] available: http://www.herald.ie/news/is-terror-leader-in-ireland-is-living-on-welfare-34221156.html.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN ITALY NATIONAL REPORT 2015

GRAZIA ALESSANDRA SIINO, NADIA LEVANTINO

THE AUTHORS

Grazia Alessandra Siino* is an international legal expert. She holds a Ph.D in Law and Politics of the Euro-Mediterranean Region from the University of Enna (Italy). Prior to that, she graduated in Law from the University of Palermo and spent one semester at the International Institute for Human Rights in Strasbourg (France) and an academic year at the University of Salamanca (Spain). While Grazia Alessandra is currently a staff member at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg (France), this paper is not part of her activity at the Council of Europe and is written in a personal capacity, unrelated to her work. Her previous experience includes working within the Italian Embassy in Mexico City (Mexico). She is fluent in English, French and Spanish. Her mother tongue is Italian. siino.grazia.alessandra@gmail.com

Nadia Levantino is an Italian lawyer specialized in International Law and Human Rights with a specific focus on children's and migrants' rights. Having graduated at the University of Palermo (Italy), she attended a post-master Programme in European and International Law at the Faculty of Law in Strasbourg (France). She is a former trainee of the Permanent Representation of Italy to the European Union in Brussels and, as from 2014, is the volunteer worker responsible for the Legal Aid service at "Save the Children Italy" in Palermo. Nadia is a native Italian speaker. She is fluent in English and French and offers legal assistance in both languages.

* The authors of this report would like to thank the following people for their valuable contribution: Alessandra Ballerini, Ferdaws Benselloum, Anna Meli, Barbara Bello, Roberto Bortone, Stefano Chirico, Mouhamed Cissé, Zaher Darwish, Monica De Angelis, Giulia Dessi, Youssef El Akhal, Alberto Guariso, Ian Leatt, Vincenzo Pace, Angela Scalzo, Francesco Tieri, Mauro Valeri.

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions. No representation, either expressed or implied, is made of the accuracy of the material in the national reports. The editors of the European Islamophobia Report cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may be made. The reader must make his or her own evaluation of the accuracy and appropriateness of those materials.

To cite this report: Grazia Alessandra Siino, Nadia Levantino (2016): *Islamophobia in Italy: National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Islamophobia in Italy is a significant phenomenon that has attracted increasing attention in the current climate of insecurity and threat which characterise Italian society.

To begin with, this report studies significant incidents and developments which occurred in the country throughout 2015. In this context, the hostile language used in the political debate, the bitter controversy on the building of appropriate places of worship, the link between the migrant crisis and the Muslim presence, as well as the discrimination suffered by Muslim women have been investigated.

Secondly, the authors of the report analyse the main shortcomings of the legislative framework, such as the absence of a general law on freedom of religion and the lack of an ad hoc agreement between the Muslim community and the Italian State; these shortcomings jeopardise the full enjoyment of Muslim rights and the effective fight against Islamophobia. Recently adopted laws and draft bills concerning the field of interest of this report have also been scrutinised.

Thirdly, the present report explains how, during 2015, Islamophobia manifested itself through several discriminatory events and incidents that occurred in various areas.

Despite a general legislative framework forbidding any form of discrimination, Islamophobic incidents have been observed in employment and education. In these fields, Islamophobia has had an impact in the every-day life of Muslims, and is evident through geographical disparities.

In the aftermath of the 2015 terrorist attacks, Islamophobia in politics has become more visible. In this regard, the implementation of existing laws has proven to be insufficient, while the penalties provided are not always a proportionate or dissuasive response to Islamophobic discourse.

Several cases of hate speech in the media and cyber-space have also been noticed. Not only journalists and bloggers but also web moderators and ordinary people have used the media and cyber-space as a vehicle to spread fear and hatred towards Muslims.

Fourthly, the report focuses on central figures who have adopted negative attitudes against Muslims and scrutinises the governmental and non-governmental initiatives undertaken to counter Islamophobia in all the fields considered above.

Lastly, based on the results of this research, the report includes a set of recommendations to be considered when discussing ways to counter the phenomenon of Islamophobia in Italy.

SINTESI

L'Islamofobia in Italia è un fenomeno significativo che ha attirato attenzione crescente nell'attuale clima di insicurezza e minaccia che caratterizza la società italiana.

In primo luogo, questo rapporto studia i principali incidenti e avvenimenti verificatisi nel Paese nel corso del 2015. In tale contesto, sono stati analizzati il linguaggio ostile utilizzato nel dibattito politico, l'aspra polemica relativa alla costruzione di idonei luoghi di culto, il legame esistente tra la crisi migratoria e la presenza musulmana così come la discriminazione subita dalle donne musulmane.

In secondo luogo, gli autori del rapporto analizzano i principali limiti del quadro legislativo, quali l'assenza di una legge generale sulla libertà di religione e la mancanza di un accordo ad hoc tra la comunità musulmana e lo Stato Italiano, che mettono a rischio il pieno godimento dei diritti da parte dei Musulmani e l'effettivo contrasto dell'Islamofobia. Leggi e progetti di legge di recente adozione relativi ai settori di interesse di tale rapporto sono anch'essi stati esaminati.

In terzo luogo, il presente rapporto spiega come, durante il 2015, l'Islamofobia si è manifestata attraverso numerosi eventi discriminatori ed incidenti verificatisi in vari settori.

Nonostante il divieto generale di ogni forma di discriminazione, incidenti discriminatori sono stati rilevati nel settore del lavoro e dell'educazione. In tali aree, l'Islamofobia ha avuto un impatto sulla vita quotidiana dei Musulmani e si è manifestata sotto forma di diseguaglianze geografiche.

In seguito agli attacchi terroristici del 2015, l'Islamofobia in ambito politico è diventata sempre più visibile. In proposito, l'attuazione delle leggi esistenti si è dimostrata insufficiente mentre le sanzioni previste non sono sempre state una risposta proporzionata ed effettiva al discorso islamofobo.

Diversi casi di "hate speech" sono stati registrati nei mezzi di comunicazione e nel cyberspazio. Non solo giornalisti ed autori di blog ma anche moderatori di siti e gente comune hanno utilizzato mezzi di comunicazione e siti internet come uno strumento per seminare paura e odio nei confronti dei Musulmani.

In quarto luogo, il presente rapporto focalizza l'attenzione sulle principali figure che hanno adottato atteggiamenti negativi nei riguardi dei Musulmani e sulle iniziative governative e non governative adottate per contrastare l'Islamofobia nei settori sopra considerati.

In conclusione, sulla base degli esiti della suddetta ricerca, il rapporto include una serie di raccomandazioni da prendere in considerazione quando si discutono le modalità per contrastare il fenomeno dell'Islamofobia in Italia.

INTRODUCTION

Of the 5 million foreign residents in Italy, 1.6 million are Muslim. Unlike other European countries, Muslim resident in Italy come from a variety of countries and their immigration is quite recent.[1]

Islamophobia is a phenomenon that has barely been studied in Italy. Although there is currently no legally agreed definition on Islamophobia,[2] nor has social science developed a common definition, policy or action to combat it, Islamophobia is undertaken within the broad concepts of racism and racial discrimination that are universally accepted by governments and international organisations. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the General Policy Recommendation No. 5 of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (hereinafter ECRI) which recognises that Muslim communities are subject to prejudice that "may manifest itself in different guises, in particular through negative general attitudes but also, to varying degrees, through discriminatory acts and through violence and harassment."[3]

In Italy, there is a manifest lack of data on Islamophobic incidents. In 2015, the Contact Centre set up at the National Office against Racial Discrimination (Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazione Razziali – UNAR, hereinafter) received 28 reports on discrimination on the grounds of religion, 3 of these concerned discrimination in cyber-space.[4] The Observatory for the Security against Discriminatory Acts (OSCAD), which also receives reports from institutions, associations or private citizens concerning acts of discrimination, received 4 complaints concerning Islamophobic incidents.[5]

Nevertheless, some surveys give a glimpse into the extent of the phenomenon. According to a recent study,[6] in Italy negative opinions about Muslims outweigh favourable views by almost two-to-one.

Also, the Eurobarometer on discrimination 2015[7] addresses this topic. Results show that 39% of Italian respondents say they would be uncomfortable working with a Muslim person. This is higher than for any other religious group. Moreover, less than half of the Italian respondents (41%) would feel at ease if one of their children was in a love relationship with a Muslim person.

1. IDOS in partnership with CONFRONTI e UNAR, *Dossier Immigrazione 2015*.

2. See, for instance, the definition of Islamophobia included in the report "Islamophobia: a challenge for us all" by the UK-based NGO Runnymede Trust.

3. See ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 5 on combating intolerance and discrimination against Muslims (CRI(2000) 21) but also ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 7 on national legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination (CRI (2003)8).

4. UNAR, data sent to authors in regard to the period January-September 2015.

5. OSCAD, data sent to authors in regard to the period January-December 2015.

6. Bruce Stoakes, "Chapter 3. Anti-minority sentiment not rising", in *Faith in European project reviving*, PEW Research Center, 2015, http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/06/02/chapter-3-anti-minority-sentiment-not-rising/

7. Special Eurobarometer 437, *Discrimination in the EU in 2015*, http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/PublicOpinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/SPECIAL/surveyKy/2077.

Nowadays, Muslims in Italy, as in the rest of Europe, are becoming targets of hate amid the growing refugee crisis and the frequent terrorist attacks. Under the current economic crisis, immigrants, whose presence is massively overestimated in Italy,[8] are increasingly portrayed as a cause of higher competition in the labour market and as a menace for traditional Italian values.[9] Despite statistics indicating that less than 30% of migrants are Muslim,[10] it has also been discovered that the presence of Muslims is overestimated in Italy by 16%[11] and that Muslims resident in Italy also suffer from the stereotypes that have penetrated the public debate about the integration of migrants.[12]

Moreover, both European and Italian statistics clearly show that these attitudes towards Muslims are shaped by an increasing sense of insecurity. In the aftermath of the attacks which occurred in Paris, the media played a crucial role in fuelling the sentiment of threat by extensively referring to the terrorism of Muslim extremists as a persistent menace for European citizens.[13] The proportion of people identifying terrorism and religious extremism as an important challenge has increased substantially[14] while in a survey carried out in November 2015, 16% of respondents blamed Islam as a whole for the attacks that took place in Paris.[15]

Methodology of the Study

This study was implemented in several phases. Initially, desk and internet research was carried out in order to analyse national legislation and policies regarding the different aspects of the Islamophobia phenomenon. During this phase, a list of key interlocutors to be interviewed was drafted, including representatives of the Italian Muslim community, experts from national institutions (UNAR, OSCAD, etc), academics, lawyers, journalists and NGO activists. Subsequently, a questionnaire based on the information collected during the initial desk research phase was drafted and

8. Ipsos Mori, *Perceptions are not reality: things the world gets wrong*, 2014, https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3466/Perceptions-are-not-reality-10-things-the-world-gets-wrong.aspx.

9. Demos & Pi, *Rapporto sulla sicurezza e insicurezza sociale in Italia e in Europa*, 2015, http://www.demos.it/2015/pdf/3346fondazione_unipolis_rapporto_sulla_sicurezza_febbraio_2015.pdf.

10. IDOS in partnership with CONFRONTI e UNAR, *Dossier Immigrazione 2015*.

11. Ipsos Mori, *Perceptions are not reality: things the world gets wrong*, 2014, https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3466/Perceptions-are-not-reality-10-things-the-world-gets-wrong.aspx

12. In the context of the current refugee crisis, Pope Francis Bergoglio called on the Catholic community to welcome refugees. Yet, Muslim immigrants have been denied accommodation on grounds of their religion in some parts of the country. ""Sono islamici, via dalla canonica": i fedeli fermano il prete pro-rifugiati", *La Repubblica*, 8 September 2015, http://www.repubblica.it/cronaca/2015/09/08/news/_sono_islamici_via_dalla_canonica_i_fedeli_fermano_il_prete_pro-rifugiati-122423061/

13. Demos & Pi, *Rapporto sulla sicurezza e insicurezza sociale in Italia e in Europa*, 2015 http://www.demos.it/2015/pdf/3346fondazione_unipolis_rapporto_sulla_sicurezza_febbraio_2015.pdf.

14. Special Eurobarometer 432, *Europeans' attitudes towards security*, 2015, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_432_en.pdf.

15. Demos & Pi, *Gli attentati di Parigi*, 20 November 2015, http://www.demos.it/2015/pdf/364620151120_attentatiparigi.pdf.

submitted to the previously identified partners. Whenever possible, individual telephone or face-to-face interviews with leading experts from throughout the country were organised. Then, more desk research activity was conducted to gather additional information. In this phase, international and national statistical data, reports by international organisations (such as the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance –ECRI, and the Fundamental Rights Agency - FRA) as well as research and information by national stakeholders (such as the media association "Carta di Roma"[16] and the "MAI+" initiative[17]) were considered.

In addition, one of the authors of this report participated in several relevant conferences held in Palermo and focused on topics related to the research, such as hate speech and migration.

The interlocutors have shown a genuine willingness to engage in dialogue, while highlighting the existence of a scientific vacuum in investigating Islamophobia in Italy.

However, dialogue with the Italian Muslim community has proven difficult and a certain reluctance on the part of the Muslim community to denounce Islamophobic incidents has been noticed. In addition, the respondents to the questionnaire indicated that some Muslims underestimate the phenomenon, whereas others use silence as a defence mechanism.

Significant Islamophobic Incidents and Developments in the Country during the Period under Review

Safety concerns among the Muslim community were heightened in the wake of the Paris attacks in January and November 2015;[18] during this time anti-Muslim sentiment made its way to the forefront of the political debate in Italy. Many politicians rode the wave of fear and hatred, bitterly attacking the Muslim community and refuting the existence of moderate Islam,[19] while others criticised the community for not adequately dissociating itself from the terrorist attacks. Muslims have been publicly called to condemn the attacks, implying that they support terrorists. As a consequence, some Muslims have feared retaliation. "Bastardi Islamici" (Islamic bastards), the opening headline of the newspaper Liberoon 14 November, drew crit-

16. "Carta di Roma" is an association set up in 2011 to implement the Code of Ethics for journalists on immigration (the so-called "Roma Charter"), signed by the National Council of the Journalists' association (CNOG) and the National Federation of the Italian Press (FNSI) in June, 2008. Despite the limited scope of the Charter (which covers only certain specific minority groups), this association has valuably monitored the Italian media's attitude towards all vulnerable groups, including Muslims. See paragraph 4 d) of this report.

17. "MAI+" (*Monitoraggio Anti-Islamofobia*), which in Italian means "never again", is civil-society initiative. See paragraph 6 of this report.

18. European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), *Reaction to the Paris attacks in the EU: fundamental rights considerations*, 2015, http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2015-paper-01-2015-post-paris-attacks-fundamental-rights-considerations-0_en.pdf.

19. Mauro Munafò, "Parigi sotto attacco, i politici sciacalli all'opera con i corpi ancora caldi", *L'Espresso*, 14 November 2015, http://espresso.repubblica.it/attualita/2015/11/14/news/parigi-sotto-attacco-i-politici-sciacalli-all-opera-con-i-colpi-ancora-caldi-1.238917.

icism from a broad range of the public, although being praised by some right-wing politicians.[20] An action was brought against Maurizio Belpietro,[21] author of the article; other journalists, in particular, the President of "Carta di Roma" Association, demanded that he be expelled from the national journalists association. No decision has been taken so far in this regard.

Other than verbal attacks, intolerance towards the Muslim community has also been expressed through threats and violence. Several mosques have been the target of violent attacks, such as those in Padova,[22] Rimini[23] and Battipaglia[24] (Salerno). In Giugliano, close to Napoli, a pig's head was found impaled on the gate of the local mosque.[25]

In 2015, apart from the direct consequences of the terrorist attacks, the debate in Italy has focused on the long-lasting request of the Muslim community to be given permission to build appropriate places of worship for the practice of Islam and its funeral rites. In fact, Muslims in some locations continue to encounter difficulties in acquiring permission from local authorities to construct mosques. While this is a question that has more visibly concerned the north of the country,[26] it does not appear to be particularly linked to the position of a particular political party. Permission to build mosques has been denied by bi-partisan mayors, the decision being left to the willingness of the local representatives.[27] The issue came to the fore in the Lombardy Region, where a regional law, aimed at regulating the building of places

20. "Fury over Italy paper's 'Islamic bastards' splash", *The Local*, 16 November 2015, http://www.thelocal.it/20151116/italy-journalists-reports-paper-over-islamic-bastards-headline; see also a letter written by Giorgia Meloni, "Perché difendo il titolo di Libero: dagli altri giornali l'Islam è sparito", *Libero Quotidiano*, 17 November 2015, http://www.liberoquotidiano.it/news/politica/11849496/Giorgia-Meloni--perche-difendo-il.html.

21. "Attentati a Parigi, la prima di Libero: "Bastardi islamici". Belpietro denunciato", *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, 14 November 2015, http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2015/11/14/attentati-a-parigi-la-prima-di-libero-bastardi-islamici-belpietro-denunciato/2219542/.

22. "Padova, bomba carta esplode davanti alla moschea all'Arcella", *PadovaOggi,* 11 December 2015, http://www.padovaoggi.it/cronaca/bomba-carta-moschea-padova-via-jacopo-da-montagnana-11-dicembre-2015.html

23. "Rimini, fiamme in una macelleria islamica a causa di una molotov", *La Repubblica*, 24 March 2015, http://bologna.repubblica.it/cronaca/2015/03/24/news/rimini_fiamme_in_una_macelleria_islamica_a_causa_di_una_molotov-110372126/

24. "Battipaglia: vandali fano esplodere petardo nella moschea", *La città di Salerno*, 22 March 2015, http://lacittadisalerno.gelocal.it/salerno/cronaca/2015/03/22/news/battipaglia-vandali-fanno-esplodere-petardo-nella-moschea-1.11094731?refresh_ce

25. "Giugliano, una testa di maiale infilzata sul cancello della moschea", *La Repubblica*, 25 November 2015, http://napoli.repubblica.it/cronaca/2015/11/25/news/una_testa_maiale_davanti_a_un_luogo_culto_musulmano_nel_napoletano-128117104/

26. As for Florence, "Moschea a Firenze. Cronistoria di un edificio che (non) esiste", *Firenze fuori*, 20 November 2015, http://www.firenzefuori.it/2015/11/20/moschea-a-firenze-cronistoria-di-un-edificio-che-non-esiste/
As for Padova, "Bitonci: "Mai più moschee a Padova". Blitz nei locali islamici, sequestrati manifesti", *Il mattino di Padova*, 8 January 2015, http://mattinopadova.gelocal.it/padova/cronaca/2015/01/08/news/bitonci-mai-piu-moschee-a-padova-blitz-nei-locali-islamici-sequestrati-manifesti-1.10629385
As for Pisa, "Moschea a Porta a Lucca, Forza Italia vuole il referendum", in *Il Tirreno*, 13 January 2015, http://iltirreno.gelocal.it/pisa/cronaca/2015/01/13/news/moschea-a-porta-a-lucca-forza-italia-vuole-il-referendum-1.10659993.

27. For instance, see the opposition against building a mosque in Pavia as pronounced by a left-wing mayor. "Pavia, il sindaco del Partito democratico Massimo Depaoli boccia la moschea. Il vescovo era favorevole", *Huffington Post*, 17 January 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.it/2015/01/17/pavia-sindaco-pd-moschea_n_6491748.html.

of worship, was adopted and subsequently challenged by the Italian government for being in breach of the Italian constitution.[28]

Throughout the summer of 2015, the link between immigration and Islam came under discussion when Giorgia Meloni, leader of the right-wing party Fratelli D'Italia and member of the Italian lower parliament, declared her opposition to immigration from Muslim countries, thus stigmatising the entire Muslim community. The response of UNAR, the anti-discrimination body that is under the authority of the Italian Government, was not long in coming. In a letter addressed to the above-mentioned MP,[29] UNAR pointed out that generalization and stereotypes hamper the smooth integration process and the full achievement of social cohesion. Due to the lack of independence of UNAR, the letter was seen as a form of governmental censorship; after this Marco De Giorgi, director of UNAR, did not have his mandate renewed.[30]

Multiple discrimination suffered by Muslim women is a worrying phenomenon. Women wearing religious symbol, such as the hijab/headscarf, are still subjected to verbal abuse and harassment in public, while the use of veil itself is criticized as a form of gender inequality. However, a part of the Muslim community has declared its willingness not to report these incidents.[31] While the use of veil is not banned in Italy,[32] there is a revival in adopting regional and local decrees that ban the use of the burqua in public places.[33] Although the adoption of these decrees is not an Islamophobic measure per se, and may be justified for the sake of security and gender equality, the state "which enters into a legislative process of this kind takes the risk of contributing to the consolidation of the stereotypes which affect certain categories of the population and of encouraging the expression of intolerance, when it has a duty, on the contrary, to promote tolerance."[34]

28. For more details, see paragraph 3 of this report.

29. Alessandro D'Amato, "La lettera di censura di palazzo Chigi a Giorgia Meloni", *Next quotidiano*, 2 September 2015, http://www.nextquotidiano.it/la-lettera-di-censura-di-palazzo-chigi-a-giorgia-meloni/.

30. "Meloni, "stop immigrati Islam". Ufficio governo: "No stereotipi". Lei: "Censura"", *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, 2 September 2015, http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2015/09/02/meloni-stop-immigrati-islam-ufficio-governo-no-stereotipi-lei-censura/2002406/.

31. Annalisa Dall'Oca, "Attentati Parigi, ragazze musulmane aggredite a Bologna: "Insulti, sputi e velo strappato. È come il post 11 settembre", *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, 19 November 2015, http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2015/11/19/attentati-parigi-ragazze-musulmane-aggredite-a-bologna-insulti-sputi-e-velo-strappato-e-come-il-post-11-settembre/2234206/.

32. No specific law in the Italian system prohibits Muslim women from wearing the veil in a public or private place. See the Consiglio di Stato's judgment issued on 23 June 2008, http://www.anolf.it/archivio/download/sentenza_%20cons._di_%20stato_4_07_08.pdf.

33. "Torna un déja vù: gli amministratori riesumano le ordinanze anti-burqua", *Cronache di ordinario razzismo,* 2 December 2015, http://www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org/torna-un-deja-vu-gli-amministratori-riesumano-le-ordinanze-anti-burqua/; "Niqab e burqa vietati negli ospedali, Orlando: «Pura propaganda»", *Il Corriere della Sera*, 15 December 2015, http://brescia.corriere.it/notizie/cronaca/15_dicembre_10/niqab-burqa-velo-integrale-ospedali-lombardia-vietato-simona-bordonali-brescia-4a9b3afa-9f22-11e5-a5b0-fde61a79d58b.shtml.

34. European Court of Human Rights, Grand Chamber, *S.A.S. v. France*, Judgement of 1 July 2014.

ISLAMOPHOBIA AND THE ITALIAN LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

While freedom of religion is guaranteed by the Italian Constitution (Articles 3, 8 and 19), no ordinary law on this matter has ever been passed.[35] Although merely introducing a new law would not guarantee the effective protection of freedom of religion, its adoption would serve to better accommodate the expectations of minority religions by enhancing the existing legislative framework. With regard to religions other than Catholicism, the Constitution (Article 8) establishes that they can "organise themselves according to their own charters, provided that these are not in conflict with the Italian legal system" and that their "relations with the State shall be regulated by the law on the basis of agreements with their representative bodies." So far, no agreement between the Italian state and the Muslim community has been signed. As can be noticed below, the lack of an ad hoc agreement at the national level[36] entails geographical inequalities by leaving the faithful at the mercy of local government administrators, who are often afraid of losing voters' support.

In 2015, one of the most controversial legislative issues was the adoption by the Lombardy Region of a regional law (L.R. 2/2015 passed on 3 February, 2015) regulating the construction of new places of worship.[37] Although the law applies to any kind of place of worship, it makes the construction of mosques much harder within the territory of Lombardy.[38] The Italian government has lodged an appeal with the Constitutional Court against this law.[39] In particular, it is possible that the regional law breaches several constitutional rules, such as Articles 3, 8 and 19 of the Constitution on freedom of religion and freedom of worship, and could have over-stepped the state's exclusive power to rule in state-religion matters (Article 117 c)). Currently, the procedure before the Constitutional Court is still pending; a hearing is expected to take place on 31 May 2016.

At the national level, two draft bills proposed by a coalition of right-wing political leaders are currently under discussion at the Italian lower Chamber Commis-

35. Several draft laws intended to regulate the principle of freedom of expression as laid out in the Italian constitution have been presented. See: Carlo Cardia – Giuseppe Della Torre, *Comunità Islamiche in Italia, identità e forme giuridiche*, Giappichelli Editore, 2015, 70.

36. The failure to sign an agreement with Muslims is commonly explained by a mix of political reasons and difficulties linked to the absence of a unified body representing Islamic communities.

37. A similar draft law was also presented by the Northern League to the Veneto Regional Council (progetto di legge No. 504, IX legislatura Veneto Regional Council).

38. The regional law imposes a number of restrictions to those professing a religion other than Catholicism who desire to enjoy their right to freedom of worship by making the administrative formalities more complicated and foreseeing close security control over the new places of worship. For more details, see "Legge "anti-moschee" – ASGI, APN e comunità religiose chiedono che il Governo ricorra alla Corte Costituzionale", *ASGI*, 9 March 2015, http://www.asgi.it/notizia/legge-anti-moschee-asgi-apn-e-comunita-religiose-chiedono-che-il-governo-ricorra-alla-corte-costituzionale/

39. Application No. 47 of the President of the Council of Ministers, 9 April 2015.

sion on Constitutional affairs[40]. While the Palmizio proposal (from the name of the MP who proposed it) aims to introduce a public register for imams, the Santanché proposal concerns both a public register for mosques and another one for imams.[41] While these proposals risk being discriminatory for imposing a register only for Muslim ministers of religion, they may also entail positive effects if their aim is to support and not oversee the Italian Muslim community. In addition, the far-right party, Lega Nord, has proposed the adoption of a law according to which the state could grant the rights to build worship places or to refurbish them only for legally recognised religious associations.[42]

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN THE FIELD OF:

Employment

As required by European Union Law, Italian legislation forbids any form of discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief.[43] This has established a general framework for equal access to the labour market and equal treatment in employment and occupation.[44]

During this research, it was difficult to find cases of employment discrimination that had occurred in 2015 due to the lack of complaints and reports to the Italian authorities.[45] However, inferences can be drawn from the existing surveys and the information received from the "MAI+" initiative.

When it comes to access to employment, 16% of the Italian respondents to the Eurobarometer on discrimination 2015[46] believe that an expression of a religious belief (for example wearing a visible religious symbol) is a disadvantage in a recruitment procedure

40. "Sicurezza, un registro delle moschee e degli imam: parte l'iter alla Camera della proposta di legge del centrodestra", *Dire Agenzia di Stampa Nazionale*, 9 December 2015, http://www.dire.it/09-12-2015/28386-sicurezza-un-registro-delle-moschee-e-degli-imam-parte-liter-alla-camera-della-proposta-di-legge-del-centrodestra/; "Proposta Santanché su moschee e imam", *Public Policy*, 9 December 2015, http://www.publicpolicy.it/proposta-santanche-moschee-imam-54493.html.

41. In the past, the COREIS association supported the idea of a register for imams. See: http://www.coreis.it/documenti_13/38.pdf. Also, UCOII expressed in favour of this kind of initiative. Daniela Sala, "L'Islam in Italia. Associazioni, leggi e rappresentanza, *Fai notizia. Radio radicale*, 27 March 2015, http://www.fainotizia.it/contributo/27-03-2015/testo/islam-italia-associazioni-leggi-e-rappresentanza-moschee.

42. Report Lunaria Watchdog, 2015, 18, http://www.lunaria.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/DossierWatchdog.pdf.

43. See article 19 of the Italian Constitution which establishes the right of freedom to religion: "Everyone has the right to profess freely their own religious faith in any form, individually or in association, to worship it in private or in public places, provided that the rites are not contrary to morality"; see also article 21 of the Italian Constitution which states that: "Everyone has the right to freely express their thoughts in speech, writing or any other means of communication".

44. See articles 3 and 4 of the Italian Constitution, article 15 of the 1970 Workers' Act, article 43 of the Legislative Decree No. 286/98, Legislative Decree No. 216/2003 that adopted the European Directive No. 216/2003.

45. See above, Introduction.

46. Special Eurobarometer 437, *Discrimination in the EU IN 2015*, http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/PublicOpinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/SPECIAL/surveyKy/2077

(10 points higher than in 2012[47]). In particular, a name of Islamic origin in the curriculum vitae and/or a job candidate wearing the Islamic veil can be viewed unfavourably. In some cases, sensitive questions about the religious orientation of the candidate have been asked. Furthermore, uncomfortable reactions of employers when the candidate accidentally informs them about his/her religious affiliation have been noted.[48]

With reference to equal treatment in employment, risks of direct and indirect discrimination linked to the traditional and religious practices of Muslim workers have been noticed. In the absence of a general law on the right to freedom of religion, which includes the workplace, and lacking an ad hoc agreement between the Muslim community and the Italian state at the national level,[49] the employer enjoys wider discretion to refuse to take into consideration specific needs, particularly when the employee is a member of a "religion without an agreement".[50]

Muslim communities and workers, supported by the Trade Unions (CGIL – CISL – UIL), have pulled together to improve the situation[51] and have signed agreements with local enterprises with regard to Islamic holidays and festivals, prayer spaces, fasting during Ramadan and consuming halal food at canteens.[52]

These agreements have enabled Muslim workers to observe Ramadan (thanks to the reduction on working time during this period), to attend Friday prayers, to pray at the correct prayer times and to have halal meal options in canteens. However, these agreements can work only within large enterprises in which the collective bargaining power of Muslim workers is very strong.

As a consequence, the protection of Muslim workers' rights has proven to be very fragmented depending on the geographical area. In practice, the larger the enterprise, the higher the presence of Muslim employees and therefore the stronger the protection that is granted to their rights.[53]

In August, 2015, an action plan against racism, xenophobia and intolerance was adopted by the Italian government. Among other actions, this plan foresees

47. Special Eurobarometer 393, *Discrimination in the EU in 2012*, 129, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_393_en.pdf.

48. Cases reported to or gathered by the "MAI+" initiative in 2015.

49. Pursuant to article 8 of the Italian Constitution, the Italian state has concluded an agreement with the representative bodies of some religious groups (for instance, the Adventists, the Jewish Communities, the Lutheran Church), but not with the Muslim community. Since 1990, the most representative Muslim associations settled in Italy, such as UCOII (*Unione delle Comunità Islamiche d'Italia*), A.M.I (*Associazione Musulmani d'Italia*) and COREIS (*Comunità Religiosa Islamica Italiana*), have proposed draft agreements to the Government.

50. See Chiara Favilli, *Report on measures to combat discrimination, Country report, Italy,* European network of legal experts in the non-discrimination field, 2013.

51. Carlo Cardia – Giuseppe Della Torre, *Comunità Islamiche in Italia, identità e forme giuridiche*, Giappichelli Editore, 2015, 418, 492-505.

52. Carlo Cardia – Giuseppe Della Torre, *Comunità Islamiche in Italia, identità e forme giuridiche*, Giappichelli Editore, 2015, 417-418.

53. Carlo Cardia – Giuseppe Della Torre, *Comunità Islamiche in Italia, identità e forme giuridiche*, Giappichelli Editore, 2015, 418.

the adoption of measures aimed at promoting awareness and respect for religious holidays and traditions, as well as historical linguistic and cultural rights of people subject to discrimination in the field of employment. The action plan has to be implemented and its effectiveness to be assessed. Nevertheless, the impact of the plan risks being weak as there is no a law on religious freedom or agreement with the Muslim community.

Education

In Italy, all children have equal access to education, regardless of their citizenship or religion. From a general point of view, the Italian law meets international standards by prohibiting any form of discrimination at school.[54]

According to these general principles, Muslim students have the same rights to education as Italians or anyone else in Italy. In November 2015, official data published by the Italian Minister of Education, University and Research on the presence of foreign students[55] in Italy show that approximately 300,000 students attending Italian schools come from countries where Islam is the predominant religion.[56]

The majority of Muslim students attend public schools where Catholic religious instruction is a specific optional course called "Hour of religion"; this is provided by teachers selected by the Catholic Church, whose salaries are paid by the Italian state. Parents may decide to opt out of this. In this case, students may attend a non-religious alternative class or, in certain cases, may decide to leave school early with parental consent.[57]

In practice, in some areas of the country, only a minority of families choose to opt out. However, where the Muslim population is higher, several foreign students (often a whole class) can choose not to attend the so-called hour of religion. In this case, the Muslim community has to cover the cost of Islamic instruction. Therefore, this educational system increases de facto discrimination based on religion within the Italian society and especially at school.

Equally, different diets may be cause of discrimination against Muslims at school. At the beginning of the year, parents are asked to fill in a form and provide information on possible allergies or specific needs of the child. On these grounds, school canteens may decide to provide halal food for students. In practice, the needs of Muslim students are not satisfied everywhere in Italy, since reasonable accommodation is made only in areas where the Muslim community is more numerous and visible.

54. See article 34 of the Italian Constitution, according to which "Schools shall be open to everyone".

55. Statistical data on foreign students in Italy available at: http://www.istruzione.it/allegati/2015/Notiziario_Alunni_Stranieri_1415.pdf.

56. "L'Islam in classe: che fare?", *Tutto Scuola,* 15 November 2015, http://www.tuttoscuola.com/cgi-local/disp.cgi?ID=37338.

57. United States Department of State, *2014 Report on International Religious Freedom - Italy*, 14 October 2015, http://www.refworld.org/docid/5621058e4.html [accessed 5 December 2015].

Recently, it has been noticed that while the representation of Islam in textbooks is often confused and not accurate,[58] the Italian curricula are not able to respond to the changing features of Italian society. This, together with other factors, may increase the already existing horizontal discrimination which manifests itself through peer-to-peer bullying behaviour.[59]

In 2015, Islamophobia in the field of education has also manifested itself through the stigmatisation of girl students wearing the Islamic veil. In February, in the northeast of Italy, a school administrator decided to ban the hijab under the pretext of avoiding incidents motivated by religious reasons.[60] Immediately, both the Italian minister of education (MIUR) and the guarantor against discrimination of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region intervened. In particular, the latter delivered a negative opinion condemning the decision of the school administrator as it was in breach of the principle of religious freedom as laid out in the Italian Constitution and the European Convention on Human Rights.[61]

Moreover, in the aftermath of the January 2015 Paris attacks, the Veneto Region Councillor for Education issued a circular calling on Muslim students and their families to condemn the terrorist attacks. Under the pretext that "All terrorists are Muslim", she deemed necessary that Muslims settled in Italy took a stand against terrorists. This initiative was condemned by ENAR (The European Network against Racism) and CILD (The Italian Coalition for Rights and Civil Liberties), as it manifestly aimed at increasing feelings of Islamophobia among young students and their families.[62] Instead of fostering social cohesion, this kind of initiative could boost bullying behaviour that targets Muslim students.

In 2015, two significant measures were adopted in the field of education. Among these, the above-mentioned action plan against racism, xenophobia and intolerance also stresses the need to revise the existing textbooks in order to identify and remove any racist or discriminatory elements and to foster the adoption of a multicultural approach. In addition, Act No. 107/15 on good schooling gives top priority to fighting discrimination and bullying.

58. Carlo Cardia – Giuseppe Della Torre, "*Comunità Islamiche in Italia, identità e forme giuridiche*", Giappichelli Editore, 2015, 439 and 464.

59. See, for instance, ""Sei un terrorista", piccolo straniero insultato e malmenato in classe", *Il Gazzettino,* 14 January 2015, http://www.ilgazzettino.it/nordest/belluno/belluno-insulti-scuola-amp-8203-terrorista/notizie/1120449.shtml

60. Greta Sclaunich, "No al velo in classe. Il preside: «Può generare razzismo»", *Il Corriere della Sera*, 16 February 2015, http://www.corriere.it/scuola/15_febbraio_16/friuli-divieto-velo-islamico-in-classe-634123ac-b5e5-11e4-bb5e-b90de9daadbe.shtml.

61. "Divieto del velo a scuola in FVG: revocata la circolare dopo intervento del MIUR e del garante contro le discriminazioni", *ASGI (Associazione di Studi Giuridici sull'Immigrazione),* 22 February 2015, http://www.asgi.it/notizia/velo-islamico-scuola-fvg-revocata-la-circolare-dopo-lintervento-del-garante-contro-la-discriminazione/.

62. "ENAR e CILD condannano la circolare alle scuole dell'assessore Donazzan", *Cronache di ordinario razzismo*, 17 February 2015, http://www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org/enar-cild-condannano-circolare-alle-scuole-dellassessore-donazzan/.

Politics

Several cases of Islamophobia in politics were registered in 2015. These are mainly linked to the climate of intolerance that has increased in the aftermath of the Paris attacks.[63]

Hate speech in politics has been observed in the run up to the elections, but no major political consultations having taken place in Italy throughout 2015. For instance, in the phase of designation of the candidates to the Sicilian Regional Presidency, the leader of the national right-wing party Fratelli d'Italia, Giorgia Meloni, opposed the candidature of a Muslim intellectual to the Sicilian presidency.[64] Moreover, in February, 2015 representatives of the right-wing political party Forza Nuova organised a rally to demand the closure of a Muslim centre in Bondeno, where local elections took place in May/June. The trade unions and civil society associations immediately condemned the initiative.[65]

In early 2015, the left-party local council member for culture and youth policies of Bonorva, a commune in the Province of Sassari, posted an Islamophobic message on Facebook wishing that Muslim people would be the victims of a Holocaust. She was forced to resign from office due to the turmoil that ensued after she had posted this message.[66] In Pontoglio, a community in the Province of Brescia, several road signs were displayed at the entrance of the town under the initiative of the local right-wing mayor. These stated that Pontoglio is "a town of Western culture and deep Christian tradition. Please stay away those who do not intend to respect the local culture or traditions." Unknown people blacked out the writing on the road signs with a spray paint.[67]

According to a recent survey, "Anti-Muslim sentiment is disproportionately a right-wing phenomenon in Europe. (…) Seven out of ten Italians who consider themselves to be on the right have unfavourable views of Muslims, as do nearly half (49%) of self-avowed Italians on the left."[68] However, left-wing politicians are also opposed to the Muslim community.[69]

63. See above, paragraph 2.

64. "Buttafuoco candidato in Sicilia con Salvini, Giorgia Meloni: "No, è islamico"", *Libero Quotidiano*, 27 July 2015, http://www.liberoquotidiano.it/news/politica/11814644/Buttafuoco-candidato-in-Sicilia-con-Salvini.html.

65. "Manifestazione anti-islam: Anpi, Cgil e Udi contro Forza Nuova", *Estense.com*, 17 February 2015, http://www.estense.com/?p=440146.

66. "Giovanna Tedde, Assessore di Bonorva posta messaggio choc su Fb: "I musulmani dovevano subire l'Olocausto". Si è dimessa", *Huffington Post*, 9 January 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.it/2015/01/09/assessore-musulmani-morire_n_6445646.html

67. "Pontoglio, cancellati i cartelli anti-Islam: via il riferimento alla "tradizione cristiana", *La Repubblica,* 27 December 2015 http://milano.repubblica.it/cronaca/2015/12/27/news/islam_pontoglio_cartelli-130242835/?refresh_ce#gallery-slider=129652510

68. Bruce Stoakes, "Chapter 3. Anti-minority sentiment not rising", in *Faith in European project reviving*, PEW Research Center, 2015, 21, http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/06/02/chapter-3-anti-minority-sentiment-not-rising/

69. See paragraph 2 of this report.

In Italy, politicians spreading hate messages can be prosecuted: a) in application of general legal provisions covering racially motivated slander, defamation or insults or b) in application of Act No. 654 of 13 October 1975 (known as the "Reale Act"), as amended by Act No. 205 of 25 June 1993 (known as "Mancino Act") and Act No. 85 of 24 February 2006.[70]

While having an appropriate criminal legislation is essential in this field, it needs to be enforced. Furthermore, the penalties have to be effective, proportionate and dissuasive. The majority of interlocutors interviewed for this research pointed out that the current legislation is inadequately implemented and claims that the sanctions applied pursuant to the current legislation are mild and insufficient. Unfortunately, data on the number of convictions issued in application of the above-mentioned legislation are not disaggregated by types of racist motivation or criminal offence. This, together with the complicated legislative framework makes it impossible to know how many people, including politicians, have been convicted for incitement to hatred towards Muslims in 2015.

Nonetheless, some specific judgments are worth mentioning. In 2015, a controversial judgment was pronounced by the Italian Court of Cassation,[71] which acquitted a politician of the charge of incitement of hatred through dissemination of hateful materials against migrants and Muslims while campaigning for the European elections in 2013. Despite leaflets that stated: "No more money lenders – no more foreigners", depicting a Muslim wearing a suicide belt, the Court of Cassation judges ruled that the defendant's intention was not to stigmatise "all non-Italians, just those who commit crimes" in Italy.

Whenever a conviction was issued, cases of non-compliance have also been registered. For instance, a politician from the right-wing party Forza Italia was ordered to pay 30,000 Euros to a Muslim Association (UCOII) for associating it with the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas. Afterwards, the politician announced her unwillingness to pay the fine.[72]

70. The "Mancino Act" amended the "Reale Act" to criminalise, among others, incitement to hate on grounds of religion. According to it, those who "spread ideas based on racial superiority or racial or ethnic hatred, or to instigate to commit or commit acts of discrimination for racial, ethnic, national or religious reasons" shall be punished. The Mancino Law was modified by the Law No. 85/2006 that replaced the term "dissemination" by the term "promotion" (propaganda) and "instigate" by "incite", thus limiting the punishable. Moreover, in 2016, the maximum penalty provided was reduced from three years' to eighteen months' imprisonment or a fine up to 6,000 Euros. The scope of this law risks being further narrowed by the possible adoption of a draft currently discussed in the Italian Parliament and aimed at enhancing the protection of freedom of expression, much to the detriment of the right to be free from discrimination. See Report Lunaria Watchdog, 2015, 16, http://www.lunaria.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/DossierWatchdog.pdf.

71. Cassation Court, Judgement No. 36906/2015.

72. "Santanchè condannata a risarcire gli islamici: "Pignoratemi lo stipendio, perché io non pagherò mai"", *Libero Quotidiano*, 23 April 2015, http://www.liberoquotidiano.it/news/personaggi/11781909/Santanche-condannata-a-risarcire-gli-islamici.html.

Media

During the period under review, Italian media outlets have regularly scrutinised the Muslim community in Italy. After the attacks in Paris in January and November, some journalists, editors and reporters have used an inflammatory and sometimes offensive discourse in an attempt to influence public opinion against the Muslim community as a whole. The Italian media have failed to report news in an ethical manner and have adopted a monolithic approach to the Muslim population, thus fostering hate speech[73] and spreading fear and hatred through generalization and anti-Muslim rhetoric.[74]

Throughout 2015, some newspapers, such as Il Giornale, Libero and Il Primato nazionale have been critical of Muslims. In particular, Il Giornale has been one of the most damning, often associating terrorism with the practice of Islam and/or migration.[75] In the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo attack against French journalists in January, the newspaper Il Giornale issued the headline: "Macellai Islamici" (Islamic Butchers),[76] referring to these events in terms of a clash of civilizations and stating that Muslims living in Italy had "justified" the massacre.[77] Also, Il Giornale spoke of Islam as "a faith full of violence" and defined it as "the root of evil".[78] Equally, after the events in Paris on 13 November, the magazine Libero cruelly attacked Muslims and was even sued over its front-page headline: "Bastardi Islamici" (Muslim Bastards).[79] Moreover, in November 2015, the magazine Il Primato Nazionale denied the existence of moderate Islam.[80] Furthermore, the anti-Islamophobia movement has also been a target for Italian newspapers. For instance, the newspaper Il Foglio criticized some left-wing Italian politicians and intellectuals for being on the side of Muslims, calling them "Professionals of Islamophobia".[81]

73. See Recommendation No. (97) 20 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States of the Council of Europe on "Hate speech", according to which hate speech shall be understood as covering all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including: intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin.

74. "Paris Attacks: What the Media Could Have Done Differently", *Media Diversity Institute,* 25 November 2015, http://www.media-diversity.org/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3012:paris-attacks-what-should-the-media-have-done-differently&catid=35:media-news-a-content&Itemid=34.

75. Associazione La Carta di Roma, *Notizie di Confine*, Terzo Rapporto La Carta di Roma, 2015, 14 and 18.

76. Alessandro Sallusti, "Macellai Islamici", *Il Giornale*, 8 January 2015, http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/politica/dichiarazione-guerra-alleuropa-e-libert-1080888.html.

77. Associazione La Carta di Roma, *Notizie di Confine*, Terzo Rapporto La Carta di Roma, 2015, 14.

78. Magdi Cristiano Allam, "Islam contro islam. Ecco la prova che è una fede piena di violenza", *Il Giornale,* 6 February 2015, http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/politica/islam-contro-islam-ecco-prova-che-fede-piena-violenza-1090364.html.

79. See introduction. Maurizio Belpietro, "Bastardi islamici", *Libero Quotidiano*, 14 November 2015, http://www.liberoquotidiano.it/news/editoriali/11848405/Belpietro--Bastardi-islamici.html; see also "Attentati a Parigi, la prima di Libero: "Bastardi islamici". Belpietro denunciato", *Il Fatto Quotidiano,* 14 November 2015, http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2015/11/14/attentati-a-parigi-la-prima-di-libero-bastardi-islamici-belpietro-denunciato/2219542/.

80. Adriano Scianca, "La storia dell'Islam moderato è una cagata pazzesca", *Il Primato Nazionale*, 25 November 2015, http://www.ilprimatonazionale.it/politica/islam-moderato-34763/.

81. Claudio Cerasa, "I professionisti dell'anti Islamofobia", *Il Foglio*, 24 November 2015, http://www.ilfoglio.it/cultura/2015/11/24/parigi-terrorismo-professionisti-dell-anti-islamofobia___1-v-135316-rubriche_c883.htm.

Inaccuracy and misrepresentation have also been features of the way in which certain media have been reporting the news. Recently, a significant event occurred in a school in Rozzano, near Milan.[82] The newspaper Il Giorno[83] was highly critical of an alleged initiative taken by the school's headmaster to cancel the Christmas concert as a form of respect towards Muslim students. A few days later, the school's headmaster was forced to resign amid a flurry of controversy from the media, politicians and parents. However, in a letter that was published later,[84] he stated that the news that had been reported around the world[85] was untrue. He had never cancelled the Christmas concert; he had only refused to allow the teaching of Christmas carols to the Catholic children during lunch breaks and had authorized a multicultural concert of secular songs for the following January.

Furthermore, it has been noticed that hostility towards Muslims has appeared on some news programmes. In particular, the TG4 Italian TV channel broadcast footage in the wake of the some terrorist attacks in which Italian Muslims were interviewed. This footage implied that behind the firm condemnation of these attacks by the Italian Muslim community there was an undercurrent of sympathy towards the terrorists.[86]

The approach of the above-mentioned newspapers and TV channels has been severely criticised by the Carta di Roma Association, which has repeatedly called on journalists to respect the Code of Ethics on immigration.[87] After the Charlie Hebdo attack in January, 2015, the Carta di Roma association stepped up efforts to raise awareness among journalists by drawing attention to the need for accurate reporting and respect for the dignity of vulnerable groups.

The lack of pluralism in the Italian media[88] and the negative reporting of the Muslim community at large has not only heightened discrimination towards Muslims in Italy, but it has also affected integration and the essential dialogue between

82. "Rozzano, festa di Natale cancellata per rispetto dei bimbi musulmani? Falso!", *Associazione "La Carta di Roma",* 30 November 2015, http://www.cartadiroma.org/news/rozzano-festa-di-natale-cancellata-per-rispetto-dei-bimbi-musulmani-falso/.

83. Massimiliano Mingoia, "Rozzano, il preside cancella la festa di Natale. E la scuola rimuove anche i crocifissi", *Il Giorno*, 27 November 2015, http://www.ilgiorno.it/sud-milano/rozzano-polemica-scuola-crocifissi-festa-natale-1.1522604.

84. http://www.icsgarofani.gov.it/attachments/article/173/circ_7_natale-signed.pdf.

85. For more details see: Alex Wellman, "Head teacher cancels Christmas concert over 'fears it would upset Muslim pupils', *The Mirror*, 30 November 2015, http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/head-teacher-cancels-christmas-concert-6927577; "Christmas is cancelled: Italians outraged over school decision to ban festivities*", The Guardian*, 30 November 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/30/christmas-is-cancelled-italians-outraged-over-school-decision-to-ban-festivities; Meg Wagner, "War on Christmas reaches Italy: Parents, Prime Minister furious after principal cancels holiday concert*", Daily News,* 4 December 2015, http://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/italian-parents-furious-school-cancels-christmas-concert-article-1.2455472.

86. Associazione La Carta di Roma, *Notizie di Confine*, Terzo Rapporto La Carta di Roma, 2015, 48.

87. Statistics show that in 2015, 47% of Italian headlines concerning immigration were alarmist. See: Associazione La Carta di Roma, *Notizie di Confine, Terzo Rapporto La Carta di Roma*, 2015.

88. IDOS in partnership with CONFRONTI e UNAR, *Dossier Immigrazione 2015*, 249.

the Muslim community and the rest of society. In this regard, it is worth noting that 95% of TV programming concerning religion is occupied by the Catholic faith, leaving little room for other religions in the Italian Television schedule.[89] Equally, the Muslim community have highlighted the lack of media interest in positive activities involving Muslims.[90] In response to this situation, the UCOII (Unione delle Comunità Islamiche d'Italia) asked the Italian Public Television Broadcaster R.A.I (Radiotelevisione Italiana) to hire Muslim journalists,[91] including those who wear the veil, in order to ensure diversity and multiculturalism. There has been a critical reaction to this proposal from right-wing politicians.[92]

Cyber-Space

During the period under review, the Anti-Muslim sentiment spread through new media and technologies, such as social networking platforms and webpages, and found fertile ground for its development.

In 2015, the controversial case of the Italian version of the "Stormfront" website was still a topical issue. Although the Italian server of the website was blocked in 2012,[93] the website is still accessible by users resident in Italy who are able to bypass the existing restrictions, since the server is hosted in foreign countries. Several people are currently being prosecuted for publishing messages inciting violence and racial hatred.[94] Even if Jews and immigrants are the main target for this website, messages inciting to hatred towards Muslims are also frequently posted. The "Stormfront" case shows that effectiveness in combating racism on the internet is mainly dependent on the authorities' ability to undertake a trans-national action involving countries where freedom of expression receives a quasi-absolute protection[95] (above all the United States).

89. Eleonora Bianchini, *"*La religione cattolica occupa il 95% dello spazio in tv. Anche grazie a Bergoglio*", Il Fatto Quotidiano*, 25 May 2015, http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2015/05/25/la-religione-cattolica-occupa-il-95-dello-spazio-in-tv-anche-grazie-a-bergoglio/1698717/.

90. For more details see "La voce dei musulmani e il mutismo dei media", *Partecipazione & spiritualità musulmana,* 14 April 2015, http://www.psm-italia.it/la-voce-dei-musulmani-e-il-mutismo-dei-media/.

91. Andrea Indini, "Le mani degli islamici sulla Rai: "Assumere subito giornalisti musulmani*", Il Giornale*, 14 March 2015, http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/politica/mani-degli-islamici-sulla-rai-assumere-subito-giornalisti-1105096.html.

92. "Rai, Ucoii propone cronista con velo islamico. Insorge il centrodestra. Daniela Santanché: "Idea fuori dal mondo", *Huffington Post*, 15 March 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.it/2015/03/15/rai-cronista-velo-islamico-polemica_n_6872576.html.

93. "Oscurato il sito neonazista Stormfront, 4 arresti. Scovata una lista con i nomi di Fini e Riccardi", *Il Sole 24 ore*, 16 November 2012, http://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/notizie/2012-11-16/oscurato-sito-neonazista-stormfront-132505.shtml?uuid=AbkVeT3G.

94. For more information, see "Stormfront: rinviate a giudizio 25 persone", *Cronache di ordinario razzismo*, 20 July 2015, http://www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org/stormfront-rinviate-a-giudizio-25-persone/.

95. Stephanos Stavros, "Combating religious hate speech: lessons learned from five years of country-monitoring by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)*",* in *Religion and Human Rights*, 9, 2014, 145; ECRI, *4th Report on Italy*, 2012, 44, https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Italy/ITA-CbC-IV-2012-002-ENG.pdf).

Apart from "Stormfront", several other websites and blogs have been brought to the attention of the competent authorities. The "Senzacensura" blog was blocked for incitement to racism.[96] Other webpages, such as "Tutti i crimini degli immigrati", "Informare per Resistere", "Catena Umana", "Vox News", "Imola Oggi", "Il primato nazionale" and "Losai" continue to spread false news and use inflammatory language when reporting about Muslim people.[97] This is even more dangerous if we think that the content of these pages often goes viral, being republished millions of times through the use of social networks. Even though it has been recognised that violence in the real world is often nourished by virtual misrepresentation and false information,[98] no effective action has been taken to stem the publication of the above-mentioned websites.[99]

The most common social networks, such as Facebook and Twitter, have also been host to Islamophobic messages.[100] In a recent study published in 2015, it was noted that around 100 Islamophobic groups have been detected on Facebook.[101] UNAR, in co-operation with the Italian Internet industry, is currently undertaking an initiative aimed at detecting and removing hate posts targeting, among others, Muslim people (Osservatorio di monitoraggio del Web). Moreover, some social media moderators responsible for the Facebook version of some newspapers, such as "L'Unione Sarda", "Il Tirreno", "La Nuova Sardegna"[102] and "La Stampa", have taken a firm stance against the spread of racist hatred through social networks and have banned the racist comments of users on their Facebook pages.[103] The above-mentioned newspapers understand that not only journalists, but also site publishers, web moderators

96. In this regard, see: "Chiuso Senzacensura.eu il sito che istigava al razzismo", *La Stampa*, 1 September 2015, http://www.lastampa.it/2015/09/01/tecnologia/chiuso-senzacensuraeu-il-sito-che-istigava-al-razzismo-6mQQmJAExD2vFzllyDjxOJ/pagina.html.

97. For instance, see: "Non tutti I musulmani sono terroristi, ma tutti i musulmani sono jihadisti", *ImolaOggi*, 20 December 2015, http://www.imolaoggi.it/2015/12/20/non-tutti-i-musulmani-sono-terroristi-ma-tutti-i-musulmani-sono-jihadisti/.

98. Paola Andrisani, "Il perverso intreccio tra odio virtuale e odio "virale"", in *Terzo libro bianco sul razzismo*, Lunaria, 2014, 115.

99. IDOS in partnership with CONFRONTI e UNAR, *Dossier Immigrazione 2015*, 252.

100. IDOS in partnership with CONFRONTI e UNAR, *Dossier Immigrazione 2015*, 251-252; for further information see Andrea Ballone and Michele Sasso, "La galassia della bufala sui social network. Il grande business di chi spaccia balle e odio", *L'Espresso*, 31 March 2015, http://espresso.repubblica.it/attualita/2015/03/31/news/la-bufala-e-l-odio-corre-via-social-network-1.206543.

101. "La mappa dell'intolleranza", *Vox Diritti*, http://www.voxdiritti.it/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/mappa_razzismo.jpg.

102. In particular, Islamophobic posts followed the publication of the news concerning the arrest of Al Qaeda terrorists in Sardinia in April 2015. See Guido Piga, "Commenti sui social, la Sardegna si divide e il mondo ne parla", *La Nuova Sardegna*, http://lanuovasardegna.gelocal.it/regione/2015/04/25/news/commenti-sui-social-la-sardegna-si-divide-e-il-mondo-ne-parla-1.11306501.

103. IDOS in partnership with CONFRONTI e UNAR, *Dossier Immigrazione 2015*, 251; see also: http://www.cartadiroma.org/news/hate-speech-la-stampa-decide-di-cancellare-i-commenti-razzisti-e-bannare-gli-autori/; http://www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org/sempre-piu-social-sempre-meno-societa-limportanza-di-dire-basta/.

and bloggers have a crucial role to play in countering hate speech on line.[104]

Although Italy is rich in laws[105] and mechanisms[106] to protect against discrimination, there is no specific law devoted to combating on-line hate speech. The Reale-Mancino Act[107] could theoretically apply to the Internet but it might prove being inadequate, having been enacted before the spread of the Internet and social networks. In addition, Italy has not yet ratified[108] the Additional Protocol[109] to the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime, concerning the criminalisation of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems. The ratification of the Protocol (Draft Law No. 3084) has already been approved by the Italian senate and is currently been discussed by the Italian lower chamber.[110] The adoption of this protocol might prove to be a major step forward to counter Islamophobic discourse on line.

CENTRAL FIGURES IN THE ISLAMOPHOBIA NETWORK

During the period under review, Italian politicians and institutions have taken negative and discriminatory attitudes against the Muslim community in Italy, fuelling anti-Muslim sentiment.

In particular, at the end of 2014, Matteo Salvini, the leader of the Northern League, announced the creation of a new manifesto called the People's League; the

104. In this regard, see: European Court of Human Rights, Grand Chamber, *Delfi AS v. Estonia*, Judgement of 16 June 2015 in which the court concluded that there was no breach of the freedom of expression principle (article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights) and reaffirmed the Estonian courts' decision to hold an Internet news portal liable for the offensive comments posted by its readers. In this case, the Court deemed that the extreme character of the comments in question had justified a restriction to the freedom of expression.

105. See above, paragraph 4 c).

106. Italy established the Observatory for Safety against Acts of Discrimination (OSCAD) in order to protect the victims of hate crimes. OSCAD, located in the Department of Public Security - Central Directorate of Criminal Police, receives reports of discriminatory acts and puts forward appropriate measures to prevent and fight discrimination (for more details: http://www.poliziadistato.it/articolo/22017/). In 2015, OSCAD stated that they had received two complaints concerning Islamophobic incidents. In July 2015, an *ad hoc* commission, the creation of which was encouraged by the Speaker of the Italian lower chamber, adopted the Declaration of Rights on the Internet (http://www.camera.it/application/xmanager/projects/leg17/commissione_internet/dichiarazione_dei_diritti_internet_pubblicata.pdf).

107. See paragraph 3 of this report.

108. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe encouraged Italy to ratify the additional protocol as soon as possible. For more information, see: the 4th ECRI report on Italy published in 2012, 12, https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Italy/ITA-CbC-IV-2012-002-ENG.pdf.

109. The Additional Protocol is an important juridical tool that requires the participation of states to criminalize the dissemination of racist and xenophobic material, as well as of racist and xenophobic-motivated threats and insults through computer systems.

110. Draft law No. 3084 of 29 April 2015, http://www.camera.it/leg17/126?tab=1&leg=17&idDocumento=3084&sede=&tipo.

values-based platform of this league includes the banning of mosques in Italy[111] under the pretext that Muslims are "trying to impose a way of life incompatible with ours."[112]

Also, Giorgia Meloni, the head of the right-wing party Fratelli d'Italia, called on supporters to block the arrival of Muslim migrants and was involved in a significant institutional clash.[113]

Furthermore, the regional government of Lombardia, led by a political alliance of right-wing parties, has promoted various campaigns that affect Muslims, banning the building of mosques and, lastly, the wearing of burqa-style Islamic dress in hospitals and public offices as from 1 January, 2016.[114] Also, a similar initiative was announced in the Veneto region.[115]

Some far-right Italian movements, such as Casa Pound and Forza Nuova, spread anti-Muslim propaganda. For instance, after the Paris attacks in January, members of Forza Nuova expressed religious intolerance towards Islam, unfurling the banner "Islam out of Italy"[116] in front of mosques and Islamic centres in the Veneto region. Again, in November 2015, other banners reading "War zone, occupied Islamic area" were put up in front of some mosques around Italy.[117] In addition, Casa Pound's political programme uses generalised anti-immigration rhetoric and defines migration as a "source of social, cultural and existential impoverishment" and as an "invasion" from which the Italians are suffering.[118] Casa Pound and Forza Nuova have also been on the side of the Northern League in several initiatives and demonstrations against Islam and immigration from Muslim countries.[119]

In addition, the Northern League filed several motions with municipal and regional councils in order to restrict the rights of or to oppose the claims of the Ital-

111. Francesco Borgonovo, "Cinquantamila giorni", *Il Corriere della Sera*, 4 November 2014, http://cinquantamila.corriere.it/storyTellerArticolo.php?storyId=54587adc302ca.

112. "Rightwing Northern League makes gains in Italian elections*", The Guardian*, 29 July 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/01/northern-league-gains-italian-elections-matteo-salvini.

113. See paragraph 2 of this report.

114. "In Lombardia dal 2016 è vietato entrare negli ospedali con burqa e niqab", *La Stampa,* 10 December 2015, http://www.lastampa.it/2015/12/10/italia/cronache/in-lombardia-da-oggi-vietato-entrare-in-ospedali-e-uffici-regionali-con-burqa-e-niqab-Y5hu3bSzM1rn3WX3T8BXCO/pagina.html.

115. "Veneto, polemica su idea divieto burqa", *Ansa*, 12 December 2015, http://www.ansa.it/veneto/notizie/2015/12/12/veneto-polemica-su-idea-divieto-burqa_efef724b-4c8e-4de8-adfc-8c7f6e1ca780.html.

116. "Charlie Hebdo, Forza Nuova: "Fuori Islam dall'Italia". Salvini: "Ci sgozzeranno", *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, 10 January 2015, http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2015/01/10/charlie-hebdo-forza-nuova-fuori-islam-dallitalia-salvini-ci-sgozzeranno/1329474/.

117. "Islam, blitz di Forza Nuova contro l'Isis: "Questa è zona di guerra", *Il Resto del Carlino*, 20 November 2015, http://www.ilrestodelcarlino.it/pesaro/forza-nuova-islam-cartelli-isis-1.1502956.

118. For further details, see the website: http://www.casapounditalia.org/.

119. Monica Rubino and Michela Scacchioli*, "*Lega-CasaPound in piazza, antirazzisti contro. Salvini: "Renzi servo sciocco". Vaffa a Fornero*", La Repubblica,* 28 February 2015*,* http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2015/02/28/news/lega_-108382515/.

ian Islamic community[120] on the pretext of ensuring the country's security. Despite these attempts, the above-mentioned motions were often blocked by other political coalitions inside the municipal or regional councils because they were considered in breach of the Italian Constitution.

OBSERVED GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN TO COUNTER ISLAMOPHOBIA

Throughout 2015, several initiatives were undertaken by national institutions, professional bodies, civil society and the Muslim community itself. However, the majority of them have not specifically focused on Islamophobia as such, but rather adopted a broader approach.

At the governmental level, an important initiative was undertaken by the UNAR Office; the office launched the Spegni le discriminazioni, accendi i diritti (Stop discriminations, turn on rights) campaign in February 2015. The purpose of this campaign was to raise awareness about the need to fight discrimination. To this end, UNAR set up a contact centre, the task of which is to receive complaints through a national helpline and a website for victims and witnesses of discrimination.[121] Also, in March 2015, on the occasion of the week against racism, UNAR launched the campaign Accendi la mente, spegni i pregiudizi[122] (Turn on your mind, turn off the prejudices), as a follow-up action to the previous initiative against discrimination. Other relevant initiatives which are targeted at countering, among other phenomena, Islamophobia, will be undertaken by UNAR in 2016.

Furthermore, in the field of media and cyber-space, the Carta di Roma association promoted the #NoHateSpeech initiative, thereby asking all publishers and journalists to ban hateful comments that target, among other, members of religious minorities.[123] The "No hate speech campaign" initiated by the Council of Europe has also focused on the need for countering on-line hate speech in all its forms.

As for specific initiatives that are aimed at countering Islamophobia, it is worth mentioning the MAI+ (never again) initiative, the goal of which is to monitor Islam-

120. See the Northern League's initiative which was aimed at taking a census of Islamic associations in the Lombardy region, http://artventuno.it/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Mozione-Lega-Nord-Islam.pdf; see also the proposal of the Northern League asking to organise a public consultation on the opportunity to build a mosque in Castelfranco, in the Emilia-Romagna Region. For further details, see "Castelfranco Emilia (MO), Lega Nord: "Moschea – Centro culturale religioso islamico: il sindaco consult ii cittadini", 23 October 2015, https://infosannio.wordpress.com/2015/10/23/castelfranco-emilia-mo-lega-nord-moschea-centro-culturale-religioso-islamico-il-sindaco-consulti-i-cittadini/.

121. For further details, see the UNAR's website, http://www.unar.it/unar/portal/?p=4700.

122. For further details, see the UNAR's website, http://www.unar.it/unar/portal/?page_id=1976.

123. "#NoHateSpeech, appello contro tutti gli istigatori d'odio", *Il Fatto Quotidiano,* 7 September 2015, http://issuu.com/ufficionazionaleantidiscriminazioni/docs/unar_-_rassegna_stampa_8_settembre_/1

ophobic incidents in Italy, to collect data and to issue periodic reports on Islamophobia in the country. The ultimate aim of this promising initiative is to support victims, both Muslim and otherwise,[124] and to raise awareness among the general public, private and public institutions, political parties, trade unions and media outlets about discrimination on religious grounds, with the purpose of eradicating Islamophobia. In 2015, MAI+ started receiving official reports from victims; the official launch of the initiative will take place in 2016.

In 2015, the Italian Muslim community also joined the "Not in my name" global initiative organized by the British organisation ActiveChange. In the context of this initiative, many Muslims peacefully took to the streets in Italy in order to take a firm stance against terrorism, while breaking away from every form of violence or radicalisation.[125]

Also, in February 2015, the Council for Italian Islam (Consulta Islamica),[126] a consultative body for the Ministry of the Interior, resumed meeting after some years of inactivity.[127]

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLITICS AND NGOS

This report shows that throughout 2015 Islamophobia in Italy was linked to international terrorist attacks and migrant crisis. The increasing willingness of Italian Muslims to claim their rights, such as the right to build appropriate places of worship, has also exacerbated existing tensions.

Hate speech has been widely spread not only throughout the media and cyber-space, but also in politics. In this regard, the debate in Italy has mainly been concerned with the politically fraught and legally complex relationship between freedom of expression, freedom of religion and the protection of human dignity. Institutional and non-institutional stakeholders are therefore confronted with the need to strike the right balance between the necessity to combat hate speech and the importance of preserving freedom of expression.

In the absence of large-scale physical attacks, Islamophobia has manifested itself not only through major incidents, such as the institutional clash between UNAR

124. Islamophobia can affect not only Muslims, but also those who choose not to practice Islam but who are perceived as Muslims.

125. Francesco Vidé, "Not in my name: essere uniti per sconfiggere la paura", *News 24*, 10 January 2015, http://www.vnews24.it/2015/01/10/not-in-my-name-uniti-contro-paura/; Laura Mari, "Not in my name', musulmani in piazza gridano forte: "Sconfiggiamo il cancro del terrorismo", *La Repubblica*, 21 November 2015, http://www.repubblica.it/cronaca/2015/11/21/news/manifestazione_musulmani_terrorismo_notinmyname-127809267/.

126. The Council for Italian Islam was set up in 2005 with the aim of promoting the institutional dialogue with the Italian Muslim community. The Council is composed of representatives of the Islamic community that has settled in Italy. It gives advice and expresses opinions on the matters referred to it by the Minister of Interior.

127. "Alfano convoca i leader islamici "Rinasce la consulta"", *La Repubblica*, 24 February 2015, http://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/2015/02/24/alfano-convoca-i-leader-islamici-rinasce-la-consulta18.html

and Giorgia Meloni, but above all through shameful minor gestures perpetrated by ordinary citizens, such as constant insults towards the members of the Muslim community. In particular, Muslim women have become the primary target for Islamophobic attacks; verbal abuse and harassment in public targeting women in the hijab are a regular occurrence.

Apart from the concrete measures recommended below, it is worth noting that eradicating Islamophobia is only possible with a joint effort from all the actors involved. Although it is necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the legislative framework, the fostering of tolerance and mutual respect through education, with a special focus on younger generations, is crucial. Every single citizen must feel affected by Islamophobic incidents and will have to be able and willing to react, because Islamophobia, as every form of intolerance concerns not only Muslims, but every common citizen of a democratic society.

Equally, the Italian Muslim community should step up efforts and speak out against Islamophobic incidents. Reluctance to report will not strengthen the Muslim community. On the contrary, it will make the phenomenon even more invisible and difficult to eradicate.

On the basis of this report, the following set of key measures should be considered when discussing ways to counter the Islamophobic phenomenon in Italy:

Legislative Framework

- the relation between the Italian Muslim community and the Italian state should be regulated by an agreement (intesa) at national level;
- a law on freedom of religion should be adopted in order to set a clear legislative framework and to reduce geographical inequalities;
- a law on combating on-line racism should be adopted;
- the Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime should be ratified as soon as possible;
- any future amendments to the Reale Act – Mancino Act should not further reduce the scope of the law;

Employment and Education

- under-reporting of Islamophobic incidents in the field of employment and education should be countered by further raising awareness among the general public and encouraging victims to report incidents;
- widespread research should be conducted to analyse carefully the subtle forms of systematic discrimination suffered by Muslim people in the field of employment;
- pluralism in schools should be ensured by overseeing a real secular education over and above the procedure that allows an exemption from the Catholic "hour of religion";
- bullying behaviours should be prevented and countered, in particular when con-

cerning the wearing of the veil, by fully implementing the measures foreseen in the 2015 Action Plan against racism, xenophobia and intolerance;

Politics

- peer pressure should be put on politicians by their party colleagues to counter the spread hatred, for instance by overseeing disciplinary action (i.e. suspension of duties);
- public disavowal and counter speech by politicians should be encouraged;
- the pervading sense of impunity displayed by certain politicians should be combated by imposing effective sanctions;

Media and Cyber-space

- more pluralism in the media should be ensured in order to give a proper representation of Italian society. To this aim, more journalists, TV presenters and guests with different religious backgrounds should be more visible in the media, thus representing the different aspects of Italian society and breaking down stereotypes;
- further efforts should be devoted to raising awareness among journalists, web moderators and bloggers about Islamophobia;
- the Internet industry should be encouraged to adopt self-regulatory measures while national authorities should further engage in a dialogue with it;
- Counter speech in media and cyber-space should also be fostered.

CHRONOLOGY

8 January 2015,

- the newspaper Il Giornale carries the headline "Muslim Butchers".

9 January 2015,

- a local councillor posts a message on Facebook wishing Muslim people be the victim of a Holocaust.

14 January 2015,

- Belluno, a student is insulted and beaten at school because of his Muslim origins.

16 February 2015,

- Friuli Venezia Giulia, a school administrator, bans the hijab under the pretext of avoiding incidents motivated by religious reasons.

22 March 2015,

- Battipaglia (Salerno), vandals explode firecrackers inside the mosque.

24 March 2015,

- Rimini, a Molotov bomb is thrown through the windows of an halal butcher.

2 September 2015,

- Rome, Giorgia Meloni, the leader of the right-wing party Fratelli D'Italia, declares her opposition to immigration from Muslim countries.

14 November 2015,

- the newspaper Libero publishes a front-page headline reading "Islamic Bastards".

19 November 2015,

- Bologna, some girls are attacked because of their Islamic veil.

25 November 2015,

- Giugliano (Naples), a pig's head is found outside the mosque.

11 December 2015,

- Padua, a paper bomb explodes in front of the mosque.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN KOSOVO NATIONAL REPORT 2015

ARBER FETIU

THE AUTHOR

Arber Fetiu is a PhD student at Universite de Montreal, Canada. His project explores the images of the future after 9/11 in dystopian fiction and political discourse. More specifically, he is interested in the images of the future that predict, foresee and anticipate the 'takeover of Europe' by immigrants; how the portrayal of Europe's futures in dystopian literature and anticipatory political discourses creates or constructs the present; the inclusion of these images of the future in official texts; how the future is talked about in the service of governance and control of subjects and their bodies. His work examines the terrains of convergence between dystopian literature and non-fiction discourse on immigration in the West. He is concerned with the role and dilution of fiction and non-fiction narratives of the future(s) in the production of new knowledge and the making of new or enhancing of old forms of control, stigmatisation and othering. Fetiu has worked with International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD) in Washington DC as well as for the International Center for the Prevention of Crime (ICPC) where he was a research assistant for the production of a report on literature review for radicalisation, published in January 2016, "International comparative study on prevention of radicalisation". He has written on secularism, radicalisation, counter-radicalisation politics and related issues. arber.fetiu.1@ulaval.ca

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions. No representation, either expressed or implied, is made of the accuracy of the material in the national reports. The editors of the European Islamophobia Report cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that have been made. The reader must make his or her own evaluation of the accuracy and appropriateness of the material.

To cite this report: Arber Fetiu (2016): *Islamophobia in Kosovo: National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The issue of Islamophobia in a Muslim majority country is theoretically a touchy one. Yet, when aggressions against Muslims occur there are practices, discourses and events that take place that go beyond the disputed terminology. Here I will try to tackle this problem and its expression in Kosovo first by problematizing the denial and affirmation of Islamophobia in Kosovo and then studying the attitude of neglect that is adopted towards aggression against Muslims. I will go on to explain the attitude of the media towards religion and Islam in particular, as well as describing certain cases in which expressions of hatred, fear, prejudice and distrust vis-à-vis Muslims have been manifested in the public discourse. From the many examples I have chosen only a few point out the nature of what falls into the rubric of Islamophobia as it is generally assumed and as the operational definition of the report describes it to be. Not many cases of precedent expressions of Islamophobia have occurred in 2015 (those that have were mostly focused on the veil and other religious markers), yet considering that the theme of radicalisation has become actual in public discourse, the manifestation of Islamophobic attitudes occurs in the form of a conflation between Muslimness and violence, the dilution of religious markers as markers of 'threat' and 'radicalism', excluding certain citizens because of their presupposed natural connection with violence, danger, etc. These expressions indicate a temptation to excommunicate certain members of society because of their religious subjectivity, one that remains highly illegible for the perpetrators of the Islamophobic discourse. I connect these discourses with past events to demonstrate their continuity and persistence.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY IN ALBANIAN

Çështja e Islamofobisë në vende me shumicë myslimane është teorikisht e ndjeshme. Por përtej pikëpyetjeve terminologjike agresioni kundër myslimaneve në praktika e diskurse publike është i dukshëm. Në këtë tekst, përpiqem të cek këtë problem dhe manifestimet e tij në Kosovë fillimisht duke problematizuar mohimin e fenomenit dhe më pas neglizhimin që i bëhet atij dhe për pasojë indiferencës ndaj agresioneve që u drejtohen myslimanëve. Duke u marrë me qasjet e mediave ndaj fesë dhe Islamit në veçanti, përmes disa rasteve të përzgjedhura nga një mori tjerash, mëtoj të dëshmoj manifestimet e urrejtjes, frikës dhe mosbesimit ndaj myslimanëve ashtu siç shfaqen në diskursin publik. Këto shprehje të cilat ky diskurs ua drejton myslimaneve, renditen në rubrikën e Islamofobisë ashtu siç kjo kuptohet në zhvillimet akademike bashkëkohore dhe ashtu siç është përkufizuar në këtë raport. Duke analizuar këto manifestime, do të shënojmë faktin e ekzistencës së fenomenit. Ndryshe nga vitet paraprake, viti 2015 karakterizohet me një ligjërim i cili ngatërron dhe njëson shënjuesit fetarë me 'radikalizimin' duke trajtuar një kategori qytetarësh si

'të rrezikshëm' , 'jo-luajalë' , 'kërcënues' mbi baza të përkatësisë së tyre fetare dhe duke iu referuar portretit të tyre fizik apo manifestimit të besimit si manifestim i një lidhjeje inherente me dhunën. Këto shprehje përjashtojnë disa qytetarë nga pjesëmarrja e tyre në qytetarinë e përbashkët duke i lexuar ata dhe subjektivitetin e tyre në atë mënyrë që bëjnë të vështirë përfshirjen e tyre në shoqëri.

INTRODUCTION

The state of Islamophobia in Kosovo has been largely ignored by scholars (Blumi, Krasniqi 2014) and the media. Rarely has Islamophobia in Kosovo appeared in sections of international reports on human rights or in forms of discrimination. The term as such has been controversial and often disputed, resulting in a denial of the very notion of Islamophobia, or the possibility of the existence of Islamophobia in a nominally Muslim majority country like Kosovo. Research and academic works on Islamophobia in Muslim majority countries, however, have documented and theoretically analysed Islamophobia in majority Muslim societies (Gressier, 2003). In September 2015, Sibel Halimi, a professor of anthropology at the University of Prishtina, wrote an article denying the existence of Islamophobia in Kosovo. "There is no Islamophobia in Kosovo," she wrote, elaborating that Islamophobia is an instrumental term in the hands of extremists, the unique function of which is to make extremism more acceptable. The only source she quotes is the controversial Australian journalist, Brendan O'Neil, who denies the phenomena of Islamophobic and anti-Muslim prejudice as such. While one can admit that there are misuses of 'Islamophobia' as a way to shun critique, it is undeniably problematic to reject the growing manifestation of anti-Muslim bigotry, hostility and aggression. Denying Islamophobia amounts to giving the green light to all anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic discourses, while denying their racist and discriminatory nature. Islamophobia denial becomes a tool with which to shun critics of anti-Muslim extremism.

The unwillingness to employ the term 'Islamophobia' is justified by some pundits in the media, who define it as "an invention to cover up problems" (Arbana Xharra, editor in chief of Zeri, Twitter 26.01.2016), or claiming that "Islamophobia in Kosovo is a myth" (Artan Haracija, Twitter 26.01.2016). Despite the denial and indisposition to use the term by some, the term has come to be more accepted throughout 2015 by others in the main daily newspapers and in public discourses. In an interview published by Zeri in April 2015, the leader of the opposition party Vetvendosje (self-determination), Albin Kurti, said "There are Islamophobes in Kosovo too". [1] The reluctance is probably best reflected in the fact that local reports on human rights do not include sections or paragraphs about anti-Muslim attitudes or acts of aggression. In January 2014, Youth for Human Rights in Kosovo produced a rather poignant report documenting the hate speech in the comments section of diverse digital information web-spaces. Monitoring the comments section of nine Albanophone web-pages in Kosovo (between 2012-2013), it found that the targeted groups of hate speech were ethnic minority groups and the LGBT community; there was no single reference to anti-religious, or more particularly, anti-Muslim comments, which were obviously present in

1. Zeri, 18.04.2015

the comments section of the web-pages taken into account. Yet, a policy brief on relations between media and religion in Kosovo, prepared for Konard-Adenauer Stiftung by Jeta Abazi-Gashi and published in April 2015, assesses that in the digital news media, in pieces "reporting on religious topics, comments start from offense or insult towards a religion up to calls for killings."[2] Similar comments, sometimes with genocidal overtones, addressed to Muslims and Islam are accessible even today in Kosovar news portals, even in some of those researched by YIHR in the time frame of their research and afterwards.

Despite the fact that Islamophobia is a disputed concept in countries with majority Muslim populations and beyond, it has been argued that the phenomenon of the anti-Muslim attitude, aggressions and prejudice might well exist in countries largely populated by people who identify themselves as Muslims. Kosovo is no exception. Hostile, fearful, hateful and stereotypical discourse against Muslims and Islam, or particular forms of public display of religiosity are present in Kosovo; these are manifested in various ways and mediums, and with different forms. These discourses can take the shape securitisation, essentialisation, prejudice and the discrimination of Muslims who adopt modes of life that are prescribed with identity markers. In such discourses, conflations between conservative ways of life and extremism are recurrent, as are the conflations of Islam with intolerance or terror, and articulations of the ordinary legitimate demands of citizens with 'radical Islam', or 'political Islam'. Often, this rhetoric and action flows as a mise a l'oeuvre of the politics of secularism, affecting particular categories of the population and being addressed for the most part to issues concerning Muslims in Kosovo.

The discourse around Islam in Kosovo in 2015 followed the marks of the fever that had surrounded the spectacular arrest of 47 citizens in cities across Kosovo in August-September 2014; these individuals were accused of acting in violation of the constitution, and of having ties to terrorism (incitement) and hate speech. The arrests were quite controversially welcomed by diverse actors in the public debate, some being in favour, while others pointed to risks of a state of security and inconsistencies in the process. Some of the documents prepared by the prosecutor's office, which were published in the following days by the local media, showed that some of the people accused of using dictums and statements such as "we will not remain with our hands crossed", which was read as a threat, indicate that according to all the evidence these expressions had been placed out of context. In a climate where more than 200 foreign fighters in Syria came from Kosovo, the arrest of 47 citizens (in 2014) suspected of complicity in aiding and facilitating the journey and contacts with radical groups in Syria, led to a wave of Islamophobic discourse; this is by no means new in Kosovo and it influenced the public discourse. As the

2. Abazi-Gashi, Jeta, *Understanding relations between media and religion in Kosovo*, Policy Briefs Kosovo, Konard-Adenauer Stifftung, 04.2015

Freedom House Report for Kosovo 2015 recognizes, the event of the 2014 arrests "produced an Islamophobic discourse in the media as well as anti-Islamic political statements."[3] As for January 2015, the number of individuals arrested under suspicion of terrorist activity was 80; more than 60% of these have now been released, some being either placed under house arrest or freed in the following weeks and months "due to lack of evidence". [4] The spectacular arrest, the publication of the names of the suspects by local media and the lack of presumption of innocence has given place to an active rhetoric of hate and prejudice towards the suspects, often resulting in negative consequences for the families. In a TV chronicle, the son of one of the arrested suspects said that he has been called 'a terrorist' or 'son of the terrorist' in the street by people who know that he is the son of one of the suspects whose names were made public in the media. [5]

Several aggressions have been reported against Muslims or Muslim symbolism in the past years. On August 7, 2007, a mosque in Kosovo, in the town of Shkabaj, was damaged in an apparent arson attack.[6] In 2012, anti-Muslim graffiti appeared in the city of Ferizaj; one referred to the prime minister of Kosovo, Hashim Thaci, as "Hashim you Turk, Avni Rrustemi has bullets for you too", "Down with the new mosque" and "Prosecutor, war to Wahhabism". While this report was being written, explosives were found in a mosque in Drenas on a Friday, the congregation day for Muslims. The actors and their motivations remain unknown.[7]

The yearly report of the OSCE-ODIHR on hate crime reporting consistently produces data concerning an 'anti-Muslim bias'. In 2011, the report states that "The OSCE Mission in Kosovo reported 20 anti-Muslim incidents, including six cases of cemetery desecration, two arson incidents, one case of damage to a monument and one case of harassment or intimidation." In 2012, the report states that "[t]he Kosovo Police and the OSCE Mission in Kosovo each reported 18 cases affecting Muslim heritage sites." For 2013, the OSCE Mission in Kosovo reported "31 incidents of the desecration of Muslim sites," while for the 2014 OSCE Mission in Kosovo reported that "the Kosovo Police recorded 40 cases affecting Muslim sites, including thefts and the desecration of cemeteries."[8] There are no details about the actors or motivations for these cases.

3. Freedom House, *Freedom in The World: Kosovo*, 2015 https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2015/kosovo

4. Kursani, Shpend, Report inquiring intothe causes and consequencesof Kosovo citizens' involvement asforeign fighters in Syria and Iraq, QKSS, Prishtina, Kosovo, pg.29

5. KTV, Rubikon, *Ballafaqimi me ekstremizmin e dhunshem ne Kosove*, 09.10.2015, between 1:30 to 6:30 minutes. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gpbGLPbHxMI

6. Human Rights First, *Violence against Muslims*: 2008 hate crime survey,

7. "*Parulla kundër Thaçit dhe Xhamisë në Ferizaj*" , Gazeta Express, 09.10.2012 http://www.gazetaexpress.com/arkiva/parulla-kund-235-r-tha-231-it-dhe-xhamis-235-n-235-ferizaj-93826/

8. The data can be found on the OSCE web-site in the section on hate crime reporting, http://hatecrime.osce.org/country/none?year=2014

MEDIA, MUSLIMNESS AND ISLAM

According to the aforementioned policy brief, "Understanding relations between media and religion in Kosovo," what is written in newspapers, their digital versions and other digital media broadcasts all show lack of responsibility when it comes to reporting religion. [9] The recommendations of the brief suggest that there is a lack of accountability about reporting religion; a lack of balance and inclusiveness exists, and there is an allowance of offensive language to be used against religion and gender.

On July 6, 2015 the most widely read digital newspaper in Kosovo, Gazeta Express, published a headline 'Sulmohen katolikët në Llapushnik – u digjet prona' (Catholics under attack in Llapushnik – their property burned); this followed upon reports by KTV about a fire in the village of Llapushnik. The insinuation is that Muslims burned the property in question. The news was shared by thousands of readers in a short time, and replicated by other digital news portals, including the top rated zeri.info, koha.net, botasot.com and many others. The report by these news outlets stated that there someone had "set fire" to the house of a citizen belonging to the Catholic faith, and it was depicted as act of religious intolerance. The headline was followed by a flood of Islamophobic comments on social networks and in the comments under the news on the web-portals. On the same day, the Kosovo police released a statement that denied the allegations made in the media; they stated that the cause of the fire was a problem with electricity installations and that there had been no human involvement. They called upon the "information mechanisms" to show more prudence when reporting the news without evidence and not to report inaccurately.[10] The headlines are still available today and no apology was issued by any of the websites or newspapers that had published them. Anticipatory thinking and a news-producing securitization discourse has been a wide currency in the Kosovar media. A similar mediated discourse occurred in the case of a statue of Mother Teresa in Mitrovica [11] in January 2014; this was followed by anticipatory accusations of Muslims. Only later was it discover that the statue had been knocked down by the wind. Equally, a day after the Jewish cemetery had been vandalised in the capital Prishtina in December 2011 by unknown actors, Blerim Latifi, a professor of philosophy at the University of Prishtina, wrote in a headline editorial stating that the actors had been Islamic fundamentalists (Islamic fascism against the Canon of Lek Dukagjini). [12] Florian Qehaja from KCSS has drawn attention to another case of securitization by the media in 2015, referring to the arrest of terrorist suspects near Lake Badovc; according to the media they were arrested when they attempted to poison the lake; this created a

9. Abazi-Gashi, Jeta, *Understanding relations between media and religion in Kosovo*, Policy Briefs Kosovo, Konard-Adenauer Stifftung, 04.2015

10. Kosovo Police, News Release, 6th of July 2015, http://www.kosovopolice.com/sq/informacione/incident-zjarri-ne-fshatin-llapushnik-komuna-e-drenasit

11. http://old.zeri.info/artikulli/25109/rrezohet-busti-i-nene-terezes-ne-mitrovice

12. Koha Ditore, 3.12.2011

panic.[13] Qehaja pointed out the risks of securitization and how this discourse has become prevalent. The media has constantly played a role in the securitization of Muslim subjects, using diverse cases as referent objects of securitization.

OPTICS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA: READINGS AND TRANSLATIONS OF RELIGIOUS MARKERS

On December 1, 2015, the expulsion of a young boy from middle school was reported in the media. The youth, Nderim Mushica, was prevented from attending school because of his beard. According to the school director, Nderim was expelled since, according to the school director, this had become a trend among the students and because students should not come to school with religious symbols such as beards or headscarves.[14] This phenomena is not new in Kosovo. The conflation between beard and radicalisation and headscarf and radicalisation has been an exchange value for some time. Writing in praise of one of his colleagues, the chronicler Halil Matoshi praised her courage to affront "an obscure Oriental world, the world of bearded men that kill in the name of Islam". [15] In 2014, a leading Albanian intellectual, Adem Demaci, while on a TV show, called for a crusade against "the bearded ones". Similarly, in 2013 the opposition leader and ex-prime minister Ramush Hajradinaj, while claiming that he is in favour of "autochthonous Islam" , said that he is against those "with nasty beards" and went on to say that such people want to change the culture and force Kosovars to be something else. Hajradinaj went on to refer to the Islam of post-war Kosovo as antagonistic and 'dirty' compared to pre-war Islam.[16] The speech of political authorities in defining and deciding what is the best or the 'true' Islam is not only a breach of the secular principle, but also manifests the politics of 'good Muslim versus bad Muslim' in the discourse of political authorities and state functionaries. Hajradinaj continued in the same vein in 2015, when he talked about the "dirty" ones with beards, and went on to criticise those who "pray in Arabic", and those Vns who cover their dead ones with the "Islamic flag",[17] calling meanwhile for an Islam that sends us to EU, and not one that brings "questionable" Arab values and endangers the national identity and the Western-oriented path.[18] The beard as a religious marker in the Kosovo discourse

13. Qehaja, Florian, *Sekuritizimi, pasojë e (pa)menduar*, Sbunker, 17.08.2015 http://sbunker.net/op-ed/33935/sekuritizimi-pasoje-e-pa-menduar/

14. Koha Ditore, 01.12.2015

15. Matoshi, Halil, *Vehbi Kajtazi & Arbana Xharra*, 20.02.2015

16. RTK, Debat, 25.12.2013

17. The reference to 'Islamic flag' is made regarding a long time tradition that Albanian Muslims have in covering their dead ones with (usually) a green cloth before burial on which sometimes verses of the Qur'an are written.

18. RTK, Debat, 31.07.2015

about radicalism has become a synonym of danger or threat. In a certain way, the beard has become the equivalent of the 'Jewish nose', translated as the symbol of a national security threat, a menacing identity and is manifestly read as a feature that insinuates danger and calls for vigilance

Kosovo has no law that bans headscarves in public schools. In 2009,[19] however, the then minister of education, Enver Hoxhaj, issued an "administrative order" making the banning of the headscarf in public schools possible. The administrative order delegates some powers to the municipalities, who may or may not allow girls with headscarves to attend school. Several protests followed to no avail. The issue was sent to the Constitutional Court to verify the constitutionality of the administrative order, but the court declined to take the case, citing procedural considerations.[20] Since the end of the war, several cases of young girls being banned from attending high schools and colleges due to the headscarf have been registered.[21] In addition, there have been cases where a woman has been refused a job because of the headscarf or she has been dismissed after she decided to wear the headscarf. In 2015, a year rife with issues of radicalisation and terrorism, there has been at least one case of a student being expelled in the capital city of Pristina; this was solved by the municipal authorities of the city and the girl was able to return to school. The media recorded the case of a woman who lost her job as a policewoman after she decided to wear the headscarf. Cases of discrimination in the job market because of the headscarf have previously been circulated in the media, yet considering that there is no observational body of Islamophobia, and that human rights organisations in Kosovo do not take the phenomena into account, it is difficult to assess the real occurrence of such cases. For the first time an authority such as the Ombudsman publicly stated that the issue of the headscarf should be treated more seriously. [22] The new Ombudsman of Kosovo, Hilmi Jashari, in one of his first public addresses stated that two things are of priority for him in his mandate - discrimination against members of the LGBT community and the issue of headscarves.[23] There were voices reacting the placing of discrimination against the LGBT com-

19. Administrative Order, MASHT (Minister of Education Science and Technology), Nr. 7/2009 as well as 06/2010.

20. Constitutional Court of Kosovo, Nr. ref.: RKt37/11

21. In 2013, a report by YIHR recalls five cases of complaint regarding the headscarf in the period between 2008 and 2012. Four of these cases on the issue of headscarf were individual cases, while one was a complaint referring to 38 girls. YIHR, Rastet e diskriminimit në Kosovë – a ekzistojnë?, 2013.

22. As early as 2004, a special report by the Ombudsman in Kosovo reads; "*On the legality of actions of public authorities aimed at banning the wearing of religious symbols by pupils in public schools throughout Kosovo*" (2004); this made a distinction between public educational institutions and the pupils attending them, and considered that prohibiting pupils from manifesting their beliefs constitutes a violation of the European Convention of Human Rights, article 9. Later on, a report from the Ombudsman n 2013, addressed to the Kosovo Assembly, pointed out the discriminatory nature of the ban on headscarf, stating that "The diversity in treatment of these girls, forbidding their participation in lectures, depending from municipality and specific school, constitutes impermissible and unjustifiable discrimination in a lawful state." http://www.ombudspersonkosovo.org/repository/docs/82549_Raporti_2012-_anglisht__-_final_784343.pdf

23. KTV, Interaktiv, 02.07.2015 and Kallxo LIVE, 09.07.2015

munity and the headscarf together. Some subjects from civil society reacted, saying that the two issues are not of the same order and that the cases of headscarf ban in the schools do not consist discrimination in the same way as discrimination against members of LGBT community. [24]

Often the language towards young girls with headscarves is derogatory and denigrating. In 2013, after two girls were banned from attending school, the director of the Education Directorship in the municipality of Gjilan Bujar Nevzati addressed a letter to the directors of all schools in the municipality, rationalizing his decision saying that girls will not be allowed to attend school as long as they wear headscarves of non-traditional colours; they would be able to return to school with headscarves that are more in keeping with local tradition.[25] In the same year, in an article published in Tribuna, Baton Haxhiu, a public intellectual writing about the headscarf, stated, in a rather paranoid fashion that is reminiscent of the discourse of the Red Scare, said that the headscarf is the first sign that will lead to a "civil war and the takeover of the government" in Kosovo.[26]

The securitization of headscarf occurs periodically in the discourse about Islam and Muslims. In 2014, following reports that approximately 230 Kosovo Albanians were fighting in Syria, the then minister of foreign affairs (former minister of education) wrote that he has been fighting radicalisation in Kosovo since the time when he was minister of education, by "issuing an administrative order to ban headscarves in public schools and (he had) voted against the inclusion of classes on religion in public education," thus correlating the ban of headscarves in public schools with radicalisation and his fight against the same. The headscarf is thus presented as a sign of radicalisation and its ban, usually articulated in terms of secularism, is seen as a matter of fighting radicalisation. Some public functionaries and MPs have chronically referred to the headscarf as a threatening factor. In 2013, prognosticating a dystopian future, during a debate on public television about allowing the headscarf in public schools, Teuta Sahatqija, a Kosovar MP, stated that the headscarf was politicization that was intended to motivate an electorate that will in the future bring the Sharia into the country.[27]

The headscarf is seen as a threat to national identity and culture, and its reappearance in the Kosovo public sphere after independence from Serbia is seen

24. Reported by KTV, 02.07.2015, found as well in Koha.net, *Shoqëria civile do që Avokati të merret me LGBT, por jo me shamitë* http://koha.net/?id=27&l=64966

25. Document from the director of education, Mr.Bujar Nevzati, addressed to the "*directors of schools where there are girls with headscarves*" as a "Decision". The order asks to ban "*The religious uniform that has been worn until now (of Iranian sort, will not be allowed anymore)*", yet it states that "*the girls can follow their education for the current year with other girls, and cover their head with modified veil (head covers in the type of veil with bright colours that are more traditional for Albanians and the Balkans.)*" The decision is dated: 13.04.2012.

26. Gazeta Tribuna, 20.08.2013

27. RTK, Jeta ne Kosove, Debat mbi edukaten fetare, 08.09.2011

as a threatening factor. Some newspaper articles show a paranoid mentality vis-à-vis the deprivatisation of religion after the war; they claim that the emergence of the headscarf is "financed by Serbia", or that Muslim women keep headscarves because "they are paid" (Flaka Surroi),[28] yet there is no proof provided in any of these rather conspiratorial readings of the new post-communist reality. The generalizing statements about veiling as a 'paid' activity reduces all women who see veiling as part of the religion to being employees of 'foreign forces' and denies them any agency. The re-Islamization of society after the fall of Communism is seen as radicalisation and this inference is often present when talking about Islam in Kosovo after the war. Religious markers such as the headscarf or the beard, and the changing of attitudes for example vis-à-vis music, halal meat and halal fast-food etc. are regarded and treated as the rise of radical Islam. The conflation between political Islam, radical Islam, extremism and demands on freedom to practice religion articulated vis-à-vis the state (regarding the headscarves in public schools, religion in the public school curricula, etc.), has created binary and dichotomist visions. This amalgam or conflation is common in the Muslim ex-republics of the USSR and it is a currency in Kosovo as well. In an article in June 2015, in one of Kosovo's largest newspapers, Koha Ditore, the author reiterates the amalgam between the religious markers (headscarf) and extremism, considering the headscarf as a marker bankrolled by Arab humanitarian NGOs that operated in Kosovo after the war; the author considers the reappearance of the headscarf as a sign of radical Islam and insinuates that the (unknown) NGOs have financially motivated women to wear the veil; however, no solid proof in support of such claims is given.[29] The issue of women being paid to wear headscarves is quite recurrent in the media and amongst the makers of public opinion.

The conflation between terrorism, beards and headscarves was similarly communicated in December 2014 by the then deputy speaker of the Kosovo parliament, Xhavit Haliti, in the "Balkan Magazine" program on TV Ora News. He said that organizations provide for poor people, and if one provides something to someone, the people will be willing to put on "veils, shorten their pants and grow beards."[30] The figure of the bearded Muslim and the girls with the headscarf in this discourse is that of disloyal subjects who have betrayed their culture and identity for money, becoming players in the hands of diverse foreign organizations and of Serbia. In addition to painting a portrait of traitors and disloyal citizens, this dis-

28. Surroi's words in a piece published by NPR in 2010 were "*What I saw during the past 10 years was a strong infiltration of Saudi money,"* says Flaka Surroi, owner of the independent Koha Media. *"They brought in the mosques, they brought in their dogma and ideology at the same time. They identified the poorest people in the communities, they offered them a steady salary every month just to take over the ideology and have them start wearing the veil."* However, no proof of this was provided. http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=130801242#commentBlock

29. Koha Ditore, 28.06.2015

30. Ora News, Balkan Magazine, Interview with Xhavit Haliti, 13.12.2014

course denies any agency to the men and women who have decided on their own religious markers, negating their subjectivity, while transforming their religious enterprise into an anti-national enterprise, financially motivated by foreign forces. When questioning the very loyalty of some Muslims, these politicians and media pundits question the rights of these people as citizens of the Republic of Kosovo. These people are portrayed as traitors or collaborators, as conspiracy figures who threaten the national cohesion, or as fifth-columnists; that is, they are the 'others', excluded from the common 'we'.

Several headlines and journal texts insinuate that so-called radical Islamism – something into which the most ordinary demands articulated by the Muslim community in Kosovo are included - is financed or supported by Serbia. There have been headlines such as "Kërcënimet e radikalëve islamik, me porosinë e Serbisë" (The threats of radical Islamists, sponsored by Serbia).[31] Haliti made similar insinuations in his interview in December, 2014. In 2014, Adem Demaci mentioned that radical Islam, and the so-called bearded ones, as well as those who demand the construction of mosques, or articulate other demands, are "financed by Serbia". In a similar vein, the idea of a Serbian agenda comes up in a letter that Alma Lama, an MP of the Kosovo parliament, addressed to the then prime minister of Kosovo, Hashim Thaci, in January 2015.[32] Not only has nothing yet been proven about a Serbian connection with so-called radical Islam, but what is prevalent in this discourse is that the term 'radical Islam', against which the government has declared war, is abused to include simple citizens who grow beards or wear headscarves, as well as those who non-violently articulate legitimate demands towards the State about the construction of mosques, about allowing girls to keep their headscarves on in public schools, about introducing religion onto the curricula of the public schools. And there is a clear connection trying to be made with Serbia as the main financer. This conflation of religious markers and legitimate demands articulated by Muslim and non-Muslim actors[33] with expressions of threats of violence or radicalization stigmatises Kosovar citizens of the Muslim faith who are subjected to attacks on their persons, their families and their symbols of faith; furthermore they are subjected to policies of exclusion and discrimination which are directly linked to the discourse of Islamophobia in contemporary Kosovo.

31. Bota Sot, 05.06.2015 http://botasot.info/lajme/413129/kercenimet-e-radikaleve-islamik-me-porosine-e-serbise/

32. Zeri,info, reports in the digital version, 06.01.2015 http://zeri.info/aktuale/14010/alma-lama-quot-kryqezon-quot-ministrin-thaci-rreth-ekstremizmit-islam-tani-te-doli-gjumi-ty/

33. In an article that won the prize for investigative journalism in 2012, the editor-in-chief of Zeri, Arbana Xharra, in a similar vein said that those who "*ask for more rights*" for the Muslim community, are "radicals" or "fanatics", thus it is considered that claiming greater rights (such as the right of girls to keep their headscarves on in public schools etc.) amounts to expressions of radicalism, despite the fact that these demands have also been supported by non-Muslim actors in society and that polls have shown that ordinary people support the right of girls to attend school with headscarvs. "*Çarjet në fe alarmojnë kosovarët*", December 2012, Zeri.

CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

As we have seen through the examples provided in the body of this short text, Islamophobia in Kosovo exists and its manifestations correspond to the manifestations elsewhere. Despite the temptation to deny the existence of Islamophobia and the fact that it is flourishing, Islamophobia is a phenomenon to which almost no society is immune. Claiming that Islamophobia in Kosovo does not exist is a claim to a highly improbable societal perfection. Considering this, it is recommended that NGOs and diverse groups which deal with human rights, hate speech and discrimination take into account the phenomenon and engage with it more seriously. There is an urgent need for the Press Council of Kosovo to address the issue of hate speech towards Muslims in the media and to push for the respect of the ethical principles of journalism with regards to reporting the issues of religion in general, and Islam in particular. Media should make more space for the narratives of religious Muslims in their own voices, through which the subjectivity and the very agency of the religious subjects of the public space can heard and reconsidered. This would help to construct more realistic approaches, which in turn would contribute to an improvement of the situation for certain citizens who have suffered partial and unjust treatment. NGOs which work on issues of discrimination should work on creating more space for those who have been excluded because of their religious beliefs. The fact that there is indifference from justice authorities, NGOs and the main public media regarding the issues of Islamophobia has created a feeling of distrust vis-à-vis the legal authorities, making it difficult for citizens who have been subjected to aggressions to address their complaints to the responsible authorities. Therefore, it is important that the responsible authorities of justice and civil society are more aware about the phenomenon and raise concerns about it in order to provide the necessary tools for citizens to address these issues and to help create a more inclusive society.

CHRONOLOGY

February 2008

- Kosovo declares independence

November 2009

- The student Arjeta Halimi wins her case in the district court of Gjilan, which obliged the municipality of Viti to allow her to attend school. The order was not carried out.

May 2010

- Massive protests against the ban on headscarves in Prishtina.

May 2010

- Administrative order 06/2010 is issued.

June 2010

- Protests against the ban on headscarves

September 2011

- Arjeta Halimi sends her case to the Constitutional Court of Kosovo. The court considers the case inadmissible because of the legal procedures have not yet been exhausted.

August-September 2014

- Spectacular arrests of more than 40 citizens of Kosovo, accused of acting in violation of the constitution, being affiliated with terrorism (incitement) and hate speech. Most of them have been liberated, or conditionally liberated in 2015.

January 2016

- Explosives found in a mosque in Drenas. Case still unsolved.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN LATVIA NATIONAL REPORT 2015

ANITA STASULANE

THE AUTHOR

Anita Stasulane (1962), Professor of history of religions, Director of the Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences at Daugavpils University (DU), graduated from the University of Latvia (1985) and Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Italy (1998). She has been working mainly on the new religious movements and youth culture; currently she is conducting research on religious fundamentalism and Islamophobia. She has expertise in qualitative, including ethnographic, research methods and experience of working in international collaborative projects, including three EU Framework projects with her appointed as the DU team lead: FP6 project "Society and Lifestyles: Towards Enhancing Social Harmonisation through Knowledge of Subcultural Communities" (2006-2008), FP7 project "Memory, Youth, Political Legacy and Civic Engagement" (2011-2015), and FP7 project "Measuring Youth Well-Being" (2014-2016). Anita Stasulane has an extensive management experience, and since 2006 she is the editor of Kultūras Studijas (Cultural Studies) issued by Daugavpils University. anita.stasulane@du.lv

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions. No representation, either expressed or implied, is made of the accuracy of the material in the national reports. The editors of the European Islamophobia Report cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The reader must make his or her own evaluation of the accuracy and appropriateness of the material.

To cite this report: Anita Stasulane (2016): *Islamophobia in Latvia: National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Latvia, Islamophobia existed surreptitiously in premise before 2015, but the migrant and so-called 'refugee crisis' provoked a wave of anti-refugee and anti-Muslim rallies led by right-wing groups. Several protest rallies were organised in Riga in response to the government's plan to take in refugees in Latvia. Causes for an increase in Islamophobia in Latvia stem from activities of small and mutually uncoordinated groups. Aversion to, fear and hatred of Muslims are spread by organisations whose financial security is weak. Therefore, there is no network of Islamophobia in Latvia.

The terrorist attacks of 2015 have had a negative impact on the situation; they have strengthened stereotypes and prejudices towards Muslims. The most common stereotypes are as follows: Islam is a religion that encourages violence; Islam restricts the rights of women; and Muslims are a united monolithic community whose members are fundamentalists who want to introduce Sharia laws worldwide. Since people in Latvia have gaps in their awareness of Islam and not all of them have ever met a Muslim, the fact that Muslims are different not only by virtue of their ethnic or national origin but also by their socio-economic status and religious practice is generally disregarded. Recognition of diversity is an important step towards avoidance of simplifications; when presenting Islam as a monolithic religion, it is easy to start demonising it.

Islamophobia in Latvia manifests itself mainly as ill feeling towards the 'Other', fear of the unknown and hostility towards Muslims. The negative attitude towards Muslims stemming from aversion to their 'Otherness' has not grown into discrimination, marginalisation and exclusion of Muslims from social, political and civil life of Latvia. Anti-Muslim sentiment has not become violent; no physical attacks on Muslims due to religion have been recorded.

Anti-Muslim sentiments entered the public domain of Latvia and threaten to transform into the dominant reaction of Latvian society to challenges caused by globalisation. The issue of the reception of refugees in Latvia revealed the fragile border between prejudice and open hatred based on the impact of shadows of ancient phobias (anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, homophobia) and radical ideologies (national socialism, communism). Otherness is viewed as an enemy in Latvia, radicalism continues to strengthen and jeopardises the benefits of the recently regained freedom and democracy.

KOPSAVILKUMS

Pirms 2015. gada Latvijā islāmafobija pastāvēja slēptā veidā, bet imigrantu un bēgļu krīze izraisīja pret bēgļiem un musulmaņiem vērstu mītiņu vilni, ko vadīja labējā politiskā spārna grupas. Pret valdības plāniem uzņemt Latvijā bēgļus Rīgā tika sarīkotas vairākas protesta akcijas. Cēloņi islāmofobijas pieaugumam Latvijā meklējami nelielu un savstarpēji nekoordinētu grupu aktivitātēs. Nepatiku, bailes un naidu pret musulmaņiem izplata organizācijas, kuru finansiālais nodrošinājums ir vājš, tāpēc Latvijā nav izveidojies islāmafobijas tīkls.

2015. gada terorakti ir negatīvi ietekmējuši situāciju, nostiprinot stereotipus un veicinot aizspriedumus pret musulmaņiem. Visizplatītākie stereotipi: islāms ir reliģija, kas mudina uz vardarbību, ierobežo sieviešu tiesības, musulmaņi ir vienota monolīta kopiena, kuras locekļi ir fundamentālisti, kas vēlas ieviest šari'a likumus itin visā pasaulē. Tā kā Latvijā trūkst izpratnes par islāmu un ne visi Latvijas iedzīvotāji ir kādreiz savā dzīvē sastapuši musulmani, tiek ignorēts, ka musulmaņi ir dažādi ne tikai pēc etniskās vai nacionālās izcelsmes, bet arī pēc sociāli ekonomiskā stāvokļa un reliģijas prakses. Daudzveidības atzīšana ir svarīgs solis ceļā uz to, lai izvairītos no vienkāršojumiem; prezentējot islāmu kā monolītu reliģiju, var viegli nonākt pie tā demonizācijas.

Negatīvā attieksme pret musulmaņiem, kas sakņojas nepatikā pret citādo, Latvijā nav pāraugusi diskriminācijā, marģinalizācijā un musulmaņu izslēgšanā no Latvijas sociālās, politiskās un pilsoniskās dzīves. Negatīvais noskaņojums nav sasniedzis vardarbīgu formu: fiziski uzbrukumi reliģijas dēļ musulmaņiem nav fiksēti. Latvijā islāmofobija izpaužas galvenokārt kā nepatika pret citādo, bailes no nepazīstamā un nepamatots naidīgums pret musulmaņiem.

Nepatika pret musulmaņiem ir ienākusi Latvijas publiskajā telpā un draud pārtapt par Latvijas sabiedrībā dominējošo reakciju uz globalizācijas izraisītiem izaicinājumiem. Jautājums par bēgļu uzņemšanu Latvijā atklāja, cik trausla ir robeža starp aizspriedumu un atklātu naidu, kura pamatā ir seno fobiju (antisemītisms, islāmofobija, homofobija) un radikālo ideoloģiju (nacionālsociālims, komunisms) ēnu ietekme. Latvijā citādais tiek uzlūkots kā ienaidnieks, radikālisms aizvien nostiprinās un apdraud nesen atgūtās brīvības un demokrātijas ieguvumus.

INTRODUCTION

Islam reached Latvia in the 19th century when, due to industrial development, Tatars entered Latvia from Lithuania. The first presence of Muslims in Latvia was documented in 1838, although the first official congregation was formed in 1902.[1] After World War II Latvia became isolated from most of the world. Therefore, the majority of Latvian Muslims are Soviet immigrants from the Soviet Central Asian and Caucasian republics, as well as the Volga region. The last Soviet census of 1989 reported more than 12,000 people of Muslim background (Tatars, Azeris, Kazakhs, Uzbeks) living in Latvia. Even though Latvia kept in touch with fellow socialist and communist countries from Africa and Asia, it attracted only a limited number of immigrants. Most often, they were young people who came to Latvia to study. The restoration of independence of the Republic of Latvia (1990) and accession to the EU (2004) translated into a moderate interest in immigration. Compared to older EU member states, Latvia has a lower GDP per capita and it provides less social capital for a foreigner to settle down and live.

Since the question regarding religion is not included in the population census anymore, precise data about the number of Muslims currently living in Latvia is not available. The number of practising Muslims indicated in reports to the Ministry of Justice by the Latvian Muslim community is quite small: in 2014, there were 320 Muslims in Latvia.[2] However, in interviews to the media Latvian Muslims have provided information about a different number of Latvian Muslims: a number reaching as many as 10,000.[3] Assuming that the number of Muslims in Latvia does not exceed 0.4 % of the country's population[4] and on the basis of the recent data on the population in Latvia[5] we can estimate the maximum possible number of nominal Muslims in Latvia to be 7,600 out of the total population of 1.9 million. Since the Muslim community states that 10-20 % of Muslims are practising, we can estimate that there are approximately 760 to 1,500 practising Muslims.

1. The Latvian State Historical Archives. 1340, 1. No. 2799, p. 31.

2. "Survey of reports submitted to the Ministry of Justice by religious organisations in 2014", Latvijas Republikas Tieslietu ministrija, accessed December 5, 2015, https://www.tm.gov.lv/lv/ministrija/gada-parskati/2014-gada-publiskie-parskati.

3. "Sieviešu apgraizīšana un Allāhs nav dievs – daži Latvijā izplatīti mīti par musulmaņiem", Delfi, accessed December 5, 2015, http://www.delfi.lv/news/national/politics/sieviesu-apgraizisana-un-allahs-nav-dievs-dazi-latvija-izplatiti-miti-par-musulmaniem.d?id=46548331.

4. Katarzyna Górak-Sosnowska, "Muslims in Europe: different communities, one discourse? Adding the Central and Eastern European perspective," in *Muslims in Poland and Eastern Europe: widening the European discourse on Islam*, ed. KatarzynaGórak-Sosnowska, (Warszawa: Univerisity of Warszaw, 2011), 17.

5. By the end of 2015, the Central Statistical Bureau indicated that Latvia's population is 1.9 million. See: "Iedzīvotāju skaits un iedzīvotāju dabiskās kustības galvenie rādītāji pa ceturkšņiem un mēnešiem." Centrālās statistikas pārvaldes datu bāzes, accessed December 5, 2015, http://data.csb.gov.lv/pxweb/lv/Sociala/Sociala__isterm__iedz/IE0010m.px/table/tableViewLayout1/?rxid=7ee5bb2b-7c93-4ccb-8a34-1aa4ade09cc3.

SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

According to the Eurobarometer survey of 2015, Latvia ranks among the countries where "discrimination is rare"[6]: 32 % of those surveyed in Latvia have indicated discrimination based on ethnicity, whereas in Europe this number is 64 %; discrimination on the grounds of religion is at 14 % of those surveyed in Latvia and 50 % in Europe. Although discrimination based on ethnicity and religion in Latvia is significantly lower than on average in Europe, compared to the data of 2012 it is noteworthy that discrimination has also increased in Latvia:[7] on the grounds of ethnicity by 6 % and on the basis of religion by 4 %.

The data resulting from the FP7 project Memory, Youth, Political Legacy and Civic Engagement (MYPLACE)[8] (2011-2015) show the attitude of Latvia's youth (aged 16-25) towards minorities, including Muslims: 52 % of young people in Riga and 27 % in Daugavpils disagree that Muslims make a positive contribution to society; 33 % of the respondents in Riga and 17 % in Daugavpils think that it is right to be suspicious of Muslims.

In Latvia, Islamophobia existed in premise before 2015, but the migrant and so-called 'refugee crisis' provoked a wave of anti-refugee and anti-Muslim rallies led by right-wing groups. Several protest rallies were organised in Riga in response to the government's plan to take in refugees in Latvia: the association Tēvijas Sargi (Guards of Fatherland) organised a picketing on 4 August, 2015 with the participation of approximately 1,000 people who held up posters reflecting sentiments of racism and Islamophobia; on 22 September, some 500 people participated in a rally "Against Immigration" organised by Tēvijas Sargi and the group Taisnīgums (Justice). The rally was concluded by a concert entitled "The Baltic Countries Are Ours". On 5 November around 100 people responded to the call of Tēvijas Sargi and Taisnīgums to take part in a picket. They highlighted the potential threat posed by Muslim immigrants, promised to establish self-protection groups and organise civil disobedience campaigns. On 17 November a picketing organised by the association Antiglobālisti (Anti-globalists) brought together approximately 30 people who held a poster with the words "No to Allah Akbar terrorists in Latvia" thus protesting against the reception of refugees in the country.

Amid the so-called 'migrant and refugee crisis', the ill feeling of Latvia's population towards Otherness has spiralled into a negative attitude towards Muslims. To

6. "Special Eurobarometer 437. Discrimination in the EU in 2015", European Union Open Data Portal, accessed December 5, 2015, http://open-data.europa.eu/en/data/dataset/S2077_83_4_437_ENG.

7. In 2012, discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin in Latvia was calculated at 26 % and in Europe at 56 %. Discrimination on the grounds of religion in Latvia stood at 10 % and in Europe at 39 %. See: "Diskriminācija 2012. gadā", Eirobarometrs, accessed December 5, 2015,http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_393_fact_lv_lv.pdf.

8. See: "MYPLACE: Memory, Youth, Political Legacy and Civic Engagement", accessed December 5, 2015, https://myplaceresearch.wordpress.com.

celebrate the Feast of Sacrifice (Kurban Bayrami), a carpet was spread outside the Islamic Cultural Centre in Riga on 24 September, 2015 and around 30 Muslims had gathered for a common prayer. The celebration had not yet really begun when the police arrived after being called by some inhabitants. The police found that Muslims had broken the law, since a public event was organised without prior coordination with the local government. The court will decide whether to fine the Islamic Cultural Centre. According to Latvian legislation, the organisers of the event may be subject to a fine of up to 2,900 Euro, i.e. about 10 Euro for each community member.[9]

Meanwhile, the act of vandalism, which took place on the night of 27 September, 2015, when the wall next to the Islamic Cultural Centre was sprayed with offensive graffiti in English "Your Allah – your problem! Go home!" can be classified as verbal abuse. Following this incident, the Muslim community of Latvia expressed concerns about Islamophobia, which is intensifying in Latvia.[10]

DISCUSSION OF ISLAMOPHOBIC INCIDENTS AND DISCURSIVE EVENTS IN VARIOUS FIELDS

Employment

Latvia's labour market discriminates against five groups of workforce: young people (aged 15-24), people approaching retirement age (aged 50-64), people with disabilities, people with poor knowledge of Latvian, and women after a parental leave. The study Discrimination in Latvia's Labour Market[11] found that respondents did not mention religion as one of the factors for which they have been refused employment. At the end of 2015, the average level of registered unemployment was 8.4 % of the total population that was economically active; studies about religion of the unemployed, however, have not been carried out. According to the head of the Arabic Culture Centre, there are about 200 people of Arabic origin living in Latvia.[12] They are well integrated, proficient in Latvian and employed in different professions (physicians, engineers, and businesspersons), not only as employees but also as em-

9. Odita Krenberga, "Par nepieteiktu svētku atzīmēšanu Rīgas māju pagalmā policija grib sodīt musulmaņus", accessed December 5, 2015, http://www.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/latvija/zinas/par-nepieteiktu-svetku-atzimesanu-rigas-maju-pagalma-policija-grib-sodit-musulmanus.a147196/.

10. "Vandaļi apgāna mošeju Rīgā", accessed December 5, 2015, http://www.delfi.lv/news/national/politics/vandali-apgana-moseju-riga-islama-kulturas-centrs-bazijas-par-augoso-islamofobiju.d?id=46521323

11. "Diskriminācija Latvijas darba tirgū", accessed December 5, 2015, http://cilvektiesibas.org.lv/media/record/docs/2014/05/12/diskriminacija_lv_tirgu.pdf.

12."Integration monitor", Latvian Centre for Human Rights, accessed December 5, 2015, http://cilvektiesibas.org.lv/lv/monitoring/4805/monitoring-news-2015-8-25-4805/.

ployers.[13] The Law on Trade Unions[14] gives the right to form trade unions without any discrimination, i.e. membership in trade unions is open not only to citizens but also to non-citizens, EU citizens and third country nationals.

Education

In Latvia, education is open to all members of the public, regardless of their faith. The law in Latvia gives everyone the right to acquire a religious education in educational institutions of religious organisations. In the state schools, Christian faith education or ethics is a mandatory subject in forms 1-3. It is a child's parents who decide whether their child will acquire a Christian faith education or attend ethics class; the majority prefer to choose ethics rather than Christian faith. The results of the public opinion study Good School: Wishes and Assessment show that 56.4 % of the population believe that education is a private or family issue and that a school should not interfere in this matter.[15] Other religious groups may provide religious education only in private schools.

The mandatory content of the educational programme in Latvia is determined by the State General Secondary Education Standard, which does not include issues of Islam directly. The issue of Islam is indirectly covered in the subject 'History of Latvia and the World'[16] whose content focuses exclusively on the history of Europe. It is easy to note that information on Islam provided in textbooks has been prepared by using mainly information from encyclopaedias.

The secondary school optional subject 'Cultural Studies' (Kulturoloģija) covers a topic on cultural traditions, focusing on the contrast between sustainability of traditions in the East and their dynamic changes in the Western world. The topic 'Western and Eastern Culture' includes a clarification – "modernisation as a foundation for Western culture (liberalism, rationalism, creativity)."[17] Such an interpretation associates the East with conservativism, irrationalism and non-creativity, and Islam is presented as a set of rigid and constant traditions, which have been preserved to the present day and which come into conflict with the modern world. This type of school curriculum creates a good breeding ground for the formation of religious prejudices.

13. "Abu Meri: jāatrod plāns, kā integrēt 250 cilvēkus, kas, visticamāk, būs sīrieši", TVNET, accessed December 5, 2015, http://www.tvnet.lv/zinas/viedokli/572892-abu_meri_jaatrod_plans_ka_integret_250_cilvekus_kas_visticamak_bus_siriesi.

14. "Arodbiedrību likums", Latvijas Republikas tiesību akti", accessed December 5, 2015, http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=265207.

15."Laba skola: vēlmes un vērtējums", accessed December 5, 2015, http://media.wix.com/ugd/5e1eac_cb0d2ffcce1c42c982e9df72d245603d.pdf.

16."Noteikumi par valsts vispārējās izglītības standartu, mācību priekšmetu standartiem un izglītības programmu paraugiem", accessed December 5, 2015, http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=257229#piel14&pd=1.

17.*Kulturoloģija: Vispārējās vidējās izglītības mācību priekšmeta programmas paraugs,* (Rīga: Izglītības satura un eksamināciyas centrs, 2008) 21.

Politics

There were no manifestations of Islamophobia either in party programmes offered to voters before the last parliamentary (Saeima) elections (4 October, 2014) or during the election campaign. Since Latvia is geographically distant from the Middle East's conflict zones, its politicians had not assessed the potential risks, and the terrorist attacks and the so-called 'refugee crisis' of 2015 found them unprepared. Latvian President Andris Bērziņš expressed condolences to France concerning the bloody attack against the staff of the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in Paris and immediately named the approach to migration as the main issue to be dealt with during the Latvia Presidency of the Council of the EU (January 1 – June 30, 2015).[18] Following the terrorist attacks in Paris on 13 November, 2015, statements made by politicians were sharp, negative and even hostile. Raivis Zeltīts (National Union) strongly criticised the EU refugee policy: "The elite of European radical liberals has facilitated ethno-masochism [..] and unconditional love of Europeans for everything unknown, without thinking that this unknown hates all 'non-believers' despite their efforts to be good and tolerant".[19] The National Union called to stop the refugee reception process[20] "to prevent risks related to the fact that terrorists will arrive in Latvia under the guise of asylum seekers."[21] The attitude of representatives of the opposition parties towards refugees was equally resistant. Mārtiņš Bondars (Union of Latvia's Regions) worried that "refugees having infectious diseases [yellow fever] could arrive in Latvia, but the health care system of our country is not ready for this."[22] Inguna Sudraba (From Heart to Latvia) expressed concerns that terrorism and crime can be imported together with refugees.[23] Andrejs Elksniņš (the union of parties Harmony) wrote on Twitter: "All refugees will go to the warm countries when winter comes,"[24] but the common position of the party is that the misguided policy of the ruling

18."Bērziņš pēc ''Charlie Hebdo" rosina runāt par ES migrācijas politiku", accessed December 5, 2015, http://www.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/latvija/zinas/berzinjsh-pec-charlie-hebdo-rosina-runat-par-es-migracijas-polit.a112925/.

19."Šokējoši paredzamā Parīze", accessed December 5, 2015, http://www.raiviszeltits.lv/sokejosi-paredzama-parize/#more-491.

20."NA aicina Vienotību apturēt bēgļu uzņemšanas procesu", accessed December 5, 2015, http://www.nacionalaapvieniba.lv/aktualitate/na-aicina-vienotibu-apturet-beglu-uznemsanas-procesu/.

21."OFICIĀLI: NA aicina apturēt bēgļu uzņemšanas procesu + dokumenta fotokopija", accessed December 5, 2015, http://nra.lv/latvija/155642-oficiali-na-aicina-apturet-beglu-uznemsanas-procesu.htm.

22."Pastāv bažas, ka bēgļi Latvijā ieradīsies ar dažādām infekcijas slimībām, saka Bondars", accessed December 5, 2015, http://skaties.lv/latvija/sabiedriba/pastav-bazas-ka-begli-latvija-ieradisies-ar-dazadam-infekcijas-slimibam-saka-bondars/.

23."Latvijai nav jāsolidarizējas ar citām Eiropas Savienības valstīm Āfrikas bēgļu uzņemšanā", accessed December 5, 2015, http://nosirdslatvijai.lv/lv/aktualitates/raksti/latvijai-nav-jasolidarizejas-ar-citam-eiropas-savienibas-valstim-afrikas-beglu-uznemsana.html.

24.Andrejs Elksniņš, June 27, 2015 (7:59 a.m.), accessed December 5, 2015, https://twitter.com/AndrejsElksnins/status/614810260017152000.

coalition has led to the reception of refugees in Latvia.[25] Significantly, the negative attitudes towards minorities, xenophobia, as well as welfare chauvinism and exclusionism typical of the right have also been taken up by the left.

Media

The terms 'Islamic terrorists', 'Islamic radicals' and 'Islamic extremists' commonly used by Latvia's media have resulted in associating nearly every possible kind of atrocities with Islam. Fear of Islam and Muslims could be the definition of the emotional background prevailing in the media, including the largest daily newspapers Diena, Latvijas Avīze, Neatkarīgā (in Latvian), Vesti Segodnya (in Russian). Terrorism is the theme examined most often in analytical articles, interviews and information reports dealing with Islam. In Latvia, the media discourse on Islam focuses on international politics and the situation in Western Europe, i.e. it refers to peoples and events outside of Latvia with no relation to local reality. Only seldom is there any counterbalancing information on the local Muslim community. The fact that the media remember the Muslim community living in the country only after terrorist attacks contributes to the formation of Islamophobic attitudes.

Information on refugees from the Middle East is presented by using the metaphors 'wave', 'flow' or 'flood' thus highlighting the volume and strength of the phenomenon, i.e. the movement of refugees is reflected as a mass phenomenon that moves forward and has significant superiority which is difficult to control. The use of such metaphors is dehumanising, since people are conceptualised as an unwanted and devastating natural disaster.[26]

Justice System

Article 99 of the Constitution of Latvia (Satversme) states that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. At the same time, Article 116 provides for the possibility to restrict expressions of religious conviction in order to protect the rights of other people, the democratic structure of the state, public safety, welfare and morals. No religion has the status of a state religion in Latvia. However, at the public administration level a distinction is made between the traditional religious organisations of Latvia (Evangelical Lutherans, Roman Catholics, Orthodox Christians, Old Believers, Baptists, Methodists, Seventh-day Adventists and Jews) and new religions. The Council of Spiritual Affairs, which is a consultative body chaired by the prime minister, is composed of representatives of the traditional religious organisations. According to the Law on Religious Organisations (1995), a

25."Lielākā daļa politiķu iebilst pret bēgļu kvotām Latvijai", accessed December 5, 2015, http://www.tvnet.lv/zinas/viedokli/561909-lielaka_dala_politiku_iebilst_pret_beglu_kvotam_latvijai.

26.Olga Procevska, "Migrācijas viļņi, bēgļu pārpludinātā Eiropa un dehumanizācijas metaforas Latvijā", accessed December 5, 2015, http://www.punctummagazine.lv/2015/09/15/migracijas-vilni-beglu-parpludinata-eiropa-un-dehumanizacijas-metaforas-latvija/.

religious organisation may be registered by 20 citizens over the age of 18 registered in the Population Register. Asylum seekers, foreign staff of diplomatic missions and people having a special temporary status do not enjoy this right. Foreign missionaries, including Muslims, may preach only if the local religious organisations have invited them to do so.

In Latvia, it is only representatives of the traditional religious organisations who may teach religion at state schools to pupils whose parents have given their consent; funding for this purpose is provided by the state. Religious education typical for a specific ethnic minority can be received at state-funded ethnic minority schools on a voluntary basis. The ethnic minorities, which do not have their state-funded minority schools, may provide religious education at private schools.

The expected arrival of asylum seekers in Latvia has led to discussions about potential threats to public order and security. Muslim women's clothing completely covering a person's face and not allowing representatives of authorities to recognise and identify a person was regarded as one such threat. This raised concerns that terrorists can be present in public places unnoticed. Members of parliament from the Union of Latvia's Regions submitted a draft law "On Regulation of Covering a Person's Face in Public Places" to the Parliament of Latvia (Saeima). The draft law prohibited the presence of people with covered faces in public places. However, the majority of the Saeima rejected it on 24 September, 2015.

The encroachment on a person's religion is classified significantly lower than other hate crimes; for example, the maximum penalty for calling a Muslim derogatory names is short-term detention or community service, while a person can be sentenced to up to three years in prison for insulting somebody regarding his/her ethnicity.[27]

Cyberspace

The portal focus.lv/tags/islams plays the most active role in publishing information on world events in relation to Islam or Muslims. The material available on the portal is mainly translations of information made public by world news agencies. The news portals delfi.lv, apollo.lv, tvnet.lv, kasjauns.lv (in Latvian) and vesti.lv; rus.delfi.lv; d-fakti.lv/ru; mixnews.lv/ru (in Russian) publish various information on Islam and Muslims, but, following the terrorist attacks in Paris on 13 November, 2015, the amount of information containing Islamophobic messages increased sharply. Online abuse also multiplied. One could read insulting readers' comments about Muslims who were equated with terrorists, while Islam was called the religion of death.[28] Islamophobia goes hand in hand with opposition to immigration. This is clearly pic-

27. "Informatīvais ziņojums par tiesisko regulējumu attiecībā uz atbildību par nacionālā vai etniskā naida izraisīšanu, aicinājumu likvidēt valstisko neatkarību vai graut teritoriālo vienotību un valsts simbolu zaimošanu", accessed December 5, 2015, http://cilvektiesibas.org.lv/lv/database/informativais-zinojums-par-tiesisko-regulejumu-att-411/.

28. "Comments on "Vilis Seleckis: Islāms – laiks nomest rozā brilles", accessed December 5, 2015, http://www.delfi.lv/news/comment/comment/vilis-seleckis-islams-laiks-nomest-roza-brilles.d?id=46723489.

tured on the portal stopimigracija.lv, which has a pronounced Islamophobic nature. A common characteristic of all portals is that they speak about Muslims as threats to security and to public safety.

Central Figures in the Network of Islamophobia

The causes of the increase in Islamophobia in Latvia stem from activities of small and mutually uncoordinated groups. Aversion to, fear and hatred of Muslims are spread by organisations whose financial security is weak. Therefore, there is no network of Islamophobia in Latvia. Latvijas Nacionālā Fronte (The Latvian National Front) has been targeting immigrants of the Soviet time in its newspaper DDD for years, but currently it is targeting Muslim immigrants who are deemed more dangerous than Soviet colonists.[29] The newspaper DDD published Islamophobic poetry[30] and an article in which migration processes are treated as an organised international conspiracy: the arrival of refugees in Europe is compared to the Trojan horse, "infantry trained at reconnaissance schools will be among refugees. It will have to open the eastern border, organise unrest and capture strategically important facilities at the right time."[31] The group Antiglobālisti (Anti-globalists) has launched an active campaign "Stop Migration!" calling on the population to organise a public debate and decide whether resettlement of immigrants in the territory of their local governments is permissible. A military hand-to-hand fight group Tēvijas sargi (Guards of Fatherland) invited each and every nationally inclined Latvian "not to tolerate new crowds of immigrants"[32] and organised a picketing in Riga against the reception of immigrants (4 August, 2015) during which the Islamophobic posters were used. The next campaigns, i.e. a protest rally on 22 September and a picketing on 5 November, were organised by Tēvijas sargi in cooperation with Taisnīgums (Justice), which advocates Latvian Latvia where racial uniformity has to be preserved.[33] This means that the consolidation process of radical right-wingers has started and can lead to the formation of a network of Islamophobia in Latvia.

A debate on the violent nature of Islam has been kept alive by several well-known people in Latvia such as the writer Nilss Sakss who announced "What happened in Paris is Islam. [..] Moreover, it is not an extreme, exotic branch of Islam, but rather a classical tradition."[34] Vilis Seleckis has equated terrorism with Islam: "Why are the worshippers of Allah the ones who blow up planes, shoot children and women dead? [..] From the very outset, Islam has already served well as an ideological basis for

29.J. Liekmanis. "Bēgļu jautājums," *DDD* 16 (2015): 3.

30.Jānis Rīts, "Imigranti," *DDD* 19 (2015): 4.

31.Joņs Čangaleišys, "Trojas zirgs," *DDD* 15 (2015): 5.

32."Tēvijas sargu manifests", accessed December 5, 2015,http://www.nacionalisti.lv/raksts/1256/militarisms-drosiba/tevijas-sargu-manifests/.

33."Programma", accessed December 5, 2015, http://www.taisnigums.lv/p/programma.html.

34.Nils Sakss, "Tas arī ir islāms", accessed December 5, 2015, http://puaro.lv/kars/nils-sakss-tas-ari-ir-islams/.

opaque bigotry, intolerance, violence. Therefore, it is obviously not surprising that currently this religion is well suited for justifying blunt terrorism."[35] A similar view has been expressed by the Russian-speaking politician Aleksandr Gilman: "Islam has declared war on world civilisation, which has to defend itself. We hear immediate objections that not all Muslims support ISIL. That's wonderful, but nobody will deny that all supporters of ISIL are extremely devout Muslims."[36]

OBSERVATIONS ON CIVIL SOCIETY, POLITICAL ASSESSMENT AND INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN TO COUNTER ISLAMOPHOBIA

There have been calls in Latvian society "not to equate the ideological platform the grouping calling itself 'Islamic State' is based on with Islamic faith as a whole."[37] Opposing the anti-immigration campaign, some 30 people participated in picketing on 24 August to support the reception of refugees in Latvia irrespective of their ethnicity or religion.[38] Latvia's politicians have become aware of the fact that they have to cooperate with the Muslim community in Latvia to address the refugee issue. On 14 October, 2015, the Citizenship, Migration and Social Cohesion Committee of Saeima (Parliament) held an external meeting at the Islamic Cultural Centre of Latvia. Issues in relation to living with Muslim culture and the involvement of refugees in the Muslim community of Latvia were discussed during the meeting.[39] Hate crimes (incitement to national, ethnic and religious hatred) are a particular problem in Latvia and they are most often committed on the Internet, especially in the comments section. To tackle this problem, the Latvian Centre for Human Rights organised an international conference entitled "Effective Ways of Addressing Hate Crimes and Hate Speech" on 22 October, 2015, which was devoted to legal issues.[40] In response to increasing intolerance, hatred and prejudices towards people of different cultures, ethnicity and religion in Latvia, the series of lectures "Dangerous Ties: Ancient Phobias Today in Latvia" were organised at Žanis Lipke Memorial

35.Vilis Seleckis, "Laiks nomest rozā brilles", accessed December 5, 2015, http://www.delfi.lv/news/comment/comment/vilis-seleckis-islams-laiks-nomest-roza-brilles.d?id=46723489.

36.Aleksandr Gilman, "Yesli eto tretya mirovaya", accessed December 5, 2015, http://rus.delfi.lv/news/daily/versions/aleksandr-gilman-esli-eto-tretya-mirovaya.d?id=46728589.

37. "Eksperti: Starp vārdiem *islāms* un *terorisms* nevar likt vienādības zīmi", accessed December 5, 2015, http://lr1.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/krustpunkta/eksperti-starp-vardiem-islams-un-terorisms-nevar-likt-vienadibas.a59472/.

38."Piketā Esplanādē atbalstu bēgļiem pauž desmiti cilvēku, ierodas arī oponenti", accessed December 5, 2015, http://www.delfi.lv/video/zinas/piketa-esplanade-atbalstu-begliem-pauz-paris-desmiti-cilveku-ierodas-ari-oponenti.d?id=46455025.

39."Islāma kultūras centrs: šī ir diena, kad Saeimas deputāti bija piemērs pārējai Latvijai", accessed December 5, 2015, http://www.la.lv/islama-kulturas-centrs-si-ir-diena-kad-saeimas-deputati-bija-piemers-parejai-latvijai/.

40."Latvian Centre for Human Rights organized an international conference", accessed December 5, 2015, http://cilvektiesibas.org.lv/en/news/international-conference-effective-ways-of-address-348/.

on 10-22 September, 2015. Researchers of social sciences tackled problems on an academic level during these lectures.

Since schools in Latvia are not mono-ethnic, i.e. pupils representing various cultural environments and religions learn together in one classroom, teachers acquire intercultural education principles. Intercultural competences are currently included in subject standards, which are the key mechanism for the sustainable combating of intolerance and the prevention of new forms of intolerance in Latvia.

CONCLUSION: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLITICS AND NGOS

Islamophobia in Latvia manifests itself mainly as ill feeling towards the 'Other', fear of the unknown and hostility towards Muslims. The negative attitude towards Muslims stemming from aversion to their 'Otherness' has not grown into discrimination, marginalisation and exclusion of Muslims from social, political and civil life of Latvia. Anti-Muslim sentiment has not become violent; no physical attacks on Muslims due to religion have been recorded.

The terrorist attacks of 2015 have had a negative impact on the situation; they have strengthened stereotypes and prejudices towards Muslims. The most common stereotypes are as follows: Islam is a religion that encourages violence; Islam restricts the rights of women; Muslims are a united monolithic community whose members are fundamentalists who want to introduce Sharia laws worldwide. Since people in Latvia have gaps in their awareness of Islam and not all of them have ever met a Muslim, the fact that Muslims are different not only by their ethnic or national origin but also by their socio-economic status and religious practice is disregarded. Recognition of diversity is an important step towards avoidance of simplifications; when presenting Islam as a monolithic religion, it is easy to start demonising it.

Representatives of the state power have to call on Latvia's population to refrain from provocative actions against the cohesion of society and the peaceful coexistence of different religious communities. The following measures need to be taken to combat discrimination and to address problems of social marginalisation:

- An assessment and amendment of laws and regulations in relation to the wounding of religious feelings.
- The education of members of the public about diversity of religions.
- Informing Latvia's population about events taking place in various Islamic countries.
- Engaging the public in the elimination of intolerance and the promotion of tolerance.
- Monitoring intolerance on a regular basis.

The Muslim community of Latvia also has a great potential to facilitate peace and concord. Therefore, it should be involved in the dialogue and in the implementation of policies promoting human rights.

CHRONOLOGY

14.01.2015

- The Security Police started to assess statements made by Oļegs Petrovs, head of the Islamic Cultural Centre of Latvia, on a Latvian TV programme: "The editorial office of French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo had deserved punishment, but it could have been not so harsh, broken fingers would have sufficed".

06.07.2015

- The government of Latvia agreed to accept 250 refugees.

04.08.2015

- A picketing against the reception of immigrants organised by Tēvijas sargi (Guards of Fatherland) with the participation of approximately 1,000 people.

24.08.2015

- Around 30 people took part in a picket supporting asylum seekers irrespective of their ethnicity and religion.

12.09.2015

- A picketing in support of refugees with the participation of some 100 people, mainly university students.

18.09.2015

- The government of Latvia agreed to accept 526 more asylum seekers on a voluntary basis.

22.09.2015

- Tēvijas sargi and Taisnīgums (Justice) organised a rally "Against Immigration" and a concert "The Baltic Countries Are Ours" in Riga gathering approximately 500 people.

27.09.2015

- During the night the wall next to the Islamic Cultural Centre in Riga was sprayed with offensive graffiti, a scrawl in English which read "Your Allah – your problem! Go home!"

29.09.2015

- The Islamic Cultural Centre expressed concerns about the development of Islamophobia in Latvia.

13.10. 2015

- The spokesman of the Latvian Muslim community Robert Klimovičs announced that Latvia will be an Islamic state in 50 years because of the low fertility rate of Latvians.

05.11.2015

- Some 100 people participated in a picketing organised by Tēvijas sargi and Taisnīgums at the Saeima (Parliament). Its participants highlighted the potential threat posed by Muslim immigrants, promised to establish self-protection groups and organise civil disobedience campaigns.

17.11.2015

- A picketing organised by Antiglobālisti (Anti-globalists) at the Cabinet of Ministers with the participation of some 30 people.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN LITHUANIA NATIONAL REPORT 2015

BIRUTĖ SABATAUSKAITĖ, EGLĖ URBONAITĖ TILINDIENĖ, KAROLIS ŽIBAS

THE AUTHORS

Birutė Sabatauskaitė, director of the Lithuanian Centre for Human Rights (LCHR), lawyer, wrote shadow reports on racism and discrimination for the European Network Against Racism, coordinates the activities of the European Network Against Racism in Lithuania. birute@lchr.lt

Eglė Tilindienė (Eglė Urbonaitė), Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, worked as a lawyer in Lithuanian Centre for Human Rights in 2011-2015, wrote shadow reports on racism and discrimination for the European Network Against Racism, currently is working in equal opportunities field. egle.tilindiene@lrs.lt

Karolis Žibas, founder of 'Diversity Development Group', is sociologist, researcher and NGO activist in areas of human rights, equal opportunities, social integration, fight against human trafficking and migration. As a project partner, leader and independent expert, Karolis Žibas is involved in different projects and researches on national and international levels. Karolis holds PhD in Social Sciences (Sociology). info@diversitygroup.lt

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions. No representation, either expressed or implied, is made of the accuracy of the material in the national reports. The editors of the European Islamophobia Report cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The reader must make his or her own evaluation of the accuracy and appropriateness of the material.

To cite this report: Birutė Sabatauskaitė, Eglė Urbonaitė Tilindienė, Karolis Žibas (2016): *Islamophobia in Lithuania: National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul: SETA, pp. xy-xy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Lithuania, 2,727 residents consider themselves Sunni Muslims.[1] The Institute for Ethnic Studies reports that the multiple terrorist attacks in Paris and the public discussions negatively influenced the attitude of Lithuanian society towards Muslims.[2] Compared to the previous annual public opinion polls, negative attitude in 2015 significantly increased towards Muslims (73 %) and refugees (72 %). The predominantly Muslim Tatar community traces its history in Lithuania to the 13th – 14th centuries and is perceived significantly positively compared to 'recent immigrants'.

Developments and incidents. The Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson has reported 4 discrimination cases on the ground of religion (Islam) during the last 4 years. There is no data available on hate crimes towards Muslims.

Employment. During the past 5 years there were no employment-related incidents registered towards Muslims. Public opinion polls and interviews with the community's representatives show there might be potential under-reporting.

Education. The Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson has reported one case of possible discrimination on the ground of religion (Islam). Incidents when certain university lecturers have unethically commented on Islam-related matters have been recorded by a non-governmental organisation.

Politics. Attitudes expressed by politicians of various parties span from 'merely' anti-migrant and anti-refugee to openly xenophobic and Islamophobic. Some attitudes promote positive dialogue, whereas measures have been taken to ensure effective integration.

Justice. There have not been any draft laws submitted in 2015 worsening the situation of Muslims. Legal amendments legalising religious slaughter of animals came into force. Discussions were initiated to prohibit face covering as a preventive measure for ensuring national security.[3] This initiative was recognised as unnecessary and as serving to frighten society by relating all refugees to potential terrorists.

Media. Islamophobia in the media is analysed in the broader context of xenopho-

1. This amounts to 0.09 % of the total population. The latest population census is from 2011; for more data, see http://statistics.bookdesign.lt/table_049.htm?lang=lt / https://osp.stat.gov.lt/2011-m.-surasymas

2. "The public opinion poll ordered by the Lithuanian Social Research Centre was carried out a week after the terrorist attacks in Paris (on November 19-29), thus the received results should be assessed as a primary reaction of people towards the news about violent attacks.", Institute for Ethnic Studies at Lithuanian Social Research Centre, Public Opinion Surveys 2009–2015, http://www.ces.lt/veikla-2/ziniasklaidos-stebesena/visuomenes-nuomones-apklausos/

3. BNS, "A. Paulauskas: accepted refugees will have to adhere to our rules", *lrt.lt*, 13 August, 2015, accessed 13 December, 2015, http://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/110882/a_paulauskas_priimti_pabegeliai_tures_laikytis_musu_taisykliu. BNS, lrt.lt, "A. Paulauskas: arrival of refugees will raise questions on wearing burqas. Criticised by human rights experts", *delfi.lt*, 13 August, 2015, accessed 12 December, 2015, http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/a-paulauskas-pabegeliu-atvykimas-iskels-ir-burkos-devejimo-klausima.d?id=68724682.

bia and immigration issues, particularly the recent so-called 'refugee crisis', which brought various challenges such as the rise of anti-immigrant attitudes, in general, and anti-refugee messages in particular; the increase of xenophobic statements by public commentators and politicians; and new forms of opposition in cyberspace against 'mass immigration' and refugee relocation programmes.

Cyberspace. There is a strong link between the so-called 'refugee crisis', refugee quotas and the emergence of new xenophobic and Islamophobic initiatives in cyberspace. Some of these go far beyond cyberspace and should be considered as an open incitement of hatred against immigrants (refugees) in general and Muslims in particular.

SANTRAUKA

2727 Lietuvos gyventojai save laiko musulmonais sunitais[4]. Etninių tyrimų instituto ataskaitoje teigiama, kad 2015 m. lapkričio mėn. įvykdytos teroristinės atakos Paryžiuje, kiti šiemet įvykdyti teroro aktai ir jų aptarimas Lietuvos viešojoje erdvėje turėjo neigiamos įtakos Lietuvos gyventojų nuostatoms musulmonų ir pabėgėlių atžvilgiu. Lyginant su ankstesnių metų apklausomis, galima pastebėti, kad žymiai išaugo Lietuvos gyventojų dalis, teigianti, kad pablogėjo nuomonė apie musulmonus (73 proc.) ir pabėgėlius (72 proc.). Dažniausiai musulmonais save laikanti totorių bendruomenė, kurios istorija Lietuvoje siekia XIII-XIV a., vertinama daug pozityviau nei „naujieji imigrantai".

Pokyčiai ir incidentai: Lygių galimybių kontrolieriaus tarnybos ataskaitose užfiksuoti keturi diskriminacijos musulmonų atžvilgiu atvejai. Atskiros informacijos apie neapykantos nusikaltimus musulmonų atžvilgiu nėra.

Užimtumas: Per paskutiniuosius penkerius metus darbo srityje nebuvo užfiksuotas nei vienas incidentas musulmonų atžvilgiu. Visuomenės nuomonės tyrimai, interviu su bendruomenių atstovais rodo, kad galimai nepakankamai kreipiamasi į oficialias institucijas.

Švietimas: Lygių galimybių kontrolieriaus tarnyba praneša apie vieną diskriminacijos dėl asmens religijos (Islamo) atvejį švietimo srityje. Nevyriausybinė organizacija praneša apie neetiškus universiteto dėstytojų komentarus su Islamu susijusiomis temomis.

Politika: Skirtingų partijų politikų požiūriai skirtingi – nuo anti-imigracijos ir anti-pabėgėliškų nuomonių iki tų, kurios yra atvirai ksenofobiškos ir islamofobiškos. Kai kurie politikai skatina pozityvų dialogą ir siūlo įvairias priemones efektyviai integracijai.

Teisingumas: 2015 m. nebuvo užregistruota teisės aktų projektų, kurie pablogintų musulmonų padėtį šalyje. 2015 m. įsigaliojo Gyvūnų gerovės ir apsaugos įstatymo nuostatos, įteisinančios religinėms apeigoms tinkamą gyvūnų skerdimą, ką pozityviai vertina musulmonų bendruomenė. Taip pat buvo inicijuotos diskusijos dėl veido dengimo viešoje vietoje uždraudimo, siekiant užtikrinti nacionalinį saugumą.[5]. Pasirodė nuomonės laikančios šią iniciatyvą nebūtina ir naudojama gąsdinti visuomenei, sulyginant visus pabėgėlius su potencialiais teroristais.

4. Tai sudaro 0.09% visos populiacijos. 2011 m. gyventojų ir būstų surašymo duomenys. Daugiau informacijos žr. http://statistics.bookdesign.lt/table_049.htm?lang=lt / https://osp.stat.gov.lt/2011-m.-surasymas

5. BNS, „A.Paulauskas: Priimti pabėgėliai turės laikytis mūsų taisyklių", *lrt.lt*, 2015 rugpjūčio 13, žiūrėta 2015 gruodžio 12, http://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/110882/a_paulauskas_priimti_pabegeliai_tures_laikytis_musu_taisykliu. BNS, lrt.lt, „A. Paulauskas: pabėgėlių atvykimas iškels ir burkos dėvėjimo klausimą (Žmogaus teisių aktyvistai kritikuoja)", *delfi.lt*, 2015 rugpjūčio 13, žiūrėta 2015 gruodžio 12, http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/a-paulauskas-pabegeliu-atvykimas-iskels-ir-burkos-devejimo-klausima.d?id=68724682.

Žiniasklaida: Islamofobija žiniasklaidoje analizuojama platesniame ksenofobijos ir imigracijos temų kontekste, ypatingai atsižvelgiant į vadinamą „pabėgėlių krizę“ ir su ja susijusius iššūkius: pastebimas anti-imigracijos bendrai ir anti-pabėgėliškų nuostatų augimas; viešų asmenų ir politikų ksenofobinių pareiškimų padaugėjimas; naujos opozicijos formos kibernetinėje erdvėje, nukreiptos prieš „masinę imigraciją“ ir pabėgėlių perkėlimo programas.

Kibernetinė erdvė: Pastebimos stiprios sąsajos tarp taip vadinamos „pabėgėlių krizės“, pabėgėlių priėmimo kvotos ir naujų ksenofobinių ir islamofobiškų iniciatyvų atsiradimo kibernetinėje erdvėje. Kai kurios jų peržengia kibernetinės erdvės ribas ir turėtų būti laikomos atviru neapykantos kurstymu prieš imigrantus (pabėgėlius) bendrai ir ypatingai prieš musulmonus.

INTRODUCTION

Regardless of the fact that the latest decades in Europe mark a period of intense international migration, which brought forth various challenges for national and international state policies and called for societies to deal with intercultural coexistence, Lithuanian society still remains homogeneous. For example, according to the latest data from the Migration Department (2015), at the beginning of 2015, there were approximately 40,000 foreigners in Lithuania, which is less than 1.5 % of the total population. The vast majority of foreigners come from non-Islamic countries and only few from Islamic ones. According to the latest population census in 2011, 2,727 residents in Lithuania considered themselves Sunni Muslims, which is 0.09 % of the total population. In 2001, this number was 2,860 or 0.08 % of the total population.[6]

Though, the number of Muslims in Lithuania is very small, societal attitudes towards Muslims are diverse. For example, considering such 'traditional minorities' as Tatars,[7] attitudes are significantly more positive than towards those, who are considered to be 'recent immigrants' (third country nationals and refugees). This fact could be explained by public opinion polls, carried out by the Institute for Ethnic Studies. Merely, 8 people out of 100 would do not want to work with Tatar people compared to working with members of the Muslim community in general – In the latter case the number increases to 26 %.[8] However, during the recent so-called 'refugee crisis' and, especially, after the terrorist attacks in Paris, attitudes towards immigration in general and refugees (especially, Muslims) in particular became more negative. For example, 50 % of respondents would not like to live in a neighbourhood with refugees, while 58 % would not like to live near Muslims. In addition, 86 % or respondents agree that refugees might increase the level of criminality in Lithuania; while 82 % think that refugees can trigger social disorder. These trends could be explained by the media response towards the so-called 'refugee crisis', immigration flows and the threat of terrorism. Currently, the mass media in Lithuania is the most common source of information on refugees, including Muslims. Eventually, the information prevailing in public discourse has larger importance to attitudes towards refugees and Muslim than direct experience (for more see Media Response).

6. For more data of the population census, see http://statistics.bookdesign.lt/table_049.htm?lang=lt / https://osp.stat.gov.lt/2011-m.-surasymas

7. The Tatar community traces its history in Lithuania to the 13th – 14th centuries and is predominantly Muslim. It is perceived positively by Lithuanian society.

8. Institute for Ethnic Studies at Lithuanian Social Research Centre, Public Opinion Surveys 2009–2015, http://www.ces.lt/veikla-2/ziniasklaidos-stebesena/visuomenes-nuomones-apklausos/

SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

Provisions of the Law on the Welfare and Protection of Animals regarding the legalisation of religious slaughter of animals without prior stunning came into force on 1 January 2015 (adopted on 23 September 2014).[9] The adoption and coming into force of these provisions have been recognised as a positive development by the Islam Education and Culture Centre.[10]

Incidents

In July 2014, the police checked the identity of every individual entering the building of the Islam Culture and Education Centre. This behaviour was recognised as racial profiling by the European Network Against Racism,[11] after which NGOs wrote a common letter to the Ministry of Internal Affairs asking for an apology from the Minister of Internal Affairs and a change of police strategies to counter terrorism, where "radical Islam" was mentioned. The Police Department reacted to the letter and deleted the words "radical Islam", changing them to "violent extremism".[12]

The Information Technology Department under the Ministry of the Interior, which collects information on crimes, does not break down the information on how many hate crimes were committed against Muslims. In general a very low number of hate crimes are officially recorded.

The Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson reports include the following information on religious discrimination: the office recorded one case of religious discrimination in 2013 after a complaint was submitted by Muslims residing in the Foreigners' Registration Centre (see Justice system); one possible case of discriminations on the grounds of religion was reported in 2014 in the field of education (see section Education); and two complaints claiming religious discrimination in 2015. Both complaints in 2015 were submitted by the same person, currently serving a sentence in Pravieniškės Correction House-Open Prison Colony. The applicant reported the fact that the food in the facilities did not take into account his religious confession (Islam). The Ombudsperson recommended to the Prison Department that alimentation be provided taking into consideration a person's religious beliefs

9. No. XII-1147, http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/oldsearch.preps2?a=483037&b=.

10. Interview with Aleksandras Beganskas, representative of the Islam Education and Culture Centre, 23 December, 2015.

11. The Islam Culture and Education Centre, members of the European Network Against Racism in Lithuania: Roma Community Centre, and the Centre for Equality Advancement, Lithuanian Centre for Human Rights wrote a joint letter to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. See: http://manoteises.lt/naujiena/europos-nevyriausybines-organizacijos-d-a-barakauskas-turi-atsiprasyti/

12. The order of the Lithuanian Police Commissioner General regarding the "Enactment of Ammendment of the long term programme of counter-terrorism measures of the Lithuanian Police and action plan for its' implementation", Lietuvos policijos generalinio komisaro 2014 m. rugsėjo 30 d. įsakymas Nr. 5-V-865 „Dėl Lietuvos policijos generalinio komisaro 2010 m. gruodžio 20 d. įsakymo Nr. 5-v-967 „Dėl Lietuvos policijos prevencinių kovos su terorizmu veiksmų ilgalaikės programos ir jos įgyvendinimo priemonių plano patvirtinimo" pakeitimo". For more see: http://manoteises.lt/naujiena/policijos-diena-gera-zinia-nevyriausybinems-organizacijoms/

as much as possible. In his second complaint the applicant complained that the open prison colony does not provide him with conditions to pray five times a day. The Ombudsperson found that there were insufficient grounds to assume that the applicant had been discriminated against because of his religion or other grounds.[13]

DISCUSSION OF ISLAMOPHOBIC INCIDENTS AND DISCURSIVE EVENTS IN VARIOUS FIELDS

Employment

The Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson reports that during the past five years there were no employment-related incidents discriminating against Muslims. Even though officially there are no Islamophobic cases, public opinion surveys and interviews with representatives of the community show that there might be potential under-reporting. Work migrants and inhabitants of smaller towns are less likely to complain for various reasons including fear of putting their job in jeopardy[14] and not being able to identify discrimination.

While analysing possible discrimination cases, language and practice of religion have to be mentioned. Many foreign nationals state that language requirements are a major barrier to employment.[15] In some instances, Lithuanian language requirements are unnecessary for competence in a specific job. It should be noted that there are less than 3,000 Muslim residents in Lithuania[16] and Islam is little analysed; it is understood by wider society primarily via mass media. Hence, the lack of knowledge of the religion brings challenges to Muslim employees. Firstly, while looking for a job, clothing characteristic to Muslims becomes a barrier due to negative stereotypes about the Muslim community. Secondly, praying rituals are little known to Lithuanian society. A case when a Muslim employee could not pray at a workplace was solved when an agreement with the employer was reached.[17]

International companies are more inclined to hire foreigners than Lithuanian companies,[18] and for the most part members of the Muslim community work in

13. Press release by the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, 23 September, 2015, accessed 6 January, 2016, http://www.lygybe.lt/lt/naujienos/pranesimai-ziniasklaidai/atsisakyta-nagrineti-karceryje-yq5v.html

14. Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, *Annual Activity Report 2012* (Vilnius, 2013), p. 3, http://www.lygybe.lt/lt/metines-tarnybos-ataskaitos.html

15. Interview with the "Balturka" association, Baltic Turkish Culture Academy, 4 January, 2016.

16. In the population census of 2011, 2,727 Muslims were recorded. Statistics Lithuania, Population Composition, http://osp.stat.gov.lt/services-portlet/pub-edition-file?id=22

17. Birutė Sabatauskaitė, Eglė Urbonaitė, Lithuanian Centre for Human Rights, *ENAR Shadow Report 2011-2012. Racism and related discriminatory practices in Lithuania* (ENAR, 2013), http://manoteises.lt/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/%C5%A0e%C5%A1%C4%97lin%C4%97-ataskaita-Rasizmas-ir-diskriminacija-Lietuvoje-2011-2012.pdf

18. Ibid.

their own small, closed businesses where no Lithuanians are involved.[19] Labour Exchange has no specific employment programmes for foreigners or for diversity in workplaces.[20] There is no official statistical data collected nationwide on employment rates, disaggregated by ethnicity, nationality or religion.

The Lithuanian Labour Exchange is responsible for granting work permits to foreigners who live in Lithuania with temporary work permits.[21] According to Labour Exchange data, 3,743 work permits were issued to foreigners in the period of 2010-2012[22] and 1,208 foreigners were unemployed. Therefore, foreigners with work permits comprised merely 0.12% of the Lithuanian labour market. The Muslim community comprises an even smaller percentage.[23] Issuance of work permits significantly dropped during the economic crisis in 2008, but since 2011 started growing again. Most work migrants are men.[24]

The framework of Lithuanian society's perceptions can help to identify potential areas of discrimination. As observed by the Institute for Ethnic Studies, Lithuanian society (60.4 % of respondents) thinks that Lithuanian taxpayers fund the majority of immigrants in Lithuania;[25] 58% of the respondents thought immigrants come to Lithuania to work; and 45.3% that they are useful for the state economy.

The social distance between co-workers of different ethnicity or religion is relatively smaller and less pronounced than the negative social attitudes regarding living in neighbourhoods close to people of different ethnicity or religion: a public survey showed an increased number of people who would agree to work with Pakistanis, Turks, Kazakhs and Tatars – the groups of people who practice Islam in Lithuania. However, members of the Muslim community overall are the least favoured group in

19. Interview with the "Balturka" association, Baltic Turkish Culture Academy, 4 January, 2016.

20. The Lithuanian Labour Exchange under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Communication No. Ds-2405 to the inquiry (2012).

21. People who live in the country with permanent residence permits do not require a work permit.

22. The Lithuanian Labour Exchange under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Communication No. Ds-2405 (2012).

23. According to the association "Balturka", Baltic Turkish Culture Academy, there are around 200 Turkish people in Lithuania and their majority study or work in their own businesses. Ninety per cent of Turkish people in Lithuania arrive in the country on family reunification grounds.

24. Diversity Development Group, Institute for Ethnic Studies at Lithuanian Social Research Centre, *Trečiųjų šalių piliečių integracijos trajektorijos ir vertinimo mechanizmai. Imigracijos, migrantų integracijos ir pilietybės politikos teorinės ir empirinės sąsajos. Tyrimo ataskaita,* http://www.ces.lt/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Imigracijos-migrant%C5%B3-integracijos-ir-pilietyb%C4%97s-politikos-teorin%C4%97s-ir-empirin%C4%97s-s%C4%85sajos2.pdf (2014), p. 98-108

25. This percentage is increasing compared to a similar survey carried out in 2010 (57.5 % shared the same thoughts). Institute for Ethnic Studies at Lithuanian Social Research Centre, Public Opinion Surveys 2009 – 2015, http://www.ces.lt/veikla-2/ziniasklaidos-stebesena/visuomenes-nuomones-apklausos/.

the workplace compared to other religions and confessions.[26] Respondents tend to assess ethnicity more favourably than religion.

In the long term, negativity towards the Muslim community appears to be slightly declining. However, data presented by the Institute of Ethnic Studies on public opinion polls carried out after the Paris attacks shows an increase of negative opinion towards refugees and Muslims (see Introduction).

Arrival procedures for labour migrants were simplified in 2011. The EU standards were transposed onto the national law to simplify arrival procedures for certain third countries nationals (students, scientists, highly qualified workers). Highly qualified workers now benefit from a simpler family reunification procedure. This procedure is not limited to religion, nationality or ethnicity.

Education

The Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson has reported one case on possible discrimination on the ground of religion. The applicant filed a complaint as preschools and comprehensive education and social care institutions organise meals disregarding children and their parents' religion, beliefs and views. All people, attending preschools, comprehensive education and social care institutions have to eat meat, poultry, fish and eggs despite their religious and/or other beliefs. Such arrangements do not take into account, for instance, the fact that Muslims do not consume pork. The final decision by the Lithuanian Supreme Administrative Court is still pending; the Court will decide whether the Vilnius Public Health Centre properly evaluated the menu submitted to the applicant for consideration.[27]

The NGO Tolerant Youth Association has conducted research on the content of school books in 2010.[28] Islam was not included as a separate topic of research in the study. However, the authors stated that multiculturalism, tolerance and discrimination have a very abstract and narrow meaning in school textbooks. Usually text books fail to include diversity issues and are limited only to ethnicity (sometimes including religion) and almost never cover race, gender, sexual orientation and disability. The research highlighted the need to implement skills-orientated methods to recognise and combat, inter alia, racism, xenophobia, ethnocentrism and hatred towards people confessing other religions. Ethnic (Lithuanians), political (Lithuania)

26. Ibid. Please indicate a group with which you would rather not work:
Muslims – 32.4 % (2009), 32.3 % (2010), 24.2 % (2011), 24.9 % (2012), 26 % (2013).
Pakistanis – 25.4 % (2009), 28 % (2010), 15.3 % (2011), 14.7 % (2012), 16 % (2013).
Turks – 20.1 % (2009), 16.4 % (2010), 8.8 % (2012), 10 % (2013).
Kazakhs – 17.2 % (2009), 16.7 % (2010), 8.5 % (2012), 10 % (2013).
Tatars – 13.4 % (2009), 12.9 % (2010), 7 % (2012), 8 % (2013).

27. Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, *Annual Activity Report 2014*, (Vilnius, 2015), p. 47, http://www.lygybe.lt/lt/metines-tarnybos-ataskaitos.html

28. Jolanta Reingardė, Nida Vasiliauskaitė, Rasa Erentaitė, ***Tolerancija ir multikultūrinis ugdymas bendrojo lavinimo mokyklose*** (2010), p. 97-98.

and religious (Catholic) communities shall not be identified as identical groups and Catholicism shall not be introduced as a characteristic of all of Lithuania's citizens or as universally common.[29]

Discrimination in educational institutions is rarely observed due to the small number of Muslim people. However, incidents when certain university lecturers inappropriately commented on Islam-related matters were recorded.[30]

Politics

Municipal council and local mayor elections took place in Lithuania in spring 2015. The debate on immigration, asylum seekers and Muslims did not occupy any particular role during the municipal election campaigns. The next parliamentary elections will be held in October 2016 so political campaigning is expected.

Some political decisions can be affiliated to the increase of negative public opinion towards Muslims in 2015, but these are not necessarily negative opinions expressed by politicians. Newly elected Vilnius City Mayor Remigijus Šimašius informed the public that a new mosque would not be built in Vilnius.[31] According to the representative of the Muslim community in Lithuania (known to the authors of this research), the Mayor said that the decision not to provide a land to the Lithuanian Muslim community for building a mosque was due to the negative public opinion of Muslims.

Islamophobic or xenophobic discourse cannot be noticed when analysing the political party programmes (focusing on major political parties that have seats in parliament). The programmes for the 2016 parliamentary election have not been publicised yet.

An increase of Islamophobic attitudes among politicians can be noticed in the second half of 2015, mostly in relation to discussions on the so-called 'refugee crisis' in Europe, and a general increase of anti-asylum, anti-migration, racist and xenophobic views. Attitudes vary from those that are 'merely' anti-migrant and anti-refugee, to those openly xenophobic and Islamophobic, and are expressed by politicians from various parties. Politicians from the Homeland Union – Lithuanian Christian Democrats party express different attitudes which vary from claims that the majority of

29. *Ibid.*

30. Interview with the association "Balturka", Baltic Turkish Culture Academy, 4 January 2016.

31. BNS, "R. Šimašius: a mosque will not be built in Vilnius", *Delfi.lt*, 24 September, 2015, accessed 16 December, 2015, http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/r-simasius-vilniuje-mecete-nebus-statoma.d?id=69100754.

Muslims support terrorist activities[32] or making references to migrants as terrorists[33] to calling for the government's positive actions to have clearer integration steps for newly arrived refugees,[34] expressed by the leader of the party. Based on the analysis of public statements by the leaders and party members of the Labour party,[35] the Order and Justice party,[36] and the Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania,[37] it seems that they all express anti-migrant and anti-refugee views. Some of them are mixed with Islamophobic attitudes or naming religion as a barrier for integration of refugees and/or migrants,[38] and the fear for the safety of Europe,[39] expressed both before and after Paris attacks. The Prime Minister stressed that every migrant will go through a thorough investigation to ensure they meet the requirements for refugee status and only when then will they be allowed to enter Lithuania.[40]

32. Kęstutis Masiulis, "How to integrate terrorists?", *Delfi.lt*, 18 November, 2015, accessed 16 December, 2015, http://www.delfi.lt/archive/article.php?id=69660054. "Explosions in Paris, attacks on free press, and other forms of terrorism are made in the name of Alach and let's not pretend, the majority of Muslims support these activities".

33. Mantas Adomėnas, "M. Adomėnas. Beyond black and white: a lack of clear analysis on refugee matters", *Delfi.lt*, 27 September, 2015, accessed 16 December, 2015, http://www.delfi.lt/news/ringas/politics/m-adomenas-anapus-juoda-ir-balta-pabegeliu-klausimu-labiausiai-truksta-blaivios-analizes.d?id=68960070. "The danger of radicalisation, fundamentalist 'Islamic purification' and 'return towards ancestors' values' always lie even within moderate Muslim communities".

34. Eglė Digrytė, "Gabrielius Landsbergis: if we accept as many refugees as Germany, we would have already 30,000 people", *15min.lt*, 9 September, 2015, accessed 16 December, 2015, http://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/gabrielius-landsbergis-jei-pabegeliu-priimtume-kiek-vokieciai-vien-siemet-butu-30-tukst-zmoniu-56-526791. "The problem is not related to a nation or religion, but arises from the social environment. We will know that our future is safe and secure, only if we answer the questions of how we would integrate refugees, which municipalities and schools and who will educate children" – Gabrielius Landsbergis, MEP, Leader of Homeland Union – Lithuanian Christian Democrats.

35. Official page of the Labour Party, "Labour Party: Acceptance of refugees in Lithuania is a mistake", 22 July, 2015, accessed 17 December, 2015, https://www.darbopartija.lt/naujienos/19312/. "It's necessary to pay attention to the language, cultural and religious differences of these people and countries, where they are being sent and then it is not hard to understand that the integration cannot be smooth, but practically impossible" – a quote from the Leader of the Labour Party, MEP, Valentinas Mazuronis.

36. Rolandas Paksas, "R. Paksas: Let's get rid of pink glasses, not of automatic guns", 25 November, 2015, accessed 16 December, 2015, http://www.delfi.lt/news/ringas/politics/r-paksas-atsisakykime-ne-automatu-bet-roziniu-akiniu.d?id=69668700. "It is constantly stressed that one cannot blame all Muslims and refugees for terror attacks. I do not. I only want to stress that no religion is peaceful. We had also bloodstained crusades against infidels. And we currently have another religion's 'crusade' and we have to adequately evaluate and properly defend ourselves."

37. "Three politicians working for Lithuania. And whom for are others working?" *Respublika.lt*, 23 September, 2015, accessed 17 December, 2015, http://www.ve.lt/naujienos/lietuva/lietuvos-naujienos/trys-politikai-dirba-lietuvai-kam-dirba-kiti-1398660/. "I think that Muslims could be accepted by Saudi Arabia and other rich Muslim countries, since they do not have anything in common with our worldview and there might be problems faced by them and us. And we could accept Christians." – Valdemar Tomaševski, MEP, leader of Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania.

38. For more see: Mečislovas Zasčiurinskas, "M. Zaščiurinskas. I pray for Paris, but think about Lithuania", *Delfi.lt*, 18 November, 2015, accessed 17 December, 2015, http://www.delfi.lt/news/ringas/politics/m-zasciurinskas-meldziuosi-uz-paryziu-bet-galvoju-apie-lietuva.d?id=69610652.

39. "V. Mazuronis: pabėgėlių kvotos Lietuvai reikia atsisakyti", 30 November, 2015, http://www.bernardinai.lt/straipsnis/2015-11-30-v-mazuronis-pabegeliu-kvotos-lietuvai-reikia-atsisakyti/137923

40. Giedrė Baltrušytė, "A. Butkevičius: only those refugees that we have all information about will come to Lithuania", 17 November, 2015, http://kauno.diena.lt/naujienos/lietuva/politika/butkevicius-i-lietuva-atvyks-tik-tie-pabegeliai-apie-kuriuos-zinosime-viska-720230

Many politicians, it must be noted, are calling for discussions about refugees and/or migrants and expressing an opinion that "Lithuania is ready to accept refugees".[41] Many of these discussions are still mixed with the topics of public security and safety – nevertheless they are calling in favour of not naming every migrant a terrorist.[42] Especially local level politicians have expressed a need for more objective information about refugees, a unified position by politicians on refugees, and a media position that will not divide society[43].

Justice System

There have not been any draft laws submitted in 2015 worsening the situation of Muslims. The Chairman of the Parliamentary National Security and Defence Committee expressed a need to prohibit the covering of the face as a preventive measure to ensure national security, while accepting refugees from Muslim countries.[44]

The representative of the Islam Culture and Education Centre stressed that the "initiative of the ban of burqas in public spaces" was unnecessary and stressed that the Koran does not require the covering of a woman's face, and it's not a religious, but rather a cultural practice, not used by Muslims living in Lithuania and not widespread among the countries of origin of the refugees that might be accepted in Lithuania in the future.[45]

The public initiation on the prohibition of burqas was seen as not relevant by the Prime Minister of Lithuania Algirdas Butkevičius, who expressed a need to concentrate on the integration of refugees and mentioned that similar questions, if needed, will be solved in the future.[46]A draft law, prohibiting the wearing of burqas or niqabs, was not registered as of 10 January, 2016.

41. Indrė Vainalavičiūtė, "Is Lithuania really ready to accept refugees?", 23 October, 2015, http://lietuvosdiena.lrytas.lt/aktualijos/ar-lietuva-tikrai-yra-pasirengusi-sutikti-pabegelius.htm

42. "S. Skvernelis encourages not to fear refugees and a stricter collection of data", 19 November, 2015 http://lsveikata.lt/aktualijos/sskvernelis-ragina-nesibaiminti-nei-pabegeliu-nei-grieztesnio-duomenu-rinkimo-3910, "It would be unfair, to put a sign of terrorist on every newly arriving person" – Minister of Interior S. Skvernelis.

43. "Refugees in Lithuania: integrated representatives of ethnic minorities or aliens?", 14 October, 2015, http://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/pabegeliai-lietuvoje-integruoti-tautiniu-mazumu-atstovai-ar-svetimsaliai-56-533998, "Šiauliai Vice Mayor Dr. Stasys Tumėnas noted that Lithuania had lived through history of war refugees of its own", "Most important [...] is to have objective information on refugees, not only superficial articles in the media" – Šiauliai Adviser to the Mayor Vaidas Bacys. "In the opinion of Gediminas Grybė, Pakruojis district vice mayor, the media often divides society […] why don't politicians sit down and express a unified position on refugees, it would unify society".

44. BNS, "A. Paulauskas: accepted refugees will have to adhere to our rules", *lrt.lt*, 23 August, 2015, accessed 12 December, 2015, http://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/110882/a_paulauskas_priimti_pabegeliai_tures_laikytis_musu_taisykliu. BNS, lrt.lt, "A. Paulauskas: arrival of refugees will raise questions on wearing burqas. Criticised by human rights experts", *delfi.lt*, 13 August, 2015, accessed 12 December, 2015, http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/a-paulauskas-pabegeliu-atvykimas-iskels-ir-burkos-devejimo-klausima.d?id=68724682.

45. Interview with Aleksandras Beganskas, representative of the Islam Education and Culture Centre, 23 December, 2015.

46. BNS, "Algirdas Butkevičius: refugee integration is more relevant than prohibition of burqas", *15min.lt*, 13 August, 2015, accessed 12 December, 2015, http://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/algirdas-butkevicius-aktualesnis-klausimas-uz-burku-devejima-pabegeliu-integracija-56-521625.

According to the Human Rights Monitoring Institute, ensuring the replacement of pork dishes with only vegetarian options in the Foreigners' Registration Centre is not fully ensuring the implementation of the principle of equal treatment.[47] The Minister of Internal Affairs adopted provisions which enforced the change of pork products with other alternatives in accordance to a person's religious beliefs.[48] A complaint has been submitted by the inhabitants of the Foreigners' Registration Centre in 2013, asking to evaluate the provision of meals in the Foreigners' Registration Centre with consideration given to the individuals' religious beliefs. The Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson recognised that the right to access food according to a person's religious beliefs was limited for a large number of people and that they, therefore, have experienced religious discrimination.[49] New complaints regarding the matter have not been submitted - positive legal developments were mentioned in section 4.

Media Response

No media and cyberspace monitoring research on asylum seekers and refugees, including Muslims, has been carried out in Lithuania in 2015. However, while analysing media content, related to Islamophobia, the so-called 'refugee crisis' and discussions on the refugee quota systems have to be emphasised. This is to say that the phenomenon of Islamophobia has to be analysed in a broader context of xenophobia and immigration issues, particularly the recent so-called 'refugee crisis', which brought forth various challenges such as the rise of anti-immigrant attitudes in general and anti-refugee attitudes in particular; the increase of xenophobic statements by public commentators and politicians; and new forms of opposition in cyberspace against 'mass immigration' and refugee relocation programmes (see below). In this context, some fragmented manifestations of Islamophobia in the media are identified. In general, these instances have a direct link to such external factors as the Charlie Hebdo attack, the so-called 'refugee crisis' and the terror attacks in Paris.

While analysing media response towards different immigration and ethnic/religious issues, emphasis should be given to the fact that publications on immigration issues in Lithuania appear after certain events. For example, articles are usually triggered by certain legislative developments, perceptions of threat (such as terrorism, crimes, riots, unemployment) and other challenges such as cultural incompatibility, racism and illegal work. This can be illustrated by the media attention to the recent so-called 'refugee crisis' and discussions on refugee relocations programmes.

47. Human Rights Monitoring Institute, *Human Rights Overview 2013-2014*, Lithuanian version (2015), p. 193-194.

48. An order by the Minister of Interior amending the order regarding the "Provisions regulating conditions and rules of temporary accommodation of foreigners within the Foreigners' registration centre", Vidaus reikalų ministro įsakymas Dėl Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus reikalų ministro 2007 m. spalio 4 d. įsakymo Nr. 1V-340 „Dėl Laikinojo užsieniečių apgyvendinimo užsieniečių registracijos centre sąlygų ir tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo" pakeitimo, Nr. 1V-42, 31 January, 2015, https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/8e67fc008a6b11e3adad91663975b89f.

49. Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, *Annual Activity report 2013* (Vilnius, 2014), p. 39-43, http://lygybe.lt/lt/metines-tarnybos-ataskaitos.html.

During 2015, public and media attention to asylum issues significantly increased as publications on the so-called 'refugee crisis' became frequent. Moreover, the so-called 'refugee crisis' received greater media coverage than issues related to labour immigration in Lithuania in 2005–2008, when the peak of labour immigration was identified, followed by intense debate on the securitisation of the immigration processes.[50] Looking deeper at the media response to the so-called 'refugee crisis', a division of opinions emerged as public commentators and politicians had (and still have) different attitudes towards the quota system and the voluntary acceptance of refugees. It seems that resistance towards accepting responsibility is much greater than a willingness to accept the quota. Moreover, an analysis of media coverage of the so-called 'refugee crisis' and relocation programmes revealed quite stable xenophobic manifestations on the one hand, and more fragmented Islamophobic attitudes, on the other. Concerning xenophobic manifestations, the media usually emphasised general challenges related to 'uncontrolled flows of asylum seekers and refugees' and its consequences, such as threat, terrorism and insecurity.[51] Regarding Islamophobic statements, particular alleged challenges were considered, such as religion and integration failures.[52] Usually, such challenges were reported while considering different (usually negative) experiences of Western European countries. However, the media still remains the only channel where the challenging situations faced by migrants and refugees can, at least, be given publicity. Due to the stereotypical coverage of refugees, however, such publicity tends to have negative undertones.

The newest research on media monitoring[53] illustrates both xenophobic and Islamophobic manifestations, where immigration in general is considered as a threat (using such words as 'wave', 'occupation' and 'influx'), while immigration of Muslims in particular is regarded through the metaphor of war, such as 'Muslims are conquering without weapons' or that they are an 'encroaching crowd of unexpected guests'.

The entire corpus of political and public debates around the so-called 'refugee crisis' can be illustrated through public opinion polls (or attitudes towards immigration and refugees). The analysis of public opinion polls[54] revealed that the mass media is perhaps the most important and most widespread form of public contact

50. For example, 'Immigration is a delay-action bomb', *delfi.lt*, 25.06.2006; 'Hundreds of thousands of migrant workers will flood Lithuania', *delfi.lt*, 07.07.2007; 'Newcomers from the East are occupying free workplaces', *delfi.lt*, 02.08.2005; 'The test of globalisation is waiting', *delfi.lt*, 11.04.2005; 'Chinese dream is their own Chinatown in Vilnius', *Balsas.lt*, 21.11.2007; 'Waiting for Chinatown', *VZ.lt*, 26.11.2008.

51. For example, 'K. Masiulis: How to integrate terrorists', *delfi.lt*, 29.11.2015; 'A. Kubilius: Middle East - refugees and terrorism: what awaits us and what we should do?', *tsajunga.lt*, 17.11.25; 'After terrorist attacks in Paris: do you feel safe?', *snaujienos.lt*.

52. For example, 'Europe, conquered by Islam, will fail as Constantinople', *sarmatas.lt*, 03.12.2015; 'S. Lapėnas. 56 % of migrants support terrorists of 'Islamic state'. What are we inviting to Lithuania?', *alkas.lt*, 17.11.2015.

53. For more details on media monitoring, see: http://www.ces.lt/projektai/buve-projektai/migracijos-tyrimu-projektai/treciuju-saliu-pilieciu-integracijos-trajektorijos-ir-vertinimo-mechanizmai/

54. For more see: http://www.ces.lt/veikla-2/ziniasklaidos-stebesena/visuomenes-nuomones-apklausos/

with immigrants and refugees (including Muslims). It can be argued that so far the information provided by mass media and the attitudes prevailing in public discourse have more relevance to the approach towards immigrants and refugees (including Muslim), and that they do not appear to affect (direct) social contacts.

No particular Islamophobic, anti-immigrant or anti-refugee campaigns in Lithuanian media have been identified with the exception of activities in cyberspace such as social media and blogs, fragmented and unpopular websites (see below).

Cyberspace

Contrary to traditional media channels, cyberspace could be characterised by its diversity of xenophobic manifestations, especially during the so-called 'refugee crisis' and after both terror attacks in Paris. Regarding Islamophobic manifestations in Lithuanian cyberspace, social media and traditional websites have to be emphasised. There is a strong link between the so-called 'refugee crisis' and refugee quotas on one hand, and the emergence of new xenophobic and Islamophobic initiatives in cyberspace, on the other. Some examples of Facebook groups include 'Public committee against mass immigration'[55]; 'Lithuania is not a place for Syrian refugees'[56]; 'Lithuania is not the jungle of multiculturalism'[57]; 'Be Lithuanian, fight for Lithuania'[58]; 'Lithuania for Lithuanians'[59] and many other similar initiatives that spread xenophobic and Islamophobic messages and, at the same time, whose influence goes far beyond cyberspace. Some of these initiatives are initiating petitions against refugee relocation programmes and participating in demonstrations against immigration. No direct link between these initiatives and political parties, however, has been identified. Moreover, the content, which is published on the profiles of these initiatives, should be considered as an open incitement of hatred against immigrants (refugees) in general and Muslims in particular. Such incitements are not republished in traditional media channels.

At the same time, there are websites,[60] where anti-immigrant and anti-refugee attitudes are openly expressed. Though these cannot be directly linked to manifestations of Islamophobia, some of the published material is linked to refugees and immigrants from Islamic countries. These websites collect and publish one-sided and negative information about refugees in the EU and challenges raised by 'mass immigration'.

55. For more see: https://www.facebook.com/priesimigracija/

56. For more see: https://www.facebook.com/No.place.for.Syria/?fref=nf

57. For more see: https://www.facebook.com/seimininkai/

58. For more see: https://www.facebook.com/NestovekPoMedziu/?fref=nf

59. For more see: https://www.facebook.com/lietuva.lietuviams.77/?ref=br_rs

60. For examples see: http://kulgrinda.lt/, http://www.baltalietuva.eu/, http://www.respublika.lt/, http://sioe.blogas.lt/apie, http://www.patriotai.lt/, http://alkas.lt/?s=pabegeliai, http://www.respublika.lt/

Central figures in the network of Islamophobia

There are no Islamophobic institutions or activists that are fostering Islamophobic campaigns, stirring up debates and lobbying for laws. However, there are few political organisations, which openly declare their anti-immigrant positions. This was especially visible during the debates on the so-called 'refugee crisis' and refugee relocation programmes as well as after the terror attacks in Paris. For example, during the congress of the Lithuanian Nationalist Union, Member of Parliament Naglis Puteikis rhetorically asked: "Have you already bought Arabic language textbooks? More ammunition Kurds will receive, fewer Arabs in Europe and Lithuania will survive".[61] It is one of many examples of how general xenophobic statements and anti-immigrant rhetoric can be directly linked to manifestations of Islamophobia or hatred towards immigrants from Islamic countries (for more about manifestations of Islamophobia in politics, see Politics).

OBSERVATIONS ON CIVIL SOCIETY, POLITICAL ASSESSMENT AND INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN TO COUNTER ISLAMOPHOBIA

As the majority of Lithuanian society has rarely personally met a Muslim person,[62] the majority of information comes from the media. Few initiatives can be mentioned as countering Islamophobia and raising awareness on the topic.

'Mišri šeima', 'Priimsiu pabėgėlį' ('Mixed family', 'Welcome Refugees') – this initiative was started a year ago as a volunteer hub for sharing experiences on living in 'mixed' families. These initiatives later evolved into a "Welcome Refugees" campaign which is very active in raising awareness on Islam and refugees' lives.[63]

A programme for young journalists by the National Social Integration Institute.[64] This initiative educates young journalists, who are still studying or have recently graduated. Every participant of the programme has a mentor, who coaches and helps him or her develop an article. Two participants of the programme carried out an experiment by going into public space with a burka and niqab and writing about their experience and perceived judgements by society.[65]

The public exhibition "Islam in Lithuania" by photographer Neringa Rekašiūtė opened a few days after the Paris attacks. The event was widely covered in the media.[66]

61. For more, see 'Congress of nationalists: more guns, less Arabs!' Available at http://lietuvosdiena.lrytas.lt/aktualijos/tautininkai-suvaziavime-daugiau-ginklu-maziau-arabu.htm

62. Institute for Ethnic Studies at Lithuanian Social Research Centre, Public Opinion Surveys 2009–2015, http://www.ces.lt/veikla-2/ziniasklaidos-stebesena/visuomenes-nuomones-apklausos/

63. See more: www.priimsiupabegeli.lt, www.misriseima.lt

64. See more: www.zurnalistui.lt

65. See more: http://www.media4change.co/lt/tyrimai/2907-3/

66. See more: http://unesco.lt/news/archives/2981

Civil society organisations such as the association 'Balturka' implement projects that trigger discussions on multiculturalism and promote open society. These include workshops on Turkish culture and language in schools, blood donation campaigns for the National Blood Centre, and other intercultural projects.

The Islam Education and Culture Centre provides information to members of society on interpretations of Islam and Muslims in Lithuania, and engages in dialogues with the media, politicians and state institutions.

CONCLUSION: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLITICS AND NGOs

Employment

- Measures must be taken to protect victims of discrimination and to assist them in filing complaints against their employers and other perpetrators.
- In the light of the so-called 'refugee crisis' and the influx of refugees, sensitive measures for integration have to be developed: guidelines for job hunting, work with potential employees to consider language requirements and cultural differences.
- Ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (1990).

Education

- Establish state-funded infrastructure and ensure that measures are taken to integrate children of migrant backgrounds, as well as children who learn in a language other than their mother tongue, into the education system.
- Involve journalists into proactive discussions about the promotion of diversity and the responsibility of the media in the formation of negative attitudes towards the Muslim community.
- Ratify the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960).

Politics

- Carry out continuous monitoring of politicians using hate speech, especially during election campaigns, to prevent Islamophobic hate speech from spreading.
- Highlight the political initiatives that are bringing positive changes to discussions of the possible solutions to the so-called 'refugee crisis'.
- Justice
- Provide information and support to potential victims of hate crimes, hate speech included.
- Establish an effective mechanism of recording hate crime; if this is not possible, establish an alternative recording mechanism to evaluate hate crime.
- Initiate legal changes ensuring the proactive role of Office of the Equal Oppor-

tunities Ombudsperson, whereby it can bring cases of discrimination to court on behalf of victims of discrimination.

Media and cyberspace

- Implement a long-term monitoring mechanism to prevent ethnic and Islamophobic hatred in mass media and cyberspace.
- Initiate training courses for journalists on the following issues: how to shed light on issues such as the so-called 'refugee crisis', the threat of terrorism, and immigration.
- Initiate alternative media campaigns on informing the public about immigration, asylum seekers and other specific issues, which currently might be receiving inadequate coverage.

CHRONOLOGY OF ISLAMOPHOBIC PUBLICATIONS

1. 22.07.2015. Labour Party: "Acceptance of refugees in Lithuania is a mistake" https://www.darbopartija.lt/naujienos/19312/
2. 13.08.2015. Artūras Paulauskas: "Arrival of refugees will raise questions on wearing burqas. Criticised by human rights experts" http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/a-paulauskas-pabegeliu-atvykimas-iskels-ir-burkos-devejimo-klausima.d?id=68724682
3. 29.09.2015. Demonstration against mass immigration in Vilnius: http://alkas.lt/2015/09/29/prie-vyriausybes-ivyko-mitingas-pries-prievartine-imigracija-nuotraukos-video/
4. 17.10.2015. Demonstration against mass immigration in Kaunas: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=viAzQmYNTtY (with English subtitles)
5. 17.11.2015. "S. Lapėnas. 56 % of migrants support terrorists of 'Islamic state'. What are we inviting to Lithuania?" http://alkas.lt/2015/11/17/s-lapenas-56-procentai-migrantu-palaiko-islamo-valstybes-teroristus-ka-mes-kvieciame-i-lietuva
6. 25.11.2015. Rolandas Paksas, "Let's get rid of pink glasses, not of automatic guns" http://www.delfi.lt/news/ringas/politics/r-paksas-atsisakykime-ne-automatu-bet-roziniu-akiniu.d?id=69668700
7. 28.11.2015. Kęstutis Masiulis, "How to integrate terrorists?" http://www.delfi.lt/archive/article.php?id=69660054
8. 03.12.2015. "Europe, conquered by Islam, will fail as Constantinople" http://www.sarmatas.lt/12/europa-uzkariauta-islamo-zlugs-kaip-konstantinopolis
9. 12.12.2015. Artūras Paulauskas: "Accepted refugees will have to adhere to our rules" http://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/110882/a_paulauskas_priimti_pabegeliai_tures_laikytis_musu_taisykliu

10. 19.12.2015. "Congress of nationalists: more guns, less Arabs!" http://lietuvosdiena.lrytas.lt/aktualijos/tautininkai-suvaziavime-daugiau-ginklu-maziau-arabu.htm

SOURCES

Legal documents

1. Law on Welfare and Protection of Animals, No. XII-1147, came into force on 1 January, 2015, adopted 23 September, 2014, http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/oldsearch.preps2?a=483037&b=
2. Dėl Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus reikalų ministro 2007 m. spalio 4 d. įsakymo Nr. 1V-340 „Dėl Laikinojo užsieniečių apgyvendinimo užsieniečių registracijos centre sąlygų ir tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo" pakeitimo, (en. Due to the amendment of the 4 October 2007 Minister's of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania Order No. 1V-340 "Due to the description of temporary foreigners' accommodation in the Centre of Foreigners' Registration conditions and order approval") No. 1V-42, 31 January 2015, https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/8e67fc008a6b11e3adad91663975b89f.
3. Lietuvos policijos generalinio komisaro 2014 m. rugsėjo 30 d. įsakymas Nr. 5-V-865 „Dėl Lietuvos policijos generalinio komisaro 2010 m. gruodžio 20 d. įsakymo Nr. 5-v-967 „Dėl Lietuvos policijos prevencinių kovos su terorizmu veiksmų ilgalaikės programos ir jos įgyvendinimo priemonių plano patvirtinimo" pakeitimo" (en. Order of 30 September 2014 of the Lithuanian Police Commissioner General No. 5-V-865 "Due to the Order of 20 December 2010 of Lithuanian Police Commissioner General No. 5-V-967 amending the Order "On the Lithuanian police preventive long-term programme to combat terrorism and its implementation plan approval".

Documents (reports, statistics, communication) of state institutions

1. Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, Annual Activity Report 2014, http://www.lygybe.lt/lt/metines-tarnybos-ataskaitos.html
2. Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, Annual Activity Report 2013, http://www.lygybe.lt/lt/metines-tarnybos-ataskaitos.html
3. Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, Annual Activity Report 2012, http://www.lygybe.lt/lt/metines-tarnybos-ataskaitos.html
4. Migration Department under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, Statistics and reports, The main indicators of migration in the Republic of Lithuania, 2015 I half, http://www.migracija.lt/index.php?1357390560
5. Statistics Lithuania, Population Composition, http://osp.stat.gov.lt/services-portlet/pub-edition-file?id=22
6. The Lithuanian Labour Exchange under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Communication No. Ds-2405 (2012).

7. Information Technology and Communications Department under the Ministry of Interior Affairs, Communication of 12 October, 2015.
8. Information Technology and Communications Department under the Ministry of Interior Affairs, data accessed 2 January, 2015, http://www.ird.lt/statistines-ataskaitos/wp-content/themes/ird/reports/txt_file.php?fv=data/1_201511_lt/f-motyvai-201511.data.txt&ff=%3C!--|MOTYVAI|1|--%3E&tt=Duomenys%20apie%20nusikalstamas%20veikas%20asmens%20lygiateisi%C5%A1kumui%20ir%20s%C4%85%C5%BEin%C4%97s%20laisvei%20Lietuvos%20Respublikoje%20%28Forma_Motyvai%29

Academic institutions

9. Institute for Ethnic Studies at Lithuanian Social Research Centre, Public Opinion Surveys 2009 – 2015, http://www.ces.lt/veikla-2/ziniasklaidos-stebesena/visuomenes-nuomones-apklausos/.

NGO reports

10. Eglė Urbonaitė, Birutė Sabatauskaitė, Lithuanian Centre for Human Rights, ENAR Shadow Report Questionnaire 2014-2015 on racism against people of African descent / black Europeans in Lithuanian (ENAR, 2015).
11. Birutė Sabatauskaitė, Eglė Urbonaitė, Lithuanian Centre for Human Rights, ENAR Shadow Report 2011-2012. Racism and related discriminatory practices in Lithuania: Islamophobia (ENAR, 2013), http://manoteises.lt/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/%C5%A0e%C5%A1%C4%97lin%C4%97-ataskaita-Rasizmas-ir-diskriminacija-Lietuvoje-2011-2012.pdf
12. Human Rights Monitoring Institute, Human Rights Overview 2013-2014, Lithuanian version (2015), p. 193-194.
13. Diversity Development Group, Institute for Ethnic Studies at Lithuanian Social Research Centre, Trečiųjų šalių piliečių integracijos trajektorijos ir vertinimo mechanizmai. Imigracijos, migrantų integracijos ir pilietybės politikos teorinės ir empirinės sąsajos. Tyrimo ataskaita, http://www.ces.lt/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Imigracijos-migrant%C5%B3-integracijos-ir-pilietyb%C4%97s-politikos-teorin%C4%97s-ir-empirin%C4%97s-s%C4%85sajos2.pdf (2014), p. 98-108.
14. Jolanta Reingardė, Nida Vasiliauskaitė, Rasa Erentaitė, Tolerancija ir multikultūrinis ugdymas bendrojo lavinimo mokyklose (2010).

Interviews with representatives of the Muslim community

1. Interview with Aleksandras Beganskas, representative of the Islam Education and Culture Centre, December 23, 2015.
2. Interview with "Balturka" association, Baltic Turkish Culture Academy, 4 January, 2016.

Media coverage

3. Mantas Adomėnas, "M. Adomėnas. Beyond black and white: a lack of clear analysis on refugee matters", Delfi.lt, 27 September, 2015, accessed 16 December, 2015, http://www.delfi.lt/news/ringas/politics/m-adomenas-anapus-juoda-ir-balta-pabegeliu-klausimu-labiausiai-truksta-blaivios-analizes.d?id=68960070.
4. BNS, "R. Šimašius: a mosque will not be built in Vilnius", Delfi.lt, 24 September, 2015, accessed 16 December, 2015, http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/r-simasius-vilniuje-mecete-nebus-statoma.d?id=69100754.
5. BNS, "A.Paulauskas: accepted refugees will have to adhere to our rules", lrt.lt, 13 August, 2015, accessed 12 December, 2015, http://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/110882/a_paulauskas_priimti_pabegeliai_tures_laikytis_musu_taisykliu.
6. BNS, lrt.lt, "A. Paulauskas: arrival of refugees will raise questions on wearing burqas. Criticised by human rights experts", delfi.lt, 13 August, 2015, accessed 12 December, 2015, http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/a-paulauskas-pabegeliu-atvykimas-iskels-ir-burkos-devejimo-klausima.d?id=68724682.
7. BNS, "Algirdas Butkevičius: refugee integration is more relevant than prohibition of burqas", 15min.lt, 13 August, 2015, accessed 12 December, 2015, http://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/algirdas-butkevicius-aktualesnis-klausimas-uz-burku-devejima-pabegeliu-integracija-56-521625.
8. BNS, "S.Skvernelis encourages not to fear refugees and a stricter collection of date", 19 November, 2015, http://lsveikata.lt/aktualijos/sskvernelis-ragina-nesibaiminti-nei-pabegeliu-nei-grieztesnio-duomenu-rinkimo-3910, "It would be unfair, to put a sign of terrorist on every newly arriving person" – Minister of Interior S. Skvernelis.
9. Giedrė Baltrušytė, "A. Butkevičius: only those refugees that we have all information about will come to Lithuania", 17 November, 2015, http://kauno.diena.lt/naujienos/lietuva/politika/butkevicius-i-lietuva-atvyks-tik-tie-pabegeliai-apie-kuriuos-zinosime-viska-720230
10. Indrė Vainalavičiūtė, "Is Lithuania really ready to accept refugees", 23 October, 2015, http://lietuvosdiena.lrytas.lt/aktualijos/ar-lietuva-tikrai-yra-pasirengusi-sutikti-pabegelius.htm
11. Lina Bartkutė, "Congress of nationalists: more guns, less Arabs!", lrytas.lt, 19 December, 2015, accessed 6 January, 2016, http://lietuvosdiena.lrytas.lt/aktualijos/tautininkai-suvaziavime-daugiau-ginklu-maziau-arabu.htm.
12. Eglė Digrytė, "Gabrielius Landsbergis: if we accept as many refugees as Germany, we would have already 30,000 people", 15min.lt, 9 September, 2015, accessed 16 December, 2015, http://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/gabrielius-landsbergis-jei-pabegeliu-priimtume-kiek-vokieciai-vien-siemet-butu-30-tukst-zmoniu-56-526791.
13. Kęstutis Masiulis, "How to integrate terrorists?", Delfi.lt, 18 November, 2015, accessed 16 December, 2015, http://www.delfi.lt/archive/article.php?id=69660054.

14. Rolandas Paksas, "R. Paksas: Let's get rid of pink glasses, not of automatic guns", delfi.lt, 25 November, 2015, accessed 16 December, 2015, http://www.delfi.lt/news/ringas/politics/r-paksas-atsisakykime-ne-automatu-bet-roziniu-akiniu.d?id=69668700.
15. Mečislovas Zasčiurinskas, "M. Zaščiurinskas. I pray for Paris, but think about Lithuania", Delfi.lt, 18 November, 2015, accessed 17 December, 2015, http://www.delfi.lt/news/ringas/politics/m-zasciurinskas-meldziuosi-uz-paryziu-bet-galvoju-apie-lietuva.d?id=69610652.
16. Official page of the Labour Party, "Labour Party: Acceptance of refugees in Lithuania is a mistake", 22 July, 2015, accessed 17 December, 2015, https://www.darbopartija.lt/naujienos/19312/
17. "Three politicians work for Lithuania. And for whom others work?" Respublika.lt, 23 September, 2015, accessed 17 December, 2015, http://www.ve.lt/naujienos/lietuva/lietuvos-naujienos/trys-politikai-dirba-lietuvai-kam-dirba-kiti-1398660/.
18. "Immigration is a delay-action bomb", delfi.lt, 25 June, 2006, http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/imigracija-tarsi-uzdelsto-veikimo-bomba.d?id=9957489
19. "Hundreds of thousands of migrant workers will flood Lithuania", delfi.lt, 7 July, 2007 http://www.delfi.lt/verslas/verslas/lietuva-uzplus-simtai-tukstanciu-darbo-migrantu.d?id=13718181
20. "Newcomers from the East are occupying free workplaces", delfi.lt, 2 August, 2005 http://www.delfi.lt/verslas/verslas/atvykeliai-is-rytu-okupuoja-laisvas-darbo-vietas.d?id=7209550
21. "The test of globalisation is waiting", delfi.lt, 11 April, 2005 http://www.delfi.lt/archive/globalizacijos-isbandymai-musu-dar-laukia.d?id=6445315
22. "Chinese dream is their own Chinatown in Vilnius", Delfi.lt, 21.11.2007 http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/kinu-svajone-savas-kvartalas-vilniuje.d?id=15074873
23. "Waiting for Chinatown", VZ.lt, 26 November 2008 http://vz.lt/archive/straipsnis/2008/11/26/Belaukiant_kinu_kvartalo
24. "A. Kubilius: Middle East – refugees and terrorism: what awaits us and what we should do?", tsajunga.lt, 17 November 2015 http://www.delfi.lt/news/ringas/politics/a-kubilius-artimieji-rytai-pabegeliai-ir-terorizmas-kas-musu-laukia-ir-ka-turime-daryti.d?id=69586958
25. "Europe, conquered by Islam, will fail as Constantinople", sarmatas.lt, 3 December, 2015 http://www.sarmatas.lt/12/europa-uzkariauta-islamo-zlugs-kaip-konstantinopolis/
26. "S. Lapėnas. 56 % of migrants support terrorists of 'Islamic state'. What are we inviting to Lithuania?", alkas.lt, 17 November, 2015, http://alkas.lt/2015/11/17/s-lapenas-56-procentai-migrantu-palaiko-islamo-valstybes-teroristus-ka-mes-kvieciame-i-lietuva/

27. Lietuvos žmogaus teisių centras, "Europos nevyriausybinės organizacijos: D.A.Barakauskas turi atsiprašyti", manoteises.lt, 23 July, 2015, http://manoteises.lt/naujiena/europos-nevyriausybines-organizacijos-d-a-barakauskas-turi-atsiprasyti/
28. Lietuvos žmogaus teisių centras, "Policijos dieną – gera žinia nevyriausybinėms organizacijoms", manoteises.lt, 6 October, 2015, http://manoteises.lt/naujiena/policijos-diena-gera-zinia-nevyriausybinems-organizacijoms/
29. "Refugees in Lithuania: integrated representatives of ethnic minorities or aliens?", 14 October, 2015, http://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/pabegeliai-lietuvoje-integruoti-tautiniu-mazumu-atstovai-ar-svetimsaliai-56-533998.

Websites

http://alkas.lt/?s=pabegeliai
http://www.baltalietuva.eu/
http://kulgrinda.lt/
http://www.media4change.co/lt/tyrimai/2907-3/
http://www.misriseima.lt/
http://pabegelis.lt/
http://www.patriotai.lt/
http://www.respublika.lt/
http://sioe.blogas.lt/apie
http://unesco.lt/news/archives/2981
http://zurnalistui.lt/

Social media

https://www.facebook.com/lietuva.lietuviams.77/?ref=br_rs
https://www.facebook.com/NestovekPoMedziu/?fref=nf
https://www.facebook.com/No.place.for.Syria/?fref=nf
https://www.facebook.com/priesimigracija/
https://www.facebook.com/seimininkai/

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN MACEDONIA
NATIONAL REPORT 2015

MITRE GEORGIEV

THE AUTHOR

Mitre Georgiev is a human rights advocate, lawyer and researcher born in Bitola, Macedonia. Graduated in Law at the "Iustiniana Prima" Law Faculty in Skopje, Macedonia, and finished an Advanced Master of European Studies at the University of Zagreb in Croatia. He has worked for several Civil Society Organisations in Macedonia, Croatia and abroad. His research interests are discrimination, human rights, migration, asylum, extradition, EU law, citizenship etc. mitre.georgiev@googlemail.com

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions. No representation, either expressed or implied, is made of the accuracy of the material in the national reports. The editors of the European Islamophobia Report cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The reader must make his or her own evaluation of the accuracy and appropriateness of the material.

To cite this report: Mitre Georgiev (2016): *Islamophobia in Macedonia: National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY IN ENGLISH

As defined by the Constitution, Macedonia is a secular state. However, religion plays an important place in social and political life. In 2015, a year that was marked by a political crisis, discrimination on the ground of religion, including Islamophobia, was present in Macedonia, a country that is also divided along ethnic and political lines. However, Islamophobia is often not recognized as an issue as it is concealed by other more dominant actors of discrimination.

Nevertheless, the refugee crisis in 2015 demonstrated that Islamophobia in the Macedonian context is not linked exclusively to ethnic minorities, but also to xenophobia. In addition to the intersectionality, a scarcity of relevant information, including under-reporting, is another factor that adds to the complexity of the issue of reporting Islamophobia in Macedonia. This report is written upon an analysis of media reports, desktop research on the relevant media, reports and social networks, as well as interviews with prominent scholars, experts, activists and representatives of civil society.

The incidents and developments that are relevant to the existence of Islamophobia in Macedonia in 2015 can be linked to several events on the global level. Global events have had a great impact on the discourse and emanation of Islamophobia in Macedonia; these include the Charlie Hebdo attacks, the presence of and debate about foreign fighters, the refugee crisis (which has affected Macedonia, as part of the Balkan Route, in a very particular way, with large number of refugees passing through to countries in the EU) and the Paris attacks in November.

It is highly likely that Islamophobia is present in all segments of society, yet it is more difficult to discern in the area of employment, education or in the justice system. Monitoring Islamophobia in the area of politics, media and social networks brings more open Islamophobic statements to the surface, statements which need to be condemned. The recommendation about discursive events which contain Islamophobic elements includes recognition, deconstruction and discussion in public, as well as moderate and informed debate.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY IN MACEDONIAN

Македонија во Уставот е дефинирана како секуларна држава. Сепак, религијата зазема важно место во општествениот и политички живот. Дискриминација на основа на религијата, вклучувајќи и Исламофобија постои во Македонија заедно со поделбата на Македонското општество по етнички и политички линии во годината што беше одбележана со политичка криза. Сепак, исламофобијата често не е препознаена кога се прекрива со други подоминантни форми на дискриминација.

Сепак, „бегалската криза“ во 2015 покажа дека исламофобијата не е поврзана само со етничките малцинства, туку и со ксенофобијата. Освен интерсекцискиот карактер, во сложеноста на анализата на исламофобијата во Македонија влијае и недостигот на информации, како и недоволното пријавување. Во пишувањето на извештајот се користеа анализи на медиумско известување, истражување на достапните медиуми, извештаи и социјални мрежи, како и разговори со еминентни научници, експерти, активисти и претставници на граѓанските организации.

Случувањата што беа релевантни на присуството на исламофобија во Македонија во 2015 може да се поврзат и со неколку настани на глобално ниво. Глобални настани кои имаа важно влијание на дискурсот и еманацијата на исламофобија во Македонија беа нападите на Шарли Ебдо во Париз, присуството и дебатата за „странски борци“, „бегалската криза“ (која влијаеше на Македонија и на национално ниво со оглед на тоа дека како дел од Балканската рута голем дел од бегалците на патот кон земјите на ЕУ поминуваа низ Македонија) и нападите во Париз на 13 ноември.

Исламофобијата може да биде дел од сите сегменти на општеството, но потешко е да се забележи во областа на вработувањето, образованите и правото. Повеќе простор за мониторинг на исламофобијата постои во областа на политиката, медиумите и социјалните мрежи каде секое отворено исламофобно тврдење требада се осуди. Дискурзивните настани што содржат исламофобни елементи треба да се препознаат, деконструираат и дискутираат во јавна, умерена и информирана дебата.

INTRODUCTION[1]

Macedonia is a country which is divided on ethnic lines that correspond for the most part with the religious structure; this is highly relevant to the presence of Islamophobia in the country. 'The other' in Macedonian society is determined according to the dominant ethnic Macedonian, Orthodox Christian, white, hetero and is Albanian, Muslim, different skinned or homosexual. Ethno-nationalistic tendencies resonate with Islamophobia in a way that intensifies this reaction, or, sometimes, with the opposite effect, the ethnic component prevails over the religious one. However, other factors that influence Islamophobia should be considered in order to get better overview of Islamophobia in Macedonia.

When analysing Islamophobia, not only should the ethnic and religious structure be considered, but also the political situation in Macedonia and events at the global level. The refugee crisis in 2015 showed that Islamophobia is not exclusively linked to ethnic minorities, but also to xenophobia as well.

A survey on religion and religious hate speech in the Republic of Macedonia was conducted for the Macedonian Institute for the Media; this was carried out on 14 and 15 October, 2014 and demonstrated that members of the Muslim community are mostly self-identified as victims of hate speech. [2]Although most of the respondents in the survey stated that they "do not approve of the use of public statements involving disagreement with, hatred or aggression towards members of various religious groups," that in their opinion hate speech exists in the public space and to a great deal on television (76.1%), in personal contacts (61.5%), on various websites and social networks (53% and 51.7%), in graffiti (47.8%) and in newspapers and magazines (47.4%). 26.9% of the respondents mentioned hate speech in public places (schools, concerts, football matches, etc.) and 10% of respondents mentioned hate speech on the radio. (Rating Agency 2014)

Demographic Structure

In order to understand Islamophobia in Macedonia, the demographic structure and political situation should be considered. Discrimination on the ground of religion, more concretely, discrimination towards Muslims, in the Macedonian

1. This report is written upon an analysis of media reports, desktop research of the relevant media, reports and social networks, as well as interviews with prominent scholars, experts, activists and representatives of civil society organisations that deal with discrimination and human rights issues. For this purpose, the author would like to thank to Voislav Stojanovski from the Macedonian Helsinki Committee of Human Rights, Biljana Kotevska from the European Policy Institute, Mirjana Najčevska from the Institute for Sociological, Political and Legal Research at the St. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, Nazif Avdi from the Young Macedonian Lawyers Association, Skopje, Ramadan Ramadani from NISMA – Institute for Free Thinking, Skopje and Žaneta Poposka from the OSCE office in Skopje, Macedonia.

2. Rating Agency. October 2014."http://bezomrazno.mk/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/ Report-of-the-survey-on-religion-and-religious-hate-speech-in-the-republic-of-Macedonia.pdf." bezomrazno.mk. (accessed December 20, 2015).

context is intersectional with other drivers of discrimination, such as ethnicity, citizenship, political opinion, language or class. Nevertheless, Islamophobia in this report is defined as broader than discrimination towards Muslims, thus including any representation of fear or prejudice towards Muslims, regardless of whether they are only perceived as such.

In addition to intersectionality, the scarcity of relevant information, including under-reporting, is another factor that adds to the complexity of the issue of reporting Islamophobia in Macedonia. While under-reporting is a more universal issue, the lack of information in the Macedonian context is related to the serious dysfunction of state institutions; this is a matter that needs to be taken into consideration. Most relevant numbers about the demographic structure in Macedonia are outdated since they relate to the 2002 census. Normally, the census is undertaken every decade, but the census that should have taken place in 2011 was cancelled before being completed due to controversial circumstances. Although never formally clarified, there was a collective resignation of the members of the State Census Commission following a disagreement between government partners.

Data from the 2002 census reveal that 64.7% of the population is Orthodox Christian, while 33.3% identify themselves as Muslim. The total population in the 2002 census was 2,022,547, while the State Statistical Office estimates that the total population in the Republic of Macedonia in 2015 was actually 2,069,172. [3]Other religions include Catholics and Protestants. The ethnic structure is important for understanding Islamophobia in Macedonia. Again, the only relevant data is from the 2002 census, in which 64% of the country identified themselves as Macedonians, 25% as Albanians, 3.8% as Turks, 2.6% as Roma, 1.8% as Serbian, 0.8% as Bosniaks, and 0.1 Muslims[4].[5] The intersectional character of discrimination is determined by the factor that religious division correlates with ethnic division. Most of the ethnic Macedonians are Orthodox Christians, while most of the Albanians are Muslims; Islam is also the religion for the majority of Turks, Roma, Bosnians and Macedonian Muslims.

The relationship between the ethnic majority, Macedonians, and the largest minority group, Albanians, is marked by ethnic intolerance, conflict and political tensions; these will be examined below.

3. State Statistical Office. Македонија во бројки (Macedonia in Numbers). Skopje: State Statistical Office, 2015.

4. Muslims or Macedonian Muslims (Македонци Муслимани, Македонци со исламска вероисповед) are a separate Macedonian speaking ethnic group, sometimes referred to as Torbeshi, Pomaci or Gorani (although these names are considered either pejorative, for example, Torbeshi, or incorrect). In the Macedonian public discourse this group is often referred to as loyal and the keepers of the Macedonian language, therefore such an argument could be used by the dominant political elite that the Islam is not per se problematic (whitewashing). cf. Stojanovski, Strasko. "Етно-лингвистичката и религиска основа на идентитетот кај Македонците муслимани: видени преку теориите за етничките групи и нивните граници на Фредрик Барт." Philological studies, 2009.

5. State Statistical Office . *Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Macedonia*. Skopje: State Statistical Office , 2015.

Political Background

There is a correlation between religious affiliation, ethnicity and ethnic division; for the most part this coincides with the line that divides the population on religious belief. However, this correlation becomes more complicated once political affiliation is added.

The government of the Republic of Macedonia is run by a coalition government: VMRO – DPMNE rightist, Conservative, Demo-Christian ethnic Macedonian Party, and the DUI party, which represents the ethnic Albanians. Ever since the independence of Macedonia in 1991, parties representing ethnic Macedonians and the Albanian minority have been included in the government. VMRO-DMPNE has ruled over the nationalistic/nation building platform since the elections in 2006, and has won several premature elections since then.

In this context, it is important to note the armed ethnic conflict of 2001 and the Ohrid Framework Agreement which ended the conflict. One agreement derived from the Ohrid Agreement was just representation of minorities in public administration bodies; this will be further discussed in the section that focuses on employment.

However, the event that marked 2015 in Macedonia from a political perspective was the political crisis connected with the eavesdropping tapes that the main opposition party, SDSM, published regularly from 9 February until 16 May. The recordings revealed corruption, election fraud and malfunctioning of the state apparatus, thus making the division among political lines more relevant. The recordings also resulted in massive protests and counter-protests. Along these lines, some research from 2013 has already claimed that the party/political divide is increasing along with the ethnic discrimination. [6]

SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

The incidents and developments that are relevant to the existence of Islamophobia in Macedonia in 2015 can be linked to several events on a global and a national level. Global events had a great impact on the discourse and the emanation of Islamophobia in Macedonia. These events include the Charlie Hebdo attack, the presence of and debate on foreign fighters, the refugee crisis (which affected Macedonia in particular, on a national level, as it is part of the Balkan Route, along which a large majority of the refugees have passed on their way to EU countries) and the November Paris attacks.

The terrorist attacks in Paris stirred Islamophobia in Macedonia mostly on social networks, but also in the media. Moreover, the Islamophobic sentiment was further expressed, mostly to the refugees who were passing through Macedonia, and the issue of the foreign fighters was raised, although no significant incident that could directly be linked to Islamophobia has been recorded.

6. Михаиловска, Јасмина, and Миша Поповиќ. Барометар за еднакви можности (*Equal opportunities barrometer*). Public Opinion Poll Report, Skopje: Македонски центар за меѓународна соработка, 2013.

The Criminal Code was amended in 2014 to criminalize participation in foreign armies. The legislative change corresponded to repeated news about the participation of Macedonian citizens in the armed conflict in Syria. Previously, criminalization had been limited to international terrorism. The new criminal offense proscribed at least 4-years imprisonment for Macedonian citizen who participate in a foreign army or paramilitary organization, while the punishment for recruitment, transportation or training soldiers for a foreign army or paramilitary organization is imprisonment of 5 years at least. [7]The representative of the Islamic Religious Community has welcomed the law, but in the media, the law was mentioned only in connection with radical Islam. [8] In Macedonia there was no information for "foreign fighters" in other regions than Syria and Iraq (where it was estimated that there were 130 persons, according to the information referring to the Ministry of Internal Affairs[9]), unlike some other countries in the region; there were "foreign fighters" who joined the army and paramilitary formations in Ukraine. Therefore, it is not possible to compare the different public discourse.

It is estimated that returning foreign fighters might be a real security threat, but it is possible that this has been exaggerated by the sensationalistic media. [10]There was a large antiterrorist action in August when 9 persons were arrested on the grounds of the foreign-fighters provisions.[1112]

The refugee crisis is a significant development in how members of Macedonian society have come face to face with people whom the general public assume are Muslims, but who are also identified as foreigners. This phenomenon separated the ethnic component from religion in regards to the perception of Muslims in Macedonia. Refugees taking the Balkan route pass through Macedonia and the legislative framework and the treatments of the authorities have changed over time. At the present time, Macedonia is considered to be the most dangerous part of the Balkan Route. [13]As it is a criminal act to assist refugees who have not claimed asylum, refugees are in a very vulnerable situation when passing through Macedonia on their way to Western European countries. On 18 June, the parliament amended the Law

7. Criminal Code of Republic of Macedonia. Закон за изменување на Кривичниот законик. no. 132. Skopje: Sluzben vesnik na Republika Makedonija, September 5, 2004.

8. *Telegraf.mk.* September 9, 2014. http://www.telegraf.mk/aktuelno/191190-ivz-go-poddrzuvame-zakonot-protiv-borci-na-stranski-frontovi (accessed December 20, 2015).

9. Blazevska, Katerina. *Deutche Welle na Makedonski*. August 6, 2015. http://dw.com/p/1GB9n (accessed December 22, 2015).

10. Stojkovski, Filip. *No Widespread Support for Religious Extremists in Macedonia and the Balkanks.* Commentary, Zagreb: Analytica Thinking Labaratory, 2015.

11. *vecer.mk*. August 7, 2015. http://vecer.mk/makedonija/dzhihadistot-doktor-stefan-lechel-mudzhahedini-vo-sirija (accessed December 22, 2015).

12. Šegavić, Igor. *Dnevnik*. August 8, 2015. http://www.dnevnik.mk/default.asp?ItemID=F34DFAF3CD6E6A49BB0EA0B1BE9FB9B9 (accessed December 22, 2015).

13. *Deutche Welle* на Македонски. 08 19, 2015. http://dw.com/p/1GHpH (accessed 12 10, 2015).

on Asylum and Temporary Protection, giving an opportunity to refugees to express their intention to ask for asylum. This gives asylum seekers a period of 72 hours during which they can submit an application for asylum, meaning that in these 72 hours the refugees are not in an illegal situation. On 19 August a crisis situation was announced by the Macedonia government, meaning that because of the influx of refugees, the army could be used.

Ever since the beginning of the crisis, many citizens have been engaged in helping the refugees, as civil society organizations, independent activists or non-formal initiatives. However, refugees were also attacked and mistreated, mostly by private persons who took advantage of a vulnerable situation. The media helped to drum up fear by addressing the issue of the refugees passing through Macedonia as a security issue and failing to consider the human-rights aspect when dealing with the complex issue.

The political situation in Macedonia in 2015 was marked by several events which had a direct or indirect influence on Islamophobia. One of the most significant cases was the political crisis that started with the publication of eavesdropping records of high state officials, carried out by the largest opposition party, SDSM. The records contained material that was not meant to become public and revealed a great deal of sensitive information regarding corruption, election fraud and other criminal activities. The political crisis reached its peak in May with the police action in Kumanovo on 9 May and the protests of the opposition and the governing parties on 17 and 18 May. The political crisis has not yet ended, although there has been an agreement among the main political parties. The police action in Kumanovo was marked by serious casualties and public unrest during the two days that the action lasted in May. 8 police officers were killed and 37 wounded when the police attacked a house in which a terrorist group was located.

If we were to choose one event that marks Islamophobia, it would be the protests and the burning down of the masjid in Kriva Palanka. Since the events were initiated after the statement of the mayor of Kriva Palanka, the event will be analysed further in the section on politics.

Another incident was in Bitola, which had a great potential for increasing Islamophobia, as well as reaffirming and strengthening prejudices. Namely, a church decided to put speakers in front of the church broadcasting the prayers from inside; the citizens living nearby complained due to the noise, and because this was not part of Macedonian Orthodox tradition. The Mitropolit Petar justified the act by referring to the call for prayer from the mosques, saying that as long as the Muslim priest is being heard, the liturgy will be as well. [14]

14. Libertas.mk. 30. 11. 2015 http://www.libertas.mk/bitolchani-se-zhalat-na-buchava-vladikat/. (Acessed 12. 12 2015.)

Employment

It is difficult to speak about discrimination in the labour market based on the assumed Muslim identity of an individual person mainly because of intersectionality with other factors and also due to the fact that there is under-reporting. The research of OSCE from 2013 about discrimination in job advertisements does not even use religion as a ground; this can be explained by the simple fact that it is easy to hide discrimination on religious grounds in written advertisements. [15]

However, according to the obligations of the Ohrid Framework agreement, the Public Ombudsman of the Republic of Macedonia monitors the equal representation of different ethnic minorities in public bodies. In the report of the Public Ombudsman for 2014 it is noted that quantitative data show that there has been a rise both in the absolute number employed in public bodies and institutions, as well as in the percentage of the Albanian minority. However, there is no progress for the number of Albanians employed in managerial position, and the representation of other ethnic minorities in public institutions is still neither equal nor adequate. [16]

Another issue that could be associated with employment is bank holidays. There is different treatment for different religions in the matter of bank holidays, which are regulated by the Law on Bank Holidays.[17] The law defines state holidays and holidays of the Republic of Macedonia, as well as other non-working days, which are specific for different religions or ethnic minorities. There are 5 non-working days for believers in the Orthodox religion in addition to the state holidays and holidays of Republic of Macedonia, and one non-working day for Muslims. None of the state holidays are related to Islam, while there are two related to Orthodox saints, St. Cyril and Methodius and St. Clement of Ohrid. Holidays of the Republic of Macedonia include New Year, Christmas, Easter, May 1 and Ramadan Bayram.

Although it is possible to say that this different treatment is equally discriminatory to all other religions, it must be remembered that Islam is the religion of at least one-third of the population.

Education

In the correspondence made for this report, the Ombudsman mentioned that they had received no complaints on the grounds of religion about education. The issue that was relevant for 2015 is the recognition of religious high schools, or to be more precise, their inclusion in the national educational system. The solution was to allow all religious high schools graduates to enrol in state universities. The head of the

15. Ананиев, Јован. Дискриминација во огласите за вработување. research report, Skopje: Комисија за заштита од дискриминацијата/OSCE, 2013.

16. Народен Правобранител. Извештај за следењето на примената на начелото на соодветна и правична застапеност за *2014* година. Скопје: Народен Правобранител, 2015.

17. Law on Bank Holidays (Закон за државните празници на Република Македонија), Official Journal of Macedonia No. 54/97 and 21/2007).

Islamic Religious Community welcomed the move and stated that it would make it possible to keep radical Islam out of the schools. [18]

In the 6th grade of primary school, students may choose one optional subject: Ethics in Religion, Introduction to Religions or Classical Culture in European Civilization. In the textbook for Ethics in Religion in the Macedonian language the Orthodox, Catholic, Evangelistic Christian, Jewish and Islamic religions are covered. However, the largest part of the textbook refers to Orthodox Christianity. On the other hand, Islam forms the main part of the textbook written in Albanian. The Islamic Religious Community advocated to have an influence over the selection of teachers, allegedly to prevent engagement of teachers connected with radical Islamic structures. [19]

Politics

There were no elections in 2015, and this largely influenced the public discourse as far as Islamophobic hate speech in political discourse is concerned. Nevertheless, 2015 was not lacking with significant events or relevant rhetoric.

The event that was most visible for its Islamophobic nature was the protest that followed the improvised masjids used by Muslims being vandalised; primarily Roma in Kriva Palanka, which occurred on 6 November, 2015. The mayor of Kriva Palanka told the media that: "the mosque will not be rebuilt because the majority of the population is Orthodox". The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoI) stated that the protest ended peacefully, although some media reported that Islamophobic chants were uttered at the protest. The perpetrators of the vandalism have not been identified. The Commission for the Relation between Religious Communities and the Platform against Religious Hatred condemned the attack. [20]

In the Report on Religious Freedoms in Macedonia for 2014, prepared by the State Department[21], the protests that occurred against constructing religious buildings to mark certain ethnic or political territory were emphasised. The argument 'not in my back yard' was often used during these and other similar incidents that occurred against building mosques, but this was also used in the refugee crisis to express anti-Muslim sentiment. The perpetrators claimed that they had nothing against Islam, but were afraid of the building, and the sights and sound that would emanate from it. The refugee crisis and the general anti-Muslim climate throughout Europe was easily manipulated by the Macedonian politicians to create a shift from Albanophobia to Islamophobia for electoral purposes. [22]

18. Дамјановска, Сања Јовановиќ. *Telma.mk*. 3 15, 2015. http://telma.com.mk/vesti/verskite-uchilishta-da-stanat-del-od-obrazovniot-sistem (accessed 12 21, 2015).

19. Ѓорѓевски, Бранко. *Dnevnik.mk*. 12 20, 2015. http://www.dnevnik.mk/?ItemID=4437E16D4023304A9D715DBBD43CDFFC (accessed 12 28, 2015).

20. Слободен печат. Окно.мк. 11 10, 2015. http://okno.mk/node/51249 (accessed 12 11, 2015).

21. US State Department. "MACEDONIA 2014 INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT." 2015.

22. Стојадиновиќ, Соња. *Plusinfo.mk*. 11 9, 2015. http://plusinfo.mk/mislenje/925/se-mrazime-sproti-izbori (accessed 12 12, 2015).

Although consisting of discussions that should have remained in the private sphere, the eavesdropping records that were published by the opposition revealed some of the values and criteria for cooperation of people in the highest positions in the government. According to the transcripts, in one of the conversation, Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski and the then minister for transport and communication were discussing the nationality of a certain collaborator, an Albanian, and they emphasised his religious affiliation, stressing that he was not Muslim, but Catholic.[23]

Indeed, politics is one area where Islamophobia is present, but well-hidden and often abused when necessary. Politicians and officials should take a more active role in condemning any form of discrimination or incitement to fear, including Islamophobia.

The Media

The media have a very powerful role as an agent of either promoting or suppressing Islamophobia. In Macedonia, the state and politicians have a great influence on the media; this, together with other factors, leads to a deterioration of professional and media standards.[24] Hate speech by political officials and by media bosses is not often critically reported in the media.[25]

In the case of reporting the refugee crisis in the Macedonian media Islamophobia was suppressed more as an exception than as the rule. There was regularly incitement to fear, xenophobia and Islamophobia when reporting on refugees.[26] Najchevska also mentions non-critical reporting of officials, namely the prime minister, who stated that "the migration wave is about to increase and migrants from different Asian and African countries will start to remain in the country".[27] There was also reporting on issues that were not central or relevant, having the ultimate effect of creating fear. [28] Prejudices towards refugees represent a new form of Islamophobia in Macedonia. Major media outlets referred to less relevant issues; there are also very serious issues about journalistic standards. An article entitled "Ahmed from Syria has reached Serbia: Instead of churches in Europe you will see minarets. It will be our revenge!" in the daily newspaper Večer, available on the news portal vecer.mk, is a report from Serbia that is full of prejudice, Islamophobic remarks and misrepresentations.[29] In the article it is suggested that the refugees who

23. Прес конференција на Саша Богдановиќ, 19.04.2015 год http://prizma.birn.eu.com (accessed 12.12.2015)

24. SEEMO South East Europe Media Organisation. *Bad Practices, Bad Faith*: Soft Censorship in Macedonia. Paris: WAN-IFRA, 2015.

25. Ibid.

26. Најчевска, Мирјана. proverkanafakti.mk. 09 04, 2015. http://proverkanafakti.mk/begalci-migranti-i-ksenofobija-vo-makedonskite-mediumi/ (accessed 12 22, 2015).

27. Telegraf.mk, 2.8.2015, http://www.telegraf.mk/aktuelno/makedonija/ns-newsarticle-294770-gruevski-migrantskiot-bran-doprva-ke-zema-zamav.nspx (accessed 12 12 2015)

28. Најчевска, Мирјана. proverkanafakti.mk. 09 04, 2015. http://proverkanafakti.mk/begalci-migranti-i-ksenofobija-vo-makedonskite-mediumi/ (accessed 12 22, 2015).

29. vecer.mk, August, 29, 2015 http://vecer.mk/balkan/ahmed-od-libija-stigna-do-srbija-namesto-crkvi-vo-evropa-kje-se-gledaat-minarinja-toa-kje (acessed 24 02, 2015)

were passing through Serbia were not really refugees, as they had financial assets and they did not want to merely reach safety. By clearly alluding to the Muslim culture, there is a suggestion that they would try to impose their rules wherever they went. [30]

The fact-checking service Proverka na Fakti, part of a project for empowering media, reports the case of an article that was published on a news portal where a Youtube video showed riots on Paris streets; the video was titled "Migrants are destroying Paris – this is one of the most dangerous incidents (video)". However the video was taken from a German source and was accompanied with anti-immigrant, anti-Islamic and xenophobic text. In fact, the events shown on the video happened in July, 2014 and the media here is misleading and misreporting the public by publishing the article in August 2015, putting it in context of the refugee crisis [31]

In August 2015 there was a large antiterrorist operation in which 9 persons were arrested under suspicion of participation in and recruitment for foreign paramilitary groups. The media reported on the ethnicity of the arrested persons and mentioned one case of a Macedonian who had converted to Islam. The debate about the motivation for participation in foreign armies – whether this was due to religious convictions or money – was raised. [32] [33] [34]

Picture 1. Screenshot from Facebook page made in support after the Kumanovo police operation with the text: Difference between terrorist and a Macedonian defender

The article "Intolerance with Macedonian students threatens to turn into radicalism", which appeared on the webpage of the weekly Republika refers to what is called a "scientific publication" entitled "Crisis of the modern world – regional and global challenges for liberal democracy against religious fundamentalism". The article on the webpage is illustrated exclusively with photos of what the reader could assume to be Muslims (apart from the one photo of the authors of the publication). [35]

30. Ibid.

31. Dukovska, Jugoslava. proverkanafakti.mk. 09 12, 2015. http://proverkanafakti.mk/recenzija-lazhni-obvinuvanja-i-promocija-na-ksenofobija/ (acessed 24 02, 2015).

32. Serafinović, Miomir. Telma. August 7, 2015. http://telma.com.mk/vesti/koj-e-stefan-borecot-na-isis (accessed December 22, 2015).

33. vecer.mk. August 7, 2015. http://vecer.mk/makedonija/dzhihadistot-doktor-stefan-lechel-mudzhahedini-vo-sirija (accessed December 22, 2015).

34. vecer.mk. August 7, 2015. http://vecer.mk/makedonija/dzhihadistot-doktor-stefan-lechel-mudzhahedini-vo-sirija. (accessed December 22, 2015).

35. Зафирова, Билјана Неделник Република. 14. 02.2015. http://republika.mk/?p=386288. (Accessed 12. 12 2015.)

The Kumanovo incident in May was also mentioned in connection with radical Islam by some of the media and on social networks. Often the idea that the terrorists had had connections with Syria and Iraq was mentioned.

Justice System

The Macedonian constitution stipulates that Macedonia is a secular state and guarantees freedom of religion. The Law on the Legal Status of Churches, Religious Communities and Religious Groups regulates the establishment of religious communities, and Article 4, paragraph 2 states that "religious belief shall not exempt a citizen of the obligation… unless otherwise regulated by law or other regulations".

The Law on State Administration is another law that regulates the relation between the state and religious communities. The Committee for the Relation between the State and Religious Communities and Religious Groups (Комисија за односи со верски заедници и религиозни групи) was established under this law.

The Office of the Public Ombudsman continuously monitors the adoption of new legislation; it has not identified provisions that limit the right of Muslims to live in and practice their religion. [36]

Cyber-Space

The cyber-space in the Macedonian language is a place where hate speech and prejudices often appear and where there is abuse of the freedom of speech. Among the wide range of discriminative speech, different Islamophobic comments and statements can be found. On the internet forums, there are often discussions about Islam; there are some good practices in which moderators take care that the discussion does not move into open insults and incitement to violence and hatred.

Islamophobia and Albanophobia are intermingled with one another. Often, specific labels are used against Muslims such as 'sečen' (circumcised) or 'zabulena' (wearing hijab or burka), being used to refer to Albanians/Muslims.

Because of their availability and outreach it is important to note Facebook pages which have openly Islamophobic content. Pegida Macedonia, a branch of the German organization, appeared as a group on Facebook. This is a far right, anti-Islamic, neo-Nazi group with openly anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant posts. There is a clear intention on the Facebook page to spread prejudice and hate speech on religious, ethnic and other grounds. Later Nemrazi.mk reported that the Facebook group was removed because of hate speech, and that it is the first such case.[37] This page was removed because of the hate speech it contained, or 'breach of the Community Standards' to use the formulation used by Facebook, however, only after being repeatedly reporting by users. However it is not

36. Correspondence with the Public Ombudsman

37. *NeMrazi.mk*. NeMrazi.mk. 01 25, 2016. http://nemrazi.mk/za-prv-pat-fejsbuk-otstranuva-strana-koja-shiri-govor-na-omraza/ (accessed 01 29, 2016).

known who is behind the Facebook page of Pegida Macedonia.

Another Facebook page that should be noted is Да ја спречиме исламизацијата во Македонија (Let's stop the Islamization in Macedonia), although there have been no posts on this page since 2012.

In the political arena it was noticed that Islamophobia was used as a means to make political opponents appear negatively in the eyes of the public.

Picture 2 : Opposition leaders and journalists are depicted wearing Arab clothing, thus appearing as Muslims; there is the suggestion that all Muslims are terrorists; under the photos is written: These people want blood and war.

Observed Civil Society and Political Assessment and Initiatives Undertaken to Counter Islamophobia

Civil society organisations are active in the field of combating hate speech, as well as monitoring hate crime, discrimination and hate speech, including incidents directed against Muslims.

Some of the initiatives that are worth mentioning are the Platform against Hate Speech, created by the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, the Metamorfosis Foundation, the Macedonian Institute for the Media, Paktis, and Civil MK.

It is extremely important to support positive initiatives like the one noted on the nemrazi.mk website. The parent of a student reported offensive graffiti which appeared on a school building. The graffiti was soon deleted.[38] It is worth noting that on the website www.nemrazi.mk the guidelines for reporting hate speech on different platforms was given, ranging from social networks to institutions. The Metamorfosis Foundation, which runs the nemrazi.mk project, holds workshop with media about hate speech. Another resource in the area of hate speech is www.bezomrazno.mk, created by the Macedonian Institute for Media.

The Macedonia Helsinki Committee runs two websites for monitoring and reporting hate speech and hate crime (www.govornaomraza.mk and www.zlostorstvaodomraza.mk).

CONCLUSION

Policy Recommendations for Politics and NGO's

Islamophobia often appears in Macedonia correlated or even mixed with other forms of discrimination and prejudices. Although this leads Islamophobia to be neglected or lets it often go unnoticed, it is important that Islamophobia be addressed as part of the strong ethnic and political tensions to prevent further escalation.

38. A.J. *Nemrazi.mk*. 12 16, 2015. http://nemrazi.mk/izbrishan-grafit-koj-shiri-govor-na-omraza-vo-dvorot-na-oujohan-hajnrih-pestalotsi/ (accessed 12 18, 2015).

It is very important that politicians restrain from Islamophobic hate speech and not use it during election campaigns; but it is equally or even more important to condemn every such public discourse. Also it is important that events and issues which may affect Islamophobia, such as refugees, terrorism or security, be discussed. It is vital that such discussion is informed and moderate.

Similarly, as with the provisions adopted to ensure equal representation in the Ohrid Framework Agreement and other similar legislative solutions, adopting laws is not enough to address tensions and discrimination. It is also recommended that possible Islamophobic sentiments or concerns should be addressed, otherwise they are "open to exploitation at the whim of opportunistic politicians".[39]

Sensationalistic media reporting should be discouraged and opposed by condemnation, information and discussion.

NGO's that are concerned with antidiscrimination and human rights should take into consideration the possible increase of Islamophobia and address it.

Finally, increasing democratic capacities and building trust among all the different actors, starting from the institutions, politicians, civil society and representatives of different religions could be a key tool in fighting Islamophobia.

CHRONOLOGY

January 7

- Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris

April 23

- Accident on the railway Veles Skopje: 14 refugees died

May 9-10

- Police Action in Kumanovo

June 18

- Parliament adopted changes and amendments of Law on Asylum and Temporary protection

August 6

- Police action "Cell", 9 persons arrested for recruiting foreign fighters

August 19

- The Government of the Republic of Macedonia announced a state of crisis due to the situation with the refugees at the borders

39. Waldman, Lorne Allan, and Warda Shazadi Meighen. "The wrong end of the wedge: migrants and Islamaphobia in the 2015 Canadian federal elections." *Oxford Monitor of Forced Migration* 5, no. 2 (2015): 33-36.

November 6

- Protests against Islamisation in Kriva Palanka

November 13

- Terrorist attacks in Paris

November 20

- MoI restricts access to Macedonian territory only to refugees coming from Syria, Afghanistan or Iraq.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

SEEMO South East Europe Media Organisation. Bad Practices, Bad Faith: Soft Censorship in Macedonia. Paris: WAN-IFRA, 2015.

A.J. Nemrazi.mk. 12 16, 2015. http://nemrazi.mk/izbrishan-grafit-koj-shiri-govor-na-omraza-vo-dvorot-na-ou-johan-hajnrih-pestalotsi/ (accessed 12 18, 2015).

Blazevska, Katerina. Deutche Welle na Makedonski. August 6, 2015. http://dw.com/p/1GB9n (accessed December 22, 2015).

"Criminal Code of Republic of Macedonia." Закон за изменување на Кривичниот законик. no. 132. Skopje: Sluzben vesnik na Republika Makedonija, September 5, 2004.

Deutche Welle на Македонски. 08 19, 2015. http://dw.com/p/1GHpH (accessed 12 10, 2015).

NeMrazi.mk. NeMrazi.mk. 01 25, 2016. http://nemrazi.mk/za-prv-pat-fejsbuk-ot-stranuva-strana-koja-shiri-govor-na-omraza/ (accessed 01 29, 2016).

Rating Agency. "http://bezomrazno.mk/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Report-of-the-survey-on-religion-and-religious-hate-speech-in-the-republic-of-Macedonia.pdf." bezomrazno.mk. October 2014. http://bezomrazno.mk/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Report-of-the-survey-on-religion-and-religious-hate-speech-in-the-republic-of-Macedonia.pdf (accessed December 20, 2015).

Serafinović, Miomir. Telma. August 7, 2015. http://telma.com.mk/vesti/koj-e-stefan-borecot-na-isis (accessed December 22, 2015).

State Statistical Office . Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Macedonia. Skopje: State Statistical Office , 2015.

State Statistical Office. Македонија во бројки (Macedonia in Numbers). Skopje: State Statistical Office, 2015.

Stojanovski, Strasko. "Етно-лингвистичката и религиска основа на идентитетот кај Македонците муслимани: видени преку теориите за етничките групи и нивните граници на Фредрик Барт." Philological studies, 2009.

Stojkovski, Filip. No Widespread Support for Religious Extremists in Macedonia and the Balkanks. Commentary, Zagreb: Analytica Thinking Labaratory, 2015.

Šegavić, Igor. Dnevnik. August 8, 2015. http://www.dnevnik.mk/default.asp?ItemID=F34DFAF3CD6E6A49BB0EA0B1BE9FB9B9 (accessed December 22, 2015).

Telegraf.mk. September 9, 2014. http://www.telegraf.mk/aktuelno/191190-ivz-go-poddrzuvame-zakonot-protiv-borci-na-stranski-frontovi (accessed December 20, 2015).

US State Department. "MACEDONIA 2014 INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT." 2015.

vecer.mk. August 7, 2015. http://vecer.mk/makedonija/dzhihadistot-doktor-stefan-lechel-mudzhahedini-vo-sirija (accessed December 22, 2015).

Waldman, Lorne Allan, and Warda Shazadi Meighen. "The wrong end of the wedge: migrants and Islamaphobia in the 2015 Canadian federal elections." Oxford Monitor of Forced Migration 5, no. 2 (2015): 33-36.

Ананиев, Јован. Дискриминација во огласите за вработување . research report, Skopje: Комисија за заштита од дискриминацијата/OSCE, 2013.

Ѓорѓевски, Бранко. Dnevnik.mk. 12 20, 2015. http://www.dnevnik.mk/?ItemID=4437E16D4023304A9D715DBBD43CDFFC (accessed 12 28, 2015).

Дамјановска, Сања Јовановиќ. Telma.mk. 3 15, 2015. http://telma.com.mk/vesti/verskite-uchilishta-da-stanat-del-od-obrazovniot-sistem (accessed 12 21, 2015).

Михаиловска, Јасмина, and Миша Поповиќ. Барометар за еднакви можности (Equal opportunities barrometer). Public Opinion Poll Report, Skopje: Македонски центар за меѓународна соработка, 2013.

Најчевска, Мирјана. proverkanafakti.mk. 09 04, 2015. http://proverkanafakti.mk/begalci-migranti-i-ksenofobija-vo-makedonskite-mediumi/ (accessed 12 22, 2015).

Народен Правобранител. Извештај за следењето на примената на начелото на соодветна и правична застапеност за 2014 година. Скопје: Народен Правобранител, 2015.

Слободен печат. Окно.мк. 11 10, 2015. http://okno.mk/node/51249 (accessed 12 11, 2015).

Стојадиновиќ, Соња. Plusinfo.mk. 11 9, 2015. http://plusinfo.mk/mislenje/925/se-mrazime-sproti-izbori (accessed 12 12, 2015).

Dukovska, Jugoslava. proverkanafakti.mk. 09 12, 2015. http://proverkanafakti.mk/recenzija-lazhni-obvinuvanja-i-promocija-na-ksenofobija/ (acessed 24 02, 2015).

vecer.mk, August, 29, 2015 http://vecer.mk/balkan/ahmed-od-libija-stigna-do-srbija-namesto-crkvi-vo-evropa-kje-se-gledaat-minarinja-toa-kje (acessed 24 02, 2015)

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN NETHERLANDS NATIONAL REPORT 2015

INEKE VAN DER VALK

THE AUTHOR

Ineke van der Valk (Political Sciences, University of Amsterdam/ Anti-Discrimination Bureau region Amsterdam) specializes in the study of racism, islamophobia, extremism, (de)radicalization, ethnic relations and diversity in multicultural societies and the history of immigrants in the Netherlands. She holds degrees in Educational Studies and Ethnic Studies and a Ph-D in Discourse Studies from the University of Amsterdam. Previously she was a senior researcher at the Anne Frank House where she studied processes of (de)radicalization, rightwing extremism, jihadi extremism and islamophobia. She obtained her doctorate on the interface between social sciences and discourse analysis with a comparative study of the perception of ethnic issues in the political discourse of the Netherlands and France, paying special attention to the extreme right: Difference, Deviance,Threat (Aksant 2002). She participated in a joint research project with the University of Vienna/ University of Amsterdam on racism in European countries. She was a community worker and human rights activist in the 70-ies and 80-ies and worked as a policy advisor for institutions, municipalities and NGO's. Supported by the Open Society Foundations and Stichting het PALET Ineke van der Valk currently works on islamophobia in the Netherlands and manages the project Monitor Islamophobia in the Netherlands.

This report has been written in the context of the project Monitor Islamophobia (University of Amsterdam) that is supported by the Open Society Foundation and Het PALET.

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions. No representation, either expressed or implied, is made of the accuracy of the material in the national reports. The editors of the European Islamophobia Report cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The reader must make his or her own evaluation of the accuracy and appropriateness of the material.

To cite this report: Ineke van der Valk (2016): *Islamophobia in Netherlands: National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015,* Istanbul, SETA, 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the first month of 2015 the Dutch regional anti-discrimination provisions received a total of 55 reports of Muslim discrimination.

A newly created community-based hotline 'Meld Islamofobie!' received 136 complaints of discriminatory aggression against Muslims in 2015.

In 2015, 142 cases of internet discrimination against Muslims were reported to the internet discrimination hotline MIND. In January alone, 103 cases were reported to the hotline MDI, 46 being punishable.

Of the vast number of media releases on topics concerning multiculturalism in the Dutch press, only a minority reported on Islamophobia, whereas 47 incidents in different municipalities were reported in relation to the reception of refugees. In many of these incidents their Muslim background was explicitly referred to.

Twenty seven incidents occurred in nineteen mosques in a number of municipalities in various parts of the country. Stones, paint and stink bombs were thrown at mosques, pigs´ heads left behind and threatening letters sent. Two mosques were occupied by a right extremist group and one mosque was the target of a shooting.

In secondary education, almost two out of three of the 498 school teachers who participated in a survey, said that they witnessed incidents in their classrooms related to discrimination of Muslims. They also frequently come across stereotypes of Muslims among their students and in textbooks.

In politics, Geert Wilders and his PVV (Party for Freedom) again and again campaigned against Islam/Muslims by means of hateful rhetoric in political speeches, on websites, in parliamentary questions and motions, and on stickers and leaflets.

Democratic political parties gradually but increasingly take a stance against the PVV trying to isolate Wilders in the political domain. However, various opinion polls taken in 2013, 2014 and 2015 have pointed to the PVV as the largest party in the Netherlands, if elections should have taken place at that point in time.

Three events attracted attention in the legal field. The government submitted a law 'partial interdiction of face-covering clothes' to Parliament. A motion asking the government to examine the possibilities of an interdiction of Salafist organisations was accepted in parliament. The PvdD (Party for the Animals) proposed a new draft law against ritual slaughtering. Four court cases discussed cases of Muslim discrimination.

More and more stakeholders have joined efforts to counter Islamophobia. Organisations campaign against Islamophobia, carry out research and present data and information on Islamophobia in the Netherlands. The present Monitor Islamophobia project at the University of Amsterdam runs until 2018 and has so far had several practical and policy effects. The Dutch government has increasingly developed policies to counter Islamophobia in particular and ethnic discrimination in general. In its annual policy paper on discrimination the government expressed concern about

the increase of intolerance and announced concrete policies to counter discrimination on the labour market, in education and in other fields.

NEDERLANDSE SAMENVATTING

Dit rapport gaat over islamofobie in Nederland in 2015. Discriminatoire agressie tegen moskeeën was een hot topic rond de jaarwisseling 2014-2015. Andere centrale kwesties in het publieke debat waren 'etnisch profileren' en moslimdiscriminatie door de politie, arbeidsmarktdiscriminatie en de komst van grote aantallen vluchtelingen in de tweede helft van het jaar.

Antidiscriminatiebureaus ontvingen alleen al in januari 55 klachten over moslimdiscrimiwnatie.

In 2015 werden bij het internet meldpunt MIND 142 gevallen van moslimdiscriminatie gemeld. In januari 2015 werden bij het MDI al 103 gevallen van internetdiscriminatie tegen moslims gemeld, waarvan 46 strafbare. Het Facebook meldpunt 'Meld Islamofobie!' registreerde 136 klachten van moslimdiscriminatie.

Slechts een klein aantal van de vele artikelen in de pers over de multiculturele samenleving gaat over discriminatie van moslims. Daarnaast werd vanaf half september veel aandacht gegeven aan 47 incidenten rond de opvang van vluchtelingen in verschillende gemeenten. Vaak werd daarbij expliciet verwezen naar het feit dat het gaat om vluchtelingen met een moslimachtergrond.

In 2015 vonden 27 incidenten plaats in 19 moskeeën in verschillende gemeenten. Er werden stenen, verf en een stinkbom naar moskeeën gegooid, er werd een varkenskop gedeponeerd en moskeeën ontvingen dreigbrieven. Twee moskeeën werden bezet door een rechtsextremistische groep en één daarvan werd bij een andere gelegenheid beschoten.

In het middelbare onderwijs gaven twee van de drie docenten die aan een representatieve survey deelnamen aan dat zij incidenten in hun klassen hadden meegemaakt gericht tegen moslims.

Steeds opnieuw laten opinieonderzoeken zien dat rond de helft van de burgers in Nederland een negatieve opinie hebben over moslims. Wilders en zijn PVV proberen deze sentimenten niet alleen verbaal politiek te organiseren maar in toenemende mate ook te mobiliseren in buitenparlementaire actie tegen moskeeën en tegen de opvang van vluchtelingen. De PVV vroeg in moties in de Tweede Kamer een algemeen verbod van moskeeën. Politieke partijen nemen geleidelijk steeds meer stelling tegen de PVV die hierdoor politiek gezien steeds meer geïsoleerd raakt. Echter opiniepeilingen in 2013-2015 lieten de PVV zien als de grootste partij als er op dat moment verkiezingen hadden plaats gevonden.

Op het gebied van wet- en regelgeving trokken drie zaken de aandacht. De regering legde een wet op gelaatsbedekkende kleding voor aan de Tweede Kamer.

De Partij voor de Dieren kwam opnieuw met een initiatief wetsvoorstel tegen ritueel slachten en de regering werd in een kamerbrede motie gevraagd om de mogelijkheden van een verbod op salafistische organisaties te onderzoeken.

Steeds meer belanghebbenden zetten zich in om islamofobie als een vorm van tegen te gaan. Maatschappelijke organisaties hebben meldpunten in het leven geroepen, voeren campagnes tegen islamofobie, doen onderzoek en verschaffen informatie en gegevens over het verschijnsel. Het project Monitor Islamofobie dat loopt tot 2018 heeft tot nu toe naast gegevens en inzicht verschillende praktische en beleidseffecten opgeleverd. De Nederlandse overheid is geleidelijk steeds actiever met het tegengaan van moslim discriminatie en discriminatie in het algemeen. De politie heeft in 2015 moslimdiscriminatie als aparte categorie opgenomen in het discriminatieregistratiesysteem. In zijn jaarlijkse discriminatiebrief (februari 2015) uitte de regering bezorgdheid over de toename van intolerantie en kondigde beleidsmaatregelen aan om discriminatie op de arbeidsmarkt, in het onderwijs en op andere terreinen tegen te gaan.

INTRODUCTION

In the Netherlands many young people from Turkish or Moroccan backgrounds do not feel they belong to Dutch society. They feel excluded and rejected by Dutch society as a whole. Dutch citizens consider them not as individuals, not as Dutch citizens but as Turks, or Moroccans or Muslims, i.e. as a deviant group. They feel they are treated differently on the labour market, in education, in daily life, in politics and in the media. They do not trust the media, politicians or the police. They feel misrepresented in the press. Most young males have experienced ethnic profiling by the police. They mention the unfavourable climate towards ethnic minority groups as the main reason why they increasingly identify themselves with their communities of origin and their faith. These are some of the outcomes of an extended study among young people from Turkish and Moroccan backgrounds in the Netherlands.[1] Taken together the results of this study present a clear indication of the experience of discrimination as the pivotal, central issue in the lives of young members of ethnic minority groups in the Netherlands. One of such forms of discrimination and the attitudes and ideologies behind it is Islamophobia. Islamophobia manifests itself in many spheres of life, in blatant and violent practices, in structural arrangements, in subtle interpersonal communication and in different sectors of society.

In another study undertaken among members of mainstream society it was found that in 2014/2015 most young people and adults in the Netherlands (55 %) are of the opinion that most Muslims respect others.[2] This percentage is measured every two years and has been steadily increasing since 2004. A smaller percentage (44 %), which is more constant over the years, is of the opinion that "the way of life of Muslims and Western Europeans is incompatible".[3]

The present report is about Islamophobia and its manifestations in the Netherlands in 2015. It should be pointed out, however, that data on 2015 from anti-discrimination agencies and official institutions such as the police, the public prosecutor and the Netherlands Institute of Human Rights will not be published until mid 2016.

SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

It is a difficult task to present an accurate report on the 'state of the art' knowledge about ethnic discrimination in the Netherlands. Institutions, organisations and academics depend on notifications and reports by victims or – in addition - they have to conduct empirical research themselves. There is a huge gap between the discrimination experienced, as it is reported in representative surveys, on the one hand, and

1. W. Huijnk et al *Werelden van verschil* , Den Haag SCP, December 2015.

2. . R. Bijl et al De Sociale staat van Nederland 2015, SCP, December 2015, webversion, p.81.

3. Notice the assumption contained in the survey question that Muslims are not Western by definition.

on the other,[4] the numbers of complaints and reports to the police and anti-discrimination agencies as well as the incidents reported in the media. While surveys show high numbers, the number of reports to official institutions is generally low. It is thus important not to focus too much on numbers and statistics of reported acts of discrimination alone. In spite of these restrictions the collected data give an indication of the prevalence, scope and character of discrimination cases that target Muslims, in real life and online.

Notifications to the Anti-Discrimination Offices

Since 2009, every municipality in the Netherlands has been under obligation to offer its citizens a provision against discrimination. In the first month of 2015, the Dutch regional anti-discrimination provisions together received 55 reports of discrimination against Muslims. More data on 2015 is expected in summer 2016.

POLDIS: police data

Commissioned by the National Expertise Centre Diversity (LECD-police) an annual report is published with data on discrimination that are systematically registered by the national police service. This POLDIS report[5] gives an overview of discrimination data on grounds that are subject to criminal law i.e. race, religion, philosophy of life, gender, sexual orientation and disability. The report on 2014 that was published in November 2015, shows several important improvements compared to previous reports.[6] Registration was not always uniform. Regular changes in categorisation and registration have caused new and unexpected problems. This has in the recent past hampered the overview, the collection of disaggregated data and the coordination among institutions and has thus rendered further insight rather problematic. Muslim discrimination was, sometimes more or sometimes less, under-reported or made more or less invisible, using number- and category games. Fortunately recently after strong criticism,[7] the police services have taken a great step forward to a more uniform and qualitatively superior system of registration. Amongst other changes, Muslim discrimination is integrated in the system as a separate category of discrimination. On a total of 5,721 reports of discriminatory incidents in 2014, 279 (5 %) were on religious grounds and 206 of these targeted a Muslim. This is a clear increase compared to 2013 when 150 such incidents were registered. Data about reports and complaints to the police services in 2015 are expected by the end of 2016.

4. See e.g. Andriessen, I., H. Fernee & K. Wittebrood, *Ervaren discriminatie in Nederland*.

5. An abbreviation of the words 'police' and 'discrimination'.

6. B. Tierolf et al. *Discriminatiecijfers politie 2014* Utrecht, Verwey-Jonker Instituut, 2015; for previous reports see: B.Tierolf c.s. *POLDIS-rapportage 2013, met themanummer moslimdiscriminatie,* Utrecht, Verwey-Jonker Instituut, 2014; B. Tierolf & N. Hermens, *Tweede rapportage racisme, antisemitisme en extreemrechts geweld in Nederland*, Rapportage incidenten, aangiftes, verdachten en afhandeling 2012. Utrecht, Verwey-Jonker Instituut, 2013.

7. For details see I. van der Valk, *Dutch Islamophobia*, LIT-Verlag, p.101-108; in Dutch: I. van der Valk, *Monitor Moslim Discriminatie,* IMES, Universiteit van Amsterdam, p. 54-60.

Civil Society Organisations (CSO)

Citizens and CSOs have taken initiatives to create hotlines and notification sites where victims can report outside of the official system of anti-discrimination bureaus and the police. In the winter of 2015, after the Charlie Hebdo attack, a small group of academics and professionals created the Facebook and internet hotline 'Meld Islamofobie!' By 20 December, 2015, the hotline had received 136 complaints on discriminatory aggression against Muslims. A first report was issued in the summer reporting 89 experiences of discriminatory incidents. The cases of verbal abuse that were reported did not always explicitly refer to being a Muslim and/or Islam but were obviously experienced by the victims as related to their Muslim identity. The reported incidents may thus be considered as reflecting the intertwined manifestation of ethnic discrimination and Muslim discrimination. The organisation reported the following in relation to the complaints of the victims in the period January – June 2015:

20.2 % of the reported incidents took place in Rotterdam and 15.5 % in Amsterdam; 62 % of the incidents took place in January 2015; 90 % (63) of the victims were women; 98 % of these women were clearly Muslims in that they wore a headscarf. In only a few cases did they have other face covering or clothes such as a niqaab or a khimaar. Of the perpetrators 71 % were (mostly white) men. One third of the reports were about physical violence, in particular against women and 87 % of the incidents took place during the day in public places (public transport, on the street, in supermarkets). 67% of the victims were alone when targeted and 58% of them did not report the incident to the police. Eight incidents targeted mosques and three incidents consisted of rallies and other forms of protest by right extremist groups.

Articles in the press

Of the vast number of media releases on topics related to multicultural society and interethnic relations, only a minority report on discrimination of Muslims. The following data are based on a daily collection of newspaper clippings from journals, local and national newspapers, digital news from radio, and television programmes on items related to multicultural society and interethnic relations. Altogether several hundreds of articles have been scrutinised. However, the many press articles on the PVV and on discriminatory aggression against mosques are not taken into consideration in this paragraph because these issues are discussed in separate sections. Discriminatory incidents related to the reception of refugees are also discussed separately. Some other articles are referred to in other sections of this report.

Altogether 22 discriminatory acts against Muslims were reported in the press. Nine incidents targeted women and three families.

These incidents consisted of the following categories, each followed by an example of such an incident:

verbal abuse and threats (6)

25 May, Enschede. Four women wearing headscarves and working in a pharmacy are often verbally abused with utterances such as 'Fucking headscarf' and 'go back to your own country'. The owner has reported this to the police and has put up a notice against discrimination at the entrance.

physical assault (5)

13 March, Rotterdam. A 40-year-old woman is beaten and verbally abused in her car for no other reason other than being Muslim.

racist graffiti (5)

1 July, Steenbergen. Racist graffiti is sprayed on the walls of a number of buildings, houses and a church. "stb AntiMuslim" is one such graffiti.

hate messages in letters/tweets (4),

28 January, The Hague (Schilderswijk). Several households received hate letters, in which the 'I' of Islam was raised as a middle finger on one side and 'we are here in the Netherlands' on the other side.

Exclusion in work and public transport (2)

June, Oosterhout. A bus driver refuses to let a woman wearing a burka on board the bus.

Incidents related to the reception of refugees

In the parliamentary general discussions on the annual budget on 16 September, Geert Wilders called for resistance against the reception of refugees. From then on a large number of discriminatory actions against asylum seekers took place, almost on a daily basis.[8] Geert Wilders distributed a daily Twitter message # join resistance. Buildings, in particular reception centres, were painted with racist graffiti or vandalised; reception centres and cars set on fire; local authorities, mayors, councillors and politicians intimidated or threatened; local meetings disturbed by people yelling and shouting. Sometimes violence was used to disturb information meetings. Right extremist groups in particular have been very active in following Wilders' call but also local action committees were formed and Facebook pages launched. Extremist groups disturbed many information meetings at different municipalities. The legitimate worries and fears of local people were exploited and abused by extremist groups. In different regions the PVV launched calls for rallies and protests, such as in Haarlem on 25 September, or put pressure on local governments not to facilitate reception of refugees such as in Zeeland and Limburg (8/10), often with the argument of a lack of provisions for local people and housing facilities in particular. Wilders visited different municipalities that stood out in protests such as Almere (3/10) and

8. On16 April, the Facebook page *Nederlandmijn vaderland* (Holland my fatherland) celebrated the drowning of 400 refugees in the Mediterranean, see *www.retecool.com*

Steenbergen (12/10) and called for a revolt. In Almere the PVV suggested prohibiting refugees to go out after dark. The Facebook page 'Support the PVV' distributed a song using the melody of a popular love song: '(…) Long live Islam. So peaceful and patient. Because we tolerate rape and violence, people give generously, because that is what they are told'.

The reported incidents are not exhaustive but give an indication of the greater picture. They do not all explicitly target Muslims/Islam but predominantly target Syrian (Muslim) refugees and local councillors and mayors who are in favour of the reception of refugees.

Incidents against the reception of refugees (from mid-September)	
Graffiti	19
Threats (letters/tweets)	8
Banners	6
Homes and centres vandalised	5
Various incidents (pigs' heads/fake letters)	4
Total	49

Examples

9 October, Woerden. A reception centre for refugees is attacked with heavy firebombs and eggs by 20 young men (18-35) from a number of villages in the neighbourhood. It was an organised action prepared by Whatsapp calls 'death to Muslims' and 'On our way soldier, it is war'. Perpetrators were arrested, suspected of overt violence and condemned in court in January 2016. One of them was a candidate for the PVV in the last provincial elections. The prime minister visited the centre to express solidarity with the refugees.

17 December, Pannerden. The house of a refugee family from Somalia in the small village is hit with a firework bomb destroying the carport and the window. A leaflet with the following texts was left behind: "White is better, own people first!!! Foreigners must leave from here!!", "this is only the beginning". Underneath the text was a photo of Geert Wilders raising his finger. Politicians asked Geert Wilders to distance himself from this action. From his holiday resort he tweeted: '(…)Take distance yourself from your cowardice and betrayal of the Netherlands to Islam.'

5 October, Utrecht. PEGIDA organised a demonstration. The speech held at the end by a spokesperson of this extremist anti-Islam movement was very hateful. On 19 December, PEGIDA organised a demonstration in Rotterdam. About a hundred people participated and listened to a speech of the Vlaams Blok Belgian politician Filip de Winter who called the Koran 'a license to kill non-believers.' For both cases the public prosecutor has announced the intent to examine whether the discourse is punishable or not by law.

Discriminatory incidents against mosques

The data from 2010 onwards collected for Monitor Islamophobia shows that discriminatory aggression against mosques has increased.[9] At the same time the pattern is cyclical and often related to contextual events. In addition, the general hardening of the climate of opinion regarding Muslims/Islam seems to have a corresponding impact on the number of incidents. Discriminatory incidents at mosques have become the proverbial tip of the Islamophobic iceberg. Plans for new mosques replacing older buildings increasingly lead to actions of protest and resistance by both the people living in the neighbourhood and others. Boards of mosques are increasingly confronted with obstacles in getting their building projects through bureaucratic procedures. Civil servants and local authorities out of fear of local resistance become extremely critical when assessing projects of mosque organisations. Local MPs are put under pressure and sometimes even anonymously threatened to vote against plans for new mosques or their financing. Some political actors, in particular the PVV, try to use the worries of local people in order to mobilise them for their own political anti-Islam objectives. Increasingly the PVV finds other right extremist groups on its side, such as Identitair Verzet (Identitarian Resistance which is part of a larger European identitarian movement) and Voorpost. Initiatives to build a new place of prayer make mosques more vulnerable to being targeted. Although a direct causal correlation is difficult to prove, the resistance against new buildings, its encouragement by the PVV on the site MoskNee ,and efforts of related initiatives may have an impact on the increase of this vulnerability. It cannot be excluded that the PVV and related initiatives encourage people to go beyond what the law allows them. As we have seen the PVV does not discourage people to do so.

In particular, the developments around new buildings for mosques in Gouda and Leiden attracted national attention from the political arena and media and are good illustrations of the rising tensions around mosques and the cycle of events described above.

In Gouda, three local mosques cooperated in a project to build one large mosque to replace the three existing ones. In 2015, the issue took on national proportions: it was discussed in the National Parliament and became front-page news in the media. Quickly the project was described as 'megamoskee' first by the anti-Islam movement and later by the mainstream press and politicians, initially between quotation marks but soon without. The local population expressed fear that the

9. In 2005-2010, the number of discriminatory incidents against mosques varied between eleven and twenty-five a year. In particular in 2007 and 2008 the number of incidents was high. Afterwards the number of incidents decreased but this changed in 2013-2014. For 2013 and 2014 taken together, 55 incidents occurred at 39 mosques. These incidents mainly consisted of vandalism, (racist) graffiti, arson, threatening letters/emails, leaving a pig's head and aggression towards staff or believers. For more information on discriminatory aggression against mosques see: I. van der Valk *Islamofobie en Discriminatie*, Amsterdam University Press, p. 75-85; *Monitor Moslim Discriminatie*, 2015, p. 68-87; Dutch Islamophobia, 2015, p. 121-158.

mosque would attract radical Muslims, that the price of their houses would decrease and that the parking of too many cars would have a negative impact on them. A sequence of events followed: actions and initiatives of local action groups, exploitation of social tensions by right extremist groups and individuals, hate speech on social media and the like. The group Identitair Verzet put a banner on the building (a former military barracks). Local politicians received a total of more than a hundred intimidating email threats such as 'if you vote for the mega mosque we will find you.' Stickers were put on their mailboxes of certain politicians. A local politician with a Muslim background was targeted on social media: 'Typhus pig. F*ck Muslim, Salafist dog. Betrayer of the nation.' In a debate about the new mosque in Gouda in the National Parliament on 12 June, 2015, the PVV in cooperation with the Group Bontes & van Klaveren proposed a ban on new mosques (no.92-34000-VI). A second PVV-only motion (no. 93-34000-VI) proposed the closure of all existing mosques.[10] No other parties supported the proposals.

Finally the local council of Gouda with a very small majority of votes decided not to buy the site of the military barracks and thus not to sell part of it to the mosques.

In February, Identitair Verzet hit the headlines in a campaign against the establishment of a new mosque in Leiden. The mosque under construction was occupied for some time by this right extremist group who raised flags with the slogan 'Stop Islam.' In addition to a local initiative of worried citizens and a populist party trying to exploit this, the group played a key role in the opposition against the mosque. Right extremist and populist actors operated together in online and offline initiatives which exploited people's front stage fear of radicalisation and extremism in order to mobilise them against Muslims backstage.[11] In addition to the occupation in February, the mosque was targeted in a shooting and vandalised twice in the autumn. Local people complained of being excluded. Their moderate voices were not heard. Many of them welcome the mosque and do not have any objections to its presence.

In addition to the events in Gouda and Leiden the following incidents took place:[12]

In the aftermath of the Paris attacks, mosques were attacked, not only in France but in the Netherlands as well. In the first five weeks following the Charlie Hebdo attacks, incidents were reported in Vlaardingen and Schiedam where paint bombs were thrown at mosques; in Enschede, a mosque was defiled by paint and graffiti; and in Almelo, two of the mosque's windows were smashed. In Rotterdam, a hate letter with death threats was sent to a mosque, while two others were pelted with glass and paint. In The Hague, a mosque received several hate letters and was assaulted with a paint bomb, another was hit with a stink bomb. On the 19 January, in Rotterdam a mosque was threatened with

10. http://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/detail?id=2015D22503&did=2015D22503 (accessed 15 February 2016)

11. For details about this campaign, see in I. van der Valk 'Monitor Moslim Discriminatie' Amsterdam IMES 2015.

12. Sources of the reports of aggression against mosques are media reports and information from mosques.

a handwritten letter that contained a death threat to Muslims if they did not leave the country in time. It stated 'it is payday!!" Muslims were called cockroaches.

February 26

- Hilversum a letter on the mosque with the text: 'murders by jihadists are an insult to Allah.'

April 26

- Breda, swastikas are painted on the entrance of a mosque.

June 23

- Roermond, a mosque receives a threatening letter.

June 27

- Purmerend, anti-Islam slogans written on the windows.

September 23

- Zwolle, a mosque is vandalized.

September 25

- Rotterdam, a mosque is vandalized.

November 11

- Assen, stones are thrown through windows of a mosque.
- After the terrorist attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015:

November 14

- Roosendaal, a mosque is set on fire.

November 13

- Bergen op Zoom, a stone is thrown through the window of a mosque.

November 25

- Leerdam, a bottle with a alcoholic drink is thrown to the mosque.

December 19

- demonstration on the roof of a mosque in Dordrecht by the group Identitair Verzet. Thirteen people are arrested. Banners can be seen with 'stop Islam' and 'Less, less.'

Altogether 19 mosques witnessed 27 cases of discriminatory aggression in 2015.

Cyberspace

Social media like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube all regularly feature Islamophobic messages.

In the aftermath of the three Swedish mosques that were set on fire just before New Year's Eve 2014, a message with the heading 'A Swedish Mosque Set on Fire Again' was posted on a Facebook page and received 282 likes and reactions that called for burning down mosques in the Netherlands as well. The Facebook page

Steun de PVV (Support the PVV) made similar incitements. The page had received 6,500 likes by the beginning of 2015. Again, similar calls were made to follow the Swedish example and set fire to mosques in the Netherlands such as, for example, "Well done, away with those buildings, they are less than inferior to pigsties!!!" Although such calls have surfaced on Facebook before, this time they drew much more attention from the national media and politicians.

Data about online discrimination is registered on a daily basis by the internet hotlines MDI and MIND. MIND was launched by the government in 2013 and has not received many complaints so far. In 2015, they received 142 complaints of Muslim discrimination.

The annual MDI reports give an overview of discrimination data on grounds that are subject to criminal law i.e. race, religion, philosophy of life, gender, sexual orientation and disability.[13] Most reports on discrimination in recent years regarded social media such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, more than weblogs, websites and discussion forums. The four most important categories of discrimination in 2014 were anti-Semitism, anti-black racism, Muslim discrimination, and discrimination of Moroccans. The following is an example of Muslim discrimination from an internet discussion in 2015 on the project to build a new mosque in Gouda: "Great, let it be built. Easy target to burn down when it is full with those stinking people", "directly throw a bomb on it", "burn down when it is full".[14] The MDI considers the legality of the expressions and accordingly requests from the owner of the website to remove the statement if it is illegal. In most cases the owner is willing to do so and the statement is removed. If not, they are reported to the police. The data on 2015 is expected to be published in the spring of 2015. After the terrorist attack on Charlie Hebdo on 6 January, 2015, 103 complaints about discriminatory expressions against Muslims on the internet were reported to MDI of which 46 were considered punishable.

Table 1. Reports and complaints of Muslim discrimination in 2015

Anti-discrimination bodies	55 (January only)
CSO Meld Islamofobie!	136
POLDIS	(expected in summer 2016)
Internet hotlines MDI	103 (January only)
MIND	142
Aggression against 19 mosques	27
Total	463

13. Stichting Magenta, afdeling MDI, Jaarverslag 2014, Amsterdam 2015.

14. Ibid.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN VARIOUS FIELDS

Education

Anti-Islam/anti-Muslim attitudes of students and their teachers' reactions were investigated in detail in a study commissioned by the Anne Frank House and FORUM in cooperation with the University of Amsterdam, Department of Political Sciences for the Monitor Islamophobia Project.[15] The study resulted in the following outcomes. Almost two out of three of the 498 school teachers who participated in the survey said that they witnessed incidents in their classes related to discrimination of Muslims. These teachers more often teach in institutes with a lower level of education (70–78 %) than in the more academic ones (51-55 %). Teachers working in rural areas witness such incidents more often (61 %) than teachers working in cities (4 5%). Perpetrators are more often boys of native Dutch origin and their victims boys of Moroccan and Turkish origin. Media reports of objectionable and criminal behaviour by Muslims (80 %), followed by comments by politicians and other well-known Dutch people (75 %) are reported as the main reasons for the incidents. Teachers also mention terrorism and terrorist organisations in the Netherlands and abroad (71 %) as contributing to such incidents. Offensive language and abuse obtained high scores among the incidents that were reported, but more serious incidents such as vandalism and physical assault were reported too. The teachers report that discussions in the media, at home and in the classroom give rise to the generalising statements about Islam and Muslims that underpin prejudices. Almost all teachers (94 %) report that they intervene when they are confronted with discrimination in their classes. They verbally correct perpetrators or engage in discussions with the students. Specifically for this monitoring project the teachers were in addition questioned about stereotypes that they confront in textbooks, and in texts and utterances by students.[16]

Stereotypes in texts and verbal utterances by students

Some examples of stereotypes were presented to the teachers in order to obtain information about the extent to which they come across such stereotypes among their students. The stereotypes were selected from an overview of frequently occurring stereotypes about Muslims from a publication of the OSCE/ODIHR, the Council of Europe, and UNESCO.[17] Almost half or sometimes more of the 498 teachers

15. S. Bouma & L. de Ruig, *Moslimdiscriminatie in het voorgezet onderwijs, een onderzoek onder docenten,* Panteia, 2015.

16. In September 2014, stereotypes about Muslims and Dutch people of Moroccan and Turkish origin in textbooks hit the headlines when some sections from a textbook were brought to the public attention in traditional and digital media. http://www.malmberg.nl/Voortgezet-onderwijs/Methodes/Mens-Maatschappij/maatschappijleer/Blikopener-vmbo-bovenbouw/Bladerboeken-en-pdfdownloads-Blikopener.htm (accessed 15 February 2016)

17. Pädagogische Leitfaden zu Bekämpfung von Diskriminierung und Intoleranz gegenüber Muslimen, mit Bildungsarbeit gegen Islamophobie, Warschau, Council of Europe, OSCE/ODIHR, UNESCO, 2012, p. 27-28.

who participated in the survey report that they sometimes or often come across the following stereotypes among their students: 'they are all the same' (65 %); 'their behaviour is exclusively determined by their religion' (51 %); and 'they represent a threat' (50 %). The stereotype 'they are culturally and morally inferior' is reported less frequently however (28 %).

Stereotypes in textbooks

The teachers were also asked if and to what extent they come across such stereotypes in their textbooks: a limited number of them replied affirmatively. Such stereotypes included 'they are all the same' (12 %); 'they are totally different from non-Muslims' (10 %); 'their behaviour is exclusively determined by their religion' (15 %); 'they represent a threat' (10 %). Again, the stereotype 'they are culturally and morally inferior' is reported less frequently (6 %).

Politics

This section discusses in particular the anti-Muslim/anti-Islam stance of the PVV. While the PVV was confronted with hardly any opposition from mainstream parties during the previous government that it supported, this has changed since its collapse. On the other side, right extremist groups increasingly manifest themselves in support of the PVV and its social actions against Muslims/Islam.

Over a period of several years, the PVV has stood out on account of its clear Islamophobic statements. Remarks of PVV MP Geert Wilders about Islam were the subject of criminal proceedings in 2010-2011, when he faced investigations into whether he had made deliberately insulting statements towards Muslims as a group because of their religion or whether he had incited discrimination and hatred, or both, against Muslims on account of their religion. Although the court took the view that some of his comments were discriminatory in themselves, or offensive and insulting, Wilders was acquitted in light of the overall context of his arguments, the wider social context and the freedom of expression granted to politicians.[18] The opposing parties have lodged an appeal to the Supreme Court and to European bodies which is still under consideration.

In mid March 2014, at a meeting concerning the municipal elections in The Hague, Wilders asked his followers if they wanted more or fewer Moroccans in the city. The followers shouted 'fewer, fewer, fewer' and Wilders answered 'We will arrange that'. The result was, among others, that the government and political parties at all levels of politics officially declared their refusal to cooperate with the PVV in general or as long as Wilders did not withdraw his statements. In mid December 2015, the public prosecutor announced that the second trial of Geert Wilders will start in March 2016. Wilders is prosecuted for insulting people on the grounds of their race

18. Amsterdam Criminal Court, 23 June 2011, LJN BQ9001.

and for inciting hatred and discrimination against a group of people when calling for 'fewer Moroccans'. The chances that he will be convicted this time are higher than in the previous trial due to the changing character of his discriminatory statements. Although a new trial certainly has some social disadvantages, it is at the same time of great interest because of the major negative consequences of the previous verdict for the constitutional state in general, as was pointed out by Prakken, one of the lawyers in the previous trial.[19] In addition, a recent verdict from the supreme court plays an important role in this prognosis. On November 16, 2014, it ruled that clear limits should be put to statements that politicians put forward in a public debate.[20]

Again and again surveys indicate that almost half of native-born Dutch people have negative attitudes towards Muslims (see Introduction). Wilders and his PVV continue to politically organise these sentiments not only on a discursive level but increasingly to transform them into, thus far, legal extra-parliamentary social actions such as those against mosques. After a call for a ban on headscarves, a ban on the Quran, a ban on the Azaan, a ban on foreign funding of mosques, a ban on building new mosques, the PVV called for an overall ban on mosques in the Dutch House of Representatives. On a local and provincial level PVV politicians or sympathisers campaign against mosques sometimes asking for closure, such as in Geleen (July) and Almere, or the interdiction of the Azaan (Oldenzaal, May; Enschede, November, Groningen, May).

In addition to the anti-Muslim rhetoric that is frequently repeated, the PVV has a website named MoskNee, which opposes the presence of both newly planned and existing mosques. From this website protest actions against mosques are organised and coordinated. People are invited to seek advice how to undertake protest actions against mosques. In addition to the website MoskNee, there is also a Facebook page Mosknee (with a lower-case 'n'), where certain legal principles are less adhered to.

A chronology of the relevant most important moments in relation to the PVV follows:

April.

1. The PVV proposed to the government not to employ people from an Islamic background in the army.
2. Geert Wilders spread his hateful discourse abroad as well. He held a speech at a PEGIDA rally in Germany and was invited in Garland, Texas (April) on the occasion of an exhibition of anti-Islam cartoons.

17 June

The right-wing extremist European parties PVV, FN, FPO, VB and Lega Nord

19. T. Prakken, , *Grondrechten op de helling, de rol van het Wildersproces in de afbraak van de rechtsstaat*, Amsterdam: Atlas Contact, 2012.

20. http://uitspraken.rechtspraak.nl/inziendocument?id=ECLI:NL:HR:2014:3583 (accessed 15 February 2016)

together hold 37 seats in the European Parliament. They succeed in founding another two parties (the Polish Congress New Right and the British UKIP) and are thus able to found a party in June 2015 under the name Europe of Nations and Freedom Group. This means more financial support, more speaking time and thus more influence.

December The PVV looks for new candidates in parliament using the criterion ´with an aversion to Islam.´

17 December

PvdA MP Khadija Arib informed parliament that she wanted to be a candidate for the presidency of the parliament. PVV MP de Graaf reacted with a tweet: 'Someone who is a subject of the king of Morocco should not become president of the Dutch Parliament, No way!'

Democratic political parties gradually but increasingly take a stance against (the racism of) the PVV, against racism in general and Islamophobia in particular.[21] Wilders and the PVV are becoming more and more isolated at the political level and anti-discrimination has become an issue on the political agenda. Political leadership, mainstream political parties and civil society actors have not only distanced themselves from and protested against the discourse on Moroccans by Wilders and his party as such, but have also gradually taken concrete action against discrimination and racism. However, various opinion polls taken in 2013, 2014 and 2015, have pointed to the PVV as the largest party in the Netherlands, if elections should take place at that point in time.

Justice system, laws, and regulations

On 4 April

G. Bouwman, head of the national police force writes on an internal blog that Muslim police officers are verbally abused by colleagues. "A poison sneaks into our organisation, the poison of exclusion," he wrote. He condemned the arbitrariness that reigns on the streets where Muslims are disproportionally stopped and searched and treated as terrorists. Research shows that debureaucratisation and an emphasis on individual autonomy have made the police force more vulnerable to different forms of discrimination that cannot be countered by the usual psychological awareness training.[22] The police service of the city of Tilburg has started a pilot project. Registration forms will be used where police officers must write down the ethnicity of the person they stop and the reason why this is done. In Amsterdam, political parties insist on a national policy of diversity to counter police discrimination. The mayor of the city of The Hague, Van Aartsen, in a debate in the local council (9 July) confirmed that ethnic profiling does

21. Examples and details are elaborated in the report, written in Dutch, I. van der Valk *Monitor Moslim Discriminatie.*

22. P. Mutsaers. "Ethnic profiling as a Societal Institution in the Netherlands" in: *Anthropoliteia*, April 2015.

occur in the police force. He proposed a long list of measures to be taken to counter discrimination by the police force. In addition to reinforcing contact and cooperation with anti-discrimination provisions, social organisation initiatives also aim at improving community relations, in particular in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

In September 2015

the Partij voor de Dieren (PvD – Party for the Animals) proposed a new draft law against ritual slaughtering.[23] A previous draft law was rejected by the senate in 2012. The draft law will be discussed in parliament in 2016.

On 27 November

the government submitted a law regarding the 'partial interdiction of face-covering clothing' to parliament. Although the law aims at non-religious face-covering clothing as well it is common sense that in the first place the burqa and niqaab are targeted. Earlier governmental and parliamentary proposals to ban these Islamic veils were raised in 2006, 2008, 2009 and 2011/12, in various ways. The actual proposal aims to ban face covering in limited public domains, the fields of education and care, public (state) institutions and public transport. Trespassing the law will be punished with a fine of 405 euros. The Council of State disapproved of the law in its advice.[24] The council emphasised that institutions do not need a legal interdiction because they have the freedom to impose their own rules. Moreover and more importantly the council is of the opinion that this interdiction is an infringement of the freedom of religion that is guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). At the initiative of the working group 'Hands off my Niqaab' fifty Islamic organisations sent a letter to parliament and the House of Commons to protest against this draft law asking them to reject it.

In November 2015, a motion of MP Marcouch (PvdA) and MP Tellegen (VVD) asking the government to examine the possibilities of an interdiction of Salafist organisations was accepted in parliament.

Court cases

This overview of cases that were brought to court in 2015 is based on data from the media and the official website www.rechtsspraak.nl. It does not exclude the possibility of more cases having been brought to court. They might not have attracted the attention of the media or may not have been interesting enough to be mentioned on the aforementioned website.

The Criminal Court of Utrecht condemned a 42-year-old man to 240 hours of community service for insulting and threatening the Muslim community because of

23. https://www.partijvoordedieren.nl/kamerinitiatieven/initiatiefwet-onverdoofd-ritueel-slachten (accessed 15 February 2016)

24. WO4.15.0170/I, 15 July.

their faith and race. He will also receive obligatory treatment at a psychiatric hospital. Shortly after the Charlie Hebdo terrorist attack in Paris, he had sent letters to five mosques in Utrecht with insults, death threats and threats of arson. He also included pieces of pork in the letters.

8 October

Eight people were given fines between 350 and 450 Euros because of their calls to set fire to Dutch mosques after similar events in Sweden on New Years' Eve.

14 October

Six people (one underage) from Zaandam are prosecuted by the police judge for posting the following text on Facebook: 'every person engaged in the building of a mosque and Islamic centre in the neighbourhood Saendelft in Assendelft should be gassed'.

Countering Islamophobia

CSOs have taken initiatives to counter Islamophobia by creating hotlines and notification sites where victims can report such incidents outside the official system of anti-discrimination bureaus and the police. Organisations that collect complaints are the Facebook initiative 'Meld Islamofobie!'; the Collective against Islamophobia based in Amsterdam; SPIOR, a platform organisation of Islamic organisations and mosques in Rotterdam; the Muslim women organisation Al Nisa; and the Turkish Forum. Other organisations that campaign against Islamophobia are Contact Orgaan Moslims en Overheid (Contact Body Muslims and Government) and EMCEMO. The weblog Republiek Allochtonie has become an important source of information on Islamophobia in the Netherlands.

The present Monitor Islamophobia project that runs until 2018 in addition to presenting data and analysis has so far had several practical publicity and policy effects.

Islamophobia is on the agenda in the media, politics and civil society.

The latest report on police data (POLDIS November 2015) shows that several of the recommendations made after a critical discussion of the system of categorisation and registration by the police have been implemented. Muslim discrimination is now integrated as a separate category of discrimination in the police registration system.

Several MPs have raised questions in parliament.

At the request of the liberal political parties D66 and VVD the proposal to integrate Muslim discrimination as a separate ground of discrimination in municipal and police categorisation systems has been accepted by the Municipality of Amsterdam. The municipality has decided to participate in contributing to the costs (50 %) of the protection of mosques under threat.

For the first time the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights explicitly discusses Islamophobia and the increase of Muslim discrimination in its annual reports.

Government

The present government, formed by the liberal party VVD (People's Party for Freedom and Democracy) and the social democratic PvdA (Labour Party) after the 2012 collapse of the government supported by the PVV of Geert Wilders, has clearly decided to tackle verbal discrimination issues. The government has repeatedly recognised publicly the existence and the rise of racism in the Netherlands in general and discrimination in the labour market in particular. After the release of a report on labour discrimination,[25] the authorities announced policies aimed at reducing discrimination, among others. by refusing to cooperate with businesses that allow discriminatory policies and practices. Measures to counter discrimination in education have also been launched. Various expert meetings on Islamophobia were organised by the Ministry of Social Affairs in close collaboration with civil society stakeholders. Most importantly the government after initial hesitation has officially protested against discriminatory declarations by Wilders about Moroccan citizens in the most recent election campaigns in the spring of 2014. It is clear that the background to these more positive political developments is to a certain extent the fact that the mainstream parties, the liberal VVD in particular, have rid themselves of the restrictive collaboration with the PVV since the collapse of the last government in 2012. In addition, the Netherlands has been one of the main countries attracting the attention of international organisations such as ECRI of the Council of Europe which produced a critical report on the situation relating to racism and anti-racism in the Netherlands.[26] In addition, The Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent of the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations visited the Netherlands in order to report on discrimination.[27] This international spotlight has obviously been a stimulus to take a stance against racism, discrimination and Islamophobia and to develop policies to counter these social problems. A first step was the announcement in the spring of 2015 of the revision of the Action Programme against Discrimination in order to incorporate more concrete policies.

In its annual policy paper on discrimination (February 2015) the Dutch government expressed concern about the increase of intolerance. It is shocking, the government said, to see how people express themselves on social media and incite hatred, discrimination and violence. It is unacceptable that synagogues and mosques in the Netherlands are confronted with incidents such as graffiti, arson and vandalism. The government aims at substantially reducing discrimination and increasing tolerance.

25. Andriessen, I., H. Fernee & K. Wittebrood, *Ervaren discriminatie in Nederland*, Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 2014.

26. *www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/**ecri**/.../NLD-CbC-IV-2013-039-NLD.pdf*. For the reaction of the government see http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/kamerstukken/2008/08/19/kabinetsreactie-ecri-rapport-kabinetsreactie.html (accessed 15 February 2016)

27. http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=14840&LangID=E (accessed 15 February 2016)

The government also increasingly discusses and takes initiatives concerning the issue of Islamophobia such as the improvement of police registration procedures, expert meetings, policy papers, (support for) safety measures for mosques and other Islamic institutions, follow-up research on discriminatory practices against mosques and research into factors that trigger anti-Semitic and Islamophobic reactions among young people. An important focus of attention on anti-discrimination policies is labour market discrimination. Measures to counter labour market discrimination consist of publication of outcomes of inspection of companies ('naming and shaming') and ending or not engaging in cooperation with companies that discriminate. In education, programmes for civic education will be developed. Referring to Article 1 of the Constitution, the Minister of the Interior launched a web campaign against discrimination on 2 September, 2015. VIPs have crossed out the word discrimination. The general public is also encouraged to do so on the website discriminatie.nl.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report discussed Islamophobia in the Netherlands. Discriminatory aggression and violence against Muslims, in particular mosques, was a hot topic during the winter of 2014-5. Other issues that were at the heart of public debate in 2015 were discrimination by police forces, labour market discrimination and the arrival of large numbers of refugees. Since the beginning of 2015, Islamophobia has definitely been on the political and public debate agenda.

In 2015, the police services took a great step forward towards a more uniform and qualitatively superior system of registration.

Of the vast number of media releases on topics related to multicultural society and interethnic relations, only a minor few report on discrimination of Muslims. Many reports discussed incidents at reception centres for asylum seekers.

Alongside the continuity of Islamophobic discourse and practices, some important changes are taking place in relation to Wilders' PVV, the party that politically organises Islamophobia. The PVV has increased its mobilisation outside parliament for social action in municipalities and local neighbourhoods not only against mosques but also against reception centres for refugees. The PVV increasingly de facto cooperates with more radical extra/parliamentary right extremist groups in the Netherlands. In alliance with traditional right-wing extremist political parties at the level of European Union politics, the PVV has formed a parliamentary group entitled 'Europe of Nations and Freedom Group'. The PVV however is becoming more and more isolated at the level of mainstream Dutch politics. In the spring of 2015, the government announced a revision of its anti-discrimination policies and measures to increase tolerance and counter discrimination based on skin colour, origin and religion.

Islamophobia occurs in various fields in the social and political domains. More qualitative research is necessary to shed light on the manifestation of Islamophobia in different social domains. More and more stakeholders have joined efforts to counter Islamophobia. CSOs have taken initiatives to counter Islamophobia by creating hotlines and notification sites, campaigning against Islamophobia, carrying out research, and presenting data and information on Islamophobia. This newly created infrastructure needs to be reinforced to become more sustainable.

National and local authorities and civil society need to conceive discriminatory aggression and violence against Muslims for what they are: cases of abuse of the right to freedom of religion and the principles of equality and anti-discrimination.

Authorities need to react adequately in the case of discriminatory aggression against the Muslim community by

- Supporting initiatives by Muslim communities to create reporting systems in coordination with the existing general notification agencies.
- Serious and respectful treatment of people who complain and report discrimination to the police.
- Improvement of prosecution procedures and practices.
- Improvement of communication with the Muslim community to support them in preventing discriminatory and aggressive acts against them and in developing long- term and preventative policies aimed at education and dialogue.

Political parties should raise their voice against populist and discriminatory slogans of racist parties such as the PVV. Relevant authorities should take a stance when hate crime and discrimination are fuelled by propaganda in the media and politics. Politicians need to function as role models and emphasise norms and values related to democratic principles.

The Muslim community as a targeted group has an important role to play. They may participate in dialogue and encounter and inform people about the significance of religion as an expression of fundamental human norms and values. Muslim organisations should reinforce their cooperation to better cope with the problems of discrimination and to convince the faithful that reporting acts of discrimination is necessary to get access to political agendas and to influence anti-discrimination policies.

CHRONOLOGY

January

- Calls for burning down mosques occur on Facebook after similar events in Sweden on New Years' Eve.

February

- The government announces the revision of the Action Programme against Discrimination.

4 April

- The head of the national police force writes on an internal blog that Muslim police officers are verbally abused by colleagues.

12 June

- In a debate in the national parliament the PVV and the Group Bontes & van Klaveren propose a ban on new mosques. A second PVV-only motion proposed the closure of all existing mosques. No other parties support the proposals.

17 June

- In alliance with traditional right-wing extremist political parties at the level of European Union politics, the PVV has formed a parliamentary group under the name 'Europe of Nations and Freedom Group'.

September

- The Party for the Animals proposes a new draft law against ritual slaughtering.

8 October

- Eight people are given fines between 350 and 450 Euros because of their calls to set fire to Dutch mosques.

27 November

- The government submits a law in favour of the 'partial interdiction of face-covering clothing' to parliament.

November

- The parliament asks the government to examine the possibilities of an interdiction of Salafist organisations.
- The national police services integrate 'Muslim discrimination' as a separate category of discrimination in its registration system and reports.
- Mid December.
- The public prosecutor announced that a second trial of Geert Wilders will start in March 2016. Wilders is prosecuted for insulting people on the grounds of their race and for inciting hatred and discrimination against a group of people when calling for 'fewer Moroccans'.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN NORWAY

NATIONAL REPORT 2015

SINDRE BANGSTAD

THE AUTHOR

Sindre Bangstad is a social anthropologist with a PhD from Radboud University in Nijmegen, The Netherlands, and currently works as a Researcher at KIFO, Institute For Church, Religion and Worldview Research in Oslo, Norway. He is the author of inter alia Anders Breivik and The Rise of Islamophobia (2014), The Politics of Mediated Presence: Exploring The Voices Of Muslims in Norway's Mediated Public Spheres (2015) and the forthcoming Anthropology in Our Times: From A Series In Public Anthropology (2016), sindre.bangstad@teologi.uio.no.

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions. No representation, either expressed or implied, is made of the accuracy of the material in the national reports. The editors of the European Islamophobia Report cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The reader must make his or her own evaluation of the accuracy and appropriateness of the material.

To cite this report: Sindre Bangstad (2016): *Islamophobia in Norway: National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The year 2015 saw a further hardening and mainstreaming of Islamophobia, racism and discrimination against Muslims in Norway on the back of the terror attacks in Paris, France in January and November and the global so-called 'refugee crisis' in the autumn of 2015. The populist right-wing Progress Party, in government since October 2013, has continued to mobilise popular support in 2015 by instrumentalising fears relating to the presence of Islam and Muslims in Norway. Norwegian media has provided ample platforms for civil society actors with a long record of Islamophobia.

KORTFATTET SAMMENDRAG

2015 så en tilspissing og en mainstreaming av islamofobi, rasisme og diskriminering rettet mot muslimer i Norge, mot et bakteppe av terrorangrepene i Paris, Frankrike i januar og november, og den globale flyktningkrisen høsten 2015. Det høyrepopulistiske Fremskrittspartiet (FrP), som har sittet i regjering siden oktober 2013, har i 2015 fortsatt å mobilisere velgergrupper på grunnlag av instrumentalisering av frykt knyttet til nærværet av islam og muslimer i Norge, og norske medier har tilbudt norske sivilsamfunnsaktører med en lang historie av islamofobi brede medieplattformer.

INTRODUCTION

Norway, which has a population of 5 million of whom an estimated 4.2 per cent are of Muslim background,[1] has since the parliamentary elections of September 2013 had a coalition government consisting of the liberal-conservative Conservative Party (CP) and the populist right-wing Progress Party (PP). The Progress Party, a party whose voters are more likely to be male, unemployed, have a low level of education, and/or be on social welfare benefits than any other party in Norway has since circa 1987 opposed immigration in general and immigration of Muslims in particular as a central mobilising factor. Representative surveys have also indicated that the party has a number of self-declared right-wing extremists (16 per cent in 2009) among its voters and sympathisers. Subsequent to their coming into government in October 2013, in a two-pronged political strategy designed to retain the support of the party's far right electoral constituencies, individuals appointed to cabinet posts from the party have toned down their historically virulent anti-Muslim and Islamophobic rhetoric, whilst individuals in leading posts as official spokespersons for the party, administrative officials and/or central party Members of Parliament (MPs) have continued apace with their rhetoric. In the context of the current global so-called 'refugee crisis', which the Norwegian government and its PP minister Sylvi Listhaug (appointed to a newly established position as Minister for Immigration and Integration in December 2015) have reacted to by introducing stringent new measures designed to limit both the flow of asylum seekers, the rights to family reunification for individuals already settled in Norway, and to increase the number of forced deportations of asylum seekers who have had their asylum applications turned down. Some of these extraordinary measures, hastily introduced by a resolution of the Norwegian Parliament in late December 2015 against the votes of the Socialist Left Party (SV) and the environmentalist Green Party (MDG) and warnings from leading Norwegian human rights scholars and experts, have been roundly criticised by official representatives for the UN's High Commissioner For Refugees (UNHCR) for, inter alia, being likely to violate international human rights laws. Norwegian media reports indicate, however, that these extraordinary measures had already been discussed two years previously in connection with a report on the 'Sustainability of Immigration' commissioned by the Progress Party's Parliamentary Caucus in April 2013, and presented to widespread condemnation from the media and the opposition in August 2013, one month before the parliamentary elections which would bring the PP to power for the first time in Norwegian history.[2] This report had been written by some of the most far right MPs in the PP, with assistance of the far

1. Bangstad, Sindre and Elgvin, Olav (2015): 'Norway'. In Scharbrodt, Oliver et. al. (eds.) *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe Volume 7*, 436-449.

2. Hoel, Per A. (2016): 'La innstrammingsplan våren før valgseieren', *Vårt Land* 11.02.16.

right civil society activist Hege Storhaug of the Norwegian NGO Human Rights' Service (HRS). These were measures proposed by Listhaug and her department, and marketed by a rhetoric from Listhaug's side in which asylum seekers arriving in Norway – who are now disproportionately likely to have a national background from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq – were told that they could not expect the Norwegian state to receive them whilst being "carried on golden chairs", while political and civil society opponents of the government's stringent new measures were described as suffering from a "tyranny of goodness." What by subtle rhetorical subterfuges is not expressed clearly here and which is in line with the populist right-wing's long-standing conflation of the terms 'immigrants', 'refugees' and 'Muslims', is of course that many refugees and asylum seekers arriving in Norway at present are in fact of Muslim background. It seems quite clear that the PP in government has learned that to single out 'Muslims' as a separate immigration category would risk violating national laws against discrimination (The Norwegian Anti-Discrimination Law of 2005, as well as the Human Rights Law of 1999) and international law, but before it came into governmental power, the PP has in fact had a long-standing record of proposing restrictions on immigration targeting Muslims in particular, dating back to political speeches made by the then party Chairman Carl I. Hagen invoking conspiratorial 'Eurabia' ideas about an impending 'Islamic colonisation' of Norway as early as 1987, and in a report on the 'sustainability of immigration' commissioned by the PP's parliamentary caucus and ghost-written by the far-right and PP-aligned civil society activist Hege Storhaug of the state-supported think thank Human Rights Service (HRS) in 2007, which proposed restrictions on Muslim immigration to Norway in particular.

SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

The year 2015 started with marches in Oslo in early January in support of the German anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant PEGIDA movement organised by Norwegian far right activists affiliated with the Norwegian Defence League (NDL), Stop the Islamisation of Norway (SIAN) and the Oslo secondary school teacher Max Hermansen. The first pro-PEGIDA demonstration in Oslo on 13 January was estimated to have been attended by 190 people marching in the snow and carrying Norwegian flags.[3] For far right activists in Norway who rarely manage to get more than 30 to 50 activists on the street, this was a relatively high number, and the demo received significant attention in national and international news media. Max Hermansen's claims to the Norwegian media that the demonstrators involved were not "extremists" (ekstremister) was belied by the presence of several well-known neo-Nazi sympathisers from Oslo, including a white male in his thirties, who upon being asked what he was

3. Yttervik, Linn K. and Arntsen, Erlend Ofte (2015): 'Pegida-demonstrasjon ga rekordoppmøte', *VG* 13.01.15.

doing in the demo replied to the private Norwegian broadcaster TV2 reporter Kadafi Zaman (who happens to be of Pakistani-Norwegian Muslim background) that he was "here to demonstrate my disgust towards such Muslim bastards as you. Such immigrant shit like you." whilst harassing Zaman by blowing smoke directly in his face.[4] Hermansen would later claim that he had never met the person in question, but camera footage revealed that the man in question and Hermansen walked side by side and exchanged words at the head of the demonstration for much of the time. In 2015, the young far right activist would be charged with racist abuse under Norwegian General Penal Code § 185 Concerning Hate Speech for Facebook comments against a well-known Norwegian TV presenter of Norwegian-African background, Haddy N'jie.[5] Media reports indicated, however, that far right and anti-Muslim activists aligned with the so-called Norwegian Defence League (NDL) and Stop the Islamisation of Norway (SIAN) had been involved in recruiting demonstrators from pubs and bars close to Oslo City Hall on the eve of the demonstrations. Max Hermansen (54), the Oslo secondary school teacher who initiated the pro-PEGIDA demonstrations and who holds university degrees in History, had been on sick leave after complaints from Muslim pupils at the secondary schools in Oslo East where he taught social science about his anti-Islamic sentiments since the autumn of 2014. Much was made about Hermansen's freedom of expression and the Oslo Municipality's responsibility to protect this from both legal and media experts, but media interviews with Hermansen as well as former Muslim pupils of his 2015 course suggested that he had in fact actively engaged in discriminatory practices against pupils of Muslim background, and not only expressed discriminatory attitudes in his classroom. Though there is no available academic research on this to date, anecdotal evidence which surfaced in the context of a public meeting with Muslim youth in a central and mainstream mosque in Oslo in November 2015 attended by hundreds suggests that experiences with discrimination and Islamophobic statements from teachers at secondary schools in Oslo has been far from uncommon in recent years. The Hermansen affair ended with Hermansen being offered a non-teaching desk job at one of the same secondary schools where he had previously taught in January 2016.[6] In line with historical experiences, the demonstrations, which by then had also spread to other smaller cities in Norway (Ålesund, Stjørdal, Sarpsborg, Tønsberg), soon fizzled out amidst internal divisions and personal acrimonies among the far right activists involved, with Ronny Alte of the NDL and the former SIAN activist Arnt Ove Kvile breaking out and creating a splinter group under the same

4. Ekehaug, Jenny-Linn, Bjørnstad, Nora Thorp and Ekehaug, Cathrine (2015): 'TV2s reporter kalt 'muslimjævel' på direkten', VG 12.01.13.

5. Jensen, Ingvild (2015): '34-åring siktet for å ha hetset Haddy', *TV2.no* 04.12.15.

6. NTB (2016): 'Max Hermansen tilbudt kontorjobb', *NTB* 27.01.16.

name.[7] In 2015, the jihadist terrorist attacks on the offices of Charlie Hebdo, the anti-Semitic terrorist attacks on a kosher supermarket in Paris on 7-9 January, and the attacks in Paris on 13-14 November led to an increased level of popular suspicion of Muslims in Norway. Norwegian Muslims reported increased levels of intolerance and harassment in public after these attacks. After the Paris attacks of November 2015, a 21-year-old man of African background was stabbed by an unknown assailant at Slependen in Asker after reportedly being queried whether he was Muslim and "whether he recalled Paris."[8] After the stabbing, which led to hospitalisation, the victim was told by the perpetrator that he was a "Muslim bastard." Media reports based on statements from a witness also recounted Muslims being kicked by unknown assailants aboard a bus in Oslo, with no one coming to the victims' assistance, and the perpetrator declaring to the witness that he had not kicked "a fellow human being, but a Muslim bastard."[9] The year also saw significant shifts in Norwegian popular opinion regarding the global so-called 'refugee crisis', with popular mobilisations in support of refugee rights in August and September in light of the extensive media coverage of the ongoing tragedies in the Mediterranean gradually being replaced by a hardening popular attitude, and the introduction of stringent measures initiated by the government in order to further limit the rights of asylum and family reunification in December.

EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION

There are no updated statistics on labour market discrimination targeting Muslims in particular in 2015. What we do know from available research on labour market discrimination from 2012 is that applicants with Norwegian-Pakistani (and Muslim)- sounding names are 25 per cent less likely than 'ethnic' Norwegian applicants, given exact similar qualifications and work experience, to get called in for interviews by Norwegian employers.[10] Reports suggest that Norwegian Somalis in particular experience labour market and housing discrimination, with men reporting more discrimination than females in all age categories.[11] The Norwegian Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (LDO), which provides a formal complaint service for citizens who think they may have experienced discrimination in various fields under criteria specified in the Norwegian Anti-Discrimination Law of 2005, reported an

7. Vepsen (2015): 'Full PEGIDA-splid', *Vepsen.no* 14.01.15.

8. Acharki, Fouad and Martinsen, Elin (2015): 'Spurte om han var muslim før han stakk med kniv', *NRK Østlandssendingen* 21.11.15.

9. Smørvik, Ingvild (2015): 'Muslimjævelen er ingen terrorist', *gjest.blogg.no* 21.11.05.

10. Midtbøen, Arnfinn og Rogstad, Jon (2012): *Diskrimineringens omfang og årsaker: Etniske minoriteters tilgang til norsk arbeidsliv*. Report no. 1: 2012. Oslo: Institutt For Samfunnsforskning.

11. Tronstad, Kristian R.(2008): Diskriminering. In Blom, Svein and Henriksen, Kristin (eds.) *Levekår blant innvandrere i Norge 2005/06*. Oslo: Statistisk Sentralbyrå.

increase of 15 per cent in cases reported. It is however unclear what proportion of these cases related to Muslims in particular or to what extent there was an increase in reported cases from Muslims in 2014. There is, in any case, few empirical grounds to suggest that labour market discrimination against Muslims in Norway has decreased in 2015, and anecdotal reports of Muslim females, for example, being denied work on the grounds that they wear a hijab remain common. A newspaper report from the Progress Party-governed municipality of Oppegård outside Oslo, for example, has two Norwegian social workers tell of young Norwegian Muslim hijab-wearing females regularly told by prospective Norwegian employers that they will not employ them as long as they continue to wear the hijab.[12]

Education

Academic research on the coverage of minorities and immigrants past and present in the Norwegian school curriculum at various levels suggest a far from ideal situation with regard to how these topics are covered in schools.[13] In 2015, there have been regular anecdotal reports about discontent from Muslim minority students about how Islam and Muslims are covered by mostly non-Muslim white middle-class teachers of both sexes, who are of course also affected by prevailing negative societal attitudes towards Islam and Muslims in Norway.

The legal field

Norwegian authorities have for a number of years now been singled by international human rights monitoring bodies such as the European Council's European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), the UN's CERD (Convention Against All Forms of Racial Discrimination) Commission, as well as the Norwegian Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (LDO) for their lack of sustained and efficient efforts against hate speech.[14] A 2012 report from the HL-Centre in Norway documents, based on national representative surveys, that Muslims according to social distance scales are among the least desired citizens in Norway, after the Roma.[15] Hate speech based on an individual's ethnic or national background, religious or other belief, sexual orientation and mental or physical ability is subject to up to three year's imprisonment under Norwegian General Penal Code § 185 against Hate Speech [previously § 135 (a)], first in-

12. Stubberudlien, Yana (2016): 'Million mot ekstremisme', *Oppegård Avis* 28.01.16.

13. Midtbøen, Arnfinn H., Orupabo, Julia and Røthing, Åse (2014): *Etniske og religiøse minoriteter i læremidler*. Report 11: 2014. Oslo: Institutt for Samfunnsforskning.

14. ECRI (2015): *ECRI Report on Norway. Fifth Monitoring Cycle*. Strasbourg: European Commission Against Racism And Intolerance (ECRI). CERD (2015): *Concluding observations on the combined twenty-first and twenty-second periodic reports of Norway*. CERD/C/NOR/CO/21-22. Geneva: CERD. LDO (2015): *Hate Speech and Hate Crime*. Report. Oslo: The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud.

15. HL-Centre (2012): *Antisemitism in Norway? The Attitudes of the Norwegian Population towards Jews and Other Minorities*. Oslo: The HL-Centre. Available at: http://www.hlsenteret.no/publikasjoner/antisemitism-in-norway-web.pdf

troduced in 1970 as a direct result of the Norwegian state's ratification of UN ICERD 1965 the same year.[16] The threshold for both prosecution and sentencing is however high and stringent, and in actual practice, few cases involving hate speech against Muslims have ever been successfully prosecuted in Norwegian courts of law. The Norwegian Prosecutor General (Riksadvokaten) has since 2000 asked local police districts to prioritise hate crimes, but until recently efforts in this field can at best be described as limited in scope and efficiency. So much so, that Norwegian Muslims interviewed for a newspaper report about this issue in August 2015 asserted that "Muslims do not report hate crimes" since they allegedly "have no confidence in the police taking it seriously."[17] Norway's first ever Hate Crimes Unit, established at Manglerud Police Station in 2013, has, however, in 2015, both prosecuted and successfully led cases involving hate crimes against Muslims to conviction. The number of hate crimes cases reported to the police in Norway has – mostly as a result of this particular unit's efforts and public calls for citizens to report such cases to the police – risen significantly in both 2014 and 2015. However, since there are no such police units in any other cities or towns in Norway, and local police districts lack both the investigative capacities and the specialised legal knowledge that prosecuting such cases require, most of the increase in reported cases has occurred in Oslo, the capital of Norway. Civil society activists as well as legal experts in this field indicate that there is a significant under-reporting of such cases, for reasons which include a lack of confidence in the local police, a lack of knowledge of existent laws and their applicability in hate speech cases etc. In a verdict from the Oslo Magistrate's Court on 17 March, 2015, a white unemployed Norwegian man (57) was sentenced to 18 days imprisonment and 15, 000 Norwegian kroner (NOK) for violations of Norwegian General Penal Code § 135 (a) (now § 185) and § 390 (a). The second paragraph, first introduced in 1955, is designed to protect individual citizens against intimidating, harassing or inconsiderate behaviour. The case, which was prosecuted by the Oslo Hate Crimes Unit, related to an incident in October 2014, when the defendant had verbally assaulted a hijab-wearing Muslim woman of North African background at a local supermarket in Oslo East. The defendant, who did not know the victim, had passed the woman as she was standing near a supermarket shelf, and according to the victim declared that "all Muslims ought to be slaughtered." The Oslo Magistrate's Court found that in the absence of any witnesses to the defendant's initial remarks, it could not be established beyond any 'reasonable doubt' that the defendant actually made these remarks. What the court found no reason to doubt, however, is that the man then proceeded to spit at the victim's face, and that when shop assistants alerted by the victim's screams came to her aid, the defendant declared that he had spat

16. Bangstad, Sindre (2012): 'Failing to Protect Minorities Against Racist and/or Discriminatory Speech? The Case of Norway and § 135 (a) of The Norwegian General Penal Code', *Nordic Journal of Human Rights* 30 (4): 483-514.

17. Stokke, Olga, Torset, Nina Selbo and Slettholm, Andreas (2015): 'Muslimer anmelder ikke hatkriminalitetet: De har null tillit til at politiet tar det alvorlig', *Aftenposten* 04.08.15.

at the woman because he "hated all Muslims."[18] By Norwegian standards, this can be considered a relatively lenient sentence: what is noteworthy is that it appears to be the first ever sentence against a Norwegian citizen for hate speech targeting a Muslim in Norwegian legal history. In another case dating from February 2015, three males in their thirties, two of whom had known affiliations to neo-Nazi groups in Norway or to the so-called Isko Boys, a group of football hooligans who support the Oslo football club VIF, were charged with racist-motivated violence against two Norwegian Kurdish males of Muslim background in their twenties on a street in downtown Oslo. According to the charges, one of the defendants is alleged to have shouted "Fucking Muslims, you don't have anything to do here" and "Go back, fucking terrorists" before the three men kicked and punched the victims in their heads and bodies.[19] The perpetrators were sentenced to 120, 75 and 60 days imprisonment in late 2015. Noteworthy in this case is how the figure of 'the Muslim' comes to stand in for the figure of 'the terrorist'[20] in motivating hate crimes against individuals of Muslim background, even in cases in which the victims' 'Muslimness' may not have been all that important. According to media reports about this particular case, the victims were at the time of the assault walking back from a visit to a bar and had consumed alcohol.

The Oslo Hate Crimes Unit's report for 2015 was not yet available at the time of writing this report, but according to Senior Advisor For Diversity Ingjerd Hansen at the Oslo Police Headquarters, the number of reported cases to the Oslo Hate Crimes Unit in 2015 more than doubled from 2014 when the figure stood at 69 cases. Out of these 69 cases from 2014, 15 involved hate crimes against individuals on the basis of their religion. It remains unclear how many of the 15 involved hate crimes against Muslims, but according to Hansen, the number of reported cases based on a motive of religious bias has also increased significantly in 2015. There are also valid reasons to believe that hate crimes based on the target's real or perceived religion are severely under-reported by available Norwegian statistics in this field. It should be noted, however, that hate crimes registered under this category in police statistics would also include inter-Muslim hate crimes: in 2014, the Oslo Police's Hate Crimes Unit registered reported cases involving hate crimes against adherents of the Ahmadiyya sect likely committed by Sunni Muslims, and in 2015, reported cases involving hate crimes against Shia Muslims likely perpetrated by Sunni Muslims. There is, in any case, every reason to believe that the hate crime cases brought to the Norwegian police's attention by Norwegian citizens of Muslim background merely represent the proverbial tip of the iceberg.

18. See *Oslo Tingrett*, case no. 15-010833MED-OTIR/04.

19. Thjømøe, Silje Løvstad (2015): 'Tiltalt for rasistisk motivert vold: «Fucking Muslims, you don't have anything to do here', *VG* 22.04.15.

20. Kundnani, Arun (2014): *The Muslims Are Coming! Islamophobia, Extremism, and the War on Terror*. London and New York: Verso.

In the legal field, a verdict from the Kristiansand Magistrate's Court from February 2015 provides some grounds for cautious optimism with regard to the Norwegian legal system's willingness and ability to confront anti-Muslim racism and Islamophobia in Norwegian society at present. The case, a civil lawsuit, had been brought by Arne Tumyr, a founding member and until 2013 chairperson of the Norwegian far-right and Islamophobic organisation Stop the Islamisation of Norway (SIAN, established in 2007), against Imam Akmal Ali of the Muslim Union Agder for having publicly defamed him under Norwegian General Penal Code § 247 in an interview with the public broadcaster NRK Sørlandet in April 2014 by citing SIAN's activities as "grounded in racism, hatred propaganda and a whole lot of lies" and using them as grounds for his refusal to meet Tumyr for a public debate in the local library in Kristiansand. By bringing the case to the courts, Tumyr effectively sought to limit not only Ali's, but also the wider Norwegian Muslim community's right and ability to engage in 'counter-speech.' In court, Tumyr, a former founding member of the Secular Humanist Association (Human-Etisk Forbund, HEF) in Bergen, Norway in the 1950s, and long-time media editor, characterised Islam as "worse than Communism, Nazism" and as a "cancerous tumor in our society." Associate Professor Lars Gule of the Oslo and Akershus University College (HiOA) and Dr Sindre Bangstad from the Faculty of Theology at the University of Oslo (UiO) testified in Ali's legal defense and on the basis of extensive reports on Tumyr's public statements about Islam and Muslims in his capacity as a SIAN chairperson from 2007 to 2013, and both concurred in their conclusion that many of these could be characterised as being "grounded in racism." In a verdict later confirmed upon appeal from Tumyr three votes against zero by a higher court, the Kristiansand Magistrate's Court in case no. 14-158854TVI-KISA/26 found in favour of Ali, and sentenced Tumyr to pay the costs of the trial and the legal defense for Ali. Though the fact that the case was decided by a lower court means that it will have limited legal precedent for future cases of this sort, it is, in effect, the first time on historical record that a Norwegian court in sentencing has accepted arguments relating to the conceptualisation of racism which goes beyond its narrow conceptualisation as being exclusively applicable to cases in which notions of biological 'race' are invoked. Given that the widespread 'denials of the existence of racism'[21] against Muslims in Norway often take the form of denying that Muslims can be subjected to racism and racialisation, since they do not qualify as a 'race' (as if 'race' is anything but a social and cultural construction[22] and as if 'race' has not historically almost always included constructions relating to 'culture' and/or 'religion'),[23] this verdict must be said to constitute some progress in the legal field.

21. Van Dijk, Teuns A. (1992): 'Discourse and the Denial of Racism', *Discourse & Society* 3 (1): 87-118.

22. Sussman, Ronald Wald (2014): *The Myth of Race*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

23. Bethencourt, Francisco (2013): *Racisms: From the Crusades to the Twentieth Century*. Princeton, New Jersey and London, U.K.: Princeton University Press.

Politics

In spite of the fact that the current government has made efforts against hate speech a central part of its 2014 'Action Plan Against Radicalisation and Violent Extremism',[24] minimal funding for academic research on hate speech has so far been made available, and the funding allocations made available to local police districts for the purpose of prioritising and increasing investigative and prosecutorial skills and competencies in combatting hate speech seem negligible. More disturbingly still, is the fact that the two parties in power in Norway since October 2013, the Conservative Party and the Progress Party, courtesy of initiatives from their respective youth wings, still have the abolishment of Norwegian hate speech laws on their party political platforms, and that any number of centrally placed PP politicians leave racist, Islamophobic and discriminatory posts from their political followers on their Facebook pages untouched whenever these appear. Open public reference to the far right and the racist 'Eurabia'- conspiracy theory[25] was last made by an MP aligned with the PP, namely Ulf Leirstein, who sits on the Justice Committee in the Norwegian Parliament (Storting), in August 2014.[26] On Facebook, Leirstein fumed against one of the very few Norwegian MPs of Muslim background, former Norwegian Minister of Culture and Chair of the Justice Committee in the Norwegian Parliament Hadia Tajik of the social democratic Labour Party, and insinuated that she both supported beheadings by 'ISIS' and serial human rights violations and practiced taqiyya.[27] Leirstein's Facebook posts went completely unsanctioned by the party leadership of the PP and were defended by the PP's Vice Chairman MP Per Sandberg as an exercise in 'freedom of expression.'[28] They form part of a relatively consistent pattern whereby PP officials have long instrumentalised popular fears about Islam and Muslims in the Norwegian social and political contexts, and provided both tacit and open support of PP members and politicians who engage in hate speech and speech seeking to harass and intimidate moderate and peaceful Muslims in Norway.[29] Though one has in recent years seen many cases of PP members and politicians engaging in various forms of hate speech against Norwegian Muslims on social media, the party,

24. Ministry of Justice (2014): *Handlingsplan mot radikalisering og voldelig ekstremisme*. Oslo: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/Handlingsplan-mot-radikalisering-og-voldelig-ekstremisme/id762413/

25. Carr, Matt (2006): 'You Are Now Entering Eurabia', *Race & Class* 48 (1): 1-22. Bangstad, Sindre (2013): 'Eurabia Comes to Norway', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 24 (3): 369-391.

26. Bangstad, Sindre (2016): 'Recoding Nationalism: Islam, Muslims and Islamophobia in Norway'. Forthcoming in Hafez, Farid (ed.) *Islamophobia Studies Yearbook*. p. 60.

27. Blindheim, Anne Marte (2014): 'Uheldig muslimdominans å ha Hadeda Taquia som leder i justiskomitéen', *Dagbladet* 23.08.14.

28. Bangstad, Sindre (2016): 'Recoding Nationalism: Islam, Muslims and Islamophobia in Norway'. Forthcoming in Hafez, Farid (ed.) *Islamophobia Studies Yearbook*. p. 60.

29. Bangstad, Sindre (2015): *The Politics of Mediated Presence: Exploring the Voices of Muslims in Norway's Mediated Public Spheres*. Oslo: Scandinavian Academic Press.

ostensibly wedded to a programme of non-tolerance for racism, has yet to sanction a single member or politician for such speech. When the Ministry of Justice, led by the Progress Party's Minister of Justice Anders Anundsen in November 2015, launched a Facebook page intended to dissuade potential asylum seekers from applying for asylum in Norway, the page had to be closed down due to the sheer number of racist posts inciting violence against refugees and asylum seekers, many of them directed against Muslims.[30] There are, in other words, reasons to doubt whether the current Norwegian government, and Progress Party cabinet ministers in particular, treat this with the seriousness it requires, and are conscientious – rather than 'calculatedly ambiguous'[31] - about the signals their own discourse and rhetoric about refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants and Muslims are sending out to the population at large and their electoral constituents in particular.

In a shadow report to the CERD Commission authored by the Norwegian Centre Against Racism (ARS) in connection with Norway's 21st/22nd Periodic Report under Article 9 of the ICERD Convention in Geneva, Switzerland in August 2015,[32] and submitted on behalf of 21 Norwegian non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the NGOs alerted the CERD Commission to the fact that the Norwegian NGO Human Rights Service (HRS), established and led by the former journalist Hege Storhaug since 2001, when it entered the state budget through an extraordinary allocation proposed by the Progress Party[33] in spite of routinely engaging in statements that are Islamophobic in nature, was still receiving state funding under a grants scheme meant to "support organisations that work to ensure that everyone has equal opportunities, rights and obligations as regards participation in society and making use of their own resources." Since the PP's coming into power in October 2013, the PP-appointed Minister of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion Solveig Horne has seen to the HRS receiving an unsolicited 80 per cent budget increase in the revised state budget for 2014, from 500,000 NOK to 900,000 NOK. That led Hege Storhaug herself to declare to the media that her organisation, the HRS, was literally "having funds thrown after them" by the new government.[34] Since 2001, the HRS has received over 10 million Norwegian kroner (the equivalent of 1 million Euro) in direct state support. In the same revised budget, Minister Horne cut state funding for civil society organisations

30. NTB (2015): 'Regjeringen lanserer asylkampanje på sosiale medier', *NTB* 07.11.15.

31. Wodak, Ruth (2015): *The Politics of Fear: What Right-Wing Populist Discourses Mean*. London and New York: Sage.

32. Linløkken, Mari (2015): *NGO Alternative Report: Supplementing and Commenting on Norway's 21st/22nd Periodic Report Submitted by Norway under Article 9 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*. Oslo: The Norwegian Centre Against Racism.

33. See Razack, Sherene H. (2004): 'Imperilled Muslim women, dangerous men and civilised Europeans: legal and social responses to forced marriages', *Feminist Legal Studies* 12: 129-74. Fekete, Liz (2007): *A Suitable Enemy: Racism, Migration and Islamophobia in Europe*. London and New York: Pluto Press.

34. NTB (2013): 'Vi får bare pengene slengt etter oss', *NTB* 09.11.13.

with a long record in the field of anti-discrimination work which had been public about their opposition to the PP, and its policies and discourse on immigrants and minorities in Norway. Though obfuscations about this matter abound in media representations, the relevant analytical question here is not whether Storhaug and the HRS has a right to freedom of expression: Storhaug and the HRS receive lavish mainstream media coverage in Norway, and enjoy a privileged access to op-ed and opinion page columns in mainstream Norwegian newspapers. Furthermore, the Norwegian Supreme Court in its 1981 Vivi Krogh verdict (a case relating to a Norwegian neo-Nazi who had distributed some 10,000 self-authored racist leaflets against Pakistani immigrants in Norway) established a precedent whereby statements regarding Islam – however offensive – were considered legally protected speech under the Norwegian Constitution's § 100, which Norwegian courts have followed ever since. The blasphemy provisions of the Norwegian General Penal Code § 247, in practice dormant since the 1930s in Norway, were abolished by the Norwegian Parliament in May 2015.[35] The relevant question is to what extent an NGO with a long and sustained record of racist, discriminatory and hateful speech directed at Muslims, which has in the recent past promoted 'Eurabia' theories, advocated that the Norwegian state violate international laws and human rights provisions relating to freedom of religion and belief by closing down mosques, and publicly harassed a Somali refugee family living in a small municipality in Norway with minor children identified with full names and pictures on their website at rights.no[36] be entitled to lavish funding from a liberal and secular state.[37]

The media

In 2015, Norwegian mainstream media has continued its long-standing and established practice of referring to even far right civil society activists who regularly engage in both racist, discriminatory and Islamophobic rhetoric targeted at Muslims, as "critics of Islam", thereby implying that what organisations such as SIAN and the HRS are involved in is part of a venerable Enlightenment tradition of 'critique of religion', rather than in advocacy for stigmatisation, exclusion and discrimination against Norwegian Muslims.[38]

How close the PP has long been to the HRS was illustrated by the fact that the party's long-standing Vice Chairman and since a cabinet reshuffle in December 2015 Norway's Minister of Fisheries Per Sandberg, who has a long and sustained record of Islamophobic speech and fabrications about Islam and Muslims

35. Myklebust, Anders (2015): 'Nå er det lov å håne andres tro', *Vårt Land* 05.05.15.

36. Bangstad, Sindre (2016): 'Recoding Nationalism: Islam, Muslims and Islamophobia in Norway'. Forthcoming in Hafez, Farid (ed.) *Islamophobia Studies Yearbook*. p. 61.

37. Brettschneider, Corey (2012): *When the State Speaks, What Should It Say? How Democracies Can Protect Expression And Promote Equality*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

38. Elgvin, Olav (2013): 'Tore Tvedt, afrikaner-kritiker', *Aftenposten* 15.02.13.

in Norway,[39] chose to personally intervene when a senior state official from the PP's coalition partner the Conservative Party, on a radio show made unfavourable comments about Storhaug, by demanding that the official in question retract her statements. Upon being queried on a radio show broadcast by the national broadcaster NRK about who the most dangerous persons in Norway at present were, the official in question, Laila Bokhari of the Prime Minister's Office (SMK), responded that the jihadist sympathiser Arfaan Bhatti and Hege Storhaug were two of "the most dangerous persons in Norway". In his statements to the media Sandberg equated the PP's views with those of Storhaug and fumed that Bokhari had "equated Hege Storhaug with terrorists."[40] Never mind that the jihadist in question, Arfaan Bhatti, a previous career criminal diagnosed as a psychopath by psychiatric experts in his first criminal trial in the 1990s, has never been convicted under charges relating to terrorism in Norwegian courts, but relating to blackmail, violent assaults and domestic abuse. After a new city government in Oslo consisting of the social democratic Labour Party (AP), the Socialist Left Party (SV) Party and the Green Party (MDG) was formed as a result of the municipal election results of September 2015, the municipality of Oslo cut all support for the HRS, a support to the tune of 1 million NOK a year (circa 100,000 Euro) which had been initiated and guaranteed by an Oslo City Government then controlled by the Progress Party and the Conservative Party. In the media blitz which surrounded the publication of Hege Storhaug's self-published popular book Islam – The Eleventh Plague Of The Nation (Islam – Den Ellevte Landeplage), which scholarly critics have demonstrated to be replete with distortions and fabrications,[41] Storhaug not only called for prohibitions against mosques in Norway, but also insinuated on the basis of non-existent empirical data, that some "thirty to forty per cent of Norwegian Muslims could be characterised as 'fundamentalist.'"[42] Quite what that term is supposed to mean is, of course, left deliberately ambiguous on Storhaug's part, but in the Norwegian discursive terrain in which Storhaug and the HRS operate, it clearly connotes both support for violence and terror. Storhaug was, unusually for an amateurishly written self-published book, provided with a massive amount of media coverage, including uncritical interviews in mainstream Norwegian newspapers. This confirms what scholars of the far right in Europe have been pointing to for quite some time now, namely that the rise and mainstreaming of political far right formations in Europe can hard-

39. Bangstad, Sindre (2014): *Anders Breivik and the Rise of Islamophobia*. London and New York: Zed Books.

40. Moen, Marie Kingsrød and Ertzaas, Pål (2015): 'Raser mot Erna-rådgiver: Hun sidestiller Hege Storhaug med terrorister', *VG* 03.06.15.

41. Gule, Lars (2016): 'Storhaug er en ukritisk kritikar', *Dag og Tid* 29.01.16.

42. Sveen, Erik Hind (2015): 'Storhaug: - 40 prosent av muslimene kan være fundamentalister. Forskere: - Nåja…' *NRK Finmar*k 09.12.15.

ly be understood without reference to these formations' ample platforms in and skillful use of the media.[43]

In its Concluding Observations on the 21st and 22nd Period Reports of Norway, issued on 25 September, 2015, the CERD Committee refrained from commenting on this particular case, but noted its concerns about "the increase in such [hate] speech and xenophobic discourse by politicians, in the media and in other public platforms" in Norway, noted its concern over a lack of adequate and effective measures to "prevent and protect against hate speech" and over the lack of a "long-term strategy aimed at firmly combating hate speech" with reference to Articles 2, 4, 5, 6 of the ICERD Convention.

Cyberspace

Central nodes for the propagation of Islamophobia in Norway are websites like document.no, run by the former Maoist-Leninist and self-declared Christian conservative former media reporter Hans Rustad; rights.no, run by Human Rights Service (HRS); and sian.no, run by the Stop the Islamisation of Norway (SIAN). Though of more marginal impact, the right-wing extremist blogger Peder Are Nøstvold Jensen (aka 'Fjordman'), believed to be living in Copenhagen, Denmark, where he is closely aligned with Lars Hedegaard of the Danish Free Press Society, also serves as a node for dissemination of Islamophobia in Norway and Scandinavia through his writings on various far right websites. Additionally, online comments fields in mainstream Norwegian newspapers also serve to propagate Islamophobic views and sentiments, with limited moderation by the newspapers concerned.

Central figures in the networks of Islamophobia

By virtue of her extensive links to the governing Progress Party, extensive state funding and long-standing links with Lars Hedegaard and Helle Merete Brix, Hege Storhaug and her partner, Rita Karlsen of the HRS is the most central and influential person in current Norwegian Islamophobia networks.

Policy recommendations

Given that the government in power in Norway since October 2013 bases much of its popular and electoral support on opposition to immigration in general and Muslim immigration in particular, and especially the fact that the governing Progress Party continues to instrumentalise Islamophobia for their own political purposes, appeals to the government to counter-act Islamophobia and its public expression in the form of hate speech against Muslims are likely to fall on deaf ears in the future too, and to be met with non-committal talk. However, part of the state bureaucracy, various directorates (IMDI) and ombudspersons (LDO), as well as the Hate Crimes Unit at Oslo Police are well aware

43. Ellinas, Antonio E. (2011): *The Media and the Far-Right in Western Europe: Playing the Nationalist Card*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Rydgren, Jens (2007): 'The Sociology of the Radical Right', *Annual Review of Sociology* 33: 241-262.

of the prevalence of hate crimes and speech against Muslims in Norwegian society at present, and have also at times registered their concerns over it. Norwegian NGOs working in the relevant fields are both underfunded and under-resourced, but have been able to consistently raise their concerns over these issues with international monitoring bodies such as ECRI, the UN's ICERD Commission and the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA).

Norway has a comparatively weak tradition of academic scholarship on racism and discrimination. It is generally difficult to obtain funding for research on these topics from state-funded research bodies like the Norwegian Research Council (NRC). This also means that one lacks adequate empirical data on the prevalence and impact of hate speech and hate crimes against Muslims in Norway, as well as adequate systems for registration of these on a national basis.

Countermeasures

Civil society organisations such as the Norwegian Centre against Racism (ARS), OMOD (The Organisation Against Public Discrimination) and other organisations have continued their long-standing work of countering racist and discriminatory attitudes and ideas, but have not had the resources available to launch new initiatives and campaigns in this field. The Lutheran State Church in Norway, through its interreligious dialogue and involvement in national and international ecumenical bodies has continued its work for interreligious tolerance, also in extensive formalised contacts with the Islamic Council of Norway (IRN).[44]

CHRONOLOGY

January 2015

- Pro-PEGIDA demonstrations gathers up to 190 far right demonstrators in the capital Oslo and spreads to smaller Norwegian towns, before fizzling out by March.

February 2015

- Three football hooligans and neo-Nazi sympathisers in Oslo assault two males of Kurdish and Muslim background on an open street in Oslo city centre at night. Later sentenced to 120, 75 and 60 days imprisonment.

February 2015

- A Magistrate's Court in Kristiansand acquits a local imam for defamation in a civil lawsuit against Arne Tumyr of the far right and Islamophobic Stop the Islamisation of Norway (SIAN) under Norwegian General Penal Code § 247 for having alleged in a media interview that SIAN's activities are "grounded in racism, hatred, propaganda and a whole lot of lies."

44. Leirvik, Oddbjørn Birger (2015): 'Policy toward Religion, State Support, and Interreligious Dialogue: The Case of Norway', *Interreligious Studies* 25 (1): 92-108.

March 2015

- Norwegian man (57) sentenced for violations of Norwegian General Penal Code § 135 (a) (now § 185) and § 390 (a) for public racist hate speech and harassment of a hijab-wearing young Norwegian Muslim woman of North African background. The verdict is the first of its kind in Norwegian legal history. The case was brought by the Oslo Hate Crimes Unit.

August 2015

- Twenty-one Norwegian NGOs and the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (LDO) express strong criticism over the Norwegian government's lack of concrete action on hate speech and hate crimes, and its continued funding of the far right and Islamophobic NGO Human Rights Service (HRS) at hearings at the UN ICERD Convention in Geneva, Switzerland.

December 2014

- The self-published book by far right and state-funded Islamophobic civil society activist Hege Storhaug Islam-den ellevte landeplage receives lavish and often uncritical media attention in Norwegian mainstream media and becomes a best-selling title. In media interviews, Storhaug characterises some 30 to 40 per cent of Norwegian Muslims as 'fundamentalists' and argues for prohibitions against the building of mosques.

December 2014

- The far right politician Sylvi Listhaug of the Progress Party becomes Minister of Immigration and Integration in the Norwegian government and proposes a series of extraordinary measures to curb immigration of asylum seekers and refugees to Norway as well as measures to limit rights to family reunification which Norwegian human rights experts and international human rights organisations characterise as being in violation of international law and Norway's commitments under international conventions.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Acharki, Fouad and Martinsen, Elin (2015). 'Spurte om han var muslim før han stakk med kniv', NRK Østlandssendingen 21.11.15.

Bangstad, Sindre (2012). 'Failing to Protect Minorities Against Racist and/or Discriminatory Speech? The Case of Norway and § 135 (a) of The Norwegian General Penal Code', Nordic Journal of Human Rights 30 (4): 483-514.

Bangstad, Sindre (2013). 'Eurabia Comes to Norway', Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations 24 (3): 369-391.

Bangstad, Sindre (2014). Anders Breivik and the Rise of Islamophobia. London and New York: Zed Books.

Bangstad, Sindre (2015). The Politics of Mediated Presence: Exploring the Voices of Muslims in Norway's Mediated Public Spheres. Oslo: Scandinavian Academic Press.

Bangstad, Sindre (2016). 'Recoding Nationalism: Islam, Muslims and Islamophobia in Norway'. Forthcoming in Hafez, Farid (ed.) Islamophobia Studies Yearbook.

Bangstad, Sindre and Elgvin, Olav (2015). 'Norway'. In Scharbrodt, Oliver et. al. (eds.) Yearbook of Muslims in Europe Volume 7, 436-449.

Bethencourt, Francisco (2013). Racisms: From the Crusades to the Twentieth Century. Princeton, New Jersey and London, U.K.: Princeton University Press.

Blindheim, Anne Marte (2014). 'Uheldig muslimdominans å ha Hadeda Taquia som leder i justiskomitéen', Dagbladet 23.08.14.

Brettschneider, Corey (2012). When the State Speaks, What Should It Say? How Democracies Can Protect Expression And Promote Equality. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Carr, Matt (2006). 'You Are Now Entering Eurabia', Race & Class 48 (1): 1-22.

CERD (2015). Concluding observations on the combined twenty-first and twenty-second periodic reports of

Norway. CERD/C/NOR/CO/21-22. Geneva: CERD.

ECRI (2015). ECRI Report on Norway. Fifth Monitoring Cycle. Strasbourg: European Commission Against Racism And Intolerance (ECRI).

Ekehaug, Jenny-Linn, Bjørnstad, Nora Thorp and Ekehaug, Cathrine (2015). 'TV2s reporter kalt 'muslimjævel' på direkten', VG 12.01.13.

Elgvin, Olav (2013). 'Tore Tvedt, afrikaner-kritiker', Aftenposten 15.02.13.

Ellinas, Antonio E. (2011). The Media and the Far-Right in Western Europe: Playing the Nationalist Card. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fekete, Liz (2007). A Suitable Enemy: Racism, Migration and Islamophobia in Europe. London and New York: Pluto Press.

Gule, Lars (2016). 'Storhaug er en ukritisk kritikar', Dag og Tid 29.01.16.

HL-Centre (2012). Antisemitism in Norway? The Attitudes of the Norwegian Population towards Jews and Other Minorities. Oslo: The HL-Centre. Available at: http://www.hlsenteret.no/publikasjoner/antisemitism-in-norway-web.pdf

Hoel, Per A. (2016). 'La innstrammingsplan våren før valgseieren', Vårt Land 11.02.16.

Jensen, Ingvild (2015). '34-åring siktet for å ha hetset Haddy', TV2.no 04.12.15.

Kundnani, Arun (2014). The Muslims Are Coming! Islamophobia, Extremism, and the War on Terror. London and New York: Verso.

Leirvik, Oddbjørn Birger (2015). 'Policy toward Religion, State Support, and In-

terreligious Dialogue: The Case of Norway', Interreligious Studies 25 (1): 92-108.

LDO (2015). Hate Speech and Hate Crime. Report. Oslo: The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud.

Linløkken, Mari (2015). NGO Alternative Report: Supplementing and Commenting on Norway's 21st/22nd Periodic Report Submitted by Norway under Article 9 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Oslo: The Norwegian Centre Against Racism.

Midtbøen, Arnfinn H., Orupabo, Julia and Røthing, Åse (2014). Etniske og religiøse minoriteter i læremidler. Report 11: 2014. Oslo: Institutt for Samfunnsforskning.

Midtbøen, Arnfinn og Rogstad, Jon (2012). Diskrimineringens omfang og årsaker: Etniske minoriteters tilgang til norsk arbeidsliv. Report no. 1: 2012. Oslo: Institutt For Samfunnsforskning.

Ministry of Justice (2014). Handlingsplan mot radikalisering og voldelig ekstremisme. Oslo: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/Handlingsplan-mot-radikalisering-og-voldelig-ekstremisme/id762413/

Moen, Marie Kingsrød and Ertzaas, Pål (2015). 'Raser mot Erna-rådgiver: Hun sidestiller Hege Storhaug med terrorister', VG 03.06.15.

Myklebust, Anders (2015). 'Nå er det lov å håne andres tro', Vårt Land 05.05.15.

NTB (2013). 'Vi får bare pengene slengt etter oss', NTB 09.11.13.

NTB (2015). 'Regjeringen lanserer asylkampanje på sosiale medier', NTB 07.11.15.

NTB (2016). 'Max Hermansen tilbudt kontorjobb', NTB 27.01.16.

Razack, Sherene H. (2004). 'Imperilled Muslim women, dangerous men and civilised Europeans: legal and social responses to forced marriages', Feminist Legal Studies 12: 129-74.

Rydgren, Jens (2007). 'The Sociology of the Radical Right', Annual Review of Sociology 33: 241-262.

Smørvik, Ingvild (2015). 'Muslimjævelen er ingen terrorist', gjest.blogg.no 21.11.05.

Stokke, Olga, Torset, Nina Selbo and Slettholm, Andreas (2015). 'Muslimer anmelder ikke hatkriminalitetet: De har null tillit til at politiet tar det alvorlig', Aftenposten 04.08.15.

Stubberudlien, Yana (2016). 'Million mot ekstremisme', Oppegård Avis 28.01.16.

Sussman, Ronald Wald (2014). The Myth of Race. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Sveen, Erik Hind (2015). 'Storhaug: - 40 prosent av muslimene kan være fundamentalister. Forskere: - Nåja…' NRK Finmark 09.12.15

Thjømøe, Silje Løvstad (2015). 'Tiltalt for rasistisk motivert vold: «Fucking Muslims, you don't have anything to do here', VG 22.04.15.

Tronstad, Kristian R.(2008) Diskriminering. In Blom, Svein and Henriksen, Kristin (eds.) Levekår blant innvandrere i Norge 2005/06. Oslo: Statistisk Sentralbyrå.

Van Dijk, Teuns A. (1992). 'Discourse and the Denial of Racism', Discourse & Society 3 (1): 87-118.

Vepsen (2015). 'Full PEGIDA-splid', Vepsen.no 14.01.15.

Yttervik, Linn K. and Arntsen, Erlend Ofte (2015). 'Pegida-demonstrasjon ga rekordoppmøte', VG 13.01.15.

Wodak, Ruth (2015). The Politics of Fear: What Right-Wing Populist Discourses Mean. London and New York: Sage.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN POLAND
NATIONAL REPORT 2015

KONRAD PĘDZIWIATR

THE AUTHOR

Konrad Pędziwiatr holds a PhD in Social Sciences from the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven and MA in European Studies from the University of Exeter and in Sociology from the Jagiellonian University . He is author of monographs The New Muslim Elites in European Cities: Religion and Active Social Citizenship Amongst Young Organized Muslims in Brussels and London (2010) and From Islam of Immigrants to Islam of Citizens: Muslims in the Countries of Western Europe (2005, 2007) and co-author of Polish Migration Politics (2015). He has authored numerous scientific publications on Islam and Muslims in Europe, religions, migrations, minorities and social movements in Europe and Middle East and North Africa. He was a Research Fellow at Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Oxford, Marie Curie Research Fellow at the University of Bradford and Open Society Institute's Civic Education Project Fellow. He is currently Assistant Professor at the Cracow University of Economics and a researcher at the Södertörn University. k.pedziwiatr@gmail.com

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions. No representation, either expressed or implied, is made of the accuracy of the material in the national reports. The editors of the European Islamophobia Report cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The reader must make his or her own evaluation of the accuracy and appropriateness of the material.

To cite this report: Konrad Pędziwiatr (2016): *Islamophobia in Poland: National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Although Poland has a very small Muslim community it is not immune to Islamophobia. The cross-European research from 2011 has actually showed that among the eight nations involved in the study, Poles were the most critical towards Islam. This report argues that 2015 was a crucial year in the public expression of Islamophobia in Poland since it transformed from being a discourse mainly in the margins of society and politics to become part of the mainstream. This was caused above all by the coupling of a number of internal factors such as presidential and parliamentary elections and numerous external ones and in particular, the so-called 'refugee crisis', the terrorist attacks in Tunisia and France and the other atrocities of ISIS.

The report begins with the assessment of key developments and Islamophobic incidents in 2015 and then analyses Islamophobia in various spheres of social life. It points out key institutions that used Islamophobic speech last year as well as some counter-Islamophobia initiatives. It argues that the process of Muslim 'Othering' has been closely linked to wider socio-political transformations in Polish society and national as well as pan-European identity construction processes. Thus, Islamophobia is partially an import and partially a "home-made" phenomenon. The report argues that anxiety and fear in relation to Islam and Muslims exists in Poland, not because large numbers of Muslims live in the country or have recently arrived to it, but rather because their number is so small and because they lack human and financial means to effectively resist the processes of stereotyping and stigmatisation.

The mass media play a very important role in the social construction of the fear of Islam and Muslim in the country. The report claims that high anti-Muslim sentiments in Poland can be also partially understood within the postcolonial framework of uncritical import of Western fears and processes of globalization/Europeanization in the context of losing the traditional Polish "Others" and searching for new ones. One of the ways of restraining the rise of anti-Muslim sentiments in the country is a more dynamic involvement of the state apparatus in the fight against all forms of racism and xenophobia in the country, as well as, closer cooperation between academia, civil society and the state towards building a more inclusive and tolerant society.

STRESZCZENIE

Choć Polskę zamieszkuje jedynie niewielka społeczność muzułmańska to kraj nie jest wolny od islamofobii. Przekrojowe badania europejskie z 2011 pokazują, że wśród ośmiu narodów ujętych w analizie Polacy cechowali się najbardziej krytycznym stosunkiem do islamu. Niniejszy raport dowodzi, że rok 2015 był kluczowy jeśli chodzi o publiczne wyrażanie niechęci wobec islamu i muzułmanów, które przestało być jedynie cechą narracji marginalnych grup społecznych i politycznych i weszło do głównego nurtu dyskursywnego. Stało się to nade wszystko poprzez zbiegnięcie się w czasie takich wydarzeń wewnętrznych jak krajowe wybory prezydenckie i parlamentarne, ze zjawiskami zewnętrznymi – nade wszystko kryzysem migracyjnym, zamachami terrorystycznymi w Tunezji i Francji oraz innymi bestialstwami ISIS.

Raport rozpoczyna się od omówienia głównych przemian i incydentów islamofobicznych w minionym roku, a następnie analizuje islamofobię w różnych sferach życia społecznego. Wskazuje również na główne instytucje które używają islamofobicznej narracji oraz wybrane inicjatywy mające na celu walkę z islamofobią. Raport argumentuje, że kreowanie muzułmańskiego „innego" jest bardzo ściśle związane z szerszymi transformacjami społeczno-politycznymi społeczeństwa polskiego jak również procesem konstruowania tożsamości narodowej i pan-europejskiej. Tym samym jest to częściowo zjawisko „importowane", a częściowo „produkt krajowy". Raport dowodzi, że obawy i strach przed muzułmanami i islamem są obecne w Polsce nie dlatego, że w kraju mamy do czynienia ze znaczącą demograficznie populacją muzułmańską, tylko raczej dlatego że muzułmanów w kraju jest tak niewielu i społeczność ta ma deficyt kapitału ludzkiego i finansowego potrzebnego do tego by skutecznie przeciwstawiać się procesom stereotypizacji i stygmatyzacji.

W społecznej konstrukcji strachu przed islamem i muzułmanami w Polsce bardzo ważną rolę odgrywają krajowe mass media. Raport twierdzi, że wysoki wskaźnik postaw anty-muzułmańskich może być częściowo rozumiany jako post-kolonialne bezkrytyczne zapożyczenia zachodnich lęków, a częściowo jako utrata dotychczasowych „innych" i szukanie nowych w kontekście procesów globalizacji i europeizacji. Jednym ze sposobów na powstrzymywanie wzrostu postaw anty-muzułmańskich w kraju jest dynamiczniejsze włączenie się aparatu państwa w walkę ze wszelkimi formami rasizmu i ksenofobii, a także bliższa współpraca ze światem akademii i społeczeństwem obywatelskim w celu budowy społeczeństwa bardziej inkluzywnego i tolerancyjnego.

INTRODUCTION

In spite of the small size of the Muslim community in Poland (around 35,000 believers according to expert estimations[1] which makes it less than 0.1 per cent of the total population of the country and 5,108 according to the Central Statistical Office of Poland),[2] or partially as a result of it,[3] the fear of Islam and Muslims is quite widespread among Polish citizens. As national research shows, Arabs, most commonly identified with Muslims by Poles, and categorised as a 'national group' in the studies carried out by the Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS) between 2002 and 2012, consistently emerged as the least liked and the most disliked group, alongside the Roma.[4] This unenthusiastic approach towards Muslims is also confirmed by the latest CBOS survey that shows that 44 per cent of Poles have a negative attitude towards Muslims, 33 per cent have a neutral attitude and only 23 per cent have a positive attitude towards them.[5] The research shows also that only 12 per cent of Poles personally knows a Muslim so the negative attitude towards followers of Islam is by and large developed in the absence of any contact with Muslims or the Muslim world.[6] Similar results were also revealed in research carried out last year by the Centre for Research on Prejudice at the University of Warsaw and the foundation Common Space. According to the latter 80 per cent of Poles do not know any Muslim and 73 per cent holds a negative attitude towards them.[7]

The aforementioned data needs to be put in context: as a result of increased contact with foreigners residing in Poland over the last decades, 'the alien' is increasingly transformed into 'the other'. Hence, there has been a growing domestication and concretisation of the category of immigrant in Poland.[8] At the same time, it seems that especially new Muslim groups in Poland are usually excluded from this process of domestication.

1. K. Pędziwiatr, *Muslims in Contemporary Poland*, [in:] *Muslims in Visegrad Countries*, ed by. J. Bureš, Anna. Lindh Foundation and Visegrad Fund, Prague 2011, pp. 10–24; A. Nalborczyk, *Mosques in Poland. Past and Present*, [in:] *Muslims in Poland and Eastern Europe. Wideaning the European Discourse on Islam*, ed by. K. Górak-Sosnowska, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa 2011.

2. GUS, *Struktura narodowo-etniczna, językowa i wyznaniowa ludności Polski*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Warszawa 2015.

3. Pędziwiatr, K. (2015) Islamophobia as a New Manifestation of Polish Fears and Anxieties. In: Kusek, R., Purchla, J., Santera-Szeliga, J. (ed.) "Nations and Stereotypes Twenty Five Years After: New Borders, New Horizons", International Cultural Centre, Kraków, 132-150.

4. CBOS, *Stosunek Polaków do innych narodów* (The Poles' attitudes towards other nations), Warszawa 2012.

5. By comparison 4 per cent of Poles have negative attitude toward Catholics, 7 per cent towards Christian Orthodox followers and 11 per cent towards Protestants. CBOS, *Postawy wobec islamu i muzułmanów (Attitudes towards Islam and Muslims)*, Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, Warszawa 2015.

6. Ibid.

7. Klimowicz, J., *Polacy boją się muzułmanów. Najbardziej najmłodsi*. Gazeta Wyborcza, 22.09.2015

8. A. Grzymała-Kazłowska, *Konstruowanie „innego". Wizerunki imigrantów w Polsce* (Constructing "the Other." Depictions of immigrants in Poland), Warszawa 2007.

The information from the national studies is also corroborated by pan-European research. Some of this research shows that the fear of Islam and Muslims in Poland is actually greater than in other European countries with much more significant Muslim populations. One such research is a study on intolerance, prejudice and discrimination commissioned by the German Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. According to this study, 47 % of the Polish respondents believe that "too many Muslims live in Poland," and 62 % believe that "Muslim demands and expectations are too high." In comparison, in France, which is the country with the largest Muslim population in the European Union, 36 % of those questioned agreed with the former opinion, with the latter view supported by 52 %. Among the eight nations involved in the research the Poles were the most critical towards Islam in terms of religion and culture. Nearly 62 % of the Polish respondents agreed with the thesis that "Islam is an intolerant religion" and only one in five believed that the Muslim culture could adapt to life in European/Polish society. In comparison, in Germany, which has the second largest Muslim population in the EU, 52 % of those questioned considered Islam to be intolerant, while in Great Britain – with the third largest Muslim community – 39 % of the respondents concurred with the statement that Muslim culture is attuned to their country/Europe.[9] Even if the aforementioned statistics - pointing to differences between European countries - need to be understood in light of different contexts of public expressions of prejudice,[10] the findings of national analyses (including ones by the author)[11] confirm an unprecedented level of anti-Muslim prejudice expressed in the public sphere especially in 2015.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS AND INCIDENTS IN 2015

The increase in anti-Muslim prejudice in the public sphere in 2015 began in January after the terrorist attack on the Charlie Hebdo offices in Paris. Although these attacks were strongly condemned by all Muslim organisations in the country numerous Muslim leaders expressed fear of the backlash and complained about the increasingly Islamophobic public mood.[12]

The significant rise of anti-Muslim feelings expressed in the public domain took place though only in the second half of the year and it was linked above all with the coupling of the so-called European 'refugee crisis' and the Polish

9. A. Zick et al. *Intolerance, Prejudice and Discrimination: A European Report*, Berlin 2011.

10. A. Piekut, U. Vieten and V., Gill. 2014. "Seeking the New Normal'? Troubled Spaces of Encountering Visible Differences in Warsaw." *Polish Sociological Review* 188 (4): 541–58.

11. Pędziwiatr, K. (2015) Islamophobia as a New Manifestation of Polish Fears and Anxieties, op. cit., and D. Maciejasz: *Jak zatrzymać tych, którzy chcą iść „z maczetami na meczety"*. "Gazeta Wyborcza. Kraków", 19-20.09.2015.

12. M. Giec, *Muzułmanie w Polsce o ataku na Charlie Hebdo | VICE | Polska*, 2015, http://www.vice.com/pl/read/muzulmanie-w-polsce-o-ataku-na-charlie-hebdo, accessed 9.02.2016; Wirtualna Polska, *Poznańscy muzułmanie boją się odwetu za zamach we Francji*, 2015, http://wiadomosci.wp.pl/kat,1019407,title,Poznanscy-muzulmanie-boja-sie-odwetu-za-zamach-we-Francji,wid,17164740,wiadomosc.html, accessed 9.02.2016.

parliamentary elections held at the end of October 2015. For the first time in the modern history of Poland the issues of supposedly increased migratory influx have been greatly politicised especially by the populist national-conservative Law and Justice Party, KORWiN, and far right groups that formed part of Kukiz'15[13] and played an important role during the parliamentary campaign. As part of this politicisation numerous candidates (especially but not exclusively from the aforementioned parties – e.g. Katarzyna Bielańska from Civic Platform in Kraków)[14] expressed openly xenophobic, racist or Islamophobic views in the media; produced anti-immigration posters;[15] and participated in the demonstrations "against the Islamisation of Poland and Europe" organised not only in the biggest Polish cities, but also in small ones like Bielsko-Biała. The poster of one of such demonstrations in Bielsko Biała can be seen below.

Figure 1. Poster of the anti-Islamisation demonstration organised in Bielsko Biała on 2 October, 2015. The poster reads "No!!! to the Islamisation of Bielsko Biała".

The victorious Law and Justice Party and some members of Kukiz'15 kept using the ongoing so-called 'refugee crisis' to stoke fear within Polish society of the supposed Muslim influx to the country after the elections. The terrorist attacks in Paris on 13 November, 2015 provided them with new arguments in these efforts. The incoming Law and Justice's Minister of European Affairs famously said that "In the face of the tragic events in Paris, Poland sees no political possibilities for implementing the decision on the relocation of refugees",[16] while the incoming Minister of Foreign Affairs Witold Waszczykowski suggested that Syrian refugees should not be given shelter and protection in Europe but instead should be militarily trained and form an army to liberate their country.[17] Members of Kukiz'15 an-

13. The electoral block and parliamentary club led by punk musician Paweł Kukiz who achieved very good results (21% of votes) in the first round of the presidential elections in May 2015. The block that is not formally registered as a political party, as one of its key postulates is to "destroy particracy", is made up of right-wing and f ar right elements.

14. Information about the controversial electoral campaign of the Civic Platform candidate can be found on http://www.tvn24.pl/kandydatka-po-promuje-sie-czarnymi-burgerami-kolor-skory-uchodzcow,587553,s.html (accessed 2.01.2016).

15. For example, Kamil Kupiec running on the KORWIN list in Kraków, put on his electoral poster the slogan "Instead of immigrants we want repatriates", while Ewa Damaszek in the Silesia region running on the same list claimed on her electoral poster that "Silesia is our home. Islam has its own."

16. Former Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz (Civic Platform) agreed before the elections to welcome 7,000 refugees in Poland. Until the end of June the statistics of the Office for Foreigners (*Urząd ds. Cudzoziemców*) show less than 800 Syrians legally residing in Poland, 211 have gained refugee status and a further 45 were given supplementary protection. (UdSC – Dane liczbowe dotyczące postępowań wobec cudzoziemców – available on http://udsc.gov.pl/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Dane-liczbowe-dotycz%C4%85ce-post%C4%99powa%C5%84-prowadzonych-wobec-cudzoziemc%C3%B3w-w-pierwszej-po%C5%82owie-2015-roku2.xlsx

17. Both incoming ministers quoted on the website of the Polish Radio - http://www.thenews.pl/1/10/Artykul/229025,Incoming-Foreign-Minister-Syrian-refugees-can-fight-for-homeland#sthash.7SAvtZAT.dpuf (accessed 02.01.2016).

nounced their intention to organise a national referendum in the hope of reversing the decision of former Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz to welcome 7,000 refugees in Poland in the coming two years.

In the presidential elections held in May 2015 the issue of the arrival of Syrian refugees to Poland was also present (especially in the last TV debate before the second round of elections), however, it was only minor issue.[18] The humanitarian tragedy of Syrian people of all faiths in the presidential debate was approached from the confessional point of view: the main concern of Bronisław Komorowski and Andrzej Duda was chiefly the fate of Christian refugees. This was symptomatic of numerous other discussions and public debates in the second half of the year that often evolved around the proposal to offer assistance not to all Syrian refugees but only to Christian ones. This was partially linked to the very successful campaign of the Estera Foundation and its president Miriam Shaded to portray the Christians in Syria as the main victims of the ongoing war and diabolise its Muslim victims.[19]

There were also numerous Islamophobic incidents in 2015. One of them that received particularly large media coverage was the desecration of the newly opened first purpose-built mosque in the Polish capital. The Ochota Mosque was shot at before its official inauguration in June 2015 with a pneumatic weapon and was a scene of numerous anti-mosque protests; soon after its official opening it was desecrated by a woman who threw pig heads inside the building.[20] The Muslim League in Poland that looks after the mosque decided to drop charges against the perpetrator in order to not give additional publicity to such individuals or lend support to such groups.

Figure 2. The woman who threw pig heads inside the mosque and in its outdoor parking is caught on CCTV cameras.

Earlier the same year a mosque in Poznań was plastered with Islamophobic graffiti and stickers.[21]The same had

18. During the presidential campaign much more attention was paid to emigration of Poles to the UK, Germany and other countries of the EU in the last decades. The transcript of the last television debate before the second tour of 2015 presidential elections can be found at http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl/wybory-prezydenckie/artykuly/490964,bronislaw-komorowski-kontra-andrzej-duda-ostatnia-przedwyborcza-debata.html (accessed 2.01.2016).

19. The foundation forced the state authorities to assist it in its effort to bring up to 1,500 Christians from Syria. The cost of the stay of Syrian Christians in Poland is to be covered by churches, local communities, individual donations and the English Barnabas Fund. The first 150 Syrians arrived to Poland in July 2015 but some complained about the conditions of their stay and left the country. http://www.thenews.pl/1/10/Artykul/213366,50-Syrian-Christian-families-arrive-in-Warsaw http://www.thenews.pl/1/10/Artykul/217824,Foundation-rejects-criticisms-by-Syrian-given-asylum-in-Poland

20. TVP, *Rozrzuciła świńskie łby w warszawskim meczecie. Policja poszukuje kobiety w ciemnych okularach*, 12.07.2015, http://www.tvp.info/20810154/rozrzucila-swinskie-lby-w-warszawskim-meczecie-policja-poszukuje-kobiety-w-ciemnych-okularach, accessed 8.01.2016.

21. K. Koziolek, *Atak na meczet w Poznaniu: To efekt Charlie Hebdo*, 2015, http://www.gloswielkopolski.pl/artykul/3720878,atak-na-meczet-w-poznaniu-to-efekt-charlie-hebdo,id,t.html, accessed 10.02.2016.

also happened to the Muslim community centre in Kraków (see photo below).[22]

The Polish Defence League claimed responsibility for the targeting of the Poznań Mosque; the former is a radical Islamophobic group (a relatively new offshoot of the English Defence League) that also organised a small-scale demonstration outside the Old Mosque in Warsaw and has repeatedly threatened Polish Muslims.[23] Among the individuals who were targets of Islamophobic attacks were, inter alia, the former imam of the mosque in Gdańsk and his businesses,[24] and a young Syrian Christian in Poznań who was mistakenly taken for a Muslim and severely beaten.[25]

Figure 3. Islamophobic graffiti by the entrance to the Islamic Centre in Krakow which includes a date of the Second Siege of Vienna and the vulgar sentence "Didn't you have enough? Get lost!"

ISLAMOPHOBIC INCIDENTS AND DISCURSIVE EVENTS IN VARIOUS SPHERES

As far as the legal situation of Muslims in Poland is concerned they have the same religious freedoms and rights as other citizens of the country. The Polish Constitution of 1997 in Article 53 guarantees freedom of conscience and religion to every citizen. In the eyes of members of the Muslim community and its key organisations (Muslim Religious Union and Muslim League) one of the laws that restricts the right of Muslims in their religious lifestyle was the ban on ritual slaughter introduced in 2013. This ban, however, was lifted at the end of 2014 by the decision of the Constitutional Tribunal that deemed it unconstitutional. In 2015, not only Polish Muslims but also Jews, thus, practised this element of their faith without legal obstacles.[26]

The small number of Muslims in the country and lack of well-developed channels of registering Islamophobic incidents in the labour market makes it difficult to assess the level of discriminatory practices towards Muslims in this sphere of social life. Numerous research on the discrimination against foreigners in Poland shows, however, that such exclusionary practices towards people considered as 'Others' do

22. In 2015, prosecutors also announced that they had not managed to find the culprits behind the devastation of the traditional Tatar Mosque in Kruszyniany that took place in 2014. http://bialystok.wyborcza.pl/bialystok/1,35241,17878928,Zniszczyli_meczet_i_mizar_w_Kruszynianach__Unikna.html?disableRedirects=true#TRrelSST accessed 02.01.2016.

23. A. Elbanowska. Antyislamiści polscy: Chcemy deportować wszystkich muzułmanów. Gazeta Wyborcza. 18.02.2015

24. J. Hlebowicz, *Bar prowadzony przez Palestyńczyka został ostrzelany*, 12.01.2015, http://gdansk.gosc.pl/doc/2854410.Bar-prowadzony-przez-Palestynczyka-zostal-ostrzelany, accessed 8.01.2016.

25. A. Lehmann, *Syryjczyk pobity w Poznaniu: człowiek w garniturze krzyczał "Dobijcie go"*, 11.06.2015, http://poznan.wyborcza.pl/poznan/1,36037,19151856,syryjczyk-pobity-w-poznaniu-mezczyzna-w-garniturze-krzyczal.html, accessed 8.01.2016.

26. Polskie Radio, *Wyrok TK: ubój rytualny i eksport uzyskanego z niego mięsa będzie dopuszczalny w polskim prawie*, 12.10.2014, //www.polskieradio.pl/42/3166/Artykul/1314979, accessed 8.01.2016.

occur also in the labour market and might be quite frequent depending on the social status/class of the persons concerned and the sector of the economy.[27]

Interviewed leaders of the key Muslim organisations (Muslim Religious Union and Muslim League) did not recall any serious Islamophobic incidents in the educational sphere. The media reported, however, a few cases that had such character (e.g. Teacher of Physics in one of the schools in Białystok asked pupils to calculate how many Syrian refugees need to be pushed out of the raft so as it could reach the destination[28] or pupil of one of the vocational schools in Świętokrzyskie voivodship was calling for setting fire to the Tatar mosque in Kruszyniany[29]) Muslim pupils and students who want to follow Islamic classes have a right to such state-paid education provided either within the school premises or outside of them. Major Muslim organisations in Poland provide such education either on their premises or in schools across Poland. At the same time, an almost decade-old analysis of the portrayal of Islam in Polish school textbooks shows that their depiction of Islam and Muslims is frequently very essentialist.[30]

As mentioned above the sphere of politics was one of the major arenas where anti-Muslim prejudice and fear were played out in 2015. What was particularly surprising was the scale of this new trend. If Islamophobic arguments had been used in political life at the national[31] as well as local[32] level before 2015, there were never part of the key tools of mainstream political mobilisation. The emergence of Daesh/ISIS in 2014 and its atrocities as well as the terrorist attacks in France in January and November coupled with the difficulties of managing the so-called 'refugee crisis' provided the right-wing and far right political forces in Poland with ample arsenal of discursive arms for their key political battles. The campaigns before Polish presidential (in May) and especially parliamentary elections (in October) were the major battlefield were these arguments were used.

27. W. Klaus, ed., *Sąsiedzi czy intruzi? O dyskryminacja cudzoziemców w Polsce*, Stowarzyszenie Interwencji Prawnej i Instytut Spraw Publicznych, Warszawa 2011; J. Brzozowski and K. Pędziwiatr, *Analiza procesu integracji imigrantów w Małopolsce*, [in:] *Imigranci w Małopolsce: między integracją, asymilacją, separacją i marglinalizacją*, Akademia Ignatianum w Krakowie, Kraków 2014, pp. 117–290.

28. Polska Times, *Zadanie o uchodźcach z Syrii. Ilu trzeba zepchnąć z tratwy, żeby dopłynąć do celu? To nie fejk*, 11.11.2015, http://www.poranny.pl/artykul/9075475,zadanie-o-uchodzcach-z-syrii-ilu-trzeba-zepchnac-z-tratwy-zeby-doplynac-do-celu-to-nie-fejk,id,t.html, accessed 23.02.2016.

29. J. Klimowicz, *19-letni uczeń nawoływał do podpalenia meczetu w Kruszynianach*, n.d., http://bialystok.wyborcza.pl/bialystok/1,35241,18317737,19-letni-uczen-nawolywal-do-podpalenia-meczetu-w-kruszynianach.html, accessed 23.02.2016.

30. K. Górak-Sosnowska, "Wizerunek islamu w Polsce na przykładzie podręczników szkolnych" ([in:] *Islam i obywatelskość w Europie.* eds. K. Górak-Sosnowska, P. Kubicki, K. Pędziwiatr, Warszawa 2006.

31. For example, in 2011, Jarosław Gowin argued in a radio interview that "We will end up like Rome, barbarians will come, Muslims will come, and Europe will become Islamic, whereas I would very much like Europe to remain attached to such values as freedom of the individual", http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/kraj/skonczymy-jak-rzym-przyjda-barbarzyncy-przyjda-muzulmanie/d05yt, (accessed 15.10.2015).

32. Pędziwiatr, *Warszawskie spory meczetowe*, "Biuletyn Migracyjny", 2012, no 39.

Stoking fear with the visions of an imminent Muslim invasion, sharia courts in Poland and refugees bringing 'cholera' and 'parasites' to Europe became not only part of the discursive repertoire of the far right and right-wing political backbenchers but also of the leader of the Law and Justice Party Jarosław Kaczyński[33] whose party won the presidential and parliamentary elections. As the Islamophobic arguments became mainstream they were increasingly used by various political actors taking part (especially) in the parliamentary elections. One of the most visible signs of this new trend was the popularisation of anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim slogans on the posters and campaign leaflets in particular of numerous candidates of KORWiN and Kukiz'15.

The essentialist images and narratives of Islam and Muslims have been greatly popularised in the mass media and on the Internet. In this sense contemporary Polish Islamophobia has a very strong media and cyberspace dimension, and the social fear of Islam and Muslims can be viewed as largely a media-made and cyberspace-amplified fear. This is linked to the fact that it is the media and the Internet where Poles mainly draw information about Islam and its believers.[34] While the majority of elements used in the simplified depiction of Islam have an exogenic character (in 2015, these were mainly the atrocities committed by ISIS and terrorist attacks abroad) over the last year (inter alia as a result of the so-called 'refugee crisis') these elements have been increasingly endogenic. Hence Muslims ceased to be portrayed as mainly the 'external enemy' and began to be depicted as (if not yet then soon to become) the Polish 'internal enemy'. Muslims were traditionally portrayed in the media as those who cannot or will not integrate with European societies while their religion was presented as incompatible with the Western values of freedom and equality, and with national values (history/customs/language). This kind of depiction had clear social results confirmed by a CBOS survey from February 2015 that showed that 63 % of Poles agreed with the statement that Muslims living in Western Europe by and large do not integrate with the majority of citizens of their countries.[35]

In today's Poland the groups promoting stereotypical visions of Islam and its adherents are greatly empowered by the Internet. It provides them with powerful tools for amplification of their voices and hence for mobilisation and recruitment. With over 70 % of Poles having access to the Internet[36] their target audience consists of almost three quarters of Polish society. These groups significantly amplify the dominant frames through which stories on Islam and Muslims are being reported. Such stories consist of "newsworthy" elements like extremism, terrorism, violence,

33. Elements of speeches by Jarosław Kaczyński during the parliamentary elections campaign are available at https://euobserver.com/political/130672accessed 12.02.2016.

34. K. Pędziwiatr, *Muslims in the Polish Media - the New Folk Devil?*, "Arches Quarterly", 2010, t.4, no 7, pp. 89–95; K. Pędziwiatr, *Islamofobia jako nowy wymiar lęków i obaw Polaków*, [in:] *Stereotypy ...*, ed by. R. Kusek, 2015.

35. CBOS, Postawy wobec islamu i muzułmanów (Attitudes towards Islam and Muslims), Warszawa 2015

36. J. Czapiński and T. Panek, *Diagnoza społeczna 2015*, Rada Monitoringu Społecznego, Warszawa 2015, 2015

radicalisation, oppression, threat, jihad, crime, fanatical, oppression, sexism and the burqa - to mention only the most frequent ones. Some of the websites that concentrate on spreading this type of information on Islam and Muslims include Euroislam.pl; Fronda.pl; PCh24.pl; Ndie.pl; Wpolityce.pl; Wsieci.pl; Polskaligaobrony.org.pl; Ruchnarodowy.net and Onr.com.pl.[37]

Social media and in particular Facebook plays a very important role in promoting stereotypical visions of Muslims and their religion. One of the Facebook groups that gathered a particularly significant following is called "No to the Islamisation of Europe" and is linked to the website Ndie.pl. Its Polish Facebook page has almost 270,000 followers[38] and regular posts are variations of the slogan popular in anti-Muslim groups "By buying a kebab, you welcome an Arab." Here it is worth noting that at the same time the PEGIDA German Facebook page has less than 190,000 followers.[39] Other Facebook groups that have large followings include 'Stop the Islamisation of Europe'[40] (40,000 followers) and 'Euroislam'[41] (which is linked to the website Euroislam.pl and has almost 11,000 followers). In comparison, the Polish anti-racist group 'YES for refugees – No to racism and xenophobia' has at present (February 2016) only 5,500 followers on Facebook. [42]

KEY INSTITUTIONS USING ISLAMOPHOBIC SPEECH AND SOME COUNTER-ISLAMOPHOBIA INITIATIVES

As far as the key groups promoting Islamophobic views are concerned one may divide them into three major types. The first cluster is made up of various individuals and associations that legitimise their stereotypical visions of Islam and Muslims with particularly frequent references to notions of enlightenment, secularism, pluralism, human rights and democracy. One of the groups that have been using these type of narratives in order to hide its overtly Islamophobic agenda is the association Europe of the Future, which aims "to thwart the development of Islamism in Poland and Europe" and associates all forms of Muslim public religiosity as a "totalitarian movement hostile to democracy".[43] One of the leading figures behind this initiative is sociologist Grzegorz Lindenberg who is currently a member of the Board of Trustees of the weekly Wprost. In 2015, these type of narratives

37. More information on these groups is provided below.

38. See https://www.facebook.com/pages/Nie-dla-Islamizacji-Europy/182944451832138?fref=ts

39. https://www.facebook.com/pages/PEGIDA/790669100971515?fref=ts (accessed 09.01.2016).

40. https://www.facebook.com/Stop-islamizacji-Europy-191777667634248/ (accessed 08.01.2016).

41. https://www.facebook.com/euroislampl (accessed 08.01.2016).

42. https://www.facebook.com/groups/tak.dla.uchodzcow/?fref=ts (accessed 10.02.2016).

43. More information about the association that started its anti-Muslim activities at an anti-Turkish demonstration in 2004 can be found on its website: http://www.euroislam.pl/index.php/stowarzyszenie/o-nas/, (accessed 15.12.2015).

have been also very frequently invoked by right-wing politicians (especially those from the Law and Justice Party), who also used Christian and religious terms to legitimise their criticism of Islam and Muslims. This type of narrative is characteristic of the second cluster of groups and individuals directly or indirectly linked with the Catholic Church that distinguish themselves in their essentialist view of Islam. Above all, they consist of the web portal Fronda.pl (which was linked until the end of 2014 with the journal Fronda Lux) and the web portal PCh24.pl which is linked to the bimonthly glossy magazine Polonia Christiana (published since 2008 by Father Piotr Skarga of the Association of Christian Culture founded in 1999 under the guidance of the traditionalist Catholic international movement 'Tradition, Family and Property'). In 2015, this narrative was strongly strengthened by the Estera Foundation lobbying for the acceptance in Poland of only Christian Syrian refugees. The last type of cluster consists of a wide variety of groups that oppose 'Muslimness' in all forms mainly with reference to ultra-nationalist terms. Here we find such far right groups as the Polish Defence League (Polskaligaobrony.org.pl), the Polish National Movement (Ruchnarodowy.net), the National Radical Camp (Onr.com.pl) and a Facebook group linked to them known as "No to the Islamisation of Europe".

There were several initiatives in 2015 that tried to counter Islamophobic narratives. As mentioned earlier the Polish Muslim community is small and has very limited human and financial resources to play an important role in such initiatives. In spite of this one of the Muslim organisations (Muslim League) has run a website called 'Observatory of Islamophobia' (from 2013 to March 2015) that aimed at "registering cases of Islamophobia and constructing counter-narratives without trying to get into debate with Islamophobes".[44] Other interesting initiative that also challenged Islamophobic voices in 2015 - not entirely but partially- were the projects 'Hate Speech Alert' and 'Brown Book'. The first project was implemented by the association Interkulturalni.pl (set up in 2010 in Kraków) and aimed at preventing hate speech by public persons and in particular by politicians and journalists. It monitored media and reacted to instances of hate speech (in 2015 a substantial part of hate speech had Islamophobic character) and provided training for journalists and members of political parties in dealing with issues of communication.[45] The second project has been running for many years now by the leading anti-racist organisation in the country - the association 'Never Again' (Stowarzyszenie Nigdy Więcej) – and was first registered in 1996. Similarly to the initiative of Interkulturalni it monitors media content, collects material on any instances of racism and xenophobia and takes action against them.[46]

44. More information on the initiative can be found at http://islamofobia.info.pl/ (accessed 08.01.2016).

45. More information on the project and its actions can be found at http://hatespeechalert.org.pl/ (accessed 08.01.2016).

46. More information about the association and its projects including 'Brown Book' can be found at http://www.nigdywiecej.org/brunatna-ksiega (accessed 08.01.2016).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As shown above the levels of Polish fear of Islam and Muslims often exceed those in European countries with much more significant Muslim populations, which only proves that strong anti-Muslim sentiments can function perfectly fine in the absence of a significant Muslim minority. As argued elsewhere anxiety and fear in relation to Islam and Muslims exist in Poland, not because a large number Muslims live in the country or recently arrived to it, but rather because their number is so small and because they lack elites powerful enough to resist the processes of stereotypingand stigmatisation.[47] High anti-Muslim sentiments in Poland can be also understood within the postcolonial framework of the uncritical import of Western fears and processes of globalization/Europeanization in the context of losing the traditional Polish "Others" and searching for new ones. The year 2015 was critical in the public expression of Islamophobia in Poland since it transformed from being mainly a discourse on the margins of society and politics to becoming part of the mainstream. This was caused above all by the coupling of a number of internal (e.g. presidential and parliamentary elections, EU request to accept refugees) and external factors (e.g. the terrorist attacks in Tunisia and France, and the atrocities of ISIS). The foundations, however, for this kind of mainstreaming had been laid much earlier.

So far there have been only minor efforts to challenge Islamophobia initiated mainly by Polish Muslims, academia[48] and wider civil society. If the raising wave of fear of Islam and Muslims is to be at least minimally limited in the future the engagement of the state apparatus in some manner is badly needed. The visit of the Polish President Andrzej Duda to the Tatar Mosque in Bohoniki in September 2015 was an important step in a direction of building good community relations between diverse religious and ethnic groups that live in Poland and one of the rare occasions last year when the mass media talked about Islam not in relation to terrorism and radicalism. The actions of the key institutions of the state however need to go beyond such symbolic gestures and try to tackle hate speech, racism and xenophobia in all forms (including political) on a daily basis. There should be a close cooperation between the state administration, academia and non-governmental actors with the common goal of fighting essentialist views of groups perceived as "Others" and in building a tolerant and inclusive society. The success of the Day of Temples initiative in Warsaw in September 2015 which saw more than 1,000 non-Muslims visit the Mosque in Ochota gives some hope for the future.

47. K. Pędziwiatr, K. Islamophobia as a New Manifestation of Polish Fears and Anxieties … op. cit.

48. Here I mean initiatives such as for example producing a special guidebook on Islam and Muslims for journalists (see A. Nalborczyk and A. Marek, *Nie bój się islamu. Leksykon dla dziennikarzy*, Więź, Warszawa 2005;) and a set of recommendations on the integration of immigrants (see e.g. J. Brzozowski and K. Pędziwiatr, „Analiza procesu integracji imigrantów w Małopolsce", op. cit.) and polish migration policy. R. Matyja, A. Siewierska-Chmaj, and K. Pędziwiatr, *Polska polityka migracyjna*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa: Rzeszów 2015.

CHRONOLOGY

January

- In the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo attack Muslims in Poland express growing fear of the backlash and complain about the increasingly Islamophobic public mood. Targeting of the Mosque in Poznań.

February

- One the columnists of the mainstream quality daily Rzeczpospolita speculates in his text regarding where Poland should expel its Muslims.[49]

March

- In the aftermath of the terrorist attack on the Bardo Complex in Tunis, where three Polish tourists died, the portrayal of Islam and Muslims is increasingly linked with terrorism and the atrocities of Daesh.

April

- The beginning of the presidential elections campaign during which numerous far right and right-wing candidates (e.g. Marian Kowalski, Grzegorz Braun, Janusz Korwin-Mikke, Paweł Kukiz) expressed xenophobic views.

May

- The end of the presidential elections campaign during which two main contenders to the post, Bronisław Komorowski (incumbent president) and Andrzej Duda (victorious candidate), discussed the humanitarian tragedy of Syrian people from the confessional point of view as their main concern was the fate of Christians in Syria.

June

- The opening of the first purpose-built mosque in Warsaw that was a scene of the first large anti-Muslim protests in Poland in 2010.

July

- The desecration of the newly opened first purpose-built mosque in Warsaw by a woman who threw pig heads inside the building and in its outdoor parking.

August

- Some of the Syrian Christian families who arrived in Poland a month earlier on the invitation of the Estera Foundation decided to leave the country. Its president Miriam Shaded continues to use various media outlets to portray the Christians in Syria as the main victims of the ongoing war and diabolises all its Muslim victims.

49. D. Zdort, *Dokąd deportować Tatarów*, "Rzeczpospolita", 06.02. 2015.

September

- Numerous anti-immigrant and anti-Islamisation demonstrations are organised across the country. One of the largest is organised in Kraków (12.09.2015) to mark the 332nd anniversary of the Vienna victory of 1683.

October

- The end of the parliamentary elections campaign during which Islamophobic arguments became tools of political mobilisation used not only by far right elements but also by mainstream right-wing political parties.

November

- Attack on young Syrian Christian George Mamlook in Poznań who was mistakenly taken for a Muslim and severely beaten.

December

- Attack on the businesses of the former imam of the mosque in Gdańsk.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brzozowski J., and Pędziwiatr K., Analiza procesu integracji imigrantów w Małopolsce, [in:] Imigranci w Małopolsce: między integracją, asymilacją, separacją i marglinalizacją, Akademia Ignatianum w Krakowie, Kraków 2014, pp. 117–290.

CBOS, Stosunek Polaków do innych narodów, Warszawa 2012.

- Postawy wobec islamu i muzułmanów (Attitudes towards Islam and Muslims), Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, Warszawa 2015.

Diagnoza Społeczna 2013 available at http://ce.vizja.pl/en/issues/volume/7/issue/3.1 accessed 04.04.2015.

Elbanowska A., Antyislamiści polscy: Chcemy deportować wszystkich muzułmanów. Gazeta Wyborcza. 18.02.2015.

Euroislam, Misja, n.d., http://www.euroislam.pl/index.php/stowarzyszenie/o-nas/.

Giec M., Muzułmanie w Polsce o ataku na Charlie Hebdo | VICE | Polska, 2015, http://www.vice.com/pl/read/muzulmanie-w-polsce-o-ataku-na-charlie-hebdo, accessed 9.02.2016.

Grzymała-Kazłowska A., Konstruowanie "innego": wizerunki imigrantów w Polsce, Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa 2007.

GUS, Struktura narodowo-etniczna, językowa i wyznaniowa ludności Polski, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Warszawa 2015.

Górak-Sosnowska, K. "Wizerunek islamu w Polsce na przykładzie podręczników szkolnych" ([in:] Islam i obywatelskość w Europie. eds. K. Górak-Sosnowska, P. Kubic-

ki, K. Pędziwiatr, Warszawa 2006.

Hlebowicz J., Bar prowadzony przez Palestyńczyka został ostrzelany, 12.01.2015, http://gdansk.gosc.pl/doc/2854410.Bar-prowadzony-przez-Palestynczyka-zostal-ostrzelany,accessed 8.01.2016.

Klaus W., Sąsiedzi czy intruzi? O dyskryminacja cudzoziemców w Polsce, Stowarzyszenie Interwencji Prawnej i Instytut Spraw Publicznych, Warszawa n.d.

Koziolek K., Atak na meczet w Poznaniu: To efekt Charlie Hebdo, 2015, http://www.gloswielkopolski.pl/artykul/3720878,atak-na-meczet-w-poznaniu-to-efekt-charlie-hebdo,id,t.html,10.02.2016.

Lehmann A., Syryjczyk pobity w Poznaniu: człowiek w garniturze krzyczał "Dobijcie go", 11.06.2015, http://poznan.wyborcza.pl/poznan/1,36037,19151856,-syryjczyk-pobity-w-poznaniu-mezczyzna-w-garniturze-krzyczal.html, accessed 8.01.2016.

Matyja R., Siewierska-Chmaj A., and Pędziwiatr K., Polska polityka migracyjna, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa : Rzeszów 2015.

Nalborczyk A., Mosques in Poland. Past and Present, [in:] Muslims in Poland and Eastern Europe. Widening the European Discourse on Islam, ed by. K. Górak-Sosnowska, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa 2011.

Nalborczyk A., and Marek A., Nie bój się islamu. Leksykon dla dziennikarzy, Więź, Warszawa 2005.

Pędziwiatr K., Warszawskie spory meczetowe, "Biuletyn Migracyjny", 2012, no 39.

Pędziwiatr K., Muslims in the Polish Media - the New Folk Devil?, "Arches Quarterly", 2010, t.4, no 7, pp. 89–95.

- Muslims in Contemporary Poland, [in:] Muslims in Visegrad Countries, ed by. J. Bureš, Anna Lindh Foundation and Visegrad Fund, Prague 2011, pp. 10–24.

- Islamofobia jako nowy wymiar lęków i obaw Polaków, [in:] Stereotypy ..., ed by. R. Kusek, 2015.

Piekut,A, U. Vieten and V., Gill. 2014. "'Seeking the New Normal'? Troubled Spaces of Encountering Visible Differences in Warsaw." Polish Sociological Review 188 (4): 541–58.

Polskie Radio, Wyrok TK: ubój rytualny i eksport uzyskanego z niego mięsa będzie dopuszczalny w polskim prawie, 12.10.2014, //www.polskieradio.pl/42/3166/Artykul/1314979, accessed 8.01.2016.

TVP, Rozrzuciła świńskie łby w warszawskim meczecie. Policja poszukuje kobiety w ciemnych okularach, 12.072015, http://www.tvp.info/20810154/rozrzucila-swinskie-lby-w-warszawskim-meczecie-policja-poszukuje-kobiety-w-ciemnych-okularach, accessed 8.01.2016.

Wirtualna Polska, Poznańscy muzułmanie boją się odwetu za zamach we Francji, 2015, http://wiadomosci.wp.pl/kat,1019407,title,Poznanscy-muzulmanie-boja-sie-odwetu-za-zamach-we-Francji,wid,17164740,wiadomosc.html,accessed 9.02.2016.

Zdort D., Dokąd deportować Tatarów, "Rzeczpospolita", 06.02.2015.

Zick, A. 2011. Intolerence, Prejudice and Descrimination: A European Report, Berlin.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN SERBIA
NATIONAL REPORT 2015

BOJAN PEROVIC

THE AUTHOR

Bojan Perovic is a PhD researcher at the University of Hamburg, Faculty of Law. He recieved his BA in Law from the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Law and obtained his Master degree in International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights from the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Political Sciences. Prior to joining University of Hamburg he spent two years as a research assistant at the Institute of Social Sciences, Center for Legal Researches in Belgrade. During his studies Mr. Perovic gained an extensive non-formal education and practice in the fields closely related to human rights and humanitarian law through participation in numerous number of prestigous non-degree schools and voluntary work in various human rights and humanitarian non-governmental organizations (Regional Academy on the United Nations; University of Groningen- Summer School on Transitional Justice and Politics of Memory; International School for Holocaust; Duke University- International Human Rights Law: Prospects and Challenges etc.). His academic interests and research areas extend to international public law, especially human rights and international humanitarian law as well as other fields such as discrimination, nationalism, transitional justice. perovicbojan1986@gmail.com

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions. No representation, either expressed or implied, is made of the accuracy of the material in the national reports. The editors of the European Islamophobia Report cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may be made. The reader must make his or her own evaluation of the accuracy and appropriateness of those materials.

To cite this report: Bojan Perovic (2016): Islamophobia in Serbia: National Report 2015, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, European Islamophobia Report 2015, Istanbul, SETA, 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the past, Islamophobic incidents in Serbia, a post-conflict society, were not at all rare. To some extent, Islamophobic incidents are still present in Serbia, especially in areas of paramount importance, such as education and media. Although the wars in the former Yugoslavia ended twenty years ago, consequences of these wars are still visible in the Western Balkans. The areas analysed include employment, education, media, politics, the justice system, hate speech and hate graffiti. This report seeks to analyse the most critical points of Islamophobia through personal contacts with NGOs, critical analyses of media content as well as official documents from government bodies, while aiming to provide policy recommendations for politics and NGOs.

IZVRŠNI REZIME

Islamofobični incidenti u Srbiji, kao postkonfliktnom društvu, u prošlosti nisu bili nikakva retkost. Islamofibični incidenti, u određenoj meri, još uvek su prisutni u oblastima od izuzetnog značaja kao što su obrazovanje i mediji. Iako su ratovi u bivšoj Jugoslaviji završeni pre dvadeset godina posledice ovih ratova su još uvek vidljive na Zapadnom Balkanu. Oblasti koje su analizirane uključuju zaposlenje, obrazovanje, medije, politiku, pravni sistem, govor mržnje i grafite mržnje. Ovaj izveštaj, kroz lične kontakte sa nevladinim organizacijama, kritičkim analizama medijskih sadržaja kao i kroz zvaničnu dokumentaciju nastoji da analizira najkritičnije tačke Islamofobije dok sa druge strane nastoji da ponudi preporuke kako za buduću politiku tako i za nevladine organizacije.

INTRODUCTION

As a post-conflict and transitional society which in recent decades has passed through wars, economic crises and strong political turmoil, the Republic of Serbia still bears the heavy burden of the past. Although the wars in the former Yugoslavia ended twenty years ago, the consequences of these wars are still visible in the Western Balkans. However, it is important to note at the beginning that the process of enlargement of the European Union and the declared commitment to European integration has led to some progress in relation to Islamophobic incidents in Serbia, even though in the past these were more common occurrences. On the other hand, the situation is far from ideal and requires analyses on many different levels. As a growing phenomenon, Islamophobia, although not present at an unbearable level, certainly represents a major challenge for Serbia, which aspires to join the European Union. The challenge lies in respecting the rule of law and respecting human and minority rights.

According to the 2011 census, Islam is the third most widespread religion in Serbia (after Christian Orthodoxy and Catholicism) with 228,658 Muslims in Serbia (3.1% of the total population). The largest concentration of Muslims in Serbia can be found in the municipalities of Novi Pazar, Tutin and Sjenica in the Sandžak region, and in the municipalities of Preševo and Bujanovac in the Preševo Valley. Muslims in Serbia are mainly organized in two communities: the Islamic community of Serbia, based in Belgrade and the Islamic community in Serbia, based in Novi Pazar.[1]

Several leading NGOs have observed that the Islamic communities in Serbia in these regions[2] face a number of internal problems; however, the focus of this report will not deal with these issues.

DISCUSSION OF ISLAMOPHOBIC INCIDENTS AND DISCURSIVE EVENTS IN VARIOUS FIELDS

Employment

According to the Labour Force Survey, the unemployment rate in Serbia in the first quarter of 2015 was 19.2%.[3] Novi Pazar is the cultural centre of the Bosniaks in Serbia (83%) and the historical region of Sandzak. As of the 2011 census, the population of the municipal area of Novi Pazar was 125,000. Novi Pazar is one of the cities with the highest unemployment rate in Serbia - as high as 53%; that is, one in two able-bodied citizens are unemployed. As reported by the president of the

1. Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, *2011 Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in the Republic of Serbia, Religion, Mother Tongue and Ethnicity*, (Belgrade: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2013)

2. For example: URBAN-In and Sandzak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms

3. The data on the number of unemployed are taken over from the National Employment Service and include only the unemployed persons registered with this service. This research is performed by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia. Accessed November 10, 2015. http://webrzs.stat.gov.rs/WebSite/repository/documents/00/01/89/83/RS10_283_I_kvartal_srb-2015.pdf

Sandzak Committee for Human Rights, Semiha Kacar, the national structure is not balanced in Novi Pazar in state institutions, such as the police, judiciary or the army. These institutions were cleansed of Bosniak Muslims in the 1990s. This has been confirmed in the European Commission Report in Serbia for 2015, which states that "the Bosniak community continues to be underrepresented in the local administration, judiciary or police."[4] There has been progress, but staffing is still not adequately balanced in relation to the composition of the city's population. In Novi Pazar there were no recorded cases of discrimination based on being Muslim, but Ms. Kacar pointed out that this is an environment in which Muslims are in the majority. In cities where Muslims are a minority such cases also might not be rare,[5] although in 2015 there are no records of any type of discrimination in the job market; this has been confirmed by the Commissioner for Protection of Equality (section-opinions and recommendations on complaints on the basis of religious beliefs).

Education

Education can be treated as the most critical issue in this report. History textbooks, especially during times of transition and particularly in countries where there are no alternative textbooks, serve to adapt history to the present, to create an instant version of history that justifies the present and they place education in the necessary historical context. History textbooks in Serbia have changed twice since the beginning of the war in the former Yugoslavia. The first change was during the era of Slobodan Milosevic in 1993, at the height of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The second change was after the fall of Milosevic in 2000, after the beginning of the 'democratic transition'. In both cases, the motives for changing the textbooks were political. The fact that Serbia is now one of the last countries in the region which still has a state monopoly over the publication of history textbooks, that no equal competition has been introduced, nor is there a choice among alternative textbooks, indicates that both the previous and the new government see history as something that has a state-forming character. It is for this reason that history textbooks remain one of the most reliable historical sources by which we can analyse the ruling political concepts in Serbia.

The way in which history is taught, particularly concerning the wars of the 90s, is subject to constant change and revisionism. As analysed by Stojanovic, who performed a comparative analysis of history textbooks, education in Serbia and the region has always been an important power lever. In the midst of the war in Bosnia in 1993-1994, new history textbooks were published; the objectives of these was to misuse history, a school subject, to create a new and politically useful model of the historical memory, thus creating a great framework with which the ongoing wars could be justified. These

4. European Commision, Serbia 2015 Report, (Brussels: November, 10, 2015): 58.

5. Semiha Kacar, e-mail message to author, December 23, 2015.

textbooks, from which students have been taught for more than 20 years, fabricated the national and historical consciousness. Historical facts were adjusted to the needs; some facts were changed or deleted, while others were reinforced in order to obtain a new mythical narrative. However, after the change of government in 2000, history books have remained the same. In 2002 they were changed, but their essence remains the same and reflects a continuity with Milosevic's system of values.[6]

Greater attention is paid to the war in Bosnia in history textbooks; this is described as a war that has a religious dimension, unlike the one in Croatia. The responsibility is depicted as totally equal, and thus: "The consequences of these conflicts were a disaster for all citizens, regardless of ethnicity or religion. Pogroms of civilians, Serbs, Croats and Muslims, left behind mass graves (Pakrac, Medacki Dzep, Ovcara near Vukovar, Gospic, Kazani near Sarajevo, Kozarac, Foca, Sipovo, Bratunac, Srebrenica)." Stojanovic further argues that by mixing and distributing these atrocities throughout the nation there is an intention to demonstrate that the Serbian people were sacrificed in more places than the other peoples. In addition, it is important to realize that the crime in Srebrenica is in the same bracket with all the other crimes, and that this is part of carrying the message of the Serbian authorities that after 2000 all crimes were equal. Stojanovic concludes that the new history textbooks in Serbia retained the interpretation which was found in textbooks dating from the Milosevic era.[7] Stojanovic stresses that in the history textbooks, the war in Bosnia was placed in the ideological context of the 'eternal conflict' between Christianity and Islam, with the historical framework being set in the late Middle Ages; this is done by using the term 'Turks' for the Bosniak population. In this way, bloody war, accompanied by ethnic cleansing and genocide, is given historical justification and almost a defensive position.[8] In the comparative analysis of history textbooks, the authors list many examples of misinterpretation, but highlight a flagrant one that can be found in the official 'Eighth Grade History Textbook for Primary Schools'. Here, before mentioning the Srebrenica Massacre against the Bosniak Muslims, the textbook authors refer to the crimes in Srebrenica where the victims were Serbs, citing the results of the Director of the Research Institute of Serbia about suffering, and the statements of one of the members of Radovan Karadzic's defence team. It must be remembered that Radovan Karadzic is currently on trial, indicted for war crimes which include

6. Dubravka Stojanović, "Nastava istorije kao predvojnička obuka," *Reč- Časopis za književnost i kulturu, i društvena pitanja* 83.29 (2013.): 248.

7. See more:

1. Sulejman Bosto, Tihomir Cipek, Olivera Milosavljević, eds., *Kultura sjećanja: 1941. Povijesni lomovi i svladavanje prošlosti*, (Disput Zagreb, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2008.)

2. Sulejman Bosto, Tihomir Cipek, eds., *Kultura sjećanja: 1945. Povijesni lomovi i svladavanje prošlosti,* (Disput Zagreb, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung , 2009.)

3. Tihomir Cipek, ed.,Kultura *sjećanja: 1991. Povijesni lomovi i svladavanje prošlosti*, (Disput Zagreb,Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2011.)

8. Dubravka Stojanović,Tumačenja istorije, sistem vrednosti i kulturni obrazac*, Republika (2009)*: 466-77.

the genocide against Bosniak Muslims, by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. The authors argue that this in some way justifies the crimes in Srebrenica and present them as less unacceptable. What is also unacceptable is that the textbook allows the manipulation of the number of victims in Srebrenica, although in a number of judgments by the Hague Tribunal the number of victims has been clearly determined at more than 7,000, while the Commission of the Government of the Republic of Srpska estimated the number of victims in Srebrenica between 7000 and 8000. This manipulation of the number of victims to some extent reduces the sheer enormity of the crime Another detail that can be observed, one that is certainly remarkable, is that the words 'massacre in Srebrenica' are written in bold print. Although the following paragraph states that the International Court of Justice qualified this crime as genocide, there is a suspicion that the bold text is trying to challenge the qualification of genocide against Bosniak Muslims. Also, another problem arises from the incorrect assertion that the International Court of Justice did not blame Serbia for the genocide in Srebrenica; the ICJ judgment of 2007 ruled that Serbia had committed a breach of the Genocide Convention by failing to prevent the genocide from occurring and for not cooperating with the ICTY in punishing the perpetrators of the genocide, in particular General Ratko Mladić, and for violating its obligation to comply with the provisional measures ordered by the Court.[9]

Higher education is another problematic issue in Serbian education. A more critical and important area for analysis is the content of official university textbooks. Textbooks for law students in the field of international humanitarian law and international criminal law offer an outdated and obsolete image of international law. For example, today, more than 20 years after the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, all relevant textbooks still question the legal basis for the establishment of ad hoc tribunals. This question certainly deserves some attention, but is controversial when the official textbook of international criminal law offers nothing more than questions or disputes about whether the Security Council has the competence to establish an ad hoc tribunal, as well as criticisms of the law that the ICTY and the ICTR applied, while failing to examine the already very rich case law of the two courts. More paradoxical is the international humanitarian law textbook, which analyses the International Criminal Court, while tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, in the context of international laws of war, do not seem to be sufficiently important to find place in the official teaching textbook for law students.[10]

In one of the official university textbooks on international criminal law the author deals with the 'case of Srebrenica'. He elaborates as follows: "the case of Srebrenica is presented as an obvious genocide, while only factual notes are given that the Army of the

9. Marijana Toma, ed., Comparative analysis of history textbooks*, Regional School for transitional justice Journal*, (Belgrade: Humanitarian Law Center, 2014): 29.

10. Bojan Perovic, The Collapse of Transitional Justice in Serbia, *Balkan Social Science Review, Vol. 6* (2015): 54-55.

Republic of Srpska on 11 July 1995 captured the town of Srebrenica, which was a UN protected area and that on this occasion around 25,000 'Bosnian' women and children were expelled, and in the coming days 7-8,000 men of different ages were systematically murdered or executed. Here the author uses data from The Hague indictment, as well as data from the indictment and the verdict for the general of the Army of the Republic of Srpska, Radislav Krstic. However, the author fails to report data relating to the pre-history of the conflict in Srebrenica and crimes committed by members of the Muslim forces in relation to the Serb population in the area, which was practically destroyed, and which certainly had an impact on the existence of retaliatory motives at large for some members of the RS Army." (page 225-226) Continuing on the Srebrenica case, the author wants to acknowledge the crime, but he provides a wider picture, because: "the crimes are indefensible... but it still has to be concluded that the numbers of people killed cannot be so easily stated; it is not possible to ignore that, this case, apparently, was predominantly about revenge by Serbian soldiers for previous crimes committed by members of the Muslim formations; thus, there is a great question about whether such a 'retaliatory intent' can easily be identified with genocidal intent." (Page 227.) This interpretation of the Srebrenica Genocide is a textbook example of the interpretative denial in which the essence is not to deny the actual facts, but to give them a different meaning and context. The author also analyses the problematic issues in the Krstic judgment (On 2 August 2001, Krstić became the first man convicted of genocide by the ICTY, and was sentenced to 46 years in prison. He was the third person to have ever been convicted under the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide), stressing that there was no evidence for the number of 8,000 killed (page 228-233) and then calls into question the concept of responsibility of General Krstic, concluding that in the Krstic case the genocidal intent of the convicted general was established in a vague and uncertain way (page 232).[11]

An additional problem in the field of education is school textbooks for national minorities (especially Albanians and Bosniaks), people who tend to be adherents of Islam. Although in previous years the Ombudsman of the Republic of Serbia also found that the rights of Bosniak students were being violated as they were not receiving education in their mother tongue and found that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development had failed to take measures in order to correct all the problems and obstacles standing in the way of organizing classes in the Bosnian language, this bad practice had not been rectified by 2015, but was even worse.[12] (Example: the Ombudsman, based on the complaint of the National

11. Milan Škulić, *Međunarodni krivični sud-nadležnost i postupak*, (Beograd: Centar za publikacije Pravnog fakulteta u Beogradu, 2005.)

12. Ombudsman of the Republic of Serbia, Povređena prava učenika bošnjačke nacionalnost da se obrazuju na maternjem jeziku, (2014). Accesed November 19, 2015. http://www.pravamanjina.rs/index.php/sr/podaci/dokumenta/-/611-povreena-prava-uenika-bonjake-nacionalnost-da-se-obrazuju-na-maternjem-jeziku

Council of Bosniak National Minority, carried out an inspection for the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development; they confirmed that the situation had not changed, despite the fact that the constitutional and legal authorities had sent recommendations that these omissions be rectified.)[13]

In addition to the Ombudsman, the State Commissioner for Protection of Equality also found that the provisions of the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination had been violated at the expense of Bosniak students on several occasions.[14] In 2015, the Ombudsman issued an opinion with a recommendation that the decision taken by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development to organize bilingual teaching in Serbian and Bosnian languages in the 2014/15 academic year was not a good decision, as it had been made against the will of the students and parents who had asked for education in the Bosnian language alone.[15] (The complaint was submitted by the Bosniac National Council.)[16] In particular, during 2015 problems with textbooks for the Albanian minority intensified. Primary school pupils in southern Serbia who attended schools where the language of instruction was Albanian were being forced to learn only from notes, as they had not been given any schoolbooks. The reason for this problem was, once again, the history textbook, which, among other things, showed the leader of the Kosovo Liberation Army, Adem Jashari, as a hero who had fought the Serbian security services.[17] While the Albanian leaders in Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja urged Belgrade to allow Albanian students the same rights, the Ministry of Education, which was in charge of solving this problem, remained silent. Instead of being on the school desks, more than 100,000 books which the Ministry of Education of Kosovo had sent to Serbia have been locked up in Serbian customs since

13. Ombudsman- Recommendations: It is necessary that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development make a decision without delay on the request for granting consent to change the current name of the primary school 'Selakovac' in Novi Pazar; this request was submitted in June 2015. During a review of the application and during the decision-making process, it is necessary that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development keep in mind the powers and reasons why the school has accepted the proposal of the Bosniac National Council for changing the current name of the school; the fact that the proposed change is to the name of a poet held in high regard by this national minority is significant...(2015). Accessed January 1, 2015. http://www.bnv.org.rs/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/RB-1208-25-2015-Misljenje-Zastitnik-gradjana-OS-Selakovac-ENG.pdf

14. Comissioner for the Protection of Equality - Opinon and Recommendation (complaints of the Bosniac National Council against the Ministry of Education about discrimination in education), (2014). Accessed November 22, 2015. http://www.ravnopravnost.gov.rs/sr/nacionalna-pripadnost

15. Ombudsman recommendation, Neophodno precizno urediti način, uslove i kriterijume za izvođenje dvojezične nastave, (2015). Accessed 24 December 2015. http://www.ombudsman.rs/index.php/lang-sr/2011-12-11-11-34-45/4248-2015-07-16-11-23-54

16. The Bosniak National Council is the highest representative body of the Sandzak Bosniaks in Serbia. (this body was founded on May 11, 1991 as the Muslim National Council of Sandzak)

17. Adem Jashari was one of the founders of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), a Kosovo Albanian separatist organization which fought for the secession of Kosovo from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia during the 1990s. Jashari was killed by Serbian forces in 1998, along with his supporters and 18 women and 10 children. For Albanians he is a hero. (The National Theatre in Pristina and Pristina International Airport have been named after him.) However, for the Serbians he is considered to be the leader of the terrorist organisation KLA and his death is described as a the liquidation of the terrorist group Jashari.

September. Nagip Arifi, the mayor of Bujanovac, stresses that the Albanian National Council had first asked the Ministry of Education in Serbia to provide them with schoolbooks. Having received no response, they turned to the Kosovo ministry, which donated the books. Arifi explains that it is unclear why all the books are still locked up, if it is only the history textbook that is controversial.[18] The problem is even more complicated; in 2015 for the first time since the agreement in 1999 that Prishtina was to provide textbooks for the Albanian community in Serbia, it was agreed that Belgrade would do the same for Serbs in Kosovo.[19]

The findings of the 2015 Expert Mission concluded that, notwithstanding recent and sometimes considerable improvements, there is still a need to increase the availability of good quality textbooks in minority languages and there is a persistent lack of qualified teachers for instruction in minority languages.[20]

Politics and the Justice System

In 2015 the largest political parties in Serbia did not use Islamophobia as a political tool; the same can be said for previous years. The process of European integration certainly had an impact in that those political parties which won enough votes to enter the National Assembly in the last elections, as well as in previous years, did not use Islamophobic speeches; all the parties currently in the Serbian parliament advocate, at least in words, Serbia's entry into the European Union. The same can be said for laws and regulations that have been adopted over the last decade. There are no laws in Serbia that violate the rights of religious communities, including the rights of Muslims, to follow their preferred lifestyle. On the other hand, certain small far-right political parties have had outbursts, but the significance is not great enough to be analysed in this section. For this reason, these initiatives will be analysed in the section on cyberspace.

Media

The President of the Sandzak Committee for Human Rights stresses that Islamophobia has mostly been spread by the media. The newspapers that dominate in this regard are Kurir, Alo, Telegraf and Pravda (daily newspapers known for giving considerable space to right-wing extremists). According to the same source, the region of Sandzak, predominantly inhabited by Muslims since the time of the so-called Bureaucratic Revolution and the rise of Slobodan Milosevic, has been marked by the

18. Dušan Komarčević, "Kosovski udžbenici zbog Jašarija nepoželjni u Srbiji", *Free Europe*, 17 December, 2015, accessed January 2, 2015. http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/content/kosovski-udzbenici-zbog-jasarija-nepozeljni-u-srbiji/27433885.html

19. Besa Malici, "Kosovo i Srbija dogovorili razmenu udžbenika", *Balkan Insight*, September 10, 2015., accesssed November 3, 2015, http://www.balkaninsight.com/rs/article/kosovo-i-srbija-dogovorili-razmenu-ud%C5%BEbenika-09-10-2015

20. Expert Report on the situation of minority rights in the Republic of Serbia (Anastasia Crickley and Rainer Hofmann 24 September 2015). This involved two independent experts from EU Member States, EU staff from the Commission (DG NEAR) and from the EU Delegation in Belgrade.p. 12, (2015). accessed November 13, 2015, http://www.ljudskaprava.gov.rs/images/pdf/nacionalne_manjine/expert_mission_report_on_minorities.pdf

media as a dangerous place, the centre of radical Islam. The stereotypes that were imposed on the local Muslims at that time have lasted until today. Some are even more pronounced. The media still produces these images, especially in the tabloid press. A greater importance is given to the stereotypes that have been created rather than producing facts that refute them. But the president of the Sandzak Human Rights Committee emphasizes that the blame to some extent must also be put on the local media, especially the Sandzak press. The image that is sent to the world is very problematic, and it is through this portal that the Islamophobic attitude has grown even greater. If you write that a Sandzak Embassy has been opened somewhere in the world, even though this is in fact only a club at an Islamic centre, then this is a purposeful manipulation. When the news relates that pensions in Serbia will be reduced, the media will indicate this as pensions being reduced in Sandzak alone. Anyone who reads this will understand the information as being limited to Sandzak, not that it is actually happening throughout Serbia. Such misinformation and rumours, if constantly repeated, become dangerous. This creates a growth in dissatisfaction and strengthens the antagonism against the government and of extremism; this is something that has to be fought on both sides.

One of the events that has caused the greatest media hysteria is the visit of the Serbian prime minister, Aleksandar Vucic, on the 20th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide. There was an incident on this occasion in which the Serbian prime minister, Aleksandar Vucic, was attacked as he was leaving the Potocari Memorial Centre. Some of those present shouted "Vucic out!" but there was also a placard reading "For every Serb we will kill 100 Muslims"; it is still unknown who these demonstrators were. Mr. Vucic himself stated after the incident that he received information that football hooligans might have come from Serbia.[21] This incident in Srebrenica completely shifted the focus from the 20th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide, in which more than 8,000 Muslims were killed, to a number of conspiracy theories in the media; these filled the front pages. The prime minister, on the other hand, was praised for his professional demeanour and his ability to lower tensions (this appreciation was expressed by politicians from all over the world, the OSCE and several local NGOs). This entire event was preceded by media hysteria about the adoption of the Resolution on Srebrenica in the United Nations; the failure to adopt this resolution was equated with the prime minister's going to Srebrenica. Regarding the 20th anniversary of Srebrenica Genocide, the Bosniac National Council issued a statement that it is unacceptable for various Serbian groups to carry out organized intimidation of, threats against or arrests of the Bosniaks who attended the event.[22]

21. "For every Serb, we will kill 100 Muslims" is a sentence by Prime Minister Vucic from 1995, when he was a member of the Serbian Radical Party (SRS).

22. Bosniac National Council, BNV obilježio "dan sjećanja" na žrtve genocida u Srebrenici, *Bilten no.3*, (September 2015): 14. accessed October 14, 2015, http://www.bnv.org.rs/bilteni/bilten_septembar_2015.pdf

Another event that marked the 20th anniversary of the Srebrenica Genocide in 2015 was an initiative by NGOs in Serbia calling for an end of denial of the genocide carried out on Muslims in Srebrenica; the action was announced as #sedamhiljada in Belgrade.[23] The Ministry of the Interior banned all public gatherings in Belgrade on the 20th anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre, citing security risks as a reason. (The right-wing organizations Dveri and Zavetnici, as well as members of the Serbian Radical Party, also announced counter-demonstrations.[24]) This decision shows that the political elites failed to understand that the freedom of peaceful demonstration is a fundamental human right to be enjoyed and exercised by individuals and groups, unregistered associations, legal entities and corporate bodies. Demonstrations may serve many purposes, including the expression of diverse, unpopular or minority opinions. Guidelines on Freedom of Peaceful Assemblies state that only peaceful demonstrations are protected. A demonstration is deemed peaceful if its organizers have professed peaceful intentions and the conduct of the demonstration is non-violent. The term 'peaceful' should be interpreted to include conduct that may annoy or give offence, and even conduct that temporarily hinders, impedes or obstructs the activities of third parties. Counter-demonstrations are a particular form of simultaneous demonstration in which the participants wish to express their disagreement with the views expressed at the main demonstration. The right to counter-demonstrate does not extend to inhibiting the right of others to demonstrate.[25] The fact that third parties use peaceful demonstrations as a pretext for violence does not give the state the right to prohibit the peaceful demonstration. It is never right to prohibit peaceful demonstration when the participants are totally non-violent just because there is threat of violence from others. This is true according to international standards; even under the constitution, a ban on peaceful demonstrations in which the participants are completely non-violent cannot be justified because there is a threat of violence by third parties. There is no doubt that there are extremists in society, that there will be violent groups who oppose any particular event. This, however, does not give the state right to deny the conditions to hold a demonstration for participants who, it is believed, will be non-violent.[26] The state could and should ban demonstrations where violence is threatened. Even if the state, in principle, is permitted to prohibit a non-violent demonstration just because third parties are threatening

23. Ivana Nikolic, "Nevladine organizacije traže da se prestane sa negiranjem genocida", *Balkan Insight*, 2 July 2015, accessed October 13, 2015, http://www.balkaninsight.com/rs/article/nevladine-organizacije-tra%C5%BEe-da-se-prestane-sa-negiranjem-genocida

24. Sasa Dragojlo, "Zabranjeni svi skupovi u Beogradu", *Balkan Insight*, 10 July 2015, accessed October, 12 2015 http://www.balkaninsight.com/rs/article/zabranjeni-svi-skupovi-u-beogradu

25. OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)/Council of Europe's European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), *Guidelines on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly, Second edition*, (Warsaw/Strasbourg, 2010): 14-19.

26. Beogradski centar za ljudska prava, *Ljudska prava u Srbiji 2012. Pravo, praksa i međunarodni standardi ljudskih prava*, (Beograd, 2013): 214.

the participants with violence, the state cannot apply such a measure if it itself is responsible for the failure to take all appropriate preventive measures to prevent or stop violent counter-demonstrations.[27]

Some of the headlines in this period read: "Muslim soldiers burned villages and killed their own people, not Ratko Mladic and the Serbs: Canadian general reveals the truth about Srebrenica!"[28] "Vucic shot in the head: See attack of enraged Muslims on Vucic!"[29] "This is a genocide? Mladic in Srebrenica frees Muslim women and children!"[30] "Kidnapped because of the truth on Srebrenica: In the book he proved that there was no genocide!"[31] "Definitely on the Bosniak side: Read who will come on July 11 in Potocari"[32] "A secret agreement between the US, Britain and France on Srebrenica?"[33] "Scam of the West: Britain-Serbs, teach your children that you are genocidal!"[34] "Organized Lynch: Sarajevo allowed assassination of Vucic!"[35] "VIDEO lynching in Potocari: See how the enraged masses attacked Vucic shouting Allah Akbar!"[36]

Certainly, these are not the only incidents that marked 2015. The term 'Šiptar' is used in the Serbian language as a derogatory term for Albanians when used by South Slavic peoples; this is due to the negative connotations associated with the word. This term is used for Albanians living in Kosovo (95.6% of the Kosovo population is Muslim). In 2015 alone, the State Commissioner for Protection of Equality decided in two cases, submitted by NGOs against media, that the use of

27. Beogradski centar za ljudska prava, *Ljudska prava u Srbiji 2011. Pravo, praksa i međunarodni standardi ljudskih prava*, (Beograd, 2012): 218.

28. Pravda, MUSLIMANSKI VOJNICI SU PALILI SELA I UBIJALI SVOJE, A NE RATKO MLADIĆ I SRBI: Kanadski general otkriva istinu o Srebrenici!, 18 July 2015, accessed October 9, 2015, http://www.pravda.rs/2015/07/18/muslimanski-vojnici-su-palili-sela-i-ubijali-svoje-a-ne-ratko-mladic-i-srbi-kanadski-general-otkriva-istinu-o-srebrenici/

29. Pravda, VUČIĆ POGOĐEN U GLAVU: Pogledajte napad razjarenih muslimana na Vučića!, 11 July 2015, accessed October 14, 2015, http://www.pravda.rs/2015/07/11/vucic-pogodjen-u-glavu-pogledajte-napad-razjarenih-muslimana-na-vucica-video/

30. Informer, AKO JE OVO GENOCID Mladić u Srebrenici oslobadja muslimanske žene i decu!, 14 July 2015, accessed October 15, 2015, http://www.informer.rs/vesti/balkan/22898/AKO-JE-OVO-GENOCID-Mladic-u-Srebrenici-pusta-muslimanske-zene-i-decu-VIDEO

31. Informer, KIDNAPOVAN ZBOG ISTINE O SREBRENICI U knjizi dokazao da nije bilo genocida!, 2 July 2015, accessed October July 15, 2015, http://www.informer.rs/vesti/politika/21146/KIDNAPOVAN-ZBOG-ISTINE-O-SREBRENICI-U-knjizi-dokazao-da-nije-bilo-genocida

32. Pravda, NEDVOSMISLENO NA STRANI BOŠNjAKA: Pročitajte ko će sve doći 11. jula u Potočare, 5 July 2015, accessed October 16, 2015, http://www.pravda.rs/2015/07/05/nedvosmisleno-na-strani-bosnjaka-procitajte-ko-ce-sve-doci-11-jula-u-potocare/

33. Pravda, Tajni dogovor SAD, Britanije i Francuske o Srebrenici?, 1 July 2015, accessed October 17, 2015, http://www.pravda.rs/2015/07/01/tajni-dogovor-sad-britanije-i-francuske-o-srebrenici/

34. Informer, BRUKA ZAPADA Britanci: Srbi, učite decu da ste genocidni!, 10 June 2015, accessed October 17, 2015, http://www.informer.rs/vesti/politika/17658/BRUKA-ZAPADA-Britanci-Srbi-ucite-decu-da-ste-genocidni

35. Kurir, LINČ ORGANIZOVAN: Sarajevo dozvolilo atentat na Vučića!, 12 July 2015, accessed October 18, 2015, http://www.kurir.rs/vesti/politika/linc-organizovan-sarajevo-dozvolilo-atentat-na-vucica-clanak-1855793

36. Kurir, VIDEO LINČ U POTOČARIMA: Pogledajte kako je razularena masa napala Vučića uz povike Alahu ekber!, 11 July 2015, accessed October 18, 2015, http://www.kurir.rs/vesti/politika/video-haos-u-potocarima-pogledajte-kako-je-razularena-masa-napala-premijera-vucica-clanak-1854873

the term 'Šiptar' represents a violation of the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination.[37] In addition to the Commissioner, the Press Council[38] found that usage of the term 'Šiptar' in the case "Youth Initiative for Human Rights against daily newspaper "Informer"[39] had violated Section 1 of Chapter IV (responsibility of journalists); here the journalist should oppose all those who violate human rights or promote any kind of discrimination, hate speech or incitement. In addition, it was decided that Section 4 of Chapter V, in which it is stated that the journalist must be aware of the danger of discrimination being furthered by the media and do everything to avoid discrimination based on race, religion, etc., had been violated. It was also confirmed that the usage of this term is offensive and that as such it should not be used in the Serbian media.[40] However, although such decisions have been made, this has not prevented the media from abusing the term.

At this point, we will turn to cyberspace, which also spreads intolerable images of 'others'. Some of these initiatives are political ones, including actions by political parties (such as Dveri), while others include webpages, forums and initiatives (Srbin. info, Srpski nacionalisti, Stormfront, SNP Nasi, Nova srpska politcka misao); the latter are mostly ultranationalist and spread Islamophobic content. We will mention only some of the headlines: "Who and when was Vucic allowed to share Serbian land with Muslims"[41], "Patriotic block of Kosovo and Metohija: Belgrade allows Šiptars to have an army"[42], "Novi Pazar Serbs outraged: They want to build a mosque in the Serbian neighbourhood"[43], "Brussels: Vucic agreed that Šiptars in Kosovo receive its

37. Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, Opinion and recommendation, 2015, accessed November 19 2015, http://www.ravnopravnost.gov.rs/rs/%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D0%BE%D0%B-D % D 0 % B 0 % D 0 % B B % D 0 % B D % D 0 % B 0 - % D 0 % B F % D 1 % 8 0 % D 0 % B 8 % D 0 % B - F%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%BD%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82

38. The Press Council is an independent, self-regulatory body that brings together publishers, owners of print and online media, news agencies and media professionals. It was established for monitoring the observance of the Journalist's Code of Ethics and solving complaints made by individuals and institutions related to media content. The Press Council is also authorized to mediate between aggrieved individuals, institutions and editorial staff, and to issue public warnings in cases when it is determined that ethical standards have been violated, as defined by the Journalist's Code of Ethics. The Press Council is engaged in the education of media professional to act in accordance with the Journalist's Code of Ethics and works to strengthen the role of the media in Serbia.

39. The text on which the Press Council decided is "Four Šiptars beat Serb to death in Austria" (p. 11), which was announced on the front page with: "Crime in Austria: Šiptars lynched Serb."

40. Press Council, Youth Initiative for Human Rights against daily newspaper "Informer", 25 March 2015, accessed November 16, 2015, http://www.savetzastampu.rs/cirilica/zalbeni-postupci/2377

41. Dveri, Ko je i kada ovlastio Vučića da deli srpsku zemlju Muslimanima, 14 May 2015, accessed November 18, 2015, http://dverisrpske.com/sr/nas-stav/6747-ko-je-i-kada-ovlastio-vucica-da-deli-srpsku-zemlju-muslimanima.html

42. Dveri, Patriotski blok Kim: Beograd dozvoljava Siptarima da imaju vojsku", 9 March 2015, accessed November 20, 2015, http://dverisrpske.com/sr/prenosimo/6513-patriotski-blok-kim-beograd-dozvoljava-siptarima-da-imaju-i-vojsku-.html

43. Dveri, Srbi Novog Pazara ogorčeni: „Hoće da grade džamiju u srpskom kvartu", 7 November 2015, accessed November 21, 2015, http://dverisrpske.com/sr/prenosimo/7357-srbi-novog-pazara-ogorceni-hoce-da-grade-dzamiju-u-srpskom-kvartu.html

own country code"[44], "The Commissioner for the Protection of Equality does not allow the Albanians to be called Šiptars!"[45], "Russians in Vidovdan came to Gazimestan: Šiptars surrounded them with Kalashnikovs"[46], "Šiptars threatened to slaughter Serbs"[47], "Turks conquers Germany like Šiptars did Kosovo".[48]

The migrant crisis has also hit Serbia. Although political officials acted in accordance with democratic principles and Serbia has received acclaim from the international community, it is nearly impossible for a tragedy of this magnitude to pass without incident. Quite a few media outlets did not report professionally or critically (examples: "Albanians and Wahhabis in Presevo: They take asylum seekers to the mosque and recruit them for radical Islam!"[49] "Hungarian Prime Minister: Islam has never been a part of Europe, these are the rules of another world"[50] "MORE REFUGEES: Migrants will soon Islamize Serbia!"[51]) The Ombudsman of the Republic of Serbia, Sasa Jankovic, appealed to the media and public figures to refrain from outbursts of distrust towards refugees from Syria and other Islamic countries; he stated these people are in no way to blame for the terrorist attacks, but rather are themselves the victims of religious extremism, fleeing and seeking refuge. Terrorists are just trying to provoke fear and hatred among people of Muslim faith; this is their basis for recruiting new terrorists. Mr. Jankovic in particular appealed to the media. The Ombudsman stated that excessively harsh images of violence on the front pages and television screens can only cause additional suffering to families, disturb the public, in particular children, and does not honour the victims.[52] In response to announcements from some ultra-right organizations who planned to protest against the immi-

44. Srbin info, BRISEL: Vučić pristao da Šiptari na Kosmetu dobiju svoj telefonski pozivni broj, 25 August, 2015, accessed October 2015, http://srbin.info/2015/08/25/brisel-vucic-pristao-da-siptari-na-kosmetu-dobiju-svoj-telefonski/

45. Srbin info, POVERENICA ZA ZAŠTITU RAVNOPRAVNOSTI ne dozvoljava da se Albanci nazivaju Šiptarima!, 28 July 2015, accessed October 22, 2015, http://srbin.info/2015/07/28/poverenica-za-zastitu-ravnopravnosti-ne-dozvoljava-da-se-albanci-nazivaju-siptarima/

46. Srbin info, RUSI NA VIDOVDAN DOŠLI NA GAZIMESTAN: Šiptari ih okružili kalašnjikovima i pretresali!, 2 July 2015, accessed October 23, 2015, http://srbin.info/2015/07/02/rusi-na-vidovdan-dosli-na-gazimestan-siptari-ih-okruzili-kalasnjikovima-i-pretresali/

47. Srbin info, Siptari pretili da ce zakolju Srbe, 21 May 2015, accessed October 24, 2015, http://srbin.info/2015/05/21/siptari-pretili-da-ce-da-zakolju-srbe/

48. Pravda, Turci osvajaju Nemacku ko Siptari Kosovo, 18 January 2015, accessed October 25, 2015, http://www.pravda.rs/2015/01/18/turci-osvajaju-nemacku-ko-siptari-kosovo/

49. Kurir, ALBANCI I VEHABIJE U PREŠEVU: Azilante odvode u džamiju i vrbuju ih za radikalni islam!, 17 September 2015, accessed October 29, 2015, http://www.kurir.rs/vesti/politika/ekstremni-albanci-i-vehabije-koriste-azilante-za-svoju-propagndu-vode-ih-u-dzamiju-vrbuju-ih-za-radikalni-islam-clanak-1936147

50. Kurir, MAĐARSKI PREMIJER: Islam nikada nije bio deo Evrope, to su pravila drugog sveta, 16 October 2015, accessed November 3, 2015, http://www.kurir.rs/planeta/madarski-premijer-islam-nikada-nije-bio-deo-evrope-to-su-pravila-drugog-sveta-clanak-1979283

51. Kurir, SVE VIŠE IZBEGLICA: Migranti će uskoro islamizirati Srbiju, 2 August 2015, accessed November 16, 2015, http://www.kurir.rs/vesti/drustvo/sve-vise-izbeglica-migranti-ce-uskoro-islamizirati-srbiju-clanak-1880879

52. Ombudsman's Statement, Janković: Mediji i javne ličnosti da se uzdrže od izliva nepoverenja prema izbeglicama, 16 November 2015, accessed December 21, 2015, http://www.ombudsman.rs/index.php/lang-sr/2011-12-25-10-17-15/4413-2015-11-16-11-59-25

grants, the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality warned the public that the constitution and the laws prohibit the spread of any religious, ethnic or racial hatred or discrimination and that the state would not tolerate this kind of behaviour. The commissioner also called on the media to respect journalistic ethics when publishing news stories, reports or headlines. The commissioner strongly condemned the discriminatory recommendation of the Association of Serbian Taxi Drivers to their members not to take immigrants as passengers; he stated that this was another indication of how much xenophobia is still present in Serbia. (27 March 2015)

On the complaint of the organization 'Praxis' from Belgrade against the Association of Serbian Taxi Drivers regarding the statement of Aleksandar Bijelic, president of the association, which was published in the electronic edition of the daily newspaper Blic, dated 24 March, 2015, the commissioner found that the Association of Serbian Taxi Drivers had violated the provisions that prohibit discrimination (24 July 2015).

One of the last incidents happened in late 2015,[53] during the trial before the ICTY of Ratko Mladic,[54] in whose defence Milorad Dodik, president of Republika of Srpska,[55] testified. In brief, Dodik said that what are we seeing around the globe - the blood and suffering of innocent Western man and the establishment of Daesh/ISIL based on Sharia law – had its beginnings in a political movement of the Bosnian Muslims. Just as the Serbs had to, the whole world today needs to defend itself; they should not accuse anyone of any crimes when dealing with such evil. Testifying in defence of Ratko Mladic, Dodik said that Alija Izetbegovic and his Party of Democratic Action, "in a sense were the forerunner of the current ideology of radical Islam that we see in the world."[56]

Hate Speech and Hate Graffiti

The laws prohibit and sanction acts and hate speech as a public expression of hatred and discrimination. In the last decade Serbia faced major problems in this regard, and in 2015 there were several incidents that are worth mentioning. Hate speech in the media was reduced in 2015, but in Serbia a number of Islamophobic incidents happened. TV Pink is the leading commercial station (with national coverage) in the Serbian television broadcast market, and has gained a strong reputation for its

53. Balkan Aljazera, ICTY: Dodik svjedok Mladićeve odbrane, 7 December 2015, accessed December 22, 2015, http://balkans.aljazeera.net/vijesti/icty-dodik-svjedok-mladiceve-odbrane
Kurir, BRANI MLADIĆA U HAGU Dodik: Izetbegović je krivac za rat, 7 December 2015, accessed December 22, 2015, http://www.kurir.rs/crna-hronika/uzivo-video-dodik-brani-mladica-predsednik-rs-svedoci-pred-haskim-sudom-clanak-2048559
Alo, SVEDOČI U HAGU Dodik na suđenju - Mladić mu salutirao, 7 December, 2015, accessed December 22, 2015, http://www.alo.rs/dodik-otisao-u-hag-da-svedoci-mladicu/22517

54. Top military general accused of committing war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. (including Siege of Sarajevo and Srebrenica massacre)

55. The Republic of Srpska is an administrative entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is one of two administrative entities; the other administrative entity is the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

56. Nemanja Stjepanović, Islamofobija stigla i do Haga, *Pescanik*, December 26, 2015.

entertainment programming, including the reality show program Farm. The discrimination against Muslims on this programme was not the first time Muslims have been discriminated against, but the latest incident happened when one of the participants, Tamara Djuric, started screaming and yelling "I will fuck all the Muslims and criminals". She was disqualified from the reality show on the ground of hate speech (which was attributed to the Muslim singer from Novi Pazar, Semir Dzankovic, another participant in the show, who was also disqualified due to violent behaviour). However, after several days had passed, Tamara Djuric was invited to come back to the show and continuing competing; she ended up as runner-up.[57]

Feelings of the local Muslims were also affected by Miroslav Lazanski, a well-known Serbian military analyst who, according to the leading Bosniak/Muslim media,[58] has played a role in recent months in an active propaganda campaign against Bosniaks and Islam.[59] The media state that under the guise of some experts, Lazanski is spreading scandalous hate speech against Bosniaks and Muslims, and inciting hatred. On a talk-show Lazanski stated that he was shocked when he saw Muslim girls in hijab at a religious school in Travnik; he said that the school reminded him of a prison. He added that "If this is the 21st century, then this is terrible."[60]

The connection between football and some forms of extreme violence is widespread in Serbia; Novi Pazar is no exception. The football team of Novi Pazar plays a key role in the region, attracting thousands of spectators at every football match. There are a number of football matches and violence linked to the football club is prominent in Novi Pazar. According to the respondents, there could be numerous reasons for these conflicts. Sympathies for the club, minority/majority relations in Serbia and political affiliation have been mentioned as the main reasons behind altercations. In the most severe cases, these altercations grow into a violent conflict. This violence can be manifested as symbolic violence (insults on ethnic or religious basis) or as direct physical altercations. Several instances of fights, stabbings and, in the worst case scenario, murders have been recorded.[61]

In 2015 alone there have been several incidents, including one against football

57. Kurir, FARMA KO ŠOVINISTIČKA FARSA: E pa, Tamara, i ti si prevršila meru! 2 December 2015, accessed December 5, 2015, http://www.kurir.rs/stars/video-farma-ko-sovinisticka-farsa-e-pa-tamara-i-ti-si-prevrsila-meru-clanak-2042561

58. Sandzak Press, Sknadalozni govor mržnje Miroslava Lazanskog o Bošnjakinjama sa hidžabom iz Travnika, 7 December 2015, accessed December 21, 2015, http://sandzakpress.net/sknadalozni-govor-mrznje-miroslava-lazanskog-o-bosnjakinjama-sa-hidzabom-iz-travnika-video

59. Sandzak Live, Sknadalozni govor mržnje Miroslava Lazanskog o Bošnjakinjama sa hidžabom iz Travnika, 7 Decembar 2015, accessed December 21, 2015, http://www.sandzaklive.rs/index.php/srbija-politika/11511-sknadalozni-govor-mrznje-miroslava-lazanskog-o-bosnjakinjama-sa-hidzabom-iz-travnika-video

60. Vijesti. ba, Skandalozni govor mržnje o Bošnjakinjama sa hidžabom, 8 December 2015, accessed December 21, 2015, http://vijesti.ba/clanak/288521/skandalozni-govor-mrznje-o-bosnjakinjama-sa-hidzabom

61. Cultural Centre DamaD, Integrated Response of the Community to Human Security challenges in Novi Pazar, (Novi Pazar: Cultural Centre DamaD 2015): 15.

club Rad, the supporters held up a placard reading: 'There will be war'. However, the flags of Albania, Kosovo and Turkey were also burned.[62] The other significant incident happened during the game in Cacak against the football club Borac when Borac fans chanted nationalist slogans and insulted the visiting players.[63]

One of the incidents happened with hate flyers which had scandalous hate speech. These were found on November 15, 2015 in the centre of Belgrade, in front of the primary school. These flyers had messages such as "Muslims are aggressive and bloodthirsty" or "Muslims become bloodthirsty murders who hate all other religions".[64]

Another problem is graffiti, which represents a form of hate speech. Graffiti is generally seen to be speech directed against a person or persons according to their race, religion, ethnicity, etc. The impact of such should not be underestimated; such graffiti intimidates the population that is being threatened, while also encouraging like-minded creators of hate graffiti. Hate graffiti in Serbia was not rare in the past and in 2015, the Islamic Community of Serbia expressed concern and strongly condemned hate graffiti in Novi Sad ('Death to Muslims'), adding that this is a way of calling for the members of this religious community to be lynched. [65] [66]

66

CONCLUSION

Policy Recommendation for Politics and NGOs

Based on the annual reports for independent authorities (the Ombudsman and Commissioner for Protection of Equality), reports of civil society organisations, the European Commission and the monitoring of media coverage of discrimination

62. B92, Radovci: Biće rata, Pazar: Reakcija, 21 February 2015, accessed December 21, 2015, http://www.b92.net/sport/fudbal/vesti.php?yyyy=2015&mm=02&dd=21&nav_id=960635

63. B92, Novi Pazar uputio žalbu zbog navijača Borca, 14 September 2015, accessed December 23, 2015, http://www.b92.net/sport/fudbal/vesti.php?yyyy=2015&mm=09&dd=14&nav_id=1039367

64. Telegraf, "MUSLIMANI SU AGRESIVNI I KRVOLOČNI": Jeziv govor mržnje ispred škole U CENTRU BEOGRADA!, 15 November 2015, accessed December 26, 2015, http://www.telegraf.rs/vesti/beograd/1837277-muslimani-su-agresivni-i-krvolocni-jeziv-govor-mrznje-ispred-skole-u-centru-beograda

65. Slobodna Bosna, GOVOR MRŽNJE: U Novom Sadu ispisan grafit "Smrt muslimanima", 4 February 2015, accessed December 24, 2015, http://www.slobodna-bosna.ba/vijest/18904/govor_mrznje_u_novom_sadu_ispisan_grafit_smrt_muslimanima.html

66. Photos taken from Slobodna Bosna website, accessed December 29, 2015, http://www.slobodna-bosna.ba/vijest/18904/govor_mrznje_u_novom_sadu_ispisan_grafit_smrt_muslimanima.html

cases, it is possible to state that discrimination does exist in Serbia, and that it is apparent in various areas. The reasons for the existence of discrimination may be sought in the fact that a certain level of intolerance exists in any society, as well as in the long-term consequences of the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia and armed conflicts that have led to grave economic and social problems in Serbia; these constitute an interruption in the development of democracy and human rights in the country. In addition, there has been a difficult post-socialist transformation, which has resulted in the emergence of a culture of intolerance, with specific vulnerable social groups and their individual members being targeted (ethnic minorities, religious communities and others).[67]

The Islamic community used to be the only institution for Bosniaks in Serbia and therefore had a very important role in preserving the identity of Bosniaks. It also served as the means to articulate the problems that Muslims faced, primarily due to the mass repression of the 90s and later discrimination, which is still present. The position of Muslims in Serbia is burdened with the organizational division of the Islamic community (the Islamic community of Serbia, based in Belgrade and the Islamic community in Serbia, based in Novi Pazar) and the absence of dialogue between the conflicting sides. The Bosniak National Council is the highest representative body of Sandzak Bosniaks in Serbia, but research carried out by the NGO Urban-IN demonstrates that the greatest problems which young people face is that the BNC currently has no specific programs for the integration of minorities, and that their programs actually contribute more to the segregation of minorities.[68]

As the region where Muslims are the majority is one of the poorest in Serbia, to achieve advances in this region, one of the major priorities should be improving the economic situation and attaining prosperity for this region. In this sense, the region needs investments, both domestic and foreign, in order to create new job opportunities. Therefore, the state should pay more attention to this region. A positive signal is the fact that Serbia today is one of the countries in Europe with no far-right political party in parliament; this is the first time since the break-up of former Yugoslavia. Interfaith partnerships are particularly important in spreading awareness about Islam and in standing up to Islamophobia. In addition to the economic dimension, it is necessary to open public debate on important social and political processes. As demonstrated by the latest survey of public perception of the Bosniaks, there is a certain degree of distance, which is growing

67. The Goverment of the Republic of Serbia, Office for Human and Minority Rights, *Anti-Discrimination Strategy for 2013-2018*, (Belgrade, 2013): 2., accessed December 27, 2015, http://www.ljudskaprava.gov.rs/images/pdf/AD_STRATEGY_ENG_UT.pdf

68. Urban-In, Istraživanje o radu Nacionalnog saveta Bošnjaka i stavovima mladih o sopstvenom učešću i uticaju na rad i programe NSB, Novi Pazar, 2014.

rapidly, about how the level of interaction increases.[69] On this plan, a significant contribution could be made by NGOs, which could promote a culture of human rights, as well as intercultural and interfaith dialogue. It is important to note that during the writing of this report the author was in contact with the majority of NGOs in Serbia, but none of them had a comprehensive, complete program or project to deal with these issues. Even organizations in Sandzak (for example Urban-IN, Cultural Centre DamaD, Sandzak Committee for Human Rights) deal with projects that are not directly focused on the issues covered in this report. The same is applicable to other NGOs in Serbia. Therefore, NGOs need to take a strong and proactive role in developing and promoting, among other things, youth policy at the state level and at the local level. This can be done through the youth offices; while this method is of great importance, it is also necessary to explore the views and opinions of young people and to create research on the development of educational programs and workshops.

On the other hand, the state should in turn address the issues of education and the teaching materials that are necessary to foster an awareness of diversity, the promotion of a non-violent culture of equality and non-discriminatory practice. The first step would be to remove any content that encourages prejudice or stereotypes in school textbooks and other teaching materials.

As media is identified as one of the weakest links, improving media reporting should be one of the major goals. Measures that might be helpful in preventing tabloid and scandalous reporting, as well as in preventing the spread of hate speech in the media, could be achieved by preparing and organizing training sessions and seminars for journalists and editors. All the above measures should be taken in synergy by the state and non-governmental organizations and a monitoring system should be implemented.

CHRONOLOGY

February

- Hate graffiti in Novi Sad ("Death to Muslims")
- Football Club Rad (placard: 'There will be war' but they also Albanian, Kosovar and Turkish flags were burned)
- Press Council, Youth Initiative for Human Rights against the daily newspaper Informer, (Usage of the term Siptar)

March

- Discriminatory recommendation by the Association of Serbian Taxi Drivers to their members not to drive immigrants

69. Ombudsman, *Percepcija javnosti u vezi sa pravima ranjivih grupa u Republici Srbiji i poznavanje nadleznosti i percepcija Zastitnika gradjana*, Drugo istrazivanje, (Beograd: 2015): 34.

June

- The State Commissioner for Protection of Equality decided in two cases (submitted by the organisations of civil society against media) that the use of the term Siptar represents a violation of the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination
- Media hysteria about the adoption of the Resolution on Srebrenica in the United Nations.

July

- The 20th anniversary of the Srebrenica Genocide (Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic was attacked as he was leaving the Potocari Memorial Centre) – this was the greatest media hysteria.
- The Bosniac National Council issued a statement that it is unacceptable for various groups of Serbians to conduct organized intimidation of, threats against or arrests of Bosniaks services who attended the 20th anniversary of the Srebrenica Genocide.
- Banned initiative of NGOs in Serbia that called for an end of genocide denial against Muslims in Srebrenica and announced action #sedamhiljada in Belgrade. (The Ministry of Interior banned all public gatherings in Belgrade)

August/September

- Islamophobic media headlines (immigrant crisis)

November

- The Ombudsman of the Republic of Serbia found that the rights of Bosniak students to be educated in their mother tongue had been violated and found that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development had failed to take measures in order to correct all the problems and obstacles standing in the way of organizing classes in the Bosnian language.
- The Ombudsman of the Republic of Serbia appeals to the media and public figures to refrain from outbursts of distrust towards refugees from Syria and other Islamic countries.
- Hate flyers with scandalous hate speech were found on November 15, 2015 in the centre of Belgrade, in front of the primary school. These flyers had messages such as "Muslims are aggressive and bloodthirsty" or "Muslims become bloodthirsty murderers who hate all other religions".

December

- The trial before the ICTY of Ratko Mladic- the testimony of Milorad Dodik, president of Republika of Srpska.
- TV Pink, national television - one of the reality show participants was disqualified from the reality show on the grounds of hate speech (which was attributed to the Muslim singer from Novi Pazar, Semir Dzankovic).
- Problems with textbooks for the Albanian minority. Primary school pupils in southern Serbia who are taught in Albanian did not receive schoolbooks.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN SPAIN NATIONAL REPORT 2015

ALFONSO CASANI HERRANZ

THE AUTHOR

Alfonso Casani is a researcher at the Islamic Culture Foundation (FUNCI). He is currently working at FUNCI's Twistislamophobia project (www.twistislamophobia.org) and has collaborated in the book "Islam and Constitutionalism: an open dialogue" (edited by the Islamic Culture Foundation). He has also taught several workshops on "Social protocol in the Gulf countries", organized by the FUNCI in collaboration with the Foundation Personas y Empresas. Alfonso is also working on a Ph.D. on the convergence of religion and political science in Morocco, at the Autonomous University of Madrid, and is a member of the International Mediterranean Studies Workshop (TEIM). Throughout his Ph.D. investigation, he has published several articles and given different lectures on the topic, the last one "Stability and change: al Adl wal-Ihsan after the Arab Spring in Morocco" (presented in the XIX Congress of the Forum of Researchers on the Arab and Muslim World, FIMAM). He has made several stays in Morocco and has worked in the Spanish Consulate in Tangier (Morocco). research@funci.org

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions. No representation, either expressed or implied, is made of the accuracy of the material in the national reports. The editors of the European Islamophobia Report cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may be made. The reader must make his or her own evaluation of the accuracy and appropriateness of those materials.

To cite this report: Alfonso Casani Herranz (2016): *Islamophobia in Spain: National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On January 8, 2015, President Rajoy stated that he did not believe Islamophobia could be a problem in Spain. Twelve months later, however, the number of Islamophobic attacks reported has quadrupled. When looking at Islamophobia in Spain, we have to take into account, first, that this country presents a historical discrimination against the "Moor" which dates back to the al-Andalus period and stretches to the conquest of the peninsula by the Christian kingdoms, that is the 15th century; this sentiment continues to be present in today's society. On the other hand, Spain's current tense political scene has also had an impact on the Muslim population living in the country.

Regarding education, in Spain we find the existence of a "hidden curriculum" which ignores or distorts the al-Andalus historical period and the Islamic elements present in the country's history and society. In addition to this, the Cooperation Agreements signed in 1992, which grant the main needs and rights of the Muslim population, are often obviated, resulting in an underrepresentation of Islamic religion teachers throughout the country, as well as other negative consequences.

Secondly, the Spanish political situation has had a polarising effect over the population, especially in Catalonia, where the political party Partido Popular (in power since 2011) has adopted many anti-Muslim slogans. These political prejudices affect the situation of Muslim mosques and cemeteries, the presence of which in public spaces has encountered some opposition.

The media's Islamophobic references have increased considerably this year as well, mainly due to Daesh/ISIL terrorist attacks and the Syrian refugee crisis that is currently developing. With regard to these two very important topics, the first has been handled with the signing of a new antiterrorist pact, which aims at preventing religious radicalisation, but which runs the risk of contributing to the mistrust and criminalisation of Muslims. As for the Syrian refugee crisis, it has been characterised by the government's reluctance when negotiating with the EU.

Finally, it is necessary to mention the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla, the Spanish North African territories, which have a Muslim population of approximately 50%. These two cities do not experience strong discrimination against the Muslim population, but are rather experiencing a lack of economic and social integration, leading to the marginalisation of a considerable part of the population.

With regard to the recommendations on how to tackle this phenomenon, we suggest that one key element to cope with any form of discrimination is knowledge, which can only come through education. This implies a more comprehensive approach, which should include the participation of specialists, as well as the participation of the Muslim population; in addition, there should be awareness-raising campaigns about Spain's Islamophobic problems, more governmental support to the Muslim communities and a better training of governmental institutions in order to

facilitate a better approach to the legal situation and protection of Muslims. This should be combined with a toughening of the legislation, in particular for aspects concerned with hate speech and hate crimes, and an introduction of punitive sanctions aimed at preventing and punishing Islamophobic acts.

RESUMEN EJECUTIVO

El 8 de enero de 2015, el presidente Mariano Rajoy declaraba que no creía que la islamofobia pudiese ser un problema en España; sin embargo, doce meses más tarde, el número de ataques islamófobos denunciados se ha multiplicado por cuatro. Cuando analizamos la islamofobia en España, es necesario tener en cuenta, en primer lugar, que este país presenta una serie de prejuicios de carácter histórico contra el "moro" que se remontan al periodo de al-Ándalus y a la conquista de la península por parte de los reinos cristianos, y que continúan estando presentes en la sociedad a día de hoy. Por otro lado, el momento de tensión e inestabilidad política que atraviesa España en la actualidad también ha influido sobre la situación de la población musulmana del país.

Estos prejuicios se reflejan en el ámbito educativo en la existencia de un "currículum oculto" que ignora o distorsiona el periodo histórico de al-Ándalus y los elementos islámicos presentes en la historia y en la sociedad española. A su vez, aunque la mayoría de los derechos y necesidades de la población musulmana fueron recogidos en los Acuerdos de cooperación firmados en 1992, que incluyen, entre otras cosas, la enseñanza del Islam, su aplicación es, a menudo, ignorada.

En segundo lugar, la situación política española ha polarizado a la población, especialmente en Cataluña, donde el Partido Popular ha adoptado numerosas consignas anti-musulmanas. Esta discriminación en el ámbito político se refleja, a su vez, en la situación de las mezquitas y los cementerios musulmanes, cuya presencia en los espacios públicos encuentra bastante oposición.

En lo que respecta a los medios de comunicación, el número de referencias islamófobas en este campo ha aumentado considerablemente este año, debido, principalmente, a los ataques terroristas del ISIS y a la crisis de los refugiados sirios. La primera de estas cuestiones ha sido abordada mediante la firma de un nuevo acuerdo antiterrorista, cuyo principal objetivo es prevenir la radicalización religiosa, pero que corre el riesgo de aumentar la criminalización y desconfianza hacia la población musulmana. Por otro lado, las negociaciones para la acogida de refugiados sirios se han caracterizado por las reticencias del gobierno y por su falta de interés político.

Por último, es necesario analizar la situación de las ciudades autónomas de Ceuta y Melilla, situadas en el norte de África y que presentan, aproximadamente, un 50 % de población musulmana. Estas dos ciudades no presentan un problema de discriminación de los musulmanes, sino, más bien, un problema de

integración económica y social, que ha conducido a la marginalización de una parte considerable de la población.

Este informe concluye con una serie de recomendaciones sobre cómo se ha de tratar este fenómeno, para ello, es importante tener en cuenta que el conocimiento es el elemento clave para poner fin a cualquier tipo de discriminación y que este sólo puede asegurarse a través de la educación. Esto hace necesario una aproximación al Islam y a la diversidad religiosa más comprensiva, que debería incluir la participación de especialistas en este campo y de la propia población musulmana, así como campañas de sensibilización sobre la islamofobia, más apoyo gubernamental y una mejor formación de las instituciones del gobierno. Estas medidas deberían combinarse con un fortalecimiento de la legislación, especialmente en lo que respecta a la regulación del discurso y los crímenes de odio, y de las sanciones punitivas destinadas a la prevención y al castigo de los actos de islamofobia.

INTRODUCTION

On January 8, 2015, one day after the Charlie Hebdo attacks, President Rajoy declared that he did not believe that Islamophobia could become a problem in Spain[1]; however, by December 2015, Amparo Sánchez Rosell, president of the Citizen Platform against Islamophobia (Plataforma Ciudadana contra la Islamofobia), announced that approximately 200 complaints had been made reporting Islamophobia attacks during the year;[2] however, the elaboration of the 2015 annual report is still pending. This is in comparison to the 49 complaints registered in 2014.

In addition to providing a working definition for Islamophobia, it is necessary to introduce a wider definition that includes the Spanish historical and social specifics, particularly regarding Spain's eight centuries of Muslim sovereignty, the "Reconquista",[3] and Spain's colonial presence in Morocco, between 1912 and 1956 (with some Moroccan territories being decolonised later on). In order to do this, we must rely on the definition offered by Fernando Bravo, one of the leading Spanish experts on Islamophobia today, who defines the concept of Islamophobia not as the rejection of Islam, but as a form of discrimination based on ethno-cultural characteristics[4]. Likewise, Luz Gómez understands Islamophobia to be a product of Western secularist thought, where Islamophobia appears as a result of the Western concern about the occupation by Islam of the public sphere[5]: "this results in a hostile attitude towards Muslims in general based on the idea of Islam posing a threat to 'our' welfare and even to 'our' survival".[6]

In addition to this, we have to take into account certain singularities that originate in the so-called 'Reconquista', which generated an intellectual current that was aimed to legitimate the existence of a negative image of the Muslim people; this has led to the belief, present throughout Spanish history, that there is a constant state of confrontation with Muslim civilisation. This belief took shape with the Reconquista, with the battles against the Ottoman Empire in the Mediterranean, with the expul-

1. As declared in an interview carried out on January, 8th, 2015: http://www.rtve.es/noticias/20150108/interior-insiste-no-hay-amenaza-concreta-singular-contra-espana/1081190.shtml

2. Interview held on December 16th, 2015.

3. The "Reconquista" (reconquest) refers to the period of time during which the Christian kings of Spain fought against the Muslim kingdoms for the control of the Iberian Peninsula. These wars began in the 8th century, after the Muslims arrived on the peninsula in 711, and ended in 1492 with the fall of the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada.

4.Fernando Bravo López, "Qué es la islamofobia?", Documentación social, 159 (2010=: 189-207, accessed December 15, 2015, https://sites.google.com/site/teimproject/-quienes-somos/fernandobravo/trabajos-de-fernando-bravo-lopez/queeslaislamofobia p.194.

5. Fernando Bravo López, "¿Qué es la islamofobia?", Documentación social, 159 (2010=: 189-207, accessed December 15, 2015, https://sites.google.com/site/teimproject/-quienes-somos/fernandobravo/trabajos-de-fernando-bravo-lopez/queeslaislamofobia p.195.

6. Fernando Bravo López, "¿Qué es la islamofobia?", Documentación social, 159 (2010=: 189-207, accessed December 15, 2015, https://sites.google.com/site/teimproject/-quienes-somos/fernandobravo/trabajos-de-fernando-bravo-lopez/queeslaislamofobia p.193.

sion of the Moriscoes[7] in 1609 and with the Hispano-Moroccan War (18559-196)[8] As Martín Corrales points out, in recent years this negative image has softened in form, but not in content, thus taking the more subtle shape of warnings about the dangers of crossing the Mediterranean by dinghy, of the difficult living conditions immigrants have to bear in Spain or the racist attacks they might be subject to.[9]

To sum up, Islamophobia is understood as a form of discrimination according to which the population see both Islam and the Muslim population as a distant, inferior culture, but which has, nonetheless, the chance of evolving and adapting to 'our' own norms and values, while rejecting the possibility that Muslims can introduce their own cultural features.[10]

2015 NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

It is important to note, firstly, that the policies in this year towards Muslims and immigration have been shaped by two main international conflicts that have shaken the international scene, influenced by the rise of Daesh/ISIL and the Syrian civil war that has devastated Syria since 2011. The two conflicts are, of course, Daesh/ISIL terrorist attacks, with the attacks in France attracting the most attention, and the Syrian refugee crisis, the media coverage of which has certainly been inconsistent and has launched the European Union into a spiral of endless negotiations.

These problems are yet to be solved. Terrorism has led to an intensification of the conflict against Daesh/ISIL and to the creation of an international coalition to combat it; Spain has yet to decide about its participation. The Syrian refugee crisis has resulted in the establishment of a quota system, which as yet has not been effectively applied.

At a national level, this year has been characterised by political tension in Spain, due to local and presidential elections; the result of these elections have led to the end of the two-party system that characterised most of the Spanish democratic period, as well as problems with political corruption and the restriction of rights and liberties. The local and presidential elections, which took place on May 24 and December 20 respectively, (in addition to Andalusian elections, which took place on March 22, and Catalonian elections on September 27), have had a polarising effect, particularly regarding sensitive issues, such as intervention in Syria or the situation in Catalonia at a domestic level, while postponing the most important decisions to a period post- election. On the other hand, the elections have led to

7. This term refers to the Muslims who converted to Christianity after the Reconquista and who remained in Spain.

8. Eloy Martín Corrales, "Maurofobia/islamofobia y maurofilia/islamofilia en la España del siglo XXI", Revista CIDOB d'affers internacionals, 66-67 (2004): 39-51, p.40.

9. Eloy Martín Corrales, "Maurofobia/islamofobia y maurofilia/islamofilia en la España del siglo XXI", Revista CIDOB d'affers internacionals, 66-67 (2004): 39-51, p.47.

10. Thierry Desrues and Manuel Pérez Yruela, "Percepciones y actitudes hacia el Islam y los musulmanes en España, avance de resultados (versión preliminar)", Instituto de Estudios Sociales Avanzados (2008), accessed December 18, 2015, http://ikuspegi-inmigracion.net/documentos/investigacion/es/percep_acti_islam_avancemarzo2008.pdf, p.24.

the emergence of new political parties, such as Podemos and Ciudadanos, which try to promote a political regeneration and seem more open to Spain's most sensitive political problems (such as corruption, the electoral system or the malfunction of political institutions). This emergence has radically changed the political arena, putting an end to the hegemony of Spain's traditional parties, the Partido Popular (PP) and the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE), while also increasing the political instability in the country and the need for coalitions.

With regard to general elections, given the recent nature of the event, it is not yet possible to tell who will form the next government, although the results have confirmed a divided and multi-party scenario in which the main parties defend opposing and incompatible red lines, most of them concerning domestic issues. These elections have been conditioned, likewise, by the many corruption cases that have struck the country, affecting mainly the PP and PSOE, and the economic crisis in which Spain continues to find itself.

In addition to this, the national scene has been conditioned by the Catalonian independence movement, currently supported by the autonomous government of Catalonia. The tensions this situation has created and the stalemate in the negotiations between the central government and the Catalonian administration have contributed to early elections on September 27, 2015, which resulted in the victory of Junts pel Sí, a coalition formed by pro-independence parties. Although this bloc intended to be understood as a query on independence for the elections, the situation remains at an impasse.

Finally, it is also worth noting the passing of a strict citizen-security law which has not only imposed restrictions on many social rights, but has also sparked protests among a large part of society; the protests are made by people who question the balance between security and personal and collective freedoms.

Regarding these events that have shaped the international scenario, as we will discuss below, the current main political parties have signed an anti-terrorist act which tackles terrorism; in turn, the refugee crisis has demonstrated the government's apathy and hesitation on the matter, with negotiations about quotas finally settling at the admittance of 14,931 refugees into Spain.

ISLAM AND THE SPANISH EDUCATION SYSTEM

Education plays a very important role in trying to normalise aspects that might seem alien for some parts of the population. Nonetheless, Spain fails to appropriately cover the needs in the educational realm for both Muslims and non-Muslims; this is true both in regards to the teaching of Islam to Muslim students and the contents covered in both primary schools and high schools when speaking about Islam. Text books tend to generalise specific experiences or traditions to the Islamic world as a whole,

reductionisms are common and principles and relevant events are valued in reference to Western culture and interests.[11]

First of all, we need to refer to what has been called the 'hidden curriculum', understood in this context as contents that are obviated, ignored or unknown in the school curriculum.[12] The existence of this said hidden curriculum is very significant with regard to Islam and Muslim civilisation in the Spanish education system, especially when one takes into account the importance this civilisation had in Spanish history during the eight centuries of al-Andalus. Several authors have denounced the existence of a created antagonism between the Judeo-Christian civilisation and the Islamic civilisation, as well as of the denial of the Arabic contribution to the Spanish national identity[13], pointing out the existence of an orientalist approach to Islam and Muslims in which exotic and ancient images dominate over the actual situation; as a result of this last approach, more importance is given to Islamic art and folklore than to Islamic thought, science or literature.[14] The almost inexistent references in textbooks to the presence of Muslims in today's society is also representative.[15] This creates a spiral of a lack of knowledge and misinformation which is reflected in all stages of Spanish education, as well as also proving that there is a lack of research with Islamic references at today's universities, in fields, such as medical science. The research in this last field does not correspond to the Spanish Islamic tradition.

On the other hand, with regard to Muslim students, the relationship with Islamic religion was first regulated by the Cooperation Agreements of 1992, which recognised several rights for Muslims, such as the possibility of having a halal menu or of receiving Islamic religious lessons when at least 10 students demanded it. However, this has resulted in a very slow legal development, mainly due to the transference of education competences to the autonomous regions, as well as a lack of interest on the part of some of the autonomous governments. In addition, there has been an initial lack of competence in the Islamic Commission of Spain, which could not name the teachers to teach this subject. Although

11. Gema Martín Muñoz, "Unconscious Islamophobia", Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self knowledge, Vol. 8, Issue 2, Article 4 (2010), accessed December 18, 2015, http://scholarworks.umb.edu/humanarchitecture/vol8/iss2/4/, pp.12-18.

12. Dolores Mayoral Arqué and Fidel Molina Luque and Lluis Samper Rasero. "¿Islamofobia o currículo nulo? La representación del Islam, las culturas musulmanas y los inmigrantes musulmanes en los libros de texto en Cataluña". Revista de educación, Núm. 357, enero abril (2012): 257-279, p253.

13. Gema Martín Muñoz, Begoña Valle Simón, and Mª Ángeles López Plaza, El Islam y el mundo árabe. Guía didáctica para profesores y formadores, (Madrid: Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional, 1998).

14. Dolores Mayoral Arqué and Fidel Molina Luque and Lluis Samper Rasero. "Islamofobia o currículo nulo? La representación del Islam, las culturas musulmanas y los inmigrantes musulmanes en los libros de texto en Cataluña". Revista de educación, Núm. 357, enero abril (2012): 257-279.

15. Dolores Mayoral Arqué and Fidel Molina Luque and Lluis Samper Rasero. "Islamofobia o currículo nulo? La representación del Islam, las culturas musulmanas y los inmigrantes musulmanes en los libros de texto en Cataluña". Revista de educación, Núm. 357, enero abril (2012): 257-279.

these gaps are gradually being filled, recent reports (Islamophobia Special Report 2014, UCIDE) prove that although such problems have been recognised at an institutional level, the correct implementations have not been put into practice in most of Spain. A demographic study developed by the same institution declared that 90% of the Spanish Muslim population does not have access to religious lessons (Demographic Study of Muslim Population 2014, UCIDE). This is due to several reasons, among them being a lack of interest on the part of the educational institutions, which many times fail even to advise Muslim families that they have such an option, and the lack of means, particularly of teachers to be employed. This contrasts with the number of professionals who have specialised in this subject; according to the UCIDE, only one out of every ten specialised teachers is actually employed by a school (Demographic Study of Muslim Population, UCIDE). In addition to this, the lack of initiatives in secondary education should be mentioned; the Education Agreement only covers Islamic education at primary schools.

Currently, Spain has 47 teachers employed in Islamic religion. Although it is not possible to compare this situation to the teaching of Catholicism, due to the historic Catholic past of the country, the constitutional recognition of deeper ties with Catholicism and the Agreements signed between the Spanish State and the Holy See (whose support does, nevertheless, generate many frictions between the different Spanish political parties), we can state that the number of teachers who can teach Islam in Spain is far less than what is needed for the 2 million Muslims who live in Spain today. Furthermore, this religious option is only offered in 6 out of the 19 autonomous territories of Spain: Andalucía, País Vasco, Canarias, Aragón and the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla (Demographic Study of Muslim Population 2014, UCIDE).

ISLAMOPHOBIA AND POLITICS

First of all, when referring to politics, and with regards to the presence of radical right-wing parties which include racist and Islamophobic claims on their agendas, it is necessary to say that in Spain such parties have very low parliamentary representation; thus, this presence, although worrisome in the communities where they are the strongest, does not have an impact on the development of national or regional politics. One exception needs to be pointed out, however, and that is the case of Catalonia, where the radical right-wing party Plataforma per Catalunya (PxC) obtained 8 city councillors in the 2015 local elections; however, this is much less than the 67 city councillors obtained in 2011.

In this sense, Catalonia's politics, as a result of holding elections and the independence trend, have undergone a polarising effect, with a worrying radical-

isation of right-wing parties; the latter try to neutralise one another by turning to xenophobic measures. Such is the example of the Partido Popular (PP), which presented slogans during the political campaign such as in Barcelona: "Do not let the Raval [one of Barcelona's neighborhoods, which gathers many of the cities' immigration] become an Islamic ghetto", while in L'Hospitalet they stated: "stop the proliferation of call shops, dollar stores and kebab restaurants" and "no to the great mosque of Cornellà", and the most stunning of all, "clean Badalona" [from immigrants and insecurity] in the city of Badalona." In the latter case, Xavier García Albiol, the former mayor of Badalona, was named the PP's candidate for Catalonia's regional government for the September 2015 election - a clear message to the most conservative electorate.

The problem when regarding the elections, as pointed out by Albert Mora, professor of sociology at the University of Valencia, is that "local governments tend to support those they see as potential voters, and the majority of Muslims [due to the Spanish legislation][16] do not have the right to vote".[17]

Sadly, the rejection of the presence of Islam in public spaces is very common, and can be easily perceived when regarding topics such as mosques or Muslim cemeteries. As the Spanish Union for Islamic Communities (UCIDE) states, local governments usually put up many obstacles for obtaining licenses to build mosques and are even more reluctant to grant smallholdings for worshipping activities (Islamophobia Special Report 2014, UCIDE). Professor Albert Mora, when regarding the situation of mosques in Catalonia – although this can be extended to the whole of Spain – agrees that there is a tendency towards excluding mosques from the city centre and placing them in the outskirts of town.[18] This rejection has found great support among both political parties and the population.

A special case that needs to be pointed out here is the controversy surrounding the mosque/cathedral of Cordoba (one of the most important Spanish Islamic monuments, which dates back to the al-Andalus period). This controversy began in 2006 when the mosque was registered by the Church as its property, alleging its ownership since 1236. The consequence has been an increase in the presence of Catholic symbols, as reported by the civil Platform Mosque-Cathedral of Cordoba[19]. This topic occupied a prominent place during the regional

16. According to the Spanish legislation, only Spanish nationals, EU nationals or several specific countries which have signed an agreement on reciprocal participation in local elections can vote in the local elections. These last countries include Norway, Ecuador, New Zealand, Colombia, Chile, Peru, Paraguay, Iceland, Bolivia, Cape Verde, the Republic of Korea y Trinidad and Tobago.

17. Enric Llopis, "Islamofobia: odio y rechazo a la mezcla cultural", Rebelión, June 25, 2015, accessed December 28, 2015, http://www.rebelion.org/noticia.php?id=200375.

18. Enric Llopis, "Islamofobia: odio y rechazo a la mezcla cultural", Rebelión, June 25, 2015, accessed December 28, 2015, http://www.rebelion.org/noticia.php?id=200375.

19. This was done through the online website "change.org": https://www.change.org/p/salvemos-la-mezquita-de-c%C3%B3rdoba-por-una-mezquita-catedral-de-todos

elections in Andalusia (March 22nd, 2015), dividing conservative and left-wing parties on the matter.

As for cemeteries, according to the government's Observatory of Religious Pluralism in Spain, there are currently 24 Muslim cemeteries in Spain. These cemeteries constitute a complex reality, and their situation varies from one place to another, depending on their historical context, the legal framework and the interest and relations between the local governments and the Muslim communities. The issue of the cemeteries and the problems they might pose, however, are very recent, as immigration in the country is a very new phenomenon and, historically, the tendency has been to repatriate the body, rather than burying it in Spain.[20] Today's numbers, however, show an imbalance between the amount of cemeteries and the Muslim population living in the country (Demographic Study of Muslim Population 2014, UCIDE); this is due in part not to a lack of will, but to a normative problem, given the legal restrictions of burying bodies directly in the earth (currently, only the autonomous community of Andalucía allows this practice). An analysis and observance of the differences present in the country would require, nevertheless, a more in-depth and detailed study.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN THE MEDIA

Islamophobia in the media has been denounced as one of the most common ways to spread Islamophobia;[21] this is especially dramatic due to the important influence the media has over the population's opinion-forming process. A poll carried out by Prof. Thierry Desrues in 2008 showed that the majority of Muslims felt that the view the non-Muslim population had of them was negative, simplistic or wrong.[22] The media plays an important role when contributing to this phenomenon.

Likewise, Padilla et al. have identified a reductionist message present in the media, which contributes greatly to the transmission of a negative image of Muslims.[23] In this sense, Corral García identified a direct link between the opinions expressed

20. Sol Tarrés and Jordi Moreras, "Topografía de la otra muerte. Los cementerios musulmanes en España (siglo XX XXI)", in Religio in labyrintho, ed. José J. Caerols, (Escola y Mayo, Madrid, 2013): 309-321, p.314.

21. Thierry Desrues, "Percepciones del Islam y de los musulmanes en los Medios de comunicación en España", (paper presented at the conference "El diálogo intercultural: un reto para las creencias y las convicciones", European Comission, Brussels, November 11, 2008), accessed December 15, 2015, http://digital.csic.es/bitstream/10261/30745/1/Thierry%20Desrues%20El%20dialogo%20intercultural.%20Un%20reto%20para%20las%20creencias%20y%20las%20convicciones.pdf, p.5

22. Thierry Desrues, "Percepciones del Islam y de los musulmanes en los Medios de comunicación en España", (paper presented at the conference "El diálogo intercultural: un reto para las creencias y las convicciones", European Comission, Brussels, November 11, 2008), accessed December 15, 2015, http://digital.csic.es/bitstream/10261/30745/1/Thierry%20Desrues%20El%20dialogo%20intercultural.%20Un%20reto%20para%20las%20creencias%20y%20las%20convicciones.pdf, p.3.

23. Graciela Padilla Castillo and Pilar Sánchez González, "La importancia del tratamiento de la religión en medios de comunicación. El caso del Islam en España", Estudios sobre el Mensaje Periodístico. Vol. 19, Núm. especial marzo (2013): 449-457, p.454.

in digital newspapers when regarding Muslims and the opinions held by its readers; this was done by analysing the comments written by newspaper readers at the end of each article. Thus, it was concluded that the Islamophobic views defended in the newspaper generated hate speech among the readers.[24]

Desrues identified four different criticisms Muslims in Spain had against the media: the generation of value judgements without truly understanding Islam, the confusion surrounding Islam and Muslims, the identification of Islam with cultural behaviour and the fact that their faith is used as an explanation of people's acts or opinions.[25] Likewise, Desrues identified four elements that the Spanish population associates with Islam which contribute to worsen its image: the use of corporal punishment, sexism, the presence of despotic governments and terrorism and religious fanaticism.[26]

In this context, the press played a singular role in 2015 with the rise of Daesh/ISIL terrorism and the repercussions of the Charlie Hebdo attack in Europe. This has led to an increase in the use of terms such as 'jihad', 'burqa' and 'Islamist' in the media, sometimes in unnecessary contexts and with sensationalist purposes, or the use of stereotyped images such as mosques, women wearing hijab, images of prayers, etc. Among the examples, we can mention the statements issued by Mr. Fernández Díaz, Spanish Ministry of International Affairs, when talking about the possibility of Muslim immigrants supporting the independence of Catalonia; he declared that "they have been promised the heaven if they did [support it]"[27]; thus resorting to prejudicial and superficial arguments, instead of providing an in-depth analysis of the reasons such support might occur. Other examples are headlines such as "from Madrid's mosque to the ranks of jihadism,"[28] the highlight by the press of the peo-

24. Alfonso Corral García, "Islamofobia en la prensa digital? Análisis de los comentarios en "La inocencia de los musulmanes", in Periodismo y publicidad digital en España: análisis empírico, Universidad, investigación y periodismo digital. XV Congreso de Periodismo Digital de Huesca, ed. Fernando Sabés Turmo (Huesca: Asociación de la prensa de Aragón, 2014), 140-152, accessed December 18, 2015 http://decimoquinto.congresoperiodismo.com/pdf/libro2014.pdf.

25. Thierry Desrues, "Percepciones del Islam y de los musulmanes en los Medios de comunicación en España", (paper presented at the conference "El diálogo intercultural: un reto para las creencias y las convicciones", European Comission, Brussels, November 11, 2008), accessed December 15, 2015, http://digital.csic.es/bitstream/10261/30745/1/Thierry%20Desrues%20El%20dialogo%20intercultural.%20Un%20reto%20para%20las%20creencias%20y%20las%20convicciones.pdf, p.3.

26. Thierry Desrues, "Percepciones del Islam y de los musulmanes en los Medios de comunicación en España", (paper presented at the conference "El diálogo intercultural: un reto para las creencias y las convicciones", European Comission, Brussels, November 11, 2008), accessed December 15, 2015, http://digital.csic.es/bitstream/10261/30745/1/Thierry%20Desrues%20El%20dialogo%20intercultural.%20Un%20reto%20para%20las%20creencias%20y%20las%20convicciones.pdf, p.3.

27. As declared at the radio channel *Cadena* SER: http://cadenaser.com/programa/2014/09/23/hoy_por_hoy/1411429820_850215.html

28. Newspaper La Razón: http://www.periodistadigital.com/mundo/oriente-medio/2014/12/13/la-mezquita-de-la-m-30-era-el-nido-d-elos-terroristas-yihadistas-en-madrid.shtml

ple's nationality whenever they were Arabs or Muslim,[29] or the call made by some journalists to impose the Western European model on the Muslim society living in Spain. In addition, as López Bargados and Ramírez point out, the main Islamophobic discrimination fell on Muslim women.[30] Not only were there references to the use of the hijab or the burqa, but there was also victimisation of women when talking about terrorism, with women being branded 'victims', 'seduced', 'convinced', 'sexual slaves' or 'concubines living in a harem', thus denying them any capacity for action. Examples of this can be found in daily newspapers, with headlines like "Jihadist girls want to go home 'disappointed' with ISIL",[31] "Young Western women crazy about a jihadist"[32] or statements such as "she let herself be seduced by the words and images of bearded men who promised her a life in the 'brothers' heaven".[33]

ISLAMOPHOBIA AND THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Islamophobia and the justice system is one of the most complicated issues to tackle, as there has always been a fine line between security and human and citizen rights. This line becomes even finer when talking about Muslim rights and jihadist terrorism, especially in the current atmosphere of tensions in which we find ourselves. The judicial scene has experienced two main additions this year. First of all, the signing of an antiterrorist pact by the two main political parties (PP and PSOE) in January; eight more political parties signed after the attacks in Paris in November 13. This pact was particularly aimed at fighting jihadist terrorism (as opposed to fighting the Spanish terrorist organisation, ETA[34]). Despite including among its 8 points the goal of fighting "any kind of racism, xenophobia or discrimination", this pact takes the risk of transforming the notion of 'radicalisation' into a new label that will contribute to the identification of Muslims as the 'other', and to justify the mistrust surrounding them; this could be seen to be the case of the 'Stop radicalismos' campaign that was launched in December and described below.

29. As reported by the digital newspaper *La Marea*: http://www.lamarea.com/2015/01/11/el-fomento-del-racismo-y-la-islamofobia-en-politica-y-prensa/. This fact is important due to the fact that – as it is reported in the newspaper article – it contradicts the deontological code of the Federation of the Press Associations of Spain, which states that the race, color, religion, social origin or sex should only mentioned when there exists a direct link between this fact and the news being discussed.

30. Alberto López Bargados and Ángeles Ramírez Fernández, "Un decálogo a contracorriente contra la islamofobia", Viento Sur, 138, February, (2015): 19-26, p.25.

31. Newspaper El Mundo: http://www.elmundo.es/internacional/2014/10/11/543917a1ca474163608b4574.html

32. Newspaper El Confidencial: http://www.elconfidencial.com/mundo/2014-10-15/adolescentes-occidentales-locas-por-un-yihadista_242506/

33. Newspaper El País: http://politica.elpais.com/politica/2015/10/24/actualidad/1445682710_631357.html

34. ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, in Basque) is a terrorist organisation, currently inactive, formed in 1958 with the objective of achieving the independence for the Basque country, currently an autonomous region located in the North of Spain.

The second new legal measure adopted is the approval of the Law of Citizen Security (commonly known as the gag rule), which has raised many tensions among both the opposition parties and the Spanish population. This law, although not directly oriented towards Muslims, includes a severe restriction on rights; as such, it affects the population as a whole, but might concern the minorities whose rights and freedoms have always seemed more fragile to a greater degree. In addition, it is important to point out, with regards to immigration, that the Popular parliamentary group, which currently leads the country, decided to add an amendment to the Law of Citizen Security in order to give legal coverage to the illegal, 'on the spot' deportation of immigrants to the Moroccan territory; this is to be applied to those who have entered Ceuta or Melilla illegally. This amendment was finally approved by the Congress of Deputies on March 26, 2015, although opposed by social organisations and condemned by the Council of Europe.

On an anecdotal level, but exemplifying the idea expressed above, on January 15, 2015 the Provincial Brigade of Information of Seville sent a document to its members with recommendations about how to act when facing an Arab-related threat.[35] This report recommended identifying all Arabs who were recording videos in non-touristic places, those in possession of more than 1,000 Euros in cash or those using a laptop inside a vehicle, as they are "probably cracking the Wi-Fi network to leave no traces of their IP address". Although the police headquarters invalidated the report shortly afterwards, we consider this to be a sign of how the restriction of civil liberties and the atmosphere of mistrust created can affect the Muslim community.

Finally, as a response to the increase of terrorism and the fear experienced in all European countries, the Spanish government has launched the platform 'Stop radicalismos' (Stop radicalism), which puts a telephone number, a website and an email at the disposal of all citizens; they can use these to report any person that they think is radicalising others. This application, which it is said targets all forms of radicalisation, but which has only been published in Spanish and Arabic, has found opposition in the Muslim community. As Amparo Sánchez Rossell,[36] president of the Citizen Platform against Islamophobia, points out that this instrument, which refers not to terrorism, but to the subjective reality of the term 'radical', violates the citizen's fundamental rights and generates juridical insecurity and defencelessness, as the reporter does not have to identify themselves, and thus is not held accountable for any accusations; moreover, this instrument fails to respect the presumption of innocence.

It is worth noting here the tension that exists between the Islamic Commission of Spain (CIE) and the Spanish government with regard to the commission's legal structure. This commission, an amalgam of different Muslim associations, is man-

35. http://www.elmundo.es/espana/2015/01/14/54b6af0b22601ddb6b8b4577.html

36. Conference for the International Day against Islamophobia, 13 December 2015, ACHIME, Madrid.

aged through a dual leadership, represented by two association groups: the Spanish Federation of Religious Entities (FEERI) and the Union of Islamic Communities of Spain (UCIDE). This dual leadership is reflected in inner tensions both among the Muslim congregation and with the central authorities; the signing of new articles of association in 2012 were only partially recognized by the Islamic Commission of Spain and were then blocked by the Ministry of Justice. In July, 2015 this ministry decided to promote a draft Royal Decree that would unilaterally modify the structure of the CIE. Although this Royal Decree has not been finalised, it has sparked protests which accuse the government of interventionism, of trying to divide the Muslim community and of discrimination.[37]

ON THE SYRIAN REFUGEES

The Syrian refugee crisis has erupted in the political arena with strength, polarising public opinion and compromising the commitments and principles which the European countries have asserted on paper. This crisis, which has made the most of the headlines over the last months, caught the public attention after a series of tragic shipwrecks in the Mediterranean during the month of April, and particularly after the photograph of Aylan Kurdi, the 3 year-old boy found dead on the Turkish coast, spread throughout the world. However, most of the government's reactions have not met the high expectations that the population, at least in the short term, had.

In the present case, the Spanish government has adopted several stances under different arguments, all of them, however, contrary to the acceptance of refugees or with a view to limit the numbers proposed by the European Union. Its first stance was that of opposition to the number of refugees being assigned to Spain, , the argument put forward was the large number of immigrants Spain was already supporting due to the constant arrival of illegal immigrants to the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla, both located opposite the Strait of Gibraltar (SOS Racism Madrid, 2015). After the EU's September negotiations, 14,931 refugees were finally assigned to the country (in addition to the 2,740 refugees who had been assigned in May); however, only 13 have arrived at the time of writing this report. This numbers, accepted in September, should be met within the next two following years (SOS Racism Madrid, 2015).

When regarding the question of the Syrian refugees, it is hard to draw a line between the existence of Islamophobia and the mere lack of political or social interest. First of all, it is necessary to point out, as has previously been stated, the fact that Spanish culture and identity was constructed in opposition to Islam and its presence in the peninsula. This leads us to believe that because the refugees are Muslim this might result in a greater mistrust, as they are perceived as a farther "other", one that entails different

37. Statement of the Spanish Federation of Religious Entities, September 8, 2015: http://feeri.es/manifiesto-por-un-islam-democratico-en-espana/

cultural features and is, therefore, more alien to the Spanish culture. Likewise, international tensions and the fear of terrorism have allowed the question of security to play an important role in the justification of this mistrust, and has led different governmental members to attempt to trigger a fear campaign; the possibility of terrorists entering the country alongside the refugees has been highlighted. Such is the case with the Minister of Interior Affairs, who hinted that this could, in fact, be possible,[38] especially after the Spanish Embassy in Turkey reported the break in and stealing of 1,452 blank Syrian passports in the province of Raqqa (Syria), or similar statements issued by Javier Maroto, vice-Secretary of the Popular Party for the Basque Country. Although the vice-president later discredited those statements, there is a risk of spreading this fear among the population. On the other hand, we also need to take into account the small number of refugees who have arrived in the country; this small amount merely increases the uncertainty of the situation and forces us to wait and see how events unfold.

On the other hand, following the initiative of Barcelona, several city councils created a Refuge-Cities Network which aims to take a more active stance on the issue in question through the allocation of funds and the offering of accommodation. This network has achieved a great deal of political interest and the adscription of dozens of cities and towns. In addition to this, along with governmental initiatives, many civil society associations have also decided to take action through raising awareness activities, food collection campaigns, helping refugees to settle in private homes or providing legal counselling. These groups, among which the lack of Muslim associations is notable, include the Spanish Commission for Refugee Aid, Rescate, Accem, and at an international level, Refugees Welcome, the Red Cross, ACNUR, and Save the Children.

Ceuta and Melilla, Two Singular Cases

It is also worth mentioning the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla, the Spanish territories in North Africa which border on Morocco. The populations of these cities present a unique nature, as they are composed of almost 50% Muslim (43.3% in Ceuta and 50.6% in Melilla, according to the demographic data provided by the Union of Islamic Communities of Spain). Today, these two cities present two opposite realities: on the one hand, they are the main focus of jihadism or radicalisation in Spain; on the other hand, according to Muslim NGOs, these cities demonstrate high levels of integration and are evidence that the two religions can coexist.

According to a recent study by the Spanish think-tank Real Instituto Elcano[39] 75.8% of the alleged jihadist terrorists arrested in Spain between 2013 and 2015

38. http://politica.elpais.com/politica/2015/09/08/actualidad/1441733810_992220.html

39. Fernando Reinares and Carola García Calvo, "Terroristas, redes y organizaciones: facetas de la actual movilización yihadista en España", Documentos de trabajo, 17/2015, Real Instituto Elcano, November 16, 2015, accessed December 20, 2015, http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/web/rielcano_es/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_es/zonas_es/dt17-2015-reinares-garciacalvo-terroristas-redes-organizaciones-facetas-actual-movilizacion-yihadista-espana.

come from either Ceuta or Melilla. Among the reasons mentioned in this study, we find a certain coherence with the general model that terrorist groups are attractive for second-generation Muslims; in addition, these cities are close to Morocco, and, more specifically, to a region with a high number of focal points of radicalisation.

However, religious plurality is well recognized among the population of these cities, Islam is taught in schools, the construction of mosques does not find widespread opposition and there is religious assistance when needed. However, in Ceuta there are only 13 Islamic teachers for 6,757 Muslim students who are attending primary or secondary education (Demographic Study of Muslim Population 2014, UCIDE); that is, there is still a gap between needs and reality.

Nevertheless, these cities present a different problem, that of integration of different economic status social groups, due, in part, to their isolated geographical situations and to the fact that a high percentage of the population rely on public employment. This has led to two different rates of development; one, the weakest in economic terms, is particularly sensitive to religious radicalisation, as well as to public disorder.

Finally, another source of constant tension are the border fences that separate these two cities from Morocco and which aim to prevent the entrance of sub-Saharan illegal immigration. In 2014, 59.4% (7,485 people)[40] of the illegal immigration Spain received entered through these two cities. In this regard, and as one of the most controversial issues that has struck this region in the last year, it is important to mention the death of 15 immigrants when trying to cross from Morocco to Ceuta through the Spanish beach of Tarajal on February 6, 2014. In several videos recorded by the boundary line's cameras and NGOs, it is possible to see how the sub-Saharan immigrants tried to cross swimming to the Spanish beach, while the Spanish civil guard shot at them using antiriot equipment. Those who finally reached Spanish soil were then illegally returned to Moroccan territory. This case led to the trial of 16 civil guards who were, however, absolved in October 15, 2015 for lack of evidence.

Which Actors are Involved in This Conflict?

There are many small groups which actively promote Islamophobia, as well as other types of discrimination based on race, sexual preference or political opinion. Of these, it is interesting to point out those who constitute themselves as political parties; these can reach a wider range. The most important one, and the one that maintains the most Islamophobic stance, is, as we have seen, Plataforma per Catalunya, whose range of action is limited to Catalonia. This party has constructed an important part of its political program on the rejection of the Muslim population. It currently has 8 city councillors, a considerable number for a party with this reference framework. Along the same lines, the political party VOX is a party with national aspirations and

40. Number provided by the newspaper *El Mundo*: http://www.elmundo.es/espana/2015/04/13/552bcff-3ca474139038b456f.html

was created in 2013 as an extreme-right split from the Partido Popular, although it has not achieved any parliamentary representation. Its Islamophobia was framed as a defence of Spain's Christian values. The Islamophobic stance maintained by Partido Popular in Catalonia has also been noted.

On a smaller scale, there are other radical right-wing parties, such as España 2000, Alianza Nacional or Democracia Nacional, who have also issued Islamophobic statements and promoted different activities to show and spread their hate speech, such as illegal demonstrations organized by Alianza Nacional against Islam in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo attacks. These last parties, however, have only a few city councillors spread through diverse towns across the Spanish territory.

In contrast to these actors, it is worth mentioning the magnificent actions carried out both by the Citizen Platform against Islamophobia and the Movement against Intolerance (Movimiento contra la intolerancia). The Citizen Platform gathers a number of groups dedicated to this cause; the platform was created in 2011 and is specially oriented towards the fight against Islamophobia and the protection of Muslims. The platform monitors manifestations of Islamophobia in Spain, collates an annual Islamophobia report which is published both online and sent to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, as well as providing assistance to Muslims in difficult situations and making complaints against Islamophobic perpetrators. The Movement against Intolerance reports a wide range of discrimination and prejudice and works in developing awareness of projects, mobilising public opinion and assisting victims of discriminatory acts. We can also highlight the Observatorio Andalusí (Andalusian Observatory), an initiative of the Union for Islamic Communities, which monitors Islamophobia in Spain. The union also creates an annual report. In addition, the efforts carried out by the Islamic Culture Foundation are historically focused, with initiatives that appeal for the recognition of Spain and Europe's Islamic historical tradition, and more recently through the elaboration of a counter-argumentative website under the name "Twistislamophobia". Finally, there are a large number of smaller groups, mostly Muslim associations, which take part in fighting this hateful prejudice, such as Muslims for Peace, ACHIME, the Association for the Sociocultural Integration of Immigrants, the movement SAFI, or at a governmental level the Pluralism and Cohabitation Foundation.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Everyone agrees that education plays an essential role in ending this form of discrimination, and that it is only through knowledge that the walls which the local population might build between them and the Muslim population out of fear or incomprehension can be torn down. This knowledge can only be achieved through a more comprehensive approach, which should include awareness-raising campaigns by which society

can better understand Muslims and empathize with their situation, better training of governmental institutions, more governmental support for the NGO's participating in this field and measures that will facilitate living together with Muslims. In this sense, the active participation of Muslims in society (through neighbourhood and parents' associations, community activities, etc.) should help them to normalise their image, thus breaking the prejudices that surround it, and to present their needs and problems to the rest of society, allowing people to understand their context.

However, with regard to this segment of population, all these initiatives will not be enough without a radical transformation of the education system. The Spanish Muslim historical period needs to be understood as an essential part of the country's history which contributed to the value of our heritage; there needs to be a recognition of the Islamic elements that exist in the country. This should require the participation of specialists who can guide in teaching this topic and the Muslim population itself, who can offer their own perspective, as well as more governmental participation and funding.

The legislative system should also be strengthened in terms of the following aspects: a modification and toughening of Article 510 of the criminal code, which penalizes hate crimes, and an improvement of the district attorney's offices which specialize in the prosecution of hate crimes; the latter is still very new, as the first one was created in 2009. In the same way, a better record of hate and Islamophobic crime should also be implemented, due to the difficulties of really being aware of the number of crimes that happen every year and the heavy reliance this has created on civil associations.

Last, but certainly not least, an active effort has to be made to stop associating terrorism with Islam; at the present time this association is being built, especially concerning the link between the Syrian refugees and jihadist fighters. This is carried out by both the media and at a political level, with the same devastating effects. As we have seen, the media is filled with misinformation and prejudices. This has a very negative impact on the population, as the media works as an opinion generator. At the same time, the media helps to support political actions and statements. In this sense, more accuracy with the terms used should be demanded, as well as more care when establishing bold links. Therefore, one of the first measures that should be implemented is a better preparation of the professionals who deal with this topic, such as specialized workshops or the elaboration of more precise style guides in the case of journalism. Likewise, publishers and editors should be more demanding when dealing with this question. As for political opinions, politicians should rely on professional consultants and be more open to scholars and academic studies and opinions. Bold accusations and hate speech should not remain without consequences as well. In order for this to be possible, the government should be more active in putting an end to these prejudices and creating a public opinion that is more respectful and inclusive, and which could act as a firewall against Islamophobic actions and decisions.

CHRONOLOGY

7 January

- Terrorist attack against Charlie Hebdo carried out by Daesh/ISIL

8 January

- President Rajoy declares that in Spain there is no risk of Islamophobia

15 January

- Publication of a report presented by the Provincial Brigade of Information of Seville on how to react to Muslim suspects

2 February:

- Signature of the Antiterrorist Pact between the Partido Popular (PP) and the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE)

17 February

- Over 1,200 immigrants die in the Mediterranean Sea in one week

22 March

- Celebration of local elections in Andalusia

26 March

- Passing the Law of Citizen Security (Gag rule)

April and May

- The PP (Partido Popular) distributes Islamophobic pamphlets and alerts against the Islamisation of Catalonia on the occasion of the local elections

8 April

The Ministry of Internal Affairs, Fernández Díaz, relates jihadism and the Catalonian Independence movement; in 2014 he had issued similar statements

24 May

- Celebration of the Spanish local elections

11 June

- Passing of a law that grants the Spanish nationality to the descendants of the Sephardic Jews expelled from the country in 1942

July

- 100 teachers from ten different countries send a statement to the Diocese of Cordoba and the Department of Culture of the Regional Government of Andalusia demanding the respect of the status of the mosque/cathedral of Cordoba

31 July

- Publication of the Royal Decree that modifies the structure of the Islamic Commission of Spain

28 August

- Ada Colau, mayoress of Barcelona, suggests the creation of a Refuge-Cities Network to accept refugees

2 September

- Aylan Kurdi, a 3 year-old Syrian immigrant, appears dead on the coast of Turkey. The phot travelled around the world, raising awareness of the Syrian refugee crisis

9 September

- Spain agrees with the European Union to accept 14,931 refugees

22 September

- A student of the University of Zaragoza is expelled from a lesson for wearing a hijab. The University initiated a disciplinary inquiry against the teacher responsible, who was forced to reaccept the student

27 September

- Celebration of local elections in Catalonia

15 October

- Acquittal of 16 civil guards being judged for the deaths of 15 immigrants on the beach of Tarajal (Ceuta) on February 6, 2014

13 November

- Terrorist attacks in Paris carried out by Daesh/ISIL, which resulted in the death of 137 people

26 November

- Nine more political parties sign the Antiterrorist Pact following the attacks of Paris on November 13

28 November

- The police announces that, so far, it has arrested 68 allegedly jihadist terrorist in the country

December

- The PP proposes a plan for the integration of the Muslim population in the city of Getafe; the city's government dismissed the proposal for its Islamophobic connotations

4 December

- Launching the "Stop radicalismos" campaign (Stop radicalisms) by the Ministry of Internal Affairs

20 December

- Celebration of the Spanish general elections

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alberto López Bargados and Ángeles Ramírez Fernández, "Un decálogo a contracorriente contra la islamofobia", Viento Sur, 138, February, (2015): 19-26.

Alfonso Corral García, "Islamofobia en la prensa digital? Análisis de los comentarios en "La inocencia de los musulmanes", in Periodismo y publicidad digital en España: análisis empírico, Universidad, investigación y periodismo digital. XV Congreso de Periodismo Digital de Huesca, ed. Fernando Sabés Turmo (Huesca: Asociación de la prensa de Aragón, 2014), 140-152, accessed December 18, 2015 http://decimoquinto.congresoperiodismo.com/pdf/libro2014.pdf.

Dolores Mayoral Arqué and Fidel Molina Luque and Lluis Samper Rasero. "¿Islamofobia o currículo nulo? La representación del Islam, las culturas musulmanas y los inmigrantes musulmanes en los libros de texto en Cataluña". Revista de educación, Núm. 357, enero-abril (2012): 257-279.

Eloy Martín Corrales, "Maurofobia/islamofobia y maurofilia/islamofilia en la España del siglo XXI", Revista CIDOB d'affers internacionals, 66-67 (2004): 39-51.

Enric Llopis, "Islamofobia: odio y rechazo a la mezcla cultural", Rebelión, June 25, 2015, accessed December 28, 2015, http://www.rebelion.org/noticia.php?id=200375.

Eva Francés Bruno, "La regulación del pañuelo islámico en el espacio público español. Alternativas a legislar", Fundación alternativas, Documento de trabajo 32/2008 (2008).

Fernando Bravo López, "¿Qué es la islamofobia?", Documentación social, 159 (2010=: 189-207, accessed December 15, 2015, https://sites.google.com/site/teimproject/-quienes-somos/fernandobravo/trabajos-de-fernando-bravo-lopez/queeslaislamofobia.

Fernando Reinares and Carola García-Calvo, "Terroristas, redes y organizaciones: facetas de la actual movilización yihadista en España", Documentos de trabajo, 17/2015, Real Instituto Elcano, November 16, 2015, accessed December 20, 2015, http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/web/rielcano_es/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_es/zonas_es/dt17-2015-reinares-garciacalvo-terroristas-redes-organizaciones-facetas-actual-movilizacion-yihadista-espana.

Gema Martín Muñoz, "Entre el tópico y el prejuicio. El islam y el mundo árabe en el sistema educativo español", Revista de educación, Núm. 316, (1998): 151-162.

Gema Martín Muñoz, Begoña Valle Simón, and Mª Ángeles López Plaza, El Islam y el mundo árabe. Guía didáctica para profesores y formadores, (Madrid: Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional, 1998).

Gema Martín Muñoz, "Unconscious Islamophobia", Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-knowledge, Vol. 8, Issue 2, Article 4 (2010), accessed December 18, 2015, http://scholarworks.umb.edu/humanarchitecture/vol8/iss2/4/.

Gema Martínez Muñoz and Ramón Grosfoguel, La islamofobia a debate. La genealogía del miedo al Islam y la construcción de los discursos antiislámicos, (Madrid: Casa Árabe, 2012).

Graciela Padilla Castillo and Pilar Sánchez González,"La importancia del tratamiento de la religión en medios de comunicación. El caso del Islam en España", Estudios sobre el Mensaje Periodístico. Vol. 19, Núm. especial marzo (2013): 449-457.

Laura Mijares y Ángeles Ramírez, "Mujeres, pañuelo e islamofobia en España: Un estado de la cuestión" Anales de Historia Contemporánea, 24 (2008), accessed December 20, 2015, accessed December 28, 2015, http://revistas.um.es/analeshc/article/view/53911.

Jordi Moreras, "¿Integrados o interrogados? La integración de los colectivos musulmanes en España en clave de sospecha", La condición inmigrante, coord.. André Pedreño Cánovas, Manuel Hernández Pedreño (Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 2005), 227-240

Observatorio Andalusí, "Estudio demográfico de la población musulmana. Explotación estadística del censo de ciudadanos musulmanes en España referido a fecha 31/12/2014", UCIDE (2015), accessed December 10, 2015: http://observatorio.hispanomuslim.es/estademograf.pdf.

Observatorio Andalusí, "Informe anual 2014", UCIDE (2015), accessed December 10, 2015: http://observatorio.hispanomuslim.es/ia2014.pdf.

Observatorio Andalusí, "Informe especial 2014", UCIDE (2015), accessed December 10, 2015: http://observatorio.hispanomuslim.es/isj14.pdf.

Olivia Orozco de la Torre and Gabriel Alonso García (eds.), "El Islam y los musulmanes hoy. Dimensión internacional y relaciones con España", Cuadernos de la Escuela Diplomática, 48 (Madrid: Escuela Diplomática, 2013).

Plataforma Ciudadana contra la Islamofobia, "Informe anual. Islamofobia en España 2014", Plataforma Ciudadana contra la Islamofobia (2015): http://www.confer.es/114/activos/texto/wcnfr_pdf_4498-thGctgdOLAxMpkVp.pdf.

Sol Tarrés and Jordi Moreras, "Topografía de la otra muerte. Los cementerios musulmanes en España (siglo XX-XXI)", in Religio in labyrintho, ed. José J. Caerols, (Escola y Mayo, Madrid, 2013): 309-321.

Thierry Desrues, "Percepciones del Islam y de los musulmanes en los Medios de comunicación en España", (paper presented at the conference "El diálogo intercultural: un

reto para las creencias y las convicciones", European Comission, Brussels, November 11, 2008), accessed December 15, 2015, http://digital.csic.es/bitstream/10261/30745/1/Thierry%20Desrues%20El%20dialogo%20intercultural.%20Un%20reto%20para%20las%20creencias%20y%20las%20convicciones.pdf.

Thierry Desrues and Manuel Pérez Yruela, "Percepciones y actitudes hacia el Islam y los musulmanes en España, avance de resultados (versión preliminar)", Instituto de Estudios Sociales Avanzados (2008), accessed December 18, 2015, http://ikuspegi-inmigracion.net/documentos/investigacion/es/percep_acti_islam_avancemarzo2008.pdf.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN SWEDEN NATIONAL REPORT 2015

AROMA ABRASHI, ÅKE SANDER, GÖRAN LARSSON

THE AUTHORS

Aroma Abrashi is a former student at Gothenburg University, from where she obtained a MA degree in Global Studies. Having a BA in law from the University of Hull, she always had a keen interest in justice and equality. The combination of her two degrees resulted in a MA thesis discussing Islamophobia in the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights, defended in November 2015- a topic she had first written about during her law degree. She has a multidisciplinary understanding of global political economy, and sees a future in the research field of Islamophobia. Currently Aroma is also admitted to the Granada Summer School teaching 'Critical Muslim Studies' organized by UC Berkley professor Ramon Grosfoguel. In this report Aroma has been supervised by Prof. Åke Sander and Prof. Göran Larsson from the Department of Literature, History of Ideas, and Religion at Gothenburg University. aroma_abrashi@hotmail.com

Åke Sander is currently Professor of psychology and sociology of religion at the department of Literature, History of Ideas and Religion, Gothenburg University, Sweden. He earned his Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Gothenburg. He has previously been lecturer in philosophy, the Director of the Centre for the Study of Cultural Contact and International Migration, and senior lecturer in systematic theology at the same university. Over the years, the defining feature of Professor Sander's research has been the attempt to know and understand the phenomena of religion and religiosity and their influence on people's ways of experiencing, thinking, feeling and acting. Sander has also been teaching at a number of universities in the world. He has published several books and close to 100 book chapters and articles. His latest publications include Larsson, G. ; Sander, Å. (2015). "An Urgent Need to Consider How to Define Islamophobia". Bulletin for the Study of Religion. 44 (1) s. 13-17; Sander, Å. (2015). Norm and Value Changes in a Globalized World. Den Trogne Arbetaren i Vingården. Festskrift till Bo Claesson. s. 119-144. Göteborg: LIR skrifter; Sander, Å. (2015). Phenomenological reduction and yogic meditation: commonalities and divergencies. Journal of East-West Thought. 5 (1) s. 29-60. aake.sander@religion.gu.se

Göran Larsson, Dr., Professor in Religious Studies, Gothenburg University. While Larsson's research is focused primarily on Islam and Muslims in Europe, he has also written about Islamic theology, Quranic studies and issues related to religion and the media. In addition to his academic work he was also secretary to the Ministry of Education's 2008-2009 inquiry into the training of Imams in Sweden. Larsson's most recent publications are the edited volume, Muslims and the New Information and Communication Technologies: Notes from an Emerging Field, published by Springer in 2013 (edited together with Thomas Hoffmann) and Muslims and the New Media: Historical and Contemporary Debates, published by Ashgate in 2011. He has also collaborated with professor Åke Sander on the publication Islam and Muslims in Sweden: Integration or Fragmentation? A Contextual Study, published by Verlag in 2007. goran.larsson@religion.gu.se

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions. No representation, either expressed or implied, is made of the accuracy of the material in the national reports. The editors of the European Islamophobia Report cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may be made. The reader must make his or her own evaluation of the accuracy and appropriateness of those materials.

To cite this report: Aroma Abrashi, Åke Sander, Göran Larsson (2016): *Islamophobia in Sweden: National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Negative and/or discriminating trends towards Islam and Muslims in Sweden are generally evident in every aspect of society included in this report: media, legal, political, and school systems, the labour market and in public attitudes. Despite this, it remains difficult to draw solid conclusions about the presence, and, perhaps more so, the extent of Islamophobia in Sweden. Part of these difficulties rest with the lack of research on the topic, and part lie with the nature of the existing research. It is difficult to conclude what discriminatory phenomena are brought into light, as most research has focused on factors such as ethnicity or race rather than on religion. In addition, issues of intersectionality are not often discussed. This has a serious impact upon the mapping and quantifying of Islamophobia. This is not to say that there is an attitude in Sweden that Islamophobia is not a problem - both government initiatives and civil society actions suggest the contrary. The Swedish government has called for an increased focus on Islamophobia, especially from the Equality Ombudsman in Sweden, but also from organisations such as EXPO, Forum for Living History and the Commission for Government Support for Faith Communities (SST). The civil society actors who have been interviewed are all of the opinion that Islamophobia is a serious matter that needs to be combated with more action and greater resources. For now, however, all informants feel that there remains a lack of engagement both from the government and from other relevant actors.

SAMMANFATTNING PÅ SVENSKA

Tecken på negative attityder mot, och/eller diskriminering av, Islam och Muslimer i Sverige existerar generellt i varje aspekt av samhället som har inkluderats i denna rapport: media, cyber-rymden, rättsväsendet, skolsystemet, politiken, arbetsmarknaden och bland allmänna attityder. Trots detta är det svårt att dra grundliga slutsatser av islamofobins närvaro och utsträckning i Sverige. Svårigheterna att dra sulsatser beror dels på bristen av forskning om ämnet, och dels på innehållet av existerande forskning. Det är inte alltid tydligt vilket diskriminerande fenomen som framhålls eftersom forskningen fokuserat på faktorer så som etnicitet och ras snarare än religion. Frågor som rör intersektionalitet diskuteras sällan. Detta har givetvis konsekvenser över kartläggningen och mätningen av islamofobi. Detta är dock inte att säga att det finns en attityd i Sverige att islamofobi inte är ett problem- snarare talar både statens och civilsamhällets handlingar om det motsatta. Svenska staten har begärt ett ökat fokus på islamofobi, framförallt från Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, men även från organisationer som EXPO, Forum för Levande Historia, och Nämnden för Statligt Stöd till Trossamfund. Aktörer från civilsamhället som blivit intervjuade delar alla åsikten att islamofobi är ett seriöst problem som måste bekämpas med fler åtgärder och ökade resurser. För tillfället är dock alla informanter ens om att engagemanget brister både från andra aktörer i civilsamhället och från regeringen.

INTRODUCTION

Though Islamophobia is, by and large, an acknowledged phenomenon in Sweden, the research on Islamophobia has been little and inconclusive.[1] The Swedish Equality Ombudsman released a report in 2014 which collected and reviewed available research on discrimination against Muslims in Sweden. However, a consensus among researches about the definition of Islamophobia is weak. Concepts of ethnic racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia sometimes overlap; informants often refer to these phenomena interchangeably, causing analytical difficulties.[2] For these reasons, it has not always been possible to identify if an incident is based on Islamophobia, as defined by the European Islamophobia Report-project, or some other related phenomenon. Moreover, a gap between official data and literature produced by Muslims - or 'so-called grey literature' - has been the concern of Swedish scholars.[3] In this study, the references have not been evaluated or criticised in a manner that would solve such problems, but have been used thematically in order to give an overview of how Islamophobia has been studied and addressed in Sweden.

Additionally, the sources and references are described in general terms, as a detailed account of existing research is out of the scope of this report. Similarly, not all literature can be covered, nor can all points of view be discussed. Precedence has been given to literature from 2005 and onwards. Much weight has also been given to the three organisations that have chosen to participate in this study. Although not many in number, these organisation have significant insights into the topic as they have actively worked to reduce Islamophobia. Of course, this does not mean that they represent civil society in Sweden as a whole, but they can give a good insight into those parts that do consciously and actively work to combat Islamophobia.

THE INTERVIEWEES

A request for participation was sent by email to 20 different organisations and civil society actors working on the topics of racism, discrimination and inequality. Due to time constraints, the aim was to interview between 7 and 10 civil society actors. A request was therefore sent to the top 20 actors working in these fields. These 20 actors were chosen based on their profile and experience in the field. 15 did not respond, 2 declined, and 3 agreed to participate. It is unclear why the responses remained few in number. The

1. Larsson Göran, Simon Stjernholm. "Islamophobia in Sweden: Contrasting Images from Muslim Advocacy Groups and Official Hate Crime Statistics". Working Paper, Gothenburg University 2016.

2. Larsson, Göran, Åke Sander. 2015. "An Urgent Need to Consider How to Define Islamophobia." *Bulletin for the Study of Religion* 44 (1): 13-7.
Larsson Göran, Simon Stjernholm. "Islamophobia in Sweden: Contrasting Images from Muslim Advocacy Groups and Official Hate Crime Statistics". Working Paper, Gothenburg University 2016.
Larsson, Göran, Åke Sander. 2007. *Islam and Muslims in Sweden. Integration or Fragmentation? A Contextual Study.* Berlin & Geneva: Lit–Verlag.

3. Larsson Göran, Simon Stjernholm. "Islamophobia in Sweden: Contrasting Images from Muslim Advocacy Groups and Official Hate Crime Statistics". Working Paper, Gothenburg University 2016.

organisations were found via Google. Only results in which lists of different organisations could be extracted were considered. By limiting each search combination to the three first pages of Google results, four lists of organisations were identified.[4] The lists were then compared to one another. Organisations focusing on discrimination on other grounds than race, ethnicity or religion (such as sexual orientation) were excluded.

Details about the Three Informants:[5]

1. EXPO[6] is a Swedish NGO that aims to combat and inform about racism and xenophobia in Sweden by producing research on these topics. EXPO works primarily through its magazine of the same name, and also by keeping an archive called EXPO Research. EXPO also holds seminars. Sara Duarte represented EXPO.
2. Gothenburg's Human Rights Cente[7] (GHRC) is a non-profit anti-discrimination agency in Gothenburg, Sweden's second largest city. Their primary work is to offer legal counselling and education about human rights and discrimination. The centre was established in 2010. Amanj Aziz represented GHRC.
3. Ibn Rushd[8] is a national adult educational association accredited by the Swedish state. Their vision is to make Islam a part of Swedish society, and that there should be nothing unusual about being a 'Swedish Muslim'. Ibn Rushd organises seminars and lectures on different societal levels and for different actors. Mustafa Tumturk spoke for Ibn Rushd.

SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN SWEDEN IN THE LAST 5 YEARS:

In general, 47% of Swedes feel negative about religious diversity in society.[9] Studies of attitudes towards Muslims in Sweden have demonstrated that Islamophobic

4. The lists were found on the following sites; the first is from a public authority, and the three latter are from civil society actors: http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/vasternorrland/Sv/manniska-och-samhalle/manskliga-rattigheter/Pages/organisationer-mot-framlingsfientlighet.aspx, http://www.immi.se/organisationer/antirasistiska-organisationer, http://www.immi.se/rasism1/raslinks.htm, http://folkbildning.net/amnen/samhalle/mangkulturellt-samhalle/rasism/organisationer/ The following search combinations were used:

In English	In Swedish
Organization*+ Islamophob* + Sweden	Organisation* + Islamofob* + Sverige
Organization*+ Racism + Sweden	Organisation* + Rasism + Sverige
Organization* + Discrimination + Sweden	Organisation* + Diskriminering + Sverige
Anti- Discrimination + Sweden	Antidiskriminering + Sverige

5. The three informants that participated in this report were asked how their respective organizations defined Islamophobia, and if they differentiated the concept from similar concepts such as xenophobia or racism. In general, it seems none of the interviewees had any working definition of Islamophobia which they used. However, Gothenburg Human Rights Centre (GHRC) said they perceived Islamophobia as a form of racism, while Ibn Rushd connected the term to xenophobia. All three informants, however, agreed that Islamophobia is a serious problem in Sweden.

6. More information about EXPO can be found at: http://expo.se/2010/about-expo_3514.html

7. In Swedish: Göteborgs Center Mot Diskriminering. More information is available at http://gbgrc.se/en/

8. For more information about Ibn Rushd (only in Swedish): http://www.ibnrushd.se

9. Mella, Orlando, Freshteh Ahmadi, Irving Palm. 2013. *Mångfaldsbarometern*. Gävle: Gävle University Press.

attitudes are evident throughout the country.[10] More generally, negative attitudes towards immigrants have stayed at a fairly stable level - 6%.[11] However, negative attitudes towards the Islamically motivated headscarf are more common; 64.4 % of the Swedish population believes Muslim women are oppressed. The tolerance of Muslim coverings in public spaces has, however, increased overall.[12] Swedes have different attitudes towards different forms of covering; around 83% are against the niqab and burka, but 65% accept the hijab and shayla.[13] However, given the current globalised information age and the impact of incidents such as the recent attacks in Paris in November 2015, attitude surveys need to be constantly updated and trends need to be monitored. Recent events, such as the Paris attacks and the military and political actions undertaken as a response, or the on-going refugee crisis, need to be factored into contemporary attempts to analyse and understand Islamophobia not only in Sweden, but globally.

Incidents which are believed to have a significant correlation with either Islamophobia specifically, or racism and xenophobia generally in Sweden cannot all be covered. A politically significant development is the right-wing populist Sweden Democrats (SD) becoming the third largest party in Sweden in 2014, winning almost 13% of the votes and 30 new parliamentary seats. Despite having anti-immigrant policies (often with a significant anti-Islam/Muslim focus) as their foremost agenda[14], the party has denied accusations of racism or xenophobia.[15] To rebuke SD's disassociation from racism, EXPO conducted a mapping of the history of SD and its specific members, revealing incidents of clear racist or discriminatory content, and some less explicit, but nonetheless suspicious activities.[16] One of very many examples listed is from 2010 when SD's party secretary stated:

10. Larsson, Göran. 2004. Nämnden för Statligt Stöd till Trossamfund, Report.
Vergara, Daniel. 2015. "Hets Mot Muslimer i Terrordådets Kölvatten." *EXPO*, Januay 8. Accessed Februay 4, 2016. http://expo.se/2015/hets-mot-muslimer-i-terrordadets-kolvatten_6756.html
Borell, Klas. 2012. *Islamofobiska Fördomar och Hatbrott: En Kunskapsöversikt*. No. 1. Stockholm: Nämnden för Statligt Stöd till Trossamfund (SST).

11. Mella, Orlando, Freshteh Ahmadi, Irving Palm. 2013. *Mångfaldsbarometer*n. Gävle: Gävle University Press.

12. Mella, Orlando, Freshteh Ahmadi, Irving Palm. 2013. *Mångfaldsbarometern*. Gävle: Gävle University Press.

13. Ibid

14. Åkesson, Jimmy. 2009. "Muslimer är Vårt Största Utländska Hot." *Aftonbladet*, October 19. Accessed December 25, 2015. http://www.aftonbladet.se/debatt/debattamnen/politik/article12049791.ab

15. Tuvhag, Emmylou. 2014. "Svårare för SD att Förneka Rasismen." *Svenska Dagbladet*, August 2. Accessed December 25, 2015. http://www.svd.se/svarare-for-sd-att-forneka-rasismen
EXPO 2013. "Hjälp Oss Påminna om SD:s Historia". February 2, 2013. Accessed: 1 September, 2015. http://expo.se/2013/hjalp-oss-paminna-om-sds-historia_5655.html
Vergara, Daniel. 2012. "Åkesson Tonar Ner Rasismen i Partiet." EXPO, June 1. Accessed December 25, 2015. http://expo.se/2012/akesson-tonar-ner-splittring-och-rasism-i-partiet_5175.html

16. EXPO 2013. "Hjälp Oss Påminna om SD:s Historia". February 2, 2013. Accessed: 1 September, 2015. http://expo.se/2013/hjalp-oss-paminna-om-sds-historia_5655.html

> Just like Nazism was overturned, so does Islam need to be overturned… [17]

Generally, the autumn of 2015 is considered to be one of the most successful periods for SD and their policies.[18] SD's party leader, Jimmie Åkesson, stated that he wanted to map out the opinions of (all) Muslims in Sweden in order to identify radical opinions among them.[19] The other political parties have also sharpened their attitudes towards policies concerning asylum, to which Åkesson stated:

> "(But) we have always said that there is a need for a serious situation in order for the other parties to wake up, so sure, from that perspective we are pleased."[20]

When asked about the responsibility of Åkesson's party not to contribute to the idea of a war between 'East' and 'West' or 'Muslims' and 'Christians', Åkesson replied in the same interview:

> "We can, to some extent, discuss whether we do not find ourselves in a situation of war already, even if it does not look like war traditionally has done." [21]

During the autumn of 2015, SD's spokesperson also confirmed that the party stood behind fliers that were handed out on the Greek island of Lesbos discouraging refugees to make their way to Sweden (Helmersson 2015). Despite being an overseas action, the attack on burqa, niqab, halal slaughter, polygamy and forced marriages and the alleged banning of the first three items speak volumes about SD's plans for domestic policies in this area. It also strongly suggests ties between their migration policies and Islamophobia. Below is a picture of a flier, and a clarification of its content.

NO MONEY, NO JOBS, NO HOMES

You might have heard positive things about our country and the Swedish people. That we are friendly, generous and hardworking. This might be true, but our society is falling apart.

Our wealth is gone. We have borrowed money to provide education and basic health care for our citizens. Due to decades of mass immigration our previously safe country is not safe anymore. Not only do we have a very high number of shootings and gang related violence, where grenade attacks in public spaces are no longer surprising, but Sweden now also demonstrates the second highest number of rape reports in the entire world.

Sweden is temporarily helping those who flee war and terror, but we can currently only offer tents and camp beds. And you will eventually be sent back home. Sweden is a modern Western country. Here, women and men are equal. Forced marriages and polygamy will never be accepted. Halal slaughter, wearing niqab or burqa in public places will be forbidden in our country.

Sweden Democrats SD- Women The People of Sweden

Flier found on the Greek island of Lesbos. Source: Helmersson 2015

Looking beyond politics, data from the Swedish public agency for monitoring and combating crime in

17. Westergren, Andreas. 2010. "Sd: Islam Måste Bekämpas." *Smålandsposten*, September 9. Accessed December 1, 2015. *http://www.smp.se/valet/sd-islam-maste-bekampas/*

18. Brandel, Tobias. "Åkesson Vill Kartlägga Svenska Muslimers Åsikter." *Svenska Dagbladet*, November 26. Accessed February 6, 2016 http://www.svd.se/jimmie-akesson-vill-kartlagga-svenska-muslimers-asikter

19. Ibid

20. Ibid "Men vi har alltid sagt att det behövs ett väldigt allvarligt läge för att de andra partierna ska vakna upp, så visst, i det perspektivet är man nöjd"

21. Ibid. I någon mening kan man diskutera om vi inte redan befinner oss i ett krig, även om det inte ser ut som krig traditionellt har gjort.

Sweden, BRÅ, shows that between 2010 and 2014 reports of hate-crimes with an identified Islamophobic motivation have increased 81%. Methodologically however, due to overlaps with other phenomena, Islamophobic crimes are difficult to capture statistically (SST 2014, 22-23). Data for 2015 is not yet available from BRÅ.

Mosques and Muslim prayer-facilities throughout Sweden have also faced violence that has Islamophobic motivation (assumed or confirmed).[22] They have been vandalised or been subject to arson[23] and these attacks are an on-going trend.[24] Examples of this can be found from the very beginning of the year. In January alone, the Gothenburg Mosque received a bomb threat,[25] a mosque in Uppsala was attacked with a firebomb (SVT 2015), a mosque in the small town of Järva was threatened by mail, including pornographic images[26], and a masjid in Mariestad was attacked with canned pork.[27] In February, the imam of the Stockholm Mosque and his family faced death threats (Salö 2015).[28]

Parallel to these damages are the attacks and incidents involving asylum housing. By October 2015, around 20 fire-related incidents, suspected to be arson by the police, have taken place.[29] By December, the number was up to 50.[30] The connection between asylum-fires and Islamophobia has little empirical grounding; however, the suspicions of racial or Islamophobic motivations behind these acts are common, as the majority of asylum seekers are from Muslim-majority countries.[31]

A Mosque in Mariestad vandalised by graffiti saying 'go home' in Swedish (El Mochantaf 2015)[28]

22. Borell, Klas. 2012. *Islamofobiska Fördomar och Hatbrott*: *En Kunskapsöversikt*. No. 1. Stockholm: Nämnden för Statligt Stöd till Trossamfund (SST).

23. Gardell, Mattias. 2010. *Islamofobi*. Stockholm: Leopard Förlag.
Larsson, Göran. 2006. *Muslimerna Kommer*! *Tankar om Islamofobi*. Göteborg: Makadam förlag.

24. Ljunggren, Petter and Mikael Funke. 2014. Stor ökning av moskéattacker 2014. SVT December 29. Accessed November 1, 2015. http://www.svt.se/ug/stor-okning-av-moskeattacker-2014
"Fakta: Moskéattacker 2014."*Göteborgs Posten*, January 1. Accessed November 1, 2015. http://www.gp.se/nyheter/sverige/1.2589194-fakta-moskeattacker-2014

25. "Bombhot mot Göteborgs." 2015. *Dagens Nyhter*, January 9. Accessed February 4, 2016. http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/bombhot-mot-goteborgs-moske/

26. Edström, Johanna. 2015 " Moskéer Hotade med Porrbrev" *Mitt I*, February 2. Accessed February 4, 2015. http://gamla.mitti.se/moskeer-hotade-med-porrbrev/

27. El-Mochantaf, Christer. 2015 " Moskélokal Attackerad med Fläsk i Mariestad." *Expressen*, January 8. Accessed February 4, 2016. http://www.expressen.se/gt/moskelokal-attackerad-med-flask-i-mariestad/

28. El-Mochantaf, Christer. 2015 " Moskélokal Attackerad med Fläsk i Mariestad." *Expressen*, January 8. Accessed February 4, 2016. http://www.expressen.se/gt/moskelokal-attackerad-med-flask-i-mariestad/

29. Lindström, Nils. 2015. Grafik: Bränder på asylboenden i år. *Sveriges Radio*, October 20. Accessed November 1, 2015. http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=83&artikel=6283376

30. Färnbo, Mikael. 2015 "Mest Intensiva Attackvågen mot Asylboende Någonsin". *EXPO*, *December 8*. Accessed: December 25. Available at: http://expo.se/2015/mest-intensiva-attackvagen-mot-asylboenden-nagonsin_6986.html

31. Ibid

Asylum housing after a fire in Munkedal in October 2015 (Ihse, 2015)[32]

A last important incident mentioned in this report is the attack in Trollhättan where a masked 21-year old entered a primary school and stabbed two students and a teacher who were of a Muslim cultural background. The 21-year old, named Anton Lundin Petterson, who was said to have had far-right sympathies, was later shot dead by the police. Peter Adlersson,[32] the spokesperson for the West-Swedish police, stated that the police are convinced the 21-year old's motives were racist, and that he had selected his victims (although it remains unclear under what criteria this was done or if Anton knew the victims were of a Muslim cultural background).[33] This analysis is not uncommon.[34]

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN SWEDISH SOCIETY

Discrimination in the Labour Market Based on (Assumed) Muslimness of a Person

Discrimination in the job and labour market has been researched in Sweden for some time. Research has indicated that employers tend to refrain from hiring those who are perceived to be non-European, Muslim or Jewish.[35] Agerström, Carlsson and Rooth[36] were interested in explicit and implicit prejudice towards Muslim men. Their study, based mostly on association-tests, concluded that 49% of employers had explicit and 94% had implicit prejudice towards Muslim men. These prejudices are believed to have an impact upon employers' decisions to hire.[37]

Looking at the other side of the employment process, Carlsson and Rooth[38], as well

32. Ihse, Adam. 2015 " 14 Flydde Asylbrand: "Samvetslöst" *Metro*, October. Accessed February 5, 2016. http://www.metro.se/nyheter/14-flydde-asylbrand-samvetslost/Hdzojt!vqFQqgGkMsnQ@dLniM@jQg/

33. Ahola, Teresa. 2015. "Polisen: Han Valde Ut Sina Offer." *Svenska Dagbladet*, October 27. Accessed November 1, 2015. http://www.svd.se/polisen-det-ror-sig-om-ett-hatbrott
Orange, Richard. 2015. "Swedish School Killer Watched Nazi Videos Before Attack." *The Telergaph*, 23 October. Accessed November 1, 2015. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/sweden/11949104/Swedish-school-killer-watched-Nazi-videos-before-attack.html

34. See for example Cabero, Maria-Pia, Jonathan Leman, Alex Bengtsson. 2015. "Skolmördaren Visar Högerextrema Sympatier på Sociala Medier" *EXPO*, October 22. Accessed: December 25, 2015. http://expo.se/2015/skolmordaren-visar-hogerextrema-sympatier-pa-sociala-medier_6954.html
Poohl, Daniel. 2015. "Ensamvargarna Lever inte i ett Vakuum." *EXPO*, October 25. Accessed: December 25, 2015. http://expo.se/2015/ensamvargarna-lever-inte-i-ett-vakuum_6959.html

35. Diskrimineringsombudsmannen. 2014. *Forskning om Diskriminering av Muslimer i Sverige*: En Översikt av Forskning Publicerad Vid Universitet och Högskolor i Sverige Sedan år 2003. Stockholm: Oxford Research AB.

36. Agerström, Jens, Rickard Carlsson, Dan-Olof Rooth. 2007. *Etnicitet och Övervikt: Implicita Arbetsrelaterade Fördomar i Sverige*. 2007:19. Uppsala: Institutet för arbetsmarknadspolitisk utvärdering (IFAU).

37. Agerström, Jens, Dan-Olof Rooth. 2009. "Implicit Prejudice and Ethnic Minorities: Arab-Muslims in Sweden." *International Journal of Manpower* 30 (1/2): 43-55.

38. Carlsson, Magnus, Dan-Olof Rooth. 2007. "Evidence of Ethnic Discrimination in the Swedish Labor Market Using Experimental Data." *Labour Economics* 14 (4): 716-29.

as Bursell[39], conducted research on the likelihood of getting called for an interview; jobs were applied for using the same CV, but with different names. The results showed that names that were perceived to be ethnically Swedish were twice as likely to be called for an interview compared to the others, despite identical qualifications. In a later study, the level of experience was increased on CV's with Arabic-sounding names to see if the 'discriminatory factor' could be 'mitigated'. Two years of additional work experience did make a positive impact, but only for female applicants.[40] A similar study[41] used Arabic and Swedish-sounding names; the Arabic-sounding applicants were made to appear particularly competent or charismatic. The replies increased for the Arabic-sounding applicants, but never reached the level of the Swedish-sounding ones.

In general, Swedish Muslims in Cooperation Network Alternative Report (SMCNAR)[42] concludes that figures from the Municipality in Stockholm suggest 'there is an alarming amount of discrimination against Muslims in the labour market' (2013, 29). SMCNAR mentions a case handled by the Equality Ombudsman where a Muslim man's refusal to shake the hands of women was seen as lack of cooperation by the Swedish Unemployment Office, who consequently kicked him out of one of its employment programs. The court ruled in favour of the man in question.[43]

Despite the above studies, the Equality Ombudsman has concluded that contemporary research is in a weak position for producing any concrete evidence of Islamophobia from employers. According to the Equality Ombudsman, research in this area has used methods that could make the employer presume ethnic, cultural or religious affiliation with the applicant.[44] This in turn has made it difficult to distinguish any identifiable Islamophobic element.

In 2015, however, a few cases have been brought to the attention of the Equality Ombudsman. The first concerns the Karolinska Institutet (KI) and their refusal to mitigate their policies concerning hygiene and clothing for one of their Mus-

39. Bursell, Moa. 2007. *What's in a Name? A Field Experiment Test for the Existence of Ethnic Discrimination in the Hiring Process*. Working paper 2007:7. Stockholm: Stockholms University, Linnaeus Center for Integration Studies (SULCIS).

40. Arai, Mahmood, Moa Bursell, and Lena Nekby. 2008. *Between Meritocracy and Ethnic Discrimination: The Gender Difference.* Discussion Paper Series 3467 (4). Bonn: Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA).

41. Agerström, Jens, Fredrik Björklund, Rickard Carlsson, Dan-Olof Rooth. 2012. "Warm and Competent Hassan = Cold and Incompetent Eric: A Harsh Equation of Real-life Hiring Discrimination." *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* 34 (4): 359-66.

42. SMCNAR is a report written in collaboration between Swedish Muslim organizations. 17 Muslim organizations and actors in Sweden financially contributed to the report. The report is a response to the Swedish government's 19th, 20th and 21st periodic report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). It represents the point of view of some of the leading Swedish Muslim organizations concerning racism and Islamophobia in Sweden.

43. Benaouda, Helena, Fatima Doubaki, Elvir Giovic, Omar Mustafa and Ahmed Siraj. 2013. *Swedish Muslims in Cooperation Network Alternative Report*. Stockholm.

44. Diskrimineringsombudsmannen. 2014. *Forskning om Diskriminering av Muslimer i Sverige: En Översikt av Forskning Publicerad Vid Universitet och Högskolor i Sverige Sedan år 2003*. Stockholm: Oxford Research AB.

lim dentistry students. The Equality Ombudsman concluded that the student's requests would not disproportionately infringe upon KI's policies, and that she had been indirectly discriminated against due to her religion; it has now been decided to sue KI.[45] Another case, brought up by media, concerned the first hijab-wearing policewoman in Sweden; she reported that her employer subjected her to harsher treatment and examinations compared to her co-workers. The matter has now been brought to the Equality Ombudsman.[46] Finally, a trainee contract was revoked after the employer found out the trainee was a practicing Muslim. The man was called in to a meeting after he had informed his employer, who had already signed the trainee contract, that he wanted to practice his daily prayers, including the Friday sermon at the mosque, while working. During the meeting, the CEO and one of the managers discussed the difficulties his religious practices would cause, and revoked his employment. The man contacted his union, who are now planning to sue the company for discrimination.[47]

Islamophobia in the Curricula, Textbooks and Other Educational Material

There is little information available about racism and Islamophobia in the Swedish education system and the teaching materials used. EXPO's recent report finds that both school staff and teaching materials are deficient in avoiding discrimination and stereotypes.[48] In an early study, Härenstam[49] contended that the picture of a militaristic Islam which is often depicted in textbooks used for teaching civics and social sciences can create a barrier for students in dealing with intolerance and xenophobia, even though dealing with these phenomena is part of the Swedish curricula and intended learning outcome. EXPO's representative holds that the Swedish schools have failed to fulfil the claim that the Swedish curriculum is a neutral place which forwards critical thinking.[50] This can be compared to the results of the Kittelmann[51] study, in which she discovered a form of secular standpoint that paints religious individuals as 'tricked'

45. Diskriminerings Ombudsmannen. 2015. *Karolinska Institutet- Indirekt Diskriminering*. Case code: ANM 2014/1987. Accessed February 6, 2016. http://www.do.se/lag-och-ratt/diskrimineringsarenden/karolinska-institutet/

46. "eslöjad polis anmäler sin arbetsgivare" 2015. LT, June 8. Accessed February 6, 2016. http://lt.se/nyheter/sodertalje/1.3002166-beslojad-polis-anmaler-sin-arbetsgivare

47. Vene, Elisabeth. 2015. "Arbetsgivaren Nobbade Praktiserande Muslim." *Lag Och Avtal*, August 25. Accessed February 5, 2016. http://www.lag-avtal.se/nyheter/avtal/stamningsansokan/article3925239.ece

48. Vergara, Daniel. 2015. "Hets Mot Muslimer i Terrordådets Kölvatten." *EXPO*, Januay 8. Accessed Februay 4, 2016. http://expo.se/2015/hets-mot-muslimer-i-terrordadets-kolvatten_6756.html

49. Härenstam, Kjell, and Islam in Textbooks (project). 1993. Skolboks-islam: Analys av Bilden av Islam i Läroböcker i Religionskunskap. Gothenburg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis.

50. Ibid. No information could be found that indicates Islamophobia as part of any curricula; rather most research on the topic has focused on the content of the textbooks. In addition, much of the research has focused on the ethnic aspect of the topic, making it difficult at times to disentangle different forms of racism and misrepresentation.

51. Kittelmann Flensner, Karin. 2015. "*Religious education in contemporary pluralistic sweden.*" PhD diss., Gotgenburg: Department of Literature, History of Ideas, and Religion, University of Gothenburg.

or 'unintelligent' in the high schools she studied; a standpoint that, according to Kittelmann, makes it difficult to reach the outcomes of understanding and respect intended for studying religion in school.

Similarly, the Equality Ombudsman's report concludes that studies have found an excluding attitude in which a construction of some groups as the 'other' is reinforced by some of the materials used in Swedish schools (DO 2014). Examples of this can be found in Kamali's[52] research on seven history books used for teaching history and religion in high school. Kamali and Sawyer[53] found that the dichotomy is especially evident between the 'good and civilised West' and the 'different' Islam, and that Islam is at times discussed as a synonym for Muslims as a group or Muslim countries. Otterbeck's (2006) study of books used for teaching religion in high school came to similar conclusions; it was found that authors of schoolbooks submitted many stereotypes about Islam.

The people interviewed for this report held a parallel view to that expressed in the academic research. All interviewees report that Islam is given a negative image and that stereotypes and generalisations are common in schoolbooks. For example, EXPO referred to a book (which has now been taken off the shelves) which had a picture of a 'Muslim' - a woman in a bomb-belt . In addition, Islam is, according to Ibn Rushd, not taught as part of the Swedish landscape, but as something different and 'foreign'. The informant from GHRC argued that there is an absence of the complex history of Islam as a civilisation; instead, the focus is on explanations of Islam which confirm stereotypes. Two of the informants (EXPO and GHRC) also voiced concern over the way these schoolbooks depict Sweden and Swedes - as the epitome and yardstick of 'goodness'. These informants criticised the Eurocentric approach to Sweden's own history where Sweden's relationship to slavery, colonialism and Sweden's minorities take the backseat.

Looking at the classroom, Otterbeck[54] found that Muslim students have felt both offended and bewildered by the depiction of Islam in the schoolbooks. This is a concern brought up by the interviewee from Ibn Rushd, who says that Muslim students sometimes cannot relate to what is being taught about them and their religion. Similarly, during the Human Rights days at the end of 2015, the university lecturer Zahra Bayati was concerned about the feeling of exclusion among university students from minority groups (in particular immigrants) who were studying

52. Kamali, Moursi. 2006. *Den Segregerade Integrationen: Om Social Sammanhållning och dess Hinder*. Rapport av Utredningen om Makt, Integration och Strukturell diskriminering. SOU 2006:73. Stockholm: Fritzes.

53. Sawyer, Lena, and Masoud Kamali, eds. Utbildningens dilemma: demokratiska ideal och andrafierande praxis. Norstedts Juridik AB, 2006.

54. Otterbeck, Jonas, Pieter Bevelander, 2006. *Islamofobi – En Studie av Begreppet, Ungdomars Attityder och Unga Muslimers Utsatthet*. Stockholm: Forum för Levande Historia.

to become educators. Her study refers to earlier studies[55] in which it was pointed out that students from these groups experience exclusion and discrimination. The students believe these experiences are related to their ethnic background and to stereotypical beliefs held of 'them' in society and in their programs. Bayati's own study found similar concerns in teacher education and writes:

> …racialized segregation in society is reconstructed in education, for example in group work or work placements[56]

Despite this, Bayati also highlights that her study:

> …reveals resistance–agents from different ethnic backgrounds who acknowledge the existence of institutional, inequality creating and discriminatory discourses, and fight them.[57]

Bayati's solution is that teacher education must "actively counteract the monocultural and Eurocentric knowledge construction that dominates the system, so as to live up to the democracy and equality-promoting claims of its policy documents." EXPO's representative, whose overall suggestions are similar to Bayati's, stated that teachers need to increase their competence and knowledge about racism and Islamophobia, and that more inclusion is needed in education. On the HR-days in Gothenburg[58] however, Bayati stated that there is a lack of inclusion in the pedagogic departments under her studies, and that there is no mandatory literature or course in the teacher program at Swedish universities that addresses issues of representation and inclusion.[59] Ibn Rushd's representative stated that the above concerns have been raised, but that these matters are still being explained in the same way. It is unclear to whom these concerns were raised or in what way.

Swedish Media and Islam/Muslims

Given the present levels of globalisation, Sweden, like other countries, is not exempt from the impact of foreign events. The civil wars in Syria and Iraq, the on-going ref-

55. Fazlhashemi, Mohammad. 2002. *Möten, Myter och Verkligheter: Studenter med Annan Etnisk Bakgrund Berättar om Möten i den Svenska Universitetsmiljön.* 2002:1. Umeå: Universitetspedagogiskt Centrum, Umeå Universitet. Fridlund, MariAnne. 2010. *Se Människan i Var och en av Oss. En Studie om Likabehandling av Studenter med Annan Etnisk Bakgrund i Högskolan*. Ma diss., Göteborgs Universitet.
Åberg-Bengtsson, Lisbeth. 2005. *Hur Roligt är det att Vara Student? En Undersökning av*
Soltani, Sofie. 2008. *Mötet med det Nya: En Studie om Utländska Lärarstudenter med Tidigare Lärarutbildning från ett annat Land och Deras Upplevelser vid en Svensk Universitet (Bachelorthesis)*. Göteborg: Institutionen för Pedagogik och, Didaktik, Göteborgs Universitet.

56. Bayati, Zahra. 2014. "'Den Andre' i Lärarutbildningen: En Studie om den Rasifierade Svenska Studentens Villkor i globaliseringens tid." PhD diss., Göteborgs Cabero Universitet.

57. Ibid.

58. Kittelmann Flensner, Karin. 2015. "*Religious education in contemporary pluralistic sweden.*" PhD diss., Gotgenburg: Department of Literature, History of Ideas, and Religion, University of Gothenburg.

59. "Ett Mörkt Årtusende eller en Gyllene Tidsålder"- Panel discussion during the annual *Human Rights Days* conference, Gothenburg, November 10, 2015.

ugee crisis, the attacks on Charlie Hebdo and the recent Paris attacks are some of the events most frequently reported. In many ways, these events, directly or indirectly, concern or are related to Islam and/or Muslims. More domestically, issues relating to the burning of mosques, the burning of refugee camps and the school attack in Trollhättan in October 2015 show direct or indirect connections to racism, and especially to Islamophobia. The media reporting on these and similar issues has raised concerns about the way Muslims and Islam are represented in the Swedish media.[60]

Acknowledging a gap in research, the Equality Ombudsman requested a report on how Muslims are depicted and perceived in the Swedish media. The report, released during the winter of 2015, presents some of the most up-to-date information available. In the report a reservation about previous research is expressed in that such research has mostly focused on the representation of 'immigrants'.[61]

Having said this, some information can be drawn from past studies. Research from the past 10 years has generated fairly similar and consistent results. During 2005 Brune aimed to study how minority ethnicities are presented in Swedish media. Examining the major newspapers in Sweden (Dagens Nyheter, Sydsvenska Dagbladet and Aftonbladet)[62] Brune[63] found that Muslims in particular face serious representations as the 'other' and are described with stereotypes often connected to violent behaviour. 2005 was also the year Jyllandposten published its Muhammad-caricatures. In 2007, Fazlhashemi argued that these caricatures were used to create and reinforce a picture of 'us' versus 'them' in which Muslims represent a threat. Graf[64] studied the representation of Radio Islam (a webpage producing, among other content, anti-Semitic material) in other media outlets. Graf[65] found that the media outlets that he studied represented Radio Islam in a way that created an image of Islam and Muslims as a collective negative 'other', rather than isolating these views to the one webpage, Radio Islam.

In general, the Ombudsman's report concludes that the representation of Muslims in Swedish news media reinforces the conclusions of previous studies (national

60. See for example: Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, 2015. *Representationer*, *Stereotype och Nyhetsvärdering*: Rapport från Medieanalys om Representationer av Muslimer i Svenska Nyheter. Rapport 2015:1. Ödeshög: DanagårdLiTHO.
EXPO, Civil Right Defenders. 2015. *Stängda Dörrar* (Report Part of the Project *Alla Människors Rätt- Sveriges Ansvar*). Stockholm: Norra Skåne Offset.

61. Ibid

62. Delin, Mikael. 2015 " Nu Utreder Säpo Hoten på Internet." *Dagens Nyheter*, January 4. Accessed February 4, 2016. http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/nu-utreder-sapo-hoten-pa-internet/

63. Brune, Ylva. 2006. "Den Dagliga Dosen. Diskriminering i Nyheterna och Bladet." In *Mediernas vi och dom: Mediernas Betydelse för den Strukturella Diskrimineringen.,* edited by Leonor Camauër and Stig Arne Nohrstedt. Stockholm: Fritze. SOU 2006:21; 89-122.

64. Graf, Heike. 2009. "How do Mainstream Media Communicate Minority Media? A Difference-theoretical Study on Radio Islam and AYPA-TVR." *Research Reports 2009:1*. Huddinge: Söderströms Högskola.

65. Ibid.

and international). The study concludes that the terms Islam or Muslim are used as a 'group marker'.[66] The study shows that the representation is more nuanced when Muslims are reported on by the Swedish media, however, at times negative stereotypes can still be reinforced. Despite some outlets aiming to steer away from narratives of an essential separation between 'us' and 'them'[67], the Equality Ombudsman finds that such efforts tend to lead to a dichotomy where Muslims are categorised as 'good' or 'bad'. According to the Equality Ombudsman,[68]although this brings a nuance, it simultaneously reinforces the original narrative.

The Ombudsman's study also conducted interviews with news editors; it was found that 'the editors perceive the media image of Muslims as problematic, but still find it difficult to see how to shape more systematic work for change'.[69] Despite this, editors believe in the quality and honesty of the craftsmanship of their profession and that the problem lies rather with the 'mixture of staff in the news rooms and among the sources'.[70]

Islamophobia in the Swedish Justice System: Laws, Regulations, Justice Processes and Actors

There are no current laws or regulations in Sweden that explicitly target Muslims on the basis of being Muslim. However, the Muslim civil society has voiced serious criticism towards the Anti-Terrorism Act (2003) adopted in Sweden.[71] SMCNAR (2013) criticises the 2003 act for being too vague on its definition of terrorism, and also for being too broad in defining conduct that can be charged under the act. Muslim civil society argues that the relationship to anti-Muslim sentiment and the act becomes clearer in its practical application. All those indicted under the act so far have been Muslim, which strengthens Muslim civil society's perception that the act is 'designed' to target Muslims specifically.[72] The report demonstrates that the burden of proof in these cases seems to be substantially lower than under other charges which might lead to jail-time for the defendant. This brings the function and drafting of the law into doubt. The charges under the act, however, remain very few in number; the law

66. Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, 2015. *Representationer, Stereotype och Nyhetsvärdering: Rapport från Medieanalys om Representationer av Muslimer i Svenska Nyheter*. Rapport 2015:1. Ödeshög: DanagårdLiTHO.

67. Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, 2015. *Representationer, Stereotype och Nyhetsvärdering: Rapport från Medieanalys om Representationer av Muslimer i Svenska Nyheter*. Rapport 2015:1. Ödeshög: DanagårdLiTHO.

68. Ibid.

Axner, Marta. 2013. " Religions and Swedish Media: A Study of Religious Actors on Three Newspaper Debate Pages 2001-2011." PhD diss., Uppsala Universitet.

69. Diskriminerings Ombudsmannen. 2015. *Karolinska Institutet- Indirekt Diskriminering*. Case code: ANM 2014/1987. Accessed February 6, 2016. http://www.do.se/lag-och-ratt/diskrimineringsarenden/karolinska-institutet/

70. Ibid.

71. Benaouda, Helena, Fatima Doubaki, Elvir Giovic, Omar Mustafa and Ahmed Siraj. 2013. *Swedish Muslims in Cooperation Network Alternative Report*. Stockholm.

72. Ibid.

has also been criticised for being so vague that it becomes difficult to apply in practice, keeping prosecutions under the act low.[73]

The justice system as an institution has been criticised by other sources as well. BRÅ conducted a study that aimed to identify and map discrimination in the Swedish justice system - Diskriminering i Rättsprocessen;[74] according to this, Muslims are less likely to receive an objective treatment, especially in criminal cases.[75] Informants to the study expressed that there is a tendency to distrust Muslim suspects, especially if they are men. The study found that stereotypes against Muslims are present throughout all instances of the Swedish justice system. BRÅ's report confirmed the results of an earlier study conducted by the Swedish Department of Labour in 2006 which concluded that Muslims in particular face discrimination in the Swedish justice system.[76] In this study, Petterson[77] found that terms such as Muslim 'culture' or 'tradition' were used to explain the conduct or acts of the defendant. During interviews with prosecutors and lawyers Du Rées[78] learned that Islam is seen as a religion with certain tendencies that discriminate against women; they believe that these perceptions can lead to (Muslim) defendants being less objectively treated, especially if facing sexual charges.

Swedish legislation and regulations which are less directly connected to Islam and Muslims have also been highlighted as marginalizing Muslims. For example, both Jews and Muslims have expressed that the current regulations on slaughtering animals in Sweden pose an obstacle to enjoying their rights under international conventions (and obligations due to Sweden's membership in the EU) to perform their religious rituals, including slaughter. The Equality Ombudsman has pointed out that these concerns should be investigated by the Swedish Animal Protection Agency (DO 2005)[79] in order to ensure the legal rights of Jews and Muslims. Circumcision (male and female) has also been debated (Nupponen 2012; Hedner Zetterholm 2012; Ullenhag 2011), and the Swedish Medical Association issued an opinion stating that non-medically motivated circumcision on boys is difficult to reconcile with the child's

73. Bering, Sofia. 2015. "Därför Åtalas så få för Terrorbrott." SVT, November 23. Accessed December 25, 2015. http://www.svt.se/nyheter/inrikes/darfor-atalas-sa-fa-for-terrorbrott

74. Martens, Peter, David Shannon, Nina Törnqvist, and Brottsförebyggande Rådet. 2008. *Diskriminering i Rättsprocessen: Om Missgynnande av Personer med Utländsk Bakgrund*. 2008(4). Stockholm: Brottsförebyggande rådet.

75. Ibid.

76. SOU. 2006. *Är Rättvisan Rättvis? Tio Perspektiv på Diskriminering av Etnisk och Religiösa Minoriteter Inom Rättsystemet. Rapport av Utredningen om Makt, Integration och Strukturell Diskriminering*. 2006:30. Stockholm: Fritzes.

77. Pettersson, Tove. 2006. "Särbehandlas Gärningspersoner med Utländsk Bakgrund Vid Anmälningar om Våldtäkter, Grov Misshandel och Eget Bruk av Narkotika?" In *Är Rättvisan Rättvis? Tio Perspektiv på Diskriminering av Etniska och Religiösa Minoriteter Inom Rättssystemet. Rapport av Utredningen om Makt, Integration och Strukturell Diskriminering, SOU* 2006:30, 111-145. Stockholm: Fritzes.

78. Du Rées, Helena. 2006. "Åklagares och Advokaters Syn på Likabehandling i Domstolen" *In Är Rättvisan Rättvis? Tio Perspektiv på Diskriminering av Etniska och Religiösa Minoriteter Inom Rättssystemet. Rapport av Utredningen om Makt, Integration och Strukturell Diskriminering, SOU* 2006:30. 257-282, Stockholm: Fritzes.

79. Diskrimineringsombudsmannen. 2005. *Remissvar. Djurskyddsmyndighetens Redovisning av Regeringsuppdrag om Religiös Slakt* (dnr Jo2005/1112). Stockholm 2005-09-27.

legal rights to his own body and the UN's Declaration of the Rights of the Child, especially if the child cannot consent to the procedure (Werner and Thunström 2014).

Cyber-Space: Webpages and Initiatives with Islamophobic Content

According to Larsson,[80] internet and social media online have had a hand in spreading and accelerating prejudice towards Islam and Muslims. The Living History Forum, a Swedish government body that works on discrimination, tolerance and human rights, writes that 'perhaps the biggest problem when it comes to spreading anti-Semitism and Islamophobia happens through internet and social media'.[81] According to Larsson,[82] the Islamophobic content found on online pages, such as Wikislam, often presents stereotypes as facts. In another study, Lagerlöf[83] found that the contents among such sites present a picture of a warlike struggle between 'Islam' and 'Sweden'.

Keeping up with the increased trend of blogging, Ekman[84] carried out a discourse analysis on three of Sweden's largest blogs that are seen to have xenophobic or racist contents. According to Ekmen, these blogs often frame racist or xenophobic standpoints as a question of freedom of speech and a critique against religious extremism.

The mapping of anti-Muslim, anti-Islamic sentiment in cyberspace has been less direct, focusing more on racism and xenophobia in general. A good example of this is the site Politism.[85] On December 2014, one of Politism's editors, Margaret Atladottir, published an article warning people of racist and xenophobic sites 'you would not want to accidently share on Facebook'. The following eight sites were listed:

- www.samtiden.nu
- www.d-intl.com
- www.nyheteridag.se
- www.avpixlat.info
- www.realisten.se
- www.exponerat.net
- www.friatider.se
- www.nyatider.nu

80. Larsson, Göran. 2007. "Cyber-Islamophobia? The case of WikiIslam." *Contemporary Islam* 1 (1): 53-67.

81. Löwander, Birgitta, Mirjam Hagström. 2011. *Antisemitism och Islamofobi - Utbredning, Orsaker och Preventivt Arbete*. Forum för Levande Historia: On Behalf of Departement of Labour: A2011/1622/DISK.

82. Larsson, Göran. 2007. "Cyber-Islamophobia? The case of WikiIslam." *Contemporary Islam* 1 (1): 53-67.

83. Lagerlöf, David. 2007. "Intolerans i Cyberrymden och Konsten att Bemöta den. I Integrationsverket" *In Rasism och Främlingsfientlighet i Sverige: Antisemitism, Antiziganism och Islamofobi 2006.* Integrationsverkets rapportserie 2007:03.

84. Ekman, Mattias. 2011. "Online Islamophobia: The Relation Between Elite News Discourse and Increasing Xenophobia in Swedish Blogs." *Internet Consequences on Political Parties and Activism*. Stockholm: Stockholms Universitet.

85.Politism is initiated by, but independent of, one of Sweden's largest newspapers *Aftonbladet*, the umbrella-organization for 14 Swedish unions LO and Swedens largets union Kommunal.

Relevant to this report are Atladottir's remarks about Dispatch International. According to Atladottir, Dispatch International describes itself as being critical towards Islam, however, it is more accurate to described it as racist. Atladottir adds that Fria Tider and Nya Tider might sound 'harmless', but are infused by racism and Islamophobia; she points out that they have been listed as part of the 'radical leftist virtual environment'.[86] Avpixlat, also on Atladottir's list, is perhaps one of the most famous sites in the (Swedish) Islamophobic cyber-space. Avpixlat has been mentioned by all three civil society organisations that took part in this report, being discussed as facilitating the spread of Islamophobia in Swedish society. During the interview, the informant from EXPO referred to Avpixlat as SD's 'megaphone' on the Internet, one which aims to draw people into a polarisation in which Muslims represent a 'threat'.

Overall, the terror attacks of 2015 have been used as a catalyst to spread hate, and as a source of collective blame on Muslims. An example is the spreading of Facebook comments supposedly celebrating the Charlie Hebdo attack by Muslims; these were published by Fria Tider in January. The Avpixlats spokesperson, Mats Dagerling, called for an end of all public Islamic practices in Sweden, saying that the religion is a 'direct threat to' Sweden.[87] Dagerling wonders if the time has come to close all avenues for Muslims to organise themselves, including shutting down mosques and ending any financial aid to Muslim organisations.[88] Facebook and other social media outlets have also been part of spreading Islamophobia. An example is a fake video of Muslims celebrating the attacks in Paris that was spread on social media. The video was in fact Pakistani fans celebrating a victory in cricket.[89]

All three interviewees are of the opinion that there are plenty of sites, blogs and forums on the web which express anti-Muslim sentiments. Some of these, according to EXPO, are less directly connected to Islamophobic actors, but nonetheless express Islamophobic attitudes. The representative from GHRC claimed that many of these virtual outlets are piloting 'research' and 'reports' on Islam and Muslims with Islamophobic connotations.

Overall, the impact of the cyber-space seems to be regarded as serious in Sweden, with political and societal consequences. Already in 2006 Otterbeck and Bevelander remarked that webpages can "coordinate marginalised ideologies and confirm" racist

86. Atladottir, Margaret. 2014. "Rasistiska Sajter Du Inte Vill Råka Dela på Facebook". *Politism*, December 14. Accessed November 1, 2015. http://www.politism.se/story/rasistiska-sajter-du-inte-vill-raka-dela-pa-facebook/#post-20059

87. Vergara, Daniel. 2015. "Hets Mot Muslimer i Terrordådets Kölvatten." *EXPO*, Januay 8. Accessed Februay 4, 2016. http://expo.se/2015/hets-mot-muslimer-i-terrordadets-kolvatten_6756.html

88. Ibid

89. Fagerlund Jerrstedt, Karin. 2015. "Stor ökning av falsk information på nätet." *Sveriges Television*, December 16. Accessed February 5, 2016. http://www.svt.se/articles/falsk-information-sprids-pa-natet/

and Islamophobic worldviews.[90] Despite the fact that the so-called new media clearly have a potential for spreading anti-Muslim, xenophobic and racist opinions, Larsson[91] adds a nuance to the discussion by pointing out that the Internet and digitalisation of information has also given Muslims increased opportunities to express themselves and for people to gain a more informed and nuanced picture of Muslims and Islam.

OBSERVED CIVIL SOCIETY AND POLITICAL ASSESSMENT AND INITIATIVES TO COUNTER ISLAMOPHOBIA IN SWEDEN

There have been both civil society and political initiatives to combat Islamophobia on different societal levels. Reports have been published and conferences held, both within the EU and the OSCE, as well as by NGOs and other active organisations.[92] Some of these efforts have been mapped by the Swedish agency, Forum for Living History, however they represent efforts from 2011 and earlier.[93] In Sweden, many of these are projects have finished, but some are still running. Ibn Rushd, for example, still works diligently to combat Islamophobia. One project run by Ibn Rushd is 'Islam - a natural part of Sweden'[94] while another effort, carried out in cooperation with Sensus,[95] later led to Muslim youth creating a peace movement called 'Swedish Muslims for Peace and Justice'.[96] Another project was 'Toolkit against Islamophobia and Racism'.[97] The aim of this project was to create instruments that could be used to combat Islamophobia and racism; the project eventually led to the virtual portal www.antirasism.info where information about the project can be found.

Slightly more updated information can, to some extent, be extracted from the interviews conducted for this report. All informants are of the opinion that it is important to work to reduce Islamophobia. All three civil society actors have conducted projects, research, classes and seminars with different actors on the topic. Ibn Rushd's informant explained that their most resent project launched an artificial anti-Islamophobia pill in order to use humour to reach people by likening Islamophobia to a headache that can be remedied by taking a painkiller. In connection to the launch, a

90. Bevelander, Pieter, Jonas Otterbeck. 2010. "Young People's Attitudes Towards Muslims in Sweden." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 33 (3): 404-25.

91. Larsson, Göran. 2011. *Muslims and the New Media: Historical and Contemporary Debates.* Farnham: Ashgate.

92. Löwander, Birgitta, Mirjam Hagström. 2011. *Antisemitism och Islamofobi - Utbredning, Orsaker och Preventivt Arbete*. Forum för Levande Historia: On Behalf of Departement of Labour: A2011/1622/DISK.

93. Ibid

94. Swedish title: Islam- en självklar del av Sverige.

95. Sensus is a national educational association in Sweden.

96. Ibid

97. This project was conducted in cooperation with Ibn Rushd, Forum for Equal Rights (in Stockholm), Swedish Muslim Council and Kista Folk High School.

series of seminars that discussed Islamophobia were held. During 2014 GHRC also held a project called 'Gothenburg against Islamophobia'[98] together with Ibn Rushd and Puntland Community Organisation. The project compiled information about Islamophobia and testimonies from those who had experienced or witnessed Islamophobia in order to bring to light how Islamophobic actions affect the victims. The aim was to educate 80 people from various societal institutions by producing and distributing material on how to prevent and combat Islamophobia. Parallel to this, material in various languages containing information about rights and resources for victims of Islamophobia was distributed to Muslim civil society.[99]

The informant from GHRC explained that seminars were held throughout the project. However, the informant expressed concern over some of the seminars, stating that sometimes they could end up feeling like forums where people could express their prejudice rather than as opportunities to gain new insights and knowledge. The informant remembered that actors from the police and the Swedish Migration Agency stood out negatively in this regard. The informant however added that the Centre continuously worked with Islamophobia and at times also brought cases to court.

When the informants were asked about the amount and quality of cooperation between civil society actors, all three initially held that they did feel there is cooperation and that it is working fairly well. EXPO's representative stated that there are many initiatives working around Islamophobia in various ways. However, Ibn Rushd's representative held that the civil society as a whole has yet to be engaged in these questions, and is of the opinion that they have not understood the gravity of these matters, or that they do not quite understand how to approach them. The interviewee from GHRC also made a criticism, saying that the cooperation can hardly be seen as cooperation; actors reach out to each other every now and then, but the cooperation remains shallow and poorly coordinated.

A further criticism, shared by all three interviewees, is that not enough is being done. EXPO's representative sees the existing structures as too little and too late; there needs to be more efforts and resources invested in order for the situation to change. In general, Ibn Rushd is of the opinion that the resources have been weakly distributed, and that the organisations that are closest to the people should get increased support. The representative stressed that there is an overestimation of solutions being able to be produced by experts and institutions in Sweden. According to Ibn Rushd, resources need to be allocated to the Islamic civil society, religious institutions and religious communities. The cry for resources can be seen in Muslim civil society in general, where a collaboration of Muslim organisations in Sweden state that "the government fails to adequately fund the institutions and organisations"

98. Swedish title: Göteborg mot islamofobi.

99. More information about GHRC's project can be found at: http://gbgrc.se/projekt-kampanjer/goteborg-mot-islamofobi/

that work with these matters in their report.[100] Focusing less on resources, the representative from GHRC states that Islamophobia needs to be dealt with in far more concrete terms. According to the Centre's representative, concretizing problems and figuring out solutions, especially for Muslim groups, are important steps to be taken in dealing with Islamophobia in Sweden.

Given this, the reason why such a small amount of actors responded to the request for participation in this report is unclear. It is necessary to consider this point, as it might indicate a lack of interest in the topic, or simply that interest to participate in activities not directly linked to the organisation itself is weak among the actors. It might also indicate that the actors are overworked and understaffed. These, of course, are only some possible causes, and no certain conclusions can be drawn.

In addition to civil society, the Equality Ombudsman has an expressed agenda to combat both Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. The Equality Ombudsman works primarily with accumulating, developing and spreading knowledge and understanding about different forms of discrimination. The Ombudsman also aims to influence different agencies, organisations and decision-makers by increasing their awareness of discrimination, pushing them towards equal rights and opportunities within their respective jurisdictions. Some of this work, often conducted in cooperation with other actors, is done through various activities, such as arranging or participating in debates, conducting or initiating investigations and research and suggesting legislative changes. Furthermore, the Equality Ombudsman can monitor the work of employees, educators and other community actors in order to ensure equal rights and opportunities and to combat discrimination. The Ombudsman also investigates suspected breaches of anti-discrimination laws in Sweden; this can lead to an acknowledgment of fault, recommendations or a decision by the Ombudsman to take the matter to the Swedish courts.[101]

It seems however, that assessments and evaluations of efforts on combating Islamophobia are largely lacking. Evidence of what constitutes good practices, or what efforts have actually contributed in the struggle to eradicate Islamophobia and other forms of discrimination in Sweden is weak.[102] Complaints, as can be seen, exist, but there remains little information on how these are met. STT's report also shows that at times religious communities seem to be lacking awareness of the possible avenues for dealing with or combating hate-crimes.[103]

100. Benaouda, Helena, Fatima Doubaki, Elvir Giovic, Omar Mustafa and Ahmed Siraj. 2013. *Swedish Muslims in Cooperation Network Alternative Report*. Stockholm.

101. More information about the Equality Ombudsman can be found at: http://www.do.se/om-do/vad-gor-do/

102. Löwander, Birgitta, Mirjam Hagström. 2011. *Antisemitism och Islamofobi - Utbredning, Orsaker och Preventivt Arbete*. Forum för Levande Historia: On Behalf of Departement of Labour: A2011/1622/DISK.

103. Larsson, Göran. 2004. Nämnden för Statligt Stöd till Trossamfund, Report.

CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

From this report it can be concluded that Islamophobia in Sweden seems to be present in all areas of society that have been discussed. Despite this, it remains unclear when something can empirically be distinguished as Islamophobia, as opposed to similar related phenomena. This poses serious consequences for understanding the depth and extent of the phenomenon, which in turn can lead to poor conclusions. Although these problems remain relevant, it does not seem to have hindered the acknowledgment that Islamophobia needs to be combated in Sweden. This can be seen from the interviews conducted, as well as from the increased focus on Islamophobia from different public bodies such as the Equality Ombudsman and Forum for Living History.

Despite this increased focus, there seems to be dissatisfaction from civil society actors in Sweden when it comes to the funding, efforts and resources put into combating Islamophobia in the country. This can be seen not only from the interviews, but also from the SMCNAR report. However, whether or not these complaints have empirical support is less evident.

For these reasons, this report will conclude with the following policy recommendations:

Research

- Research, both within and outside academia, needs to be conducted with the clear aim of identifying Islamophobia. For this to be well executed, conceptual and theoretical starting points need to be clarified.
- Methodological tools with the above aim in mind need to be developed.

Public administration and policies

- Increased internal understanding of Islamophobia within different public bodies and agencies, especially within the justice system and the police, but also on a national level, needs to be achieved. Continuous and constant efforts to educate public authorities on all levels must be conducted with the aim of combating structural discrimination.
- Resources towards research on, and efforts and work towards combating, Islamophobia should be increased.
- Efforts and work aiming to combat Islamophobia need to be clearly evaluated.
- Relations to minority groups need to be improved in order to gain trust and also to increase awareness of avenues for such groups to combat all kinds of hate-crimes. Possible language barriers need to be overcome for this to be achieved.
- The relationship with civil society needs to be improved and constantly evaluated through continuous dialogue; there also needs to be an increase in the quality of avenues for complaints to be made by civil society.

Civil Society

Civil society actors are recommended to concretise their internal understanding and approach towards Islamophobia.

It is advisable for cooperation between civil society actors to increase and solidify in order to gain a stronger front when combating Islamophobia.

Civil society actors who are actively working with Islamophobia are recommended to continue with educating both the public and public agencies and authorities, but also to extend these efforts towards other civil society actors who are working to combat discrimination, but are not concretely working on the topic of Islamophobia.

Civil society needs to evaluate the possible avenues for complaint and criticism towards not only state policies, but also discussions of budget and allocation of resources.

Civil society actors are also recommended to exhaust all the possibilities for funding and other available resources in order to make sure they are making their utmost effort to improve their possibilities and working conditions. In addition, serious measures should be taken to make sure existing knowledge and resources are utilised, to avoid having to solve problems that might already have viable solutions.

CHRONOLOGY[104]

Januanry 2015

- Gothenburg Mosque is threatened by a bomb attack[105]
- Mosque in Mariestad is attacked with canned pork and vandalised with graffiti stating 'go home' in Swedish.[106]
- The Swedish Security Service (SÄPO) starts investigation on hate-messages in Cyber-Space following the celebration of attacks on mosques and prayer facilities and the spread of the message 'strike during the Friday prayer to be efficient' on social media[107]
- A fire bomb is thrown at a mosque in in Uppsala[108]
- A juryman in Huddinge calls Muslims 'imbeciles' and wants to forbid Islam following a manifestation in which citizens condemn the attacks on prayer facilities

104. Note that not all these incidents have a confirmed Islamophobic element to them, and many are still under investigation. However, they all demonstrate the landscape of the potential reach of Islamophobia in Sweden.

105. "Moské Attackerades med Fläsk." 2015. *Dagens Nyheter*, January 8. http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/moske-attackerades-med-flask/

106. El-Mochantaf, Christer. 2015 " Moskélokal Attackerad med Fläsk i Mariestad." *Expressen*, January 8. Accessed February 4, 2016. http://www.expressen.se/gt/moskelokal-attackerad-med-flask-i-mariestad/

107. Delin, Mikael. 2015 " Nu Utreder Säpo Hoten på Internet." *Dagens Nyheter*, January 4. Accessed February 4, 2016. http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/nu-utreder-sapo-hoten-pa-internet/

108. Ljunggren, Petter and Mikael Funke. 2014. Stor ökning av moskéattacker 2014. SVT December 29. Accessed November 1, 2015. http://www.svt.se/ug/stor-okning-av-moskeattacker-2014

and demand more security[109]

- A mosque in Järva is sent mail containing pornographic images[110]

February

- The imam of Stockholm mosque and his family face death threats and white powder is sent to the mosque

March

- Asylum housing for refugee children is set on fire in Kolbäck. The reason for fire is unknown.[111]

April

- A general practitioner refused to treat a patient who did not want to shake hands due to her Islamic faith. The health centre is being sued for discrimination[112]

May

- A Muslim employee at one of Lunds public health centres has allegedly been harassed due to his faith and comments mentioning terrorism and Daesh/ISIL are made. The Equality Ombudsman requests that the municipality of Lund make a statement regarding this.[113]
- Gävle mosque receives a phone call threatening that 'God's wrath will be upon you on Friday'.[114]

June

- Sweden's first hijab-wearing policewoman issues a complaint to the Equality Ombudsman that she faces discrimination and harsher examinations than her peers from her employer.[115]

109. Johansson, Henrik. 2015. "SD-politiker efter moskébrand – muslimer är kretiner och islam ska förbjudas." *Inte Rasist Men*, January 3. Accessed February 4, 2016. https://www.interasistmen.se/granskning/sd-politiker-efter-moskebrand-muslimer-ar-kretiner-och-islam-ska-forbjudas/

110. Edström, Johanna. 2015 " Moskéer Hotade med Porrbrev" *Mitt I*, February 2. Accessed February 4, 2015. http://gamla.mitti.se/moskeer-hotade-med-porrbrev/

111. Even though it is impossible to state the extent to which attacks on asylum housing are acts of Islamophobia or 'just' general xenophobia, it is common knowledge that the majority of asylum seekers in Sweden during the last years have come from countries dominated by Islamic/Muslim cultural traditions. "Nya Asylbränder – Polisen Utreder 40-tal Incidenter" 2015. *Svenska Dagbladet*, December 20. Accessed February 4, 2016. http://www.svd.se/over-40-asylboenden-har-brunnit

112. Agerberg, Miki. 2015. "Läkare diskriminerade patient". *Läkartidningen*, April 8. Accessed February 5, 2016. http://www.lakartidningen.se/Aktuellt/Nyheter/2015/04/Lakare-diskriminerade-muslimsk-patient/

113. Svensson, G Mats. 2015. "Mulsim Trakassrad inom Lundavården. *Skånska Dagbladet*, May 9. Accessed February 5, 2016. http://www.skd.se/2015/05/09/muslim-trakasserad-inom-lundavarden/

114. Åhman, Emma. 2015. "Hot mot Gävle Moské." *Gefle Dagblad*, November 18. Accessed February 5, 2016. http://www.gd.se/gastrikland/gavle/hot-mot-gavle-moske

115. "eslöjad polis anmäler sin arbetsgivare" 2015. LT, June 8. Accessed February 6, 2016. http://lt.se/nyheter/sodertalje/1.3002166-beslojad-polis-anmaler-sin-arbetsgivare

- A balcony is set on fire in an asylum housing in Vilhelmina and the asylum's bus has its tires slashed
- Two firebombs are thrown at a planned asylum housing in Filipstad

July

- Suspected arson on asylum housing in Bengtsfors[116]

August

- An employer revokes a signed trainee contract after the trainee asks to be allowed to perform his daily prayers and attend the mosque on Friday as prescribed by his Islamic faith. His union is now suing the employer for discrimination on religious grounds.
- Crosses are placed in front of an asylum housing in Malung and set on fire[117]
  Suspected arson on housing for refugee children in Värnamo[118]

September

- The Swedish fashion chains H&M and Åhléns feature hijab-wearing women in their newest campaigns which creates debate regarding the hijab on ads specifically, and the hijab more generally.[119]
- Suspected arson at a camp ground which is partly used as refugee camp in Stenungsund

October

- Sweden's largest live debate program, SVT Debatt, features a debate about whether women in hijab should be allowed on the ads of fashion giants[120]
- Gina Dirawi, a host on SVT complains about SVT Debatt, arguing that the topic of allowing women in hijab on ads itself is ignorant and discriminating.[121]
- The Swedish Member of Parliament, Gulan Avic, from the Liberal Party (Folkpartiet) argues that the hijab should not be normalised, and that H&M and Åhléns should refrain from using hijab in their campaigns. Avic holds that the hijab is being used as a tool to subordinate women and that mandating the hijab is one of Islamists' global goals.[122]

116. Tuvhag, Emmylou. 2014. "Svårare för SD att Förneka Rasismen." *Svenska Dagbladet*, August 2. Accessed December 25, 2015. http://www.svd.se/svarare-for-sd-att-forneka-rasismen

117. Tuvhag, Emmylou. 2014. "Svårare för SD att Förneka Rasismen." *Svenska Dagbladet*, August 2. Accessed December 25, 2015. http://www.svd.se/svarare-for-sd-att-forneka-rasismen

118. Ibid

119. Canoilas, Viviana. 2015. "Gina Dirawis Kritik mot SVT: Diskriminerande." *Expressen*, October 3. Accessed February 5 2016. http://www.expressen.se/noje/gina-dirawis-kritik-mot-svt-diskriminerande/

120. Ibid

121. Ibid

122. Avci, Gulan. 2015. "Fel att se Slöjan som Vilket Plagg som Helst." *Aftonbladet*, October 8. Accessed February 6, 2015. http://www.aftonbladet.se/debatt/debattamnen/samhalle/article21548120.ab

- Sverige Demokraterna, a right-wing populist party, publishes a list of housing planned to be used as asylum residences in the future, encouraging people to issue complaints to their town building office.[123]
- Anton Lundin Petterson attacked Kronan School in Trollhättan, Sweden, with a sword, killing two people. The police confirmed Pettersson was motivated by racism and had chosen the school as his target due to its location in a neighborhood with a high immigrant population.[124]
- A planned asylum housing in Upplands Väsby is vandalised[125]
- A former school, planned as asylum housing, in Danderyd, is set on fire[126]
- Planned asylum housing is set on fire in Eskilstuna[127]
- Asylum housing in Munkedal is set on fire[128]
- Suspected arson on housing for refugee children in Lund[129]

November

- The Sweden Democrats party leader, Jimmie Åkesson, calls for the monitoring and mapping of (all) Muslim opinions.[130]
- Fliers discouraging refugees to make their way to Sweden are found on the Greek island of Lesbos. The Sweden Democrats officially confirm that the party wrote the fliers (Helmersson 2015)
- Asylum housing in Boden is set on fire[131]
- Attempted arson on planned asylum housing in Forshaga[132]
- Asylum housing in Tranås is vandalised[133]
- A hand grenade is thrown at planned asylum housing in Kalmar[134]

123. Linde Joel, Aron Andersson. 2015. "Här Sprider SD Adresser till Planerade Flyktingboenden."*Metro*, October 23. Accessed February 4. http://www.metro.se/nyheter/har-sprider-sd-adresser-till-planerade-flyktingboenden/EVHojw!bwEhkU6On6f62/

124. Ahola, Teresa. 2015. "Polisen: Han Valde Ut Sina Offer." *Svenska Dagbladet*, October 27. Accessed November 1, 2015. http://www.svd.se/polisen-det-ror-sig-om-ett-hatbrott
Orange, Richard. 2015. "Swedish School Killer Watched Nazi Videos Before Attack." *The Telergaph*, 23 October. Accessed November 1, 2015. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/sweden/11949104/Swedish-school-killer-watched-Nazi-videos-before-attack.html

125. Ibid

126. Ahola, Teresa. 2015. "Polisen: Han Valde Ut Sina Offer." *Svenska Dagbladet*, October 27. Accessed November 1, 2015. http://www.svd.se/polisen-det-ror-sig-om-ett-hatbrott

127. Ibid

128. Ibid

129. Ibid

130. Brandel, Tobias. "Åkesson Vill Kartlägga Svenska Muslimers Åsikter." *Svenska Dagbladet*, November 26. Accessed February 6, 2016 http://www.svd.se/jimmie-akesson-vill-kartlagga-svenska-muslimers-asikter

131. Brandel, Tobias. "Åkesson Vill Kartlägga Svenska Muslimers Åsikter." *Svenska Dagbladet*, November 26. Accessed February 6, 2016 http://www.svd.se/jimmie-akesson-vill-kartlagga-svenska-muslimers-asikter

132. Ibid

133. Ibid

134. Ibid

December

- Housing for refugee children in Uppsala is burned to the ground[135]
- Housing for refugee children in Södertälje is completely vandalised[136]
- Suspected arson on housing for refugee children in Götene[137]

January 2016

- Fire in Borås Mosque- unclear if arson or not[138]

REFERENCES

Agerberg, Miki. 2015. "Läkare diskriminerade patient". Läkartidningen, April 8. Accessed February 5, 2016. http://www.lakartidningen.se/Aktuellt/Nyheter/2015/04/Lakare-diskriminerade-muslimsk-patient/

Agerström, Jens, Rickard Carlsson, Dan-Olof Rooth. 2007. Etnicitet och Övervikt: Implicita Arbetsrelaterade Fördomar i Sverige. 2007:19. Uppsala: Institutet för arbetsmarknadspolitisk utvärdering (IFAU).

Agerström, Jens, Dan-Olof Rooth. 2009. "Implicit Prejudice and Ethnic Minorities: Arab-Muslims in Sweden." International Journal of Manpower 30 (1/2): 43-55.

Agerström, Jens, Fredrik Björklund, Rickard Carlsson, Dan-Olof Rooth. 2012. "Warm and Competent Hassan = Cold and Incompetent Eric: A Harsh Equation of Real-life Hiring Discrimination." Basic and Applied Social Psychology 34 (4): 359-66.

Ahola, Teresa. 2015. "Polisen: Han Valde Ut Sina Offer." Svenska Dagbladet, October 27. Accessed November 1, 2015. http://www.svd.se/polisen-det-ror-sig-om-ett-hatbrott

Arai, Mahmood, Moa Bursell, and Lena Nekby. 2008. Between Meritocracy and Ethnic Discrimination: The Gender Difference. Discussion Paper Series 3467 (4). Bonn: Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA).

Atladottir, Margaret. 2014. "Rasistiska Sajter Du Inte Vill Råka Dela på Facebook". Politism, December 14. Accessed November 1, 2015. http://www.politism.se/story/rasistiska-sajter-du-inte-vill-raka-dela-pa-facebook/#post-20059

Axner, Marta. 2013. " Religions and Swedish Media: A Study of Religious Actors on Three Newspaper Debate Pages 2001-2011." PhD diss., Uppsala Universitet.

Avci, Gulan. 2015. "Fel att se Slöjan som Vilket Plagg som Helst." Aftonbladet, October 8. Accessed February 6, 2015. http://www.aftonbladet.se/debatt/debattamnen/samhalle/article21548120.ab

135. "Nya Asylbränder – Polisen Utreder 40-tal Incidenter" 2015. *Svenska Dagbladet*, December 20. Accessed February 4, 2016. http://www.svd.se/over-40-asylboenden-har-brunnit

136. Ibid

137. Ibid

138. Dahlén Persson, Maya. 2016. "Moské Satt i Brand." *Expressen*, January1. Accessed February 6, 2016. http://www.expressen.se/gt/moske-satt-i-brand/

Bayati, Zahra. 2014. "'Den Andre' i Lärarutbildningen: En Studie om den Rasifierade Svenska Studentens Villkor i globaliseringens tid." PhD diss., Göteborgs Universitet.

Benaouda, Helena, Fatima Doubaki, Elvir Giovic, Omar Mustafa and Ahmed Siraj. 2013. Swedish Muslims in Cooperation Network Alternative Report. Stockholm.

Bering, Sofia. 2015. "Därför Åtalas så få för Terrorbrott." SVT, November 23. Accessed December 25, 2015. http://www.svt.se/nyheter/inrikes/darfor-atalas-sa-fa-for-terrorbrott

"eslöjad polis anmäler sin arbetsgivare" 2015. LT, June 8. Accessed February 6, 2016. http://lt.se/nyheter/sodertalje/1.3002166-beslojad-polis-anmaler-sin-arbetsgivare

Bevelander, Pieter, Jonas Otterbeck. 2010. "Young People's Attitudes Towards Muslims in Sweden." Ethnic and Racial Studies 33 (3): 404-25.

"Bombhot mot Göteborgs." 2015. Dagens Nyhter, January 9. Accessed February 4, 2016. http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/bombhot-mot-goteborgs-moske/

Borell, Klas. 2012. Islamofobiska Fördomar och Hatbrott: En Kunskapsöversikt. No. 1. Stockholm: Nämnden för Statligt Stöd till Trossamfund (SST).

"Brandbomb Kastad mot Moské i Uppsala." 2015. Sveriges Television, January 2. Accessed February 5 2016. http://www.svt.se/nyheter/inrikes/brandbomb-kastad-mot-moske-i-uppsala

Brandel, Tobias. "Åkesson Vill Kartlägga Svenska Muslimers Åsikter." Svenska Dagbladet, November 26. Accessed February 6, 2016 http://www.svd.se/jimmie-akesson-vill-kartlagga-svenska-muslimers-asikter

Brottsförebyggande Rådet 2014. Hatbrott 2014. Statistik Över Polisanmälningar med Identifierade Hatbrottsmotiv. Accessed November 25, 2015. http://www.bra.se/bra/brott-och-statistik/statistik/hatbrott.html

Brune, Ylva. 2006. "Den Dagliga Dosen. Diskriminering i Nyheterna och Bladet." In Mediernas vi och dom: Mediernas Betydelse för den Strukturella Diskrimineringen., edited by Leonor Camauër and Stig Arne Nohrstedt. Stockholm: Fritze. SOU 2006:21; 89-122.

Bursell, Moa. 2007. What's in a Name? A Field Experiment Test for the Existence of Ethnic Discrimination in the Hiring Process. Working paper 2007:7. Stockholm: Stockholms University, Linnaeus Center for Integration Studies (SULCIS).

Cabero, Maria-Pia, Jonathan Leman, Alex Bengtsson. 2015. "Skolmördaren Visar Högerextrema Sympatier på Sociala Medier" EXPO, October 22. Accessed: December 25, 2015.

http://expo.se/2015/skolmordaren-visar-hogerextrema-sympatier-pa-sociala-medier_6954.html

Canoilas, Viviana. 2015. "Gina Dirawis Kritik mot SVT: Diskriminerande." Expressen, October 3. Accessed February 5 2016. http://www.expressen.se/noje/gina-dirawis-kritik-mot-svt-diskriminerande/

Carlsson, Magnus, Dan-Olof Rooth. 2007. “Evidence of Ethnic Discrimination in the Swedish Labor Market Using Experimental Data.” Labour Economics 14 (4): 716-29.

Dahlén Persson, Maya. 2016. ”Moské Satt i Brand.” Expressen, January1. Accessed February 6, 2016. http://www.expressen.se/gt/moske-satt-i-brand/

Delin, Mikael. 2015 ” Nu Utreder Säpo Hoten på Internet.” Dagens Nyheter, January 4. Accessed February 4, 2016. http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/nu-utreder-sapo-hoten-pa-internet/

Diskrimineringsombudsmannen. 2005. Remissvar. Djurskyddsmyndighetens

Redovisning av Regeringsuppdrag om Religiös Slakt (dnr Jo2005/1112). Stockholm 2005-09-27.

Diskrimineringsombudsmannen. 2014. Forskning om Diskriminering av Muslimer i Sverige: En Översikt av Forskning Publicerad Vid Universitet och Högskolor i Sverige Sedan år 2003. Stockholm: Oxford Research AB.

Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, 2015. Representationer, Stereotype och Nyhetsvärdering: Rapport från Medieanalys om Representationer av Muslimer i Svenska Nyheter. Rapport 2015:1. Ödeshög: DanagårdLiTHO.

Diskriminerings Ombudsmannen. 2015. Karolinska Institutet- Indirekt Diskriminering. Case code: ANM 2014/1987. Accessed February 6, 2016. http://www.do.se/lag-och-ratt/diskrimineringsarenden/karolinska-institutet/

Du Rées, Helena. 2006. ”Åklagares och Advokaters Syn på Likabehandling i Domstolen” In Är Rättvisan Rättvis? Tio Perspektiv på Diskriminering av Etniska och Religiösa Minoriteter Inom Rättssystemet. Rapport av Utredningen om Makt, Integration och Strukturell Diskriminering, SOU 2006:30. 257-282, Stockholm: Fritzes.

Edström, Johanna. 2015 ” Moskéer Hotade med Porrbrev” Mitt I, February 2. Accessed February 4, 2015. http://gamla.mitti.se/moskeer-hotade-med-porrbrev/

Ekman, Mattias. 2011. ”Online Islamophobia: The Relation Between Elite News Discourse and Increasing Xenophobia in Swedish Blogs.” Internet Consequences on Political Parties and Activism. Stockholm: Stockholms Universitet.

El-Mochantaf, Christer. 2015 ” Moskélokal Attackerad med Fläsk i Mariestad.” Expressen, January 8. Accessed February 4, 2016. http://www.expressen.se/gt/moskelokal-attackerad-med-flask-i-mariestad/

EXPO, Civil Right Defenders. 2015. Stängda Dörrar (Report Part of the Project Alla Människors Rätt- Sveriges Ansvar). Stockholm: Norra Skåne Offset.

EXPO 2013. “Hjälp Oss Påminna om SD:s Historia”. February 2, 2013. Accessed: 1 September, 2015. http://expo.se/2013/hjalp-oss-paminna-om-sds-historia_5655.html

Fagerlund Jerrstedt, Karin. 2015. “Stor ökning av falsk information på nätet.” Sveriges Television, December 16. Accessed February 5, 2016. http://www.svt.se/articles/falsk-information-sprids-pa-natet/

"Fakta: Moskéattacker 2014."Göteborgs Posten, January 1. Accessed November 1, 2015. http://www.gp.se/nyheter/sverige/1.2589194-fakta-moskeattacker-2014

Fazlhashemi, Mohammad. 2002. Möten, Myter och Verkligheter: Studenter med Annan Etnisk Bakgrund Berättar om Möten i den Svenska Universitetsmiljön. 2002:1. Umeå: Universitetspedagogiskt Centrum, Umeå Universitet.

Fazlhashemi, Mohammad. 2007. "Nidteckningar, Antisemitism och Islamofobi." Integrationsverket: Rasism och Främlingsfientlighet i Sverige: Antisemitism, Antiziganism och Islamofobi 2007:30. Integrationsverkets Rapportserie.

Fridlund, MariAnne. 2010. Se Människan i Var och en av Oss. En Studie om Likabehandling av Studenter med Annan Etnisk Bakgrund i Högskolan. Ma diss., Göteborgs Universitet.

Färnbo, Mikael. 2015 "Mest Intensiva Attackvågen mot Asylboende Någonsin". EXPO, December 8. Accessed: December 25. Available at: http://expo.se/2015/mest-intensiva-attackvagen-mot-asylboenden-nagonsin_6986.html

Färnbo, Mikael. 2015. "Uppmaningar till Mordbrand och Terrordåd i SD-Vänliga Facebookgrupper" EXPO, October 21. Accessed: December 25, 2015. http://expo.se/2015/uppmaningar-till-mordbrand-och-terrordad-i-sd-vanliga-facebookgrupper_6953.html

Gardell, Mattias. 2010. Islamofobi. Stockholm: Leopard Förlag.

Graf, Heike. 2009. "How do Mainstream Media Communicate Minority Media? A Difference-theoretical Study on Radio Islam and AYPA-TVR." Research Reports 2009:1. Huddinge: Söderströms Högskola.

Hedner Zetterholm, Karin. 2012. "Omskärelsen Fast Förankrad I Judisk Tradition." Svenska Dagbladet, January 16. Accessed January 9, 2016. http://www.svd.se/omskarelsen-fast-forankrad-i-judisk-tradition

Härenstam, Kjell, and Islam in Textbooks (project). 1993. Skolboks-islam: Analys av Bilden av Islam i Läroböcker i Religionskunskap. Gothenburg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis.

Ihse, Adam. 2015 " 14 Flydde Asylbrand: "Samvetslöst" Metro, October. Accessed February 5, 2016. http://www.metro.se/nyheter/14-flydde-asylbrand-samvetslost/Hdzojt!vqFQqgGkMsnQ@dLniM@jQg/

Johansson, Henrik. 2015. "SD-politiker efter moskébrand – muslimer är kretiner och islam ska förbjudas." Inte Rasist Men, January 3. Accessed February 4, 2016. https://www.interasistmen.se/granskning/sd-politiker-efter-moskebrand-muslimer-ar-kretiner-och-islam-ska-forbjudas/

Kamali, Moursi. 2006. Den Segregerade Integrationen: Om Social Sammanhållning och dess Hinder. Rapport av Utredningen om Makt, Integration och Strukturell diskriminering. SOU 2006:73. Stockholm: Fritzes.

Kamali, Moursi. 2006. Utbildningens Dilemma: Demokratiska Ideal och Andrafierande Praxis. SOU 2006:40. Stockholm: Fritzes.

Kerstin, Werner, Malena Thunströ. 2014. Rikshandboken Barnhälsovård- Omskärelse av Pojkar. Official Online Document. Accessed: January 9, 2015. http://www.rikshandboken-bhv.se/Texter/Omskarelse---konsstympning/Omskarelse-av-pojkar/

Kittelmann Flensner, Karin. 2015. "Religious education in contemporary pluralistic sweden." PhD diss., Gotgenburg: Department of Literature, History of Ideas, and Religion, University of Gothenburg.

Lagerlöf, David. 2007. "Intolerans i Cyberrymden och Konsten att Bemöta den. I Integrationsverket" In Rasism och Främlingsfientlighet i Sverige: Antisemitism, Antiziganism och Islamofobi 2006. Integrationsverkets rapportserie 2007:03.

Larsson, Göran. 2006. Muslimerna Kommer! Tankar om Islamofobi. Göteborg: Makadam förlag.

Larsson, Göran, Åke Sander. 2007. Islam and Muslims in Sweden. Integration or Fragmentation? A Contextual Study. Berlin & Geneva: Lit–Verlag.

Larsson, Göran. 2007. "Cyber-Islamophobia? The case of WikiIslam." Contemporary Islam 1 (1): 53-67.

Larsson, Göran. 2011. Muslims and the New Media: Historical and Contemporary Debates. Farnham: Ashgate.

Larsson, Göran, Åke Sander. 2015. "An Urgent Need to Consider How to Define Islamophobia." Bulletin for the Study of Religion 44 (1): 13-7.

Larsson Göran, Simon Stjernholm. "Islamophobia in Sweden: Contrasting Images from Muslim Advocacy Groups and Official Hate Crime Statistics". Working Paper, Gothenburg University 2016.

Lennander, Fredrik. 2015. "Moské Attackeras på Nyårsnatten." Expressen, January 1. Accessed February 4, 2015. http://www.expressen.se/nyheter/moske-attackerades-pa-nyarsnatten/

Linde Joel, Aron Andersson. 2015. "Här Sprider SD Adresser till Planerade Flyktingboenden." Metro, October 23. Accessed February 4. http://www.metro.se/nyheter/har-sprider-sd-adresser-till-planerade-flyktingboenden/EVHojw!bwEhkU6On6f62/

Lindström, Nils. 2015. Grafik: Bränder på asylboenden i år. Sveriges Radio, October 20. Accessed November 1, 2015. http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=83&artikel=6283376

Linnea, Carlén. 2015. "De Protesterar mot H&M och Åhléns Kampanjer med Kvinnor i Slöja." Metro, October 12. Accessed February 6, 2016. http://www.metro.se/nyheter/de-protesterar-mot-hm-och-ahlens-kampanjer-med-kvinnor-i-sloja/EVHojl!OvFZ8hGslwLXo/

Ljunggren, Petter and Mikael Funke. 2014. Stor ökning av moskéattacker 2014. SVT December 29. Accessed November 1, 2015. http://www.svt.se/ug/stor-okning-av-moske-attacker-2014

Löwander, Birgitta, Mirjam Hagström. 2011. Antisemitism och Islamofobi - Utbredning, Orsaker och Preventivt Arbete. Forum för Levande Historia: On Behalf of Departement of Labour: A2011/1622/DISK.

Martens, Peter, David Shannon, Nina Törnqvist, and Brottsförebyggande Rådet. 2008. Diskriminering i Rättsprocessen: Om Missgynnande av Personer med Utländsk Bakgrund. 2008(4). Stockholm: Brottsförebyggande rådet.

Mella, Orlando, Freshteh Ahmadi, Irving Palm. 2013. Mångfaldsbarometern. Gävle: Gävle University Press.

Mella, Orlando and Irving Palm. 2012. Mångfaldsbarometern. Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, Departement of Sociology.

Mella, Orlando, Freshteh Ahmadi, Irving Palm. 2013. Mångfaldsbarometern. Gävle: Gävle University Press.

"Moské Attackerades med Fläsk." 2015. Dagens Nyheter, January 8. http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/moske-attackerades-med-flask/

Mulinari, Diana, Anders Neergaard. 2014. "We are Sweden Democrats Because We Care for Others: Exploring Racisms in the Swedish Extreme Right." European Journal of Women's Studies 21 (1): 43-56.

Nupponen, Jonna. 2012. "Omskärelse av Pojkar- Uppfostran eller Misshandel." YLE, October 24. Accessed January 9, 2016. http://svenska.yle.fi/artikel/2012/10/24/omskarelse-av-pojkar-uppfostran-eller-misshandel

"Nya Asylbränder – Polisen Utreder 40-tal Incidenter" 2015. Svenska Dagbladet, December 20. Accessed February 4, 2016. http://www.svd.se/over-40-asylboenden-har-brunnit

Otterbeck, Jonas, Pieter Bevelander, 2006. Islamofobi – En Studie av Begreppet, Ungdomars Attityder och Unga Muslimers Utsatthet. Stockholm: Forum för Levande Historia.

Otterbeck, Jonas. 2006. "Vad kan man egentligen begära? Läromedeltexter om Islam." In Religion, Skole og Kulturel Integration i Danmark og Sverige, edited by Andersen, P.B et al. Köpenhamn: Museum Tusculanums Forlag,

Orange, Richard. 2015. "Swedish School Killer Watched Nazi Videos Before Attack." The Telergaph, 23 October. Accessed November 1, 2015. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/sweden/11949104/Swedish-school-killer-watched-Nazi-videos-before-attack.html

Pettersson, Tove. 2006. "Särbehandlas Gärningspersoner med Utländsk Bakgrund Vid Anmälningar om Våldtäkter, Grov Misshandel och Eget Bruk av Narkotika?" In Är Rättvisan Rättvis? Tio Perspektiv på Diskriminering av Etniska och Religiösa Minoriteter

Inom Rättssystemet. Rapport av Utredningen om Makt, Integration och Strukturell Diskriminering, SOU 2006:30, 111-145. Stockholm: Fritzes.

Poohl, Daniel. 2015. ”Ensamvargarna Lever inte i ett Vakuum.” EXPO, October 25. Accessed: December 25, 2015. http://expo.se/2015/ensamvargarna-lever-inte-i-ett-vakuum_6959.html

Salö, Freja. 2015. “Imamen Vid Stockholms Moské Hotad till Livet.” Sveriges Television, February 8. Accessed February 5, 2016. http://www.svt.se/nyheter/inrikes/vitt-pulver-skickat-till-stockholms-moske

Sarnecki, Jerzy, and Sweden. 2006. ” Strukturell Diskriminering i Rättsväsendet på Grund av Etnisk och Religiös Tillhörighet. En Introduktion och Sammanfattning.” In Är Rättvisan Rättvis? Tio Perspektiv på Diskriminering av Etniska och Religiösa Minoriteter Inom Rättssystemet. Rapport av Utredningen om Makt, Integration och Strukturell Diskriminering, SOU 2006:30, 9-37. Stockholm: Fritzes.

Soltani, Sofie. 2008. Mötet med det Nya: En Studie om Utländska Lärarstudenter med Tidigare Lärarutbildning från ett annat Land och Deras Upplevelser vid en Svensk Universitet (Bachelorthesis). Göteborg: Institutionen för Pedagogik och

Didaktik, Göteborgs Universitet.

SOU. 2006. Är Rättvisan Rättvis? Tio Perspektiv på Diskriminering av Etnisk och Religiösa Minoriteter Inom Rättsystemet. Rapport av Utredningen om Makt, Integration och Strukturell Diskriminering. 2006:30. Stockholm: Fritzes.

Svensson, G Mats. 2015. ”Mulsim Trakassrad inom Lundavården. Skånska Dagbladet, May 9. Accessed February 5, 2016. http://www.skd.se/2015/05/09/muslim-trakasserad-inom-lundavarden/

Tuvhag, Emmylou. 2014. ”Svårare för SD att Förneka Rasismen.” Svenska Dagbladet, August 2. Accessed December 25, 2015. http://www.svd.se/svarare-for-sd-att-forneka-rasismen

Ullenhag, Erik. 2011. “Därför Bör Manlig Omskärelse inte Förbjudas.” Dagens Nyheter, November 18. Accessed January 9, 2016. http://www.dn.se/debatt/darfor-bor-manlig-omskarelse-inte-forbjudas/

Vene, Elisabeth. 2015. ”Arbetsgivaren Nobbade Praktiserande Muslim.” Lag Och Avtal, August 25. Accessed February 5, 2016. http://www.lag-avtal.se/nyheter/avtal/stamning-sansokan/article3925239.ece

Vergara, Daniel. 2012. ”Åkesson Tonar Ner Rasismen i Partiet.” EXPO, June 1. Accessed December 25, 2015. http://expo.se/2012/akesson-tonar-ner-splittring-och-rasism-i-partiet_5175.html

Vergara, Daniel. 2015. “Hets Mot Muslimer i Terrordådets Kölvatten.” EXPO, Januay 8. Accessed Februay 4, 2016. http://expo.se/2015/hets-mot-muslimer-i-terrordadets-kolvatten_6756.html

Westergren, Andreas. 2010. ”Sd: Islam Måste Bekämpas.” Smålandsposten, September 9. Accessed December 1, 2015. http://www.smp.se/valet/sd-islam-maste-bekampas/

Åberg-Bengtsson, Lisbeth. 2005. Hur Roligt är det att Vara Student? En Undersökning av Studiemiljö Vid Göteborgs Universitet (STUG-projekt 2005:2). Göteborg: Acta

Universitas Gothoburgensis.

Åhman, Emma. 2015. “Hot mot Gävle Moské.” Gefle Dagblad, November 18. Accessed February 5, 2016. http://www.gd.se/gastrikland/gavle/hot-mot-gavle-moske

Åkesson, Jimmy. 2009. “Muslimer är Vårt Största Utländska Hot.” Aftonbladet, October 19. Accessed December 25, 2015.

http://www.aftonbladet.se/debatt/debattamnen/politik/article12049791.ab

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN SWITZERLAND NATIONAL REPORT 2015

SAIRA BANO ORAKZAI

THE AUTHOR

Saira Bano Orakzai is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice, University of Free States , South Africa. She earned her Ph.D in Peace and Conflict Studies from the University of New England, Australia. She won Australian Award Scholarship for Ph.D. studies 2009-2013 . She is also a Higher Education Commission Visiting Assistant Professor at the Institute of Peace and Conflict studies, University of Peshawar, Pakistan. In 2015, she has been selected as the Centre for Strategic and International Studies International fellow, Washington D.C. She has been Charles Wallace Trust fellow at the Human Rights Consortium 2013-2014 , University of London and Visiting scholar at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, School of Advanced Studies, University of London. In 2010 , she was the Caux Scholar, Peacebuilder forum, Initiative of Faith, Switzerland. She has 11 journal publications and working on two edited volumes on peace and conflict studies. Her latest publication includes 'Islamophobia and the Making of Discourses', Islamophobia Yearbook 2015, Cultural Resources of Peacebuilding for the Conflict in FATA: The Philosophy of Abdul Ghaffar Khan and KhudaiKhidmatgar Movement", Journal of Conflict Engagement and Negotiations, 2015, The Post 2011 Insurgency in Libya and Neo- Liberal Peacebuilding: Sketching the Path to Reconciliation, John Idriss Lahai and Tanya Lyons (ed) African Frontiers: Insurgency, Governance and Peacebuilding in Post-Colonial States, Ashgate publishers, 2015. orakzai.saira@gmail.com

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions. No representation, either expressed or implied, is made of the accuracy of the material in the national reports. The editors of the European Islamophobia Report cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The reader must make his or her own evaluation of the accuracy and appropriateness of the material.

To cite this report: Saira Bano Orakzai (2016): *Islamophobia in Switzerland: National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2015 unprecedented events which focused attention on Islamophobic and xenophobic incidents occurred in Europe. Chief among these was the Charlie Hebdo massacre in Paris in January, 2015, the Copenhagen attacks in February, 2015 and the Paris terror attacks in November, 2015. The subsequent reaction against Muslims after these attacks opened up recurring debates on the place of religion in the public space in Europe. Islamophobia in Switzerland has also emerged as a distinct factor in the social and political space of the country. Events depicting the institutionalization of Islamophobia and structural racism in Switzerland have deepened this phenomenon. The banning of minarets, headscarf, niqab (face veil) and growing fear of Islam in response to violent extremism and terrorism resulted in stigmatising the religion through anti-jihadi strategies; this has resulted in multi-level discrimination against Muslims and their exclusion from Swiss society. Anti-immigration sentiments, anti-Muslim right-wing politics and an anti-Muslim attitude in the tabloid media are also some alarming factors that have emerged. Since July/August 2015, the question of asylum seekers and migration of Muslims to Europe, as a result of recent civil wars in the Middle East, has generally increased the denigration and dehumanization of Muslims. Challenges have been posed at both the regional and international level, generating stereotyping and often leading to violence and the economic marginalization of Muslims. In presenting this annual report on Islamophobia in Switzerland for 2015, the call is for an analysis and policy recommendation that are constructive and result-oriented. The data collection for this study were taken from recent surveys, newspaper reports, journals, Swiss government documents and religion and racism monitors.

INTRODUCTION

The major events and topics which dominated Swiss political debates and media coverage in 2015 are related to questions of global Jihadism and Muslim migration. The first trend that frames Islamophobia debates in Switzerland is terrorism; this has been influenced by the 7 January 2015 massacre at the office of the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in Paris, allegedly by two Algerians; this was followed by another terrorist attack in Copenhagen in February 2015. At the end of the year, on 13 November, 2015, also witnessed terrorism-inspired global Jihadism and violent extremism in Paris; this attack set a negative tone and led to debates on xenophobia and Islamophobia in which fear caused Islam to be depicted as an intolerant and violent-prone religion. These events had an impact in general on Muslims living in Europe, the United States of America and more particularly in Switzerland. The second important trend, which directed the debates on Islamophobia, was the question of asylum seekers and immigrants leaving Syria and Iraq and coming to Europe due to civil wars.

By the end of 2015, these two trends were embedded in the larger prism through which Muslims in Switzerland and Europe were viewed; this prism colours other socio-political issues with prejudice and aversion. The present report examines the impact of these negative tendencies on the Muslim presence in Switzerland and the emerging trends of Swiss Islam in the coming years. Here, constitutional acts, acts of violence and changes in the attitude and perception of the Swiss population towards religious minorities are discussed; at the same time, anti-Islamic actions in the media in 2015 will be focused on. The report also examines reactions by politicians, the targeting of religious symbols and architecture, academic institutions and other organisations that have had an impact on Islamophobia.

Since the London and Madrid terror attacks in 2005, and the Danish cartoon controversy in 2006, the critical discourse on Islam has been shaped on the question of immigration, creating fear as Islam is perceived as a threat to European values and peace. These Islamophobic reactions have taken shape as social, political and constitutional acts in Switzerland. The impact has been most visible in social and economic exclusion, and in matters concerned with Muslim attire and architecture. Through the media attention that is given to international conflicts surrounding Muslims and the involvement of Swiss Muslims in the global jihad launched by Daesh/ISIL in Iraq and the Levant, these reactions have made inroads into public debates. These dynamics were also employed for electoral political leverage to curb migrations. Moreover, the launching of controversy which focused on the divergence of Islamic values from Swiss values and the alleged failure of Muslims to be part of Swiss society also aggravated negative feelings. This became evident in 2009 with the shaping of a new amendment (Article 72 clause 3) to the Swiss constitution which bans the construction of minarets on Swiss mosques.

In 2012, as he retired from office after serving 16 years, the chairman of the Swiss Federal Commission against Racism, George Kreis, commented on Swiss attitudes towards foreigners; he admitted that the attitude towards foreigners had worsened over the years, in particular anti-black racism and, to an extent, Islamophobia. On the request of the Swiss Federal Council, the Swiss Ministry of Federal Justice and Police prepared a controversial report in 2013 entitled 'The Situation of Muslims in Switzerland'. The report found that Muslims are diverse on an ethnic, demographic and sectarian basis and pose no threat to Swiss society. However, their integration is hampered not by religious barriers, but rather due to linguistic and socio-cultural barriers. The report completely downplayed Islamophobia in Swiss society. The Islamic Central Council Switzerland (ICCS) welcomed the report, as it helped reduce fear among the Swiss population about Islam and promote a positive image of Islam in Swiss society.[1]

SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN SWITZERLAND

Demographics and statistics: Switzerland held its last national census in 2012; according to statistical data published in 2015 the population numbers 8.1 million and consists predominantly of French, Italian, German and Roma populations. The country is divided into 26 cantons which control social and economic matters. Muslims make up about 4.9% of the total Swiss population. Almost three-quarters of the Swiss population is Christians: 38.2% is Catholic, 26.9% Protestant, 5.7% of other Christian faiths, 0.3% Jewish and 21.4% has no religious affiliation.[2]

There are between 350,000 and 400,000 Muslims living in Switzerland; 12% of these are Swiss citizens.[3] Most of the Muslim immigrants have an ethnic background from Turkey (16%), the Balkans (43%), North Africa (5%), Sub-Saharan Africa (1%), the Middle East (4%), while 12% are Swiss (naturalized or converts); as a result of an increase in migration and asylum seekers, the Muslim population originates from 30 different countries. The question of religious affiliation is recorded in communal registries in the cantons, but this data are not reliable as only Swiss citizens over the age of 15 can participate. Moreover, as the systematic national census was abandoned in 2000, how religious affiliations are recorded by different communities has been affected.[4]

1. 'Soeren Kern, Switzerland: Multicultural Paradise', 21 March 2013. http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/3721/switzerland-multicultural

2. Statistical Data on Switzerland 2015, Federal Department of Home Affairs, 8. (FDHA).http://issuu.com/sfso/docs/025-1500?e=2969314/11623591

3. 2014 Report on International Religious Freedom Switzerland. www.refworld.org/docid/5621054515.html

4. Mallory Schneuwly Purdie and Andreas Tunger-Zaneti, Switzerland (reporting on the year 2014), 562- 578, in Samim Akagonul, Ahmet Alibasic, Jorgen S. Nielsen, Egdunas Racius. 'Yearbook of Muslims in Europe Volume 7', editor in chief Oliver Scharbrodht (Leiden & Boston: BRILL, 2015).

The public debate about Islam in Switzerland is structured around issues that are not the product of Swiss society, but rather are influenced by the larger European debate on Islam. Islam became an important part of the national discourse in Swiss media and politics due to issues like the ban on minarets, headscarf issues, veil (face cover), Muslim girls being exempted from swimming lessons, the question of Muslim cemeteries and halal food; all of these raised the crucial question of integration in Swiss society. These issues are some of the consequences of the immigration that has taken place since the 1960s, mainly from Muslim countries.

The new wave of immigration in Europe, the result of civil wars in the Middle East, particularly after the crises in Iraq and Syria, and poverty in Africa, has created the greatest influx of refugees in 2015 since the end of World War II. According to the United Nations and International Organisation of Migration (IOM), almost 102,000 immigrants arrived in Europe in 2015. Among these immigrants, half were Syrians, 20% were Afghanis and 7% Iraqis.[5] In July-August 2015, images of the women and children coming from Syria to Europe via the Mediterranean resulted in the acceptance of immigrants on a humanitarian basis; however, after the Paris terror attacks of 13 November, 2015, this influx was halted, due to fear of further terrorists attacks and as part of a strict policy towards migration. Switzerland was no exception to the fear of terror attacks and extremist Islam.

ISLAMOPHOBIA AND IMMIGRATION

A referendum in Switzerland was held on 9 February, 2014; this referendum called for the limitation of migration from other European countries; 50.3% of Swiss voters voted in favour of the proposal, exemplifying a rise in xenophobic tendencies and anti-EU sentiments.[6] The anti-immigration Swiss People's Party (SVP) backed this proposal; the same party also won the election on 15 October, 2015 with 29.4% of vote, giving them total of 65 seats in the lower house of the parliament.[7] Similarly, in 2014 Swiss voters also approved a plan for the automatic deportation of foreigners who had committed serious crimes or benefitted from fraud. In the referendum, 52.9% voters backed the SVP proposal, while 47.1% voters opposed it.

The Swiss parliament approved these laws in March 2015 and called for enacting a measure that gave discretion to judges and allowed for exceptions to those who had been born and who had grown up in Switzerland. The SVP opposed the

5. Number of Migrants Landing in Europe in 2015 passes 100,000, Europe and Central Asia/Itlay, International Organisation of Migration, 6 September 2015. www.iom.int/news/numer-migrants-landing-europe-2015-passes-100000

6. The Vote against Immigration: An Error for Switzerland ?, The Project for Democratic Union, www.democraticunion.eu/2014/04/the-vote-against-immigration/

7. Anti-Immigration party wins Swiss elections in 'slide to the Right', The Telegraph, 19 October 2015. www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews//europe/switzerland/11939953/Anti-immigration-party-wins-Swiss-election-in-slide-to-the-Right-html

discretion given to judges and suggested a more rigid text; this will be put to the vote on 28 February, 2016.[8] The right wing Swiss People's Party is focusing on a ban on asylum seekers from the Middle East, especially from Iraq and Syria as, according to them, such people not only increase the fear of a terror attack, but also create numerous social problems. The representation of foreigners as Muslims in public debates is one of the critical issues that has led to the Islamization of public debates, and there has been a shift of representing foreign workers as Muslims. This shift has been from 'italiophobia' in the 1960s and 1970s to 'islamophobia' in the 1990s and focuses on immigrant workers in the changing discourses on immigration in Switzerland.[9]

Although Switzerland is a not a member of the European Union, such policies have a far-reaching impact on its relations with other European countries. Since August 2015, Switzerland has provided refuge to 29,000 asylum seekers, less than the number that has arrived in the rest of Europe. In July 2015 the representative Point de Suisse survey was conducted by the artists' collective, com& com, in collaboration with the University of Basel. 1,000 respondents from every region of the country responded; 61% percent of the 1,000 people surveyed wanted their country to lead in the humanitarian response to the refugee crisis. Nevertheless, 83.1% responded that they did not want to provide refuge in the country for these people, but would agree to give aid in crisis zones; 44.6 wanted the borders to be temporally closed, as they feared an influx of immigrants would damage the prosperity of the country.[10] In a study conducted by Anaid Lindemann and Jorg Stolz it was observed that from 1970 to 2004 religion had become a new tool for defining otherness in Swiss newspapers; this trend supports the theory of the Islamization of immigrants in discussions and the changing discourse about Muslim immigrants, while the coverage of Muslims remained, on average, moderately negative. [11]

The Swiss arm of PEGIDA (Patriotische Europaer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes or Patriotic Europeans against Islamization of the West) and Stop Islamization of Europe (SIOE) also stand against asylum seekers and immigrants.[12] PEGIDA is an anti-Islam political organization that was established in Germany in 2014; it calls for more restrictive immigration policies against for Muslims. It planned an anti-Islam protest on 15 January, 2015, a date that was soon after the Charlie Hebdo attacks; this

8. Swiss Vote to automatically expel foreign criminals. Sensible or perverse. Le News, 11 February 2016. Lenews.ch/2016/02/11/swiss-vote-to-automatically-expel-foreign-criminals-sensible-or-perverse

9. Marc Helbling. 'Islamophobia in Switzerland: A New Phenomenon or a New Name for Xenophobia?', report prepared for the Annual Conference of the Midwest Political Science Association, 3-6, April 2008.

10. Online Survey Point de Suisse II: Results of Representative Survey, 29 July 2015. www.pointdesuisse.ch/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Ergebnisse_repBefragung_PointdeSuisse-II_ENG.pdf

11. Anaid Lindemann and Jorg Stolz, "Use of Islam in the Definition of Foreign Otherness in Switzerland: A Comparative Analysis of Media Discourses between 1970-2004", 45- 58, in Islamophobia Studies Journal, Volume 2, Issue 1, Spring 2014.

12. 'Swiss police ban protest by German anti-Islam group PEGIDA', The Jerusalem Post, 1 January 2016. www.jpost.com/breaking-News/Swiss-police-ban-protest-by-German-anti-Islam-group-PEGIDA-442478

protest was banned by the Swiss police.[13] At the same time, the head of the Swiss Federal Commission against Racism, Martin Brunschwig Graf, termed such proposed immigration policies as discriminatory as they would lead to an increased atmosphere of hate.[14]

The Human Rights Watch World Report published in 2016 states that the fear of an influx of asylum seekers to Europe, particularly after the crisis in Syria, has led Europe to close its gates. The fear of the politicians and the governments is related to terror attacks; Muslim refugees have become the scapegoats. The polarizing us-versus-them narrative, Islamophobia and the demonizing of refugees has now entered mainstream politics and has led many governments to curtail rights based solely on xenophobic attitudes. The current influx of refugees is the greatest since World War II; almost 1 million asylum seekers have now fled to Europe, with 60 million others being displaced. The result is a public discourse filled with hatred against Muslims; due to the nexus of refugees and terrorism in the media, Muslims now face discrimination.[15]

COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA

The 46th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum held in Davos-Klosters from 20 to 23 January, 2016 had the theme 'Mastering the Fourth Industrial Revolution'; here the subject of terrorism and the migration crisis in Europe was adopted as a subtheme. The talks focused on tackling violent extremism and the question of Daesh/ISIL.[16] The question of armed violence and the impact of globalization has today reframed the foreign policy agenda in Switzerland. The nexus between peace and development has been depicted by Agenda 2030; here one of the seventeen Sustainable Development goals, that is 'peaceful and inclusive societies', was adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on 25 September, 2015.[17] As part of Agenda 2030, Switzerland has had to develop strategies, introducing means that reduce poverty and exclusion in society through parliamentary acts.

In October 2015, the Swiss Federal Council approved a strategy to counter violent extremism and terrorism; this is based on four pillars of prevention, law enforcement, protection and crisis management. This strategy has led to the creation of a new Intelligence Service Act, the Nachrichtendienstgesetz, to counter terrorism activities. Peace

13. Police Ban first PEGIDA demonstration in Switzerland, Mail Online, 22 January 2015, www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/articles-3412399/Police-ban-PEGIDA-demonstration-Switzerland.html

14. Swiss People's party leader calls for ban on more Muslim refugees to Switzerland, Refugee Resettlement Watch,12 January 2015, http://refugeeresettlementwatch.wordpress.com/2015/01/12/swiss-peoples-party-leader-calls-for-ban-on-more-muslim-refugee-to-switzerland/

15. Human Right Watch World Report 2016, 'Twin Threats: How the Politics of Fear and the Crushing of Civil Society Imperil Global Rights', 1-20, www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/world_report_download/wr2016_web.pdf

16. What is the Theme of Davos 2016, www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/11/what-is-the-theme-of-devos-2016

17. Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. http://sustainabledevelopment.un-.org/post2015/transformingoourworld

promoting measures are to be developed to help counter violent extremism and to support counter-terrorism efforts. Such measures include vocational training to ensure that unemployed Muslims have better employment opportunities, as well as youth training through Global Community Engagement in order to promote a sense of community, and bringing Muslims out of the ghettos; the resilience fund in Geneva will also contribute to community-lead initiatives for countering violent extremism.[18]

Earlier in Switzerland, Islamophobia affected more societal-level interactions, being confined to the exclusion of immigrants and issues surrounding their life styles. However, with an increase in Muslim terrorist acts and Muslim extremism in Europe, there has been a shift in Islamophobia; as a result more political issues have emerged and these have had an impact on other aspects of society. The fear of terrorist attacks by Muslims in Switzerland has increased with the emergence of the Daesh/ISIL involvement in the Paris attacks in November 2015; according to the Swiss Federal Intelligence Services (FIS), in 2012 the danger associated with al Qaeda was termed as medium. On 1 January, 2015 al Qaeda was banned with an emergency statute.[19] With the rise of Daesh/ISIL, the risk of extremist terror attack and supporters of jihad has become the top worry; but this is not an abstract concern. The Swiss Federal Department of Defence has noted a higher risk of attack in Switzerland after the attacks on the offices of the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in Paris.[20]

Since October 2015, almost 40 jihad-motivated trips have been recorded, in addition to 70 cases of suspected terrorist activities and twenty cases of criminal investigation. The Swiss response to Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) is mostly concerned with security and surveillance; this is due to the consideration that prevention is an important factor. The aim of this policy is to detect radicalization, to prevent the ghettoization of immigrants, as has happened in France, and to ensure the integration of immigrants in society. Jihad-motivated travel to Syria or Iraq is one of the most serious security issues facing Switzerland; in particular, the return of such people after having been indoctrinated and training by the jihadis, as well as being influenced by the ideologies existing in these conflict zones all pose a serious threat to Swiss security.[21] This has had a serious impact on right-wing politics, leading to the creation of Islamophobic political agendas. According to the report, until now the influence of electronic media on communicative behaviour has had the greatest impact on male individuals who have unsatisfactory future prospects and who are using social networks in Switzerland.[22]

18.Counterterrorism Strategy for Switzerland', 2015, www.news.admin.ch/NSBSubscriber/message/attachments/41397.pdf

19. Switzerland's Security, 26. www.vbs.admin.ch/internet/vbs/en/home/aktuell/150505f.parsys.10960.downloadlist.82638.DownloadFile.tr

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid, 17.

22. Ibid, 22.

The shifting trends of Islamophobia from the imagined fear of Islam and Muslims in European societies to their actual presence and attacks have affected not only international politics, but also the national political landscape of Switzerland. In 2015, the Swiss adopted a so-called 'anti-jihadi strategy' to counter extremism in the wake of the Paris attacks; this strategy included monitoring social media and networks to combat jihadism by preventing propaganda or incitement to violence. In addition, preventive interviews have been conducted, bans have been introduced, inquiry alerts concerned with deportation or revocation of residency and integration measures to prevent the marginalization of Muslims have also been included to counteract radicalization and to prevent jihad-motivated travel, particularly for lone perpetrators or small groups. It was stated that from 2015 until the present time jihad-monitoring has identified 200 users involved in distributing jihadist ideas.[23] Similarly, on December 2015, Geneva, which has a border with France, was put on high terror alert for suspected jihadists who were about to carry out an alleged terrorist attack on Swiss soil.[24]

The head of the Federal Office of Police, Nicolleta Della Vella, while commenting on the Swiss anti-jihadi strategy, stated that radical Muslims and Muslim organizations should be considered separately; the second group represents Muslims, not terrorists. Activities such as suddenly abstaining from alcohol, rejecting values of Swiss society or acting withdrawn from it should be identified as part of the anti-jihadi strategy. For example, in December 2015, police in the city of Zurich arrested two suspects travelling from Turkey for an alleged connection with the banned Islamic militant groups. The head of the Swiss Federal Police Office proposed a travel ban on radicalized youth to prevent jihadi radicalization.[25]

In Switzerland, along with anti-jihadi strategies, counter-radicalisation measures have also been introduced for Muslims. This is particularly important, as such strategies exclusively target Muslim communities. Different cantons have adopted strategies to counter radicalisation. In Geneva, there is work on integration through collaboration; this is a city that has a higher level of Muslim unemployment. In Zurich, a bridge-building role with the Muslim communities has been adopted, while in St-Gallen round-table talks with imams and Muslims groups and different religious groups/representatives have been introduced to counter radical ideas. When the president of An'Nur mosque, Atef Shanoun, was interviewed on Swiss public television (SRF) about the controversy of the

23. Switzerland's Security, www.vbs.admin.ch/internet/vbs/en/home/aktuell/150505f.parsys.10960.downloadlist.82638.DownloadFile.tr

24. Bern Officials launch Geneva terror probe, The Local, 10 December 2015. www.thelocal.ch/2015210/bern-prosecutor-launches-geneva-terror-probe

25. Police chief weighs in on anti-jihadi measures, 12 November 2015, SWI, www.swissinfo.ch/eng/travel-ban-police-chief-weighs-in-on-anti-jihadi-measures/41773548

presence of three radicalized youth, the mosque leader clearly stated that he had no information on this matter this and also argued against the idea that prayers should be termed as hate speech.[26]

ISLAMOPHOBIA AND POLITICS IN SWITZERLAND

Since 9/11, right-wing populism in Europe has focused on a hostile attitude towards Islam; this has gained more popularity and has influenced the political culture. In Switzerland, the constitution stipulates that there is a 46-member Council of States and that there are 200 members in the National Council. The Federal Council or cabinet is a seven-member executive council. The Swiss political system is stable, as since 1959 there have been four parties that have governed; however, in 2008, the Federal Council has been comprised of two members from each of the Scheweizerizerische Volkspartei (SVP), the Free Democratic Party of Switzerland (FDP), the Social Democratic Party of Switzerland (SPS) and the Christian Democrat People's party of Switzerland (Christlichdemokratische Volkspatei der Schweiz - CVP).

The Swiss People's Party (SVP) is a right-wing anti-immigration party; this party won a large share of the vote in the Swiss parliamentary elections held in October 2015. In 2010, Ulrich Schlur of the SVP launched an anti-Islamization manifesto for Switzerland. In 2014, SVP poled over 26% of the votes. Since 1999, SVP has support from 22% of electorate. In 2009 SVP played an important role in the banning of minarets and they base their politics on the themes of Islam and the dangers it poses to Swiss society. The linking of anti-immigration politics with anti-Islamic rhetoric has played an important role in the party's success since 2001.

On 29 November, 2009, Switzerland became the first country in Europe to vote to curb the religious practices of Muslims; 57.5% of people voted in a referendum that favoured a ban on the construction of minarets. Article 72 of the Swiss federal constitution, which is concerned with relations between the state and religion, was amended to include Paragraph 3, which states 'the construction of minarets will be forbidden'. Foreign Architects Switzerland (FAS) challenged the ban on the construction of minarets. The call for the ban was supported by politicians from the Democratic Union of the Centre (SVP/UDC) and the Federal Democratic Union (EDU/UDF), an evangelical conservative party. However, the Roman Catholic Church, the Protestant Church, a majority of the politicians and members of parliament opposed this move.[27]

26. Simon Bradley, 'Steering Swiss Youngsters Away from Radicalization', 17 November 2015 http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/anti-jihadi-strategy_steering-swiss-youngsters-away-from-radicalisation/41783644

27. Patrick Haenni and Stephane Lathion. Eds. 'The Swiss Minaret Ban: Islam in Question. Religioscope Institute, Switzerland', 2011. www.minaret.li/resources/ReligioscopeSwissMinareteBan.pdf

Michael Hermann from the Zurich Sotomo research institute observes an increase in anti-Muslim sentiments being expressed through the Swiss political system.[28] According to a report published by the Vox series of the research institute led by Hans Hirter and Adrian Vatter, it has been revealed that although left-wing/right-wing politics have shaped the vote, the curb on the expansion of Islam and the symbolic issues related to the presence of Islam are an important motive for the voters. This issue became prominent in wake of terror attacks and the rise of Islamist militants in Europe; in Switzerland there are only four mosques that have minarets and these are not used for the call to prayers and pose no real danger to the Swiss architectural landscape.[29] An Amnesty International Report in 2012, 'Choice and Prejudice', termed the constitutional clause that prohibited the building of minarets in Switzerland as discriminatory.[30]

In May 2015, 13 Muslim graves were vandalized in Lausanne, Switzerland at the Bois de Vaux cemetery.[31] In contrast, in 2012, a nationwide ban on burqas (Muslim religious dress for women) was rejected by the Swiss parliament. France was the first country to ban full face veil in public places in 2010, followed by Belgium in 2011. A people's initiative that was supported by the Swiss People's Party supported the ban on the face veil in public places, as they believed that Switzerland is threatened by Islamisation. The left-wing Green party opposed this initiative, as it would discriminate against an entire religious community and only help to spread Islamophobia.

The SVP considers question of minarets, the burqa and niqab as symbols of radical Islam and as representatives of Islamic power. On 25 November, 2015, the parliament in Ticino, the Italian-speaking southern canton, approved the law banning women from wearing dress that covers their faces in pubic and a fine of 10,000 francs was introduced. In 2013 a referendum was held in the canton of Ticino and the ban on face-covering in the public sphere was approved. Two-thirds of the voters supported the initiative in this referendum. Amnesty International termed this a black day for human rights in the canton. However, Ticino's parliament imposed the ban to deal with extremism while Giorgio Ghiringhelli, who drew up the proposal for the ban, said that this ban gives a clear message to Islamic fundamentalists. In July 2014 the European Court for Human Rights

28. John Revill and Andrew Morse,,Calls to Curb Muslim Immigration Rise in Switzerland, The Wall Street Journal 12 January 2015, www.perrylawgroup.com/?p=871.

29. Hirter, Hans; Vatter, Adrian (2009): Analyse der eidgenössischen Abstimmungen vom 29. November 2009. Bern. Online verfügbar unter: http://www.polittrends.ch/abstimmungen/abstimmungsanalysen/vox-analysen/2009-11-29_VoxD.pdf, zuletzt geprüft am 01.05.2010.

30. 'Choice and Prejudice: Discrimination against Muslims in Europe', Amnesty International, 2012, www.amnesty.si/media/uploads/files/eur010012012.pdf

31. 13 Muslim graves were vandalised in Switzerland, Muslim Mirror, 5 May 2015, http://muslimmirror.com/eng/13-muslim-graves-vandalised-in-switzerland/

declared that French ban on full face-covering in public spaces was consistent with the human rights conventions.[32]

ISLAMOPHOBIA: EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND INITIATIVES

Since the 1970s, public debates on immigration have become one of the central issues in the social and political landscape of Europe. According to Salman Sayyid, Islamophobia is understood as the regulating and disciplining of Muslims along the Western horizon.[33] In the 1990s, the debate on immigration included the integration of Muslim immigrants into European society and the adoption of European values. In the post 9/11 period, the debates on immigration were linked to global events; this changed to a fear of Islamisation in Europe and the emergence of right-wing politics, thus increasing xenophobia towards Muslims and their life style in Europe. This had an impact on job-market discrimination against Muslims, particularly due to a fear of Islam and Muslims in societies and had an adverse effect on their employment prospects.

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe observed that compared to other European countries, Swiss Muslims are better off in education and financial status.[34] Swiss society witnessed changes with the rise of immigration from the 1970s; the new immigrants brought their own ways of educating their children, that is, according to Islamic principles. This had impact on the emerging life-style of the immigrants and their children, creating an alternative from that prevalent in Swiss society. In July 2015, Swiss authorities in Zurich refused to give permission to the Al Huda Association for the establishment of an Islamic kindergarten; here they proposed to teach Islamic principles, Arabic and Qur'an to students. The proposal was rejected due to a fear of a radical interpretation of Islam, which was thought to be in opposition to the secular nature of the Swiss education system. In November 2015, Switzerland requested that the Egyptian Ministry of Endowment translate copies of the Qur'an, Muslim rituals and religion for the Muslim youth in Switzerland, in an attempt to prevent young people from following youth extremist or radical ideologies.[35]

A study published by Jacqueline Grigo at the University of Zurich was aimed at studying people who wore religious clothing; it found that such people have difficul-

32. Burka Banned in Ticino, Switzerland, As Muslim women face fine upto £ 6,500, 26 November 2015. http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/11/25/burkas-banned-switzerland-muslim-women_n_8649340.html

33. Salman Sayyid, 'Thinking through Islamophobia,' In Thinking through Islamophobia, ed. S. Sayyid, S. and Abdoolkarim Vakil, 1-4 , New York: Columbia University Press, 15-17.

34. OSCE expert concerned by Swiss Islamophobia, 15 November 2007, www.swissfo.ch/eng/osce-expert-concerned-by-swiss-islamophobia/6251966

35. Switzerland requests translated Islamic books from Egypt, NSNBC International, 29 November 2015. http://nsnbc.me/2015/11/29/switzerland-requests-translated-islamic-books-from-egypt/

ty in finding employment or getting accommodation.[36] Similarly, in January 2016, thirty male baggage handlers at the Geneva international airport were refused airport passes. These employees were Muslims from France, and had no criminal record. Such incidents of discrimination against Muslims became rampant after the January 2015 attacks in Paris due to heightened security concerns in Switzerland.

In Switzerland, certain initiatives and organisations are either promoting or countering Islamophobia. The 'Citizen's Initiative', which was launched during the controversy surrounding minaret construction, has played an important role in forming opinion in Swiss society on the matter of revising the constitution. This group drew an analogy between Islamic law and Swiss law, as well as focusing on the question of Islam invading the nation via minarets. Certain Muslims organisations played an important role in Switzerland in countering Islamophobia and attempting to better integrate Muslims in Swiss society. Chief among these were the Federation of Islamic Organisations in Switzerland (FIDS/FOIS), the Coordination of Islamic Organisations in Switzerland (KIOS), the League of Muslims in Switzerland (LMS), Geneva Islamic Centre and the Turkish Islamic Foundation for Switzerland. However, the Bern-based Islamic organisation, the Islamic Central Council of Switzerland (ICCS), was alleged to have connections with terrorists organizations. Some of its members were arrested on charges of terrorism. Swiss police also opened criminal cases against Islamic council members in December 2015; these have been contested by ICCS members.[37]

MEDIA, CYBERSPACE AND ISLAMOPHOBIA

The Swiss political system has a particular feature of participation by citizens through direct democratic means. The media plays an important role in changing public perceptions in this regard. The Swiss constitution guarantees the freedom of press in Article 17, while Article 93 states the independence of broadcast media; the penal code prohibits racial hatred, discrimination, spreading racist ideology and denying crimes against humanity. The state-owned Swiss Broadcasting Corporation dominates the media market. Since the 1980s, controversial questions relating to Islamism, jihadism and Muslim immigrants have dominated the Swiss media debates and news headlines. There has been an increase in Islamophobic tweets and attacks against foreigners on Facebook, blogs, TV and in posters.[38] There are also Islamophobic

36. When did showing your faith become so controversial, SWI, 26 February 2015. www.swissinfo.ch/eng/signs-of.religon_when-did-showing-your-faith-become-so-controversial-/41292538

37. Swiss investigate top member of largest Islamic organization for jihadist propaganda, DW Made for minds, 19 December 2015. http://www.dw.com/en/swiss-investigate-top-member-of-largest-islamic-organization-for-jihadist-propaganda/a-18929810?maca=en-rss-en-all-1573-rdf

38. Ramon Grosfoguel, The Multiple Faces of Islamophobia, Islamophobia Studies Journal, Vol-1, Issue 1 fall 2012, 9-33. ETTINGER, Patrik, IMHOF, Kurt (2006). "Ethnisierung des Politischen und Problematisierung religiöser Differenz. Schlussbericht", research carried out in the context of NFP 58 Religiongemeinschaften, Staat und Gesellschaft.

statements highlighted by politicians in Switzerland, mainly those from the right-wing Swiss People's party. The Berne regional tribunal found the secretary general of the Swiss People's Party (UDC), Martin Baltisser and his substitute Silvia Bar guilty of racism on 30 April, 2015 for using slogan "Kosovars Stab Swiss".[39]

According to the eighth OIC observatory report on Islamophobia in 2015, the focus of media on the heinous acts of Daesh/ISIL and other extremist groups worldwide has been associated with Islamic values and jurisprudence; the acts of such groups against Western civilians have been used to manipulate the perception of Islam. Such portrayal by the media, due to a 'fear' of Islam, resulted in impression that all religious Muslims were radicals and extremists.[40] Swiss media reported the alleged radicalization of Muslims in the city of Winterthur and Geneva, where mosques are alleged to have been responsible for radicalising the youth, thus increasing the fear of Islam in the region.[41] This fear has increased studies in Muslim radicalisation and extremism, as shown by the study conducted by Miryam Eser Davolio, who headed the study of the radicalisation of young Swiss people for Zurich University of Applied Sciences. She points out that certain areas within the cantons of Geneva and Ticino were more likely to develop radicalization tendencies due to the presence of unemployed Muslim youth in these areas. The university looked at 66 cases recorded between 2001 and July 2015 and found that out of the 66 people, 16 were below the age of 25, while 3 women were found to be involved in radicalization, below the European average of 10%.[42]

In the Freedom of the Press 2015 Report-Switzerland, it was reported that Christopher Blocher, the right-wing politician of SVP planned to invest in Neue Zurcher Zeitung (NZZ), the country's leading newspaper, which plays an important role in influencing the public opinion to right wing policies. In December 2014, another report published by the government expressed concern over the growing concentration of media ownership and lack of independent print media in 26 cantons. [43]

One of the problems with the Swiss anti-jihadi strategy and the media's role is that it does not address Islamophobia. Miryam Eser Dacolio of Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW) said in her study into radicalization of Swiss young people that it is very important to address Islamophobia; the presence of people who are afraid of Muslims and do not approve of them enhances the theory that Muslims are being

39. Swiss People's Party (UDC) found guilty of racism, Le News, 30 April, 2015. http://lenews.ch/2015/04/30/two-swiss-peoples-party-udc-leaders-found-guilty-of-racism/

40. Eight OIC Observatory Report on Islamophobia, May 2014-April 2015, 42nd Council of Foreign Ministers, Kuwait 27-28 May , 2015. www.oic-oci.org/oicv2/uploads/islamophobia/2015/en/reports/8th_Ob_Rep_Islamophobia_Final.pdf

41. Winterthur at centre of Swiss jihadi fighter claims, SWI, 19 November 2015, www.swissinfo.ch/eng/islamic-radicalisation_winterthur-at-centre-of-swiss-jihadi-fighter-claims/41789612

42. Simon Bradley, 'Steering Swiss Youngsters Away from Radicalization', 17 November 2015 http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/anti-jihadi-strategy_steering-swiss-youngsters-away-from-radicalisation/41783644

43. Freedom of the Press-2015-Switzerland, 12 November 2015, http://www.refworld.org/docid/5653134f11.html

stigmatized and humiliated while also facing exclusion in different sections of society. This increases the chances of radicalization by causing polarization within society. Dacolio believes that the internet and social circles are playing a more crucial role in radicalization than the mosques, which act as more preventive organizations where incorrect beliefs are corrected. Rather than closing the door on persons who have been radicalised out of fear, the mosque can be central in counselling such persons.[44]

ISLAMOPHOBIC ACTORS IN SWITZERLAND

In a study conducted by University of Zurich on the problematization of Muslims in public communications, it was discovered that the framework used by the Swiss media has mostly been defined by international wars and conflicts. The London and Madrid bombings in 2005 created a perception of threat by Muslims in Swiss society, creating not only a clash of civilisations, but also a clash of values in public debates; this resulted in the creation of stereotypes. Another important reason for the rise of Islamophobia was its use by SVP leaders as a central tool for politics; this also affected the commercialisation of media and was used by right-wing politicians.[45]

Islamophobic actors in Switzerland emanate from the right-wing Swiss People's Party, as well as from right-wing think-tanks, print and social media. In the counter-jihadist networks there are intellectuals who actively participate in networks and others who validate the discourse through online actors. SVP/UDC's MP Dominique Baetig framed the citizen's initiative for Islam as one that provided identity for the poor population to avenge the humiliation of those who are at war with the values of modernity. Ulrich Schluer, president of the Egerkingen committee of the citizen's initiative, considered the minaret issues; in wake of the terror related events in Europe this sparked strong emotions in the Swiss public. Other Islamophobes include Daniel Zingg, a member of Reformed Church in Bern who politically belongs to Federal Democratic Union (EDU/UDF) and is active within a free evangelical community, the national councillor Walter Wobmann (SVP/UDC), the national councillor Jasmin Hutter (SVP/UDC), the national councillor Oscar Freysinger (UDC) and the journalist Mireille Vallette; the latter launched an association to fight the Islamization of Switzerland called the Association Suisse Vigilance Islam (ASVI). The aim of this association was to defend Swiss democracy from the expansion of Islam.[46] In 2011 Daniel Streich, a former Islamophobe who was behind the minaret

44. Simon Bradley, 'Steering Swiss Youngsters Away from Radicalization', 17 November 2015 http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/anti-jihadi-strategy_steering-swiss-youngsters-away-from-radicalisation/41783644

45. Ettinger, Patrik. The problematisation of Muslims in public communication in Switzerland. fög discussion paper 2008-0004. fög – Forschungsbereich Öffentlichkeit und Gesellschaft, Zürich. 2008. http://www.foeg.uzh.ch/analyse/publikationen/Problematisierung_Muslime.pdf

46. Switzerland gets a powerful new anti-Islam voice: Mireille Vallette, Diversity Macht Frei, diversitymatch.blogspot.com/2015/06/Switzerland-gets-powerful-new-anti.html

issue in Switzerland, converted to Islam. In April 2015, SVP leader Martin Baltisser was fined by the regional court for racial discrimination against Kosovar immigrants. Walter Wobmann, a parliamentarian from the SVP led the initiative for the burqa ban in Switzerland and started the new country-wide initiative in September 2015.

1.9 Islamophobia and the Justice System in Switzerland

In the Swiss justice system, judicial decisions are made for the most part at the cantonal level. The Swiss Federal Supreme Court is empowered to review the decisions made at the cantonal level. In Switzerland, the Federal Commission on Racism was created in 1995 to implement the International Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial discrimination (CERD).

The President of the Swiss Federal Supreme Court contested the legal status of the citizen's initiative as a violation of religious freedom in accordance with Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). In the constitution dated 18 April, 1999 (Article 15) the Swiss Confederation committed to respecting religious freedom; a similar commitment has been made in international treaties concerning human rights that have been ratified by the constitution, such as the European Convention on Human Rights (Article 9, paragraph 1) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 18, paragraphs 1, 2 and 4, Article 27).

In 2014 the Federal Commission against Racism in Switzerland reported incidents of racial and Islamophobic tendencies. These included SVP posters titled 'Aarau or Ankara' and 'Baden or Baghdad' with a tagline saying 'have a safe future'. Posters showing Muslims praying in front of the Swiss parliament building, with the Muslim depicted from behind, were found to be offensive. During the minaret issue, posters were issued depicting minarets as rockets penetrating the Swiss flag and a female wearing a black niqab. The report also stated that the bilateral treaties with the EU were under threat due to attacks on the free movement of people by right-wing politicians. It also discussed incidents of hate speech against different racial groups within Switzerland. However, the report considered the use of internet and social media as public space, as ruled by the Zurich higher court in 2013, although social media has a huge impact on the behaviour of the people. The report mentioned Muslims in Switzerland as being one of the main victim groups subject to xenophobic stereotyping by a section of the media and right-wing politicians.[47] Before the October 18, 2015 federal elections, the FCR warned about a dangerous trend of hate speech, stigmatizing words and xenophobic tendencies over immigration, asylum policies and people who were already under threat.[48]

47. Report of the federal Commission Against Racism (FCR) to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination CERD, Berne 21 January 2014. www.ekr.admin.ch/pdf/140121_REPORT_FCR_to_CERD_2014.pdf

48. Switzerland: Racism Commission Sees Risks Ahead of Federal Elections, Euroasia Review, www.euroasiareview.com/31082015-switzerland-racism-commission-sees-risks-ahead-of-federal-elections/

On 19 December 2015, the office of the Swiss attorney general started criminal proceedings against the directors of the Islamic Central Council of Switzerland on suspicion that they had violated Article 2 of the federal law which prohibits groups like Al-Qaeda or Daesh/ISIL. The office of the Swiss attorney general has 46 criminal proceeding cases related to jihad-motivated terrorism. On 16 October, 2015, the office of the attorney general also filed charges against four Iraqi nationals for supporting criminal originations.[49] However, ICCS members defended the director accused of these charges.

CONCLUSION

Policy Recommendations

According to the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, Islamophobia depicts the disintegration of human values and most Islamophobic incidents remain under-reported due to the non-availability of relevant data.[50] The president of the Swiss Council of Religions, Gottfried Locher, considers good relations between Islam and Christianity to be important and that followers curb extremism and Islamophobia. To this end, it is important that people talk with one another other rather than talk about one another.[51] An in-depth study conducted between 2010 and 2014 to study racist and xenophobic attitudes in Switzerland and was published in 2015; here it was found that there was a stable base of 20% of Swiss residents having negative attitudes towards Muslims while 20 to 30% held hostile attitude towards Muslims.[52]

In this study, important policy recommendations for addressing the worsening condition of Islamophobic attitudes in Switzerland included:

- A new approach is needed to deal with Islamophobia; this should address pluralism within society instead of adopting policies that limit religious freedom of immigrants or deals harshly with asylum seekers through laws that curb immigration.
- There is a need to develop an alternative narrative in order to deal with the proliferating Islamophobic industry in the country.
- Treating Muslims as the 'other' in society will lead to the worsening of extremist attitudes within the Muslim community. Real inclusion involves removing the

49. Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland opens a criminal proceeding, The Federal Council Bern 19 December 2015. www.news.admin.ch/message/index.html?lang=en&msg-id=60101

50. Islamophobia in Europe, Open Society Foundation, April 2015. www.opensocietyfoundations.org/explainers/islamophobia-europe

51. 'The relationship between Islam and Christianity is key', 13 September 2015, SWI, www.swissinfor.ch/eng/swiss-council-of-religions_-u20cthe-relationship-between-islam-and-christianity-is-key

52. Clare O'Dea, ' One in four Swiss residents has xenophobic attitudes', 13 February 2015, www.swissinfo.ch/eng/racism_one-in-four-swiss-residents-has-xenophobic-attitudes/41271694

indicators of marginality for Muslims, while also improving their socio-economic conditions in society. Integration is also dependent on the national tradition of integration in Switzerland. As the threat of Islam within Swiss political culture has roots in international conflicts, the question of integration should also take these incidents into account in order to deal with the root causes.

- The manufacturing of Islamophobia by right-wing political parties should be dealt with by societal leaders by integrating the values of Islam with modern European values and thus making living conditions safe for Muslims in Switzerland.
- In Islamophobia's discourse, the talk of rich and poor, civilized and uncivilized and superior and inferior dichotomies are used. It is important to change the discourse of inequality to treat the 'others' as equal.
- Religion, which has become a new tool of otherness in secular European societies, should not lead to the Islamization of all socio-economic-political discourses, nor should immigration, employment or educational opportunities be affected by these policies and discourses.
- Civil society, NGOs, Muslim organization and other involved parties should act as mediators in crisis situations, developing programs and training that will increase plural attitudes in society.
- Media discourses are critical to form attitudes in society, therefore inter-religious dialogue is critical. This should not be to the exclusion of other religious groups and the focus should not be limited on Islam or Muslims alone.
- The policies should be directed at improving educational opportunities, bridging social capital, improving the labour market position and addressing the needs of religious freedom without compromising Swiss values; modern Western culture emphasises the differences rather than common grounds.
- Anti-Jihadi strategies, counter-terrorism and radicalization strategies through terror alerts which exclusively target Muslims have increased Islamophobia within Swiss society and have had a negative impact on socio-political issues. It is, therefore, important to have strategies that clearly distinguish religion and the religious community from isolated events and groups which are responsible for such attacks.

CHRONOLOGY

1 January 2015

- An Emergency Statute banning al Qaeda, the 'Islamic State' group and related organizations.

7 January 2015

- Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris and Swiss border control and higher terror alert.

15 February 2015

- Copenhagen attacks increasing terror threat in Switzerland.

30 April 2015

- Berne regional tribunal found the leaders of the Swiss People's Party guilty of racism

July 2015

- Refusal by the Swiss government to the Al Huda Association to build a kindergarten in Zurich

July-August 2015

- Refugees and asylum seekers from Syria and Afghanistan enter Europe through the Mediterranean Sea.

September 2015

- High school girl in Berne forced to take off hijab

October 2015

- Swiss Federal Council approves strategy to Counter Violent Extremism (CVE).

18 October 2015

- Right-wing Swiss People's Party (SVP) wins large share of the vote in federal elections.

November 2015

- Swiss federal council approves the Anti-Jihadi strategy

13 November 2015

- Paris terror attacks and strict policies towards asylum seekers from the Middle East

25 November 2015

- Ticino's parliament approved the law banning women face cover with a fine of 10,000 francs

December 2015

- Swiss police open criminal cases against members of ICCS and its connection to terrorist organisations.

December 2015

- Police in Zurich arrested two suspects travelling from Syria through Turkey who had connections with banned terrorist organizations and coming.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN UNITED KINGDOM

NATIONAL REPORT 2015

ARZU MERALI

THE AUTHOR

Arzu Merali is a writer and researcher based in London, UK. She is one of the founders of Islamic Human Rights Commission (an NGO with consultative status with the United Nations, set up in 1997) and heads its research section. She has authored various academic and journalistic articles, reports and books on human rights and social justice issues, including and especially Islamophobia. Her latest publications include Environment of Hate: The New Normal for Muslims in the UK (2015) with Saied R. Ameli and 'La cooptación del feminismo islámico en el euro-islam y La pérdida de La Liberación' in Tabula Rasa. No.21: 91-109, Julio-Diciembre. She has presented her work at various fora including the United Nations. Merali is a permanent faculty member of the Critical Muslim Studies: Decolonial Struggles and Liberation Theologies summer school. She focuses on Islamic Feminsim, human rights and grammars of human dignity. Arzu Merali, MA Cantab. and Kent, arzu@ihrc.org

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions. No representation, either expressed or implied, is made of the accuracy of the material in the national reports. The editors of the European Islamophobia Report cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may be made. The reader must make his or her own evaluation of the accuracy and appropriateness of those materials.

To cite this report: Arzu Merali (2016): *Islamophobia in United Kingdom: National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UK faced a difficult year, marked by what many perceived as a downward turn in race relations, seeing in particular, a demonstrable rise in Islamophobia. The general election in May saw the Conservative Party returned with a majority (it had previously been in government in a coalition with the Liberal Democrats). The party had inter alia campaigned on a platform of securitisation and anti-immigration.

Events during the year that had impact on the environment of hatred included terror related incidents: the attacks on the Charlie Hebdo office, and the attacks in Paris in November; the attacks on British tourists in Tunisia and various Daesh / ISIL related events. The reportage, opinions from the commentariat and political elites, and policy related announcements following these events contributed to an anti-Muslim climate. Other issues that raised Islamophobia or intersected with its rise included the so-called migrant crisis, the continued fall-out from the Trojan Horse affair and the rise of Daesh/ ISIL.

The legal climate was marked by the implementation of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, which made it a statutory requirement for public sector workers, e.g. doctors and teachers, to refer people they thought to be extremists to the authorities. This requirement made the previous policy of PREVENT, introduced in 2005, law. With no concrete definition of extremism, referrals have been reported as being based on misconceptions and prejudices.

Media representation of Muslims continued to be problematic, with continued conflation of Islam, Muslims and terrorism, misogyny, sexual deviancy and disloyalty. In order to deal with the repercussions of increased Islamophobia a number of civil society initiatives were undertaken, including campaigns to end anti-terror laws, interfaith initiatives and the building of community alliances.

INTRODUCTION

The year 2015 saw a major political shift in the United Kingdom. The general election of 2015 saw a surprise victory for the Conservative Party (May), followed by the equally unexpected and overwhelming victory of Jeremy Corbyn MP, a well-known socialist, as leader of the opposition Labour Party (September). Both events have had an impact on the situation vis à vis the playing out of anti-Muslim rhetoric, and political mobilisation around issues of civil rights, human rights, citizenship and law, which will be discussed below.

Muslims continued to be discriminated against and experience hostility and hatred as a racialized group within the context of a liberal nation state. The roll back of the welfare state and the continued implementation of austerity measures, as well as proposed increases in university fees and the scrapping of student grants all had an impact on Muslim communities, who are still mainly a working class community[1].

SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

2015 was marked by a predominance of security discourse and policy, framed before but 'justified' post hoc by political and media actors. Events that fed the securitisation narrative were not always UK-based; both the killing of staff at the Charlie Hebdo in January and the Paris attacks of November caused political reverberations in the UK which had an impact on Muslims. In particular, the killing of the staff at Charlie Hebdo caused much media furore and a reversion to anti-Muslim tropes regarding free speech. Notably (see Civil Society etc. responses below), there was small but significant dissent over this narrative from sections of academia and press. However, overall, the representation of Muslims in the media and political discourse exhibited deterioration as perceived by Muslims. (Ameli and Merali, 2015).

Similarly the attacks in Paris in November led to a spiral of negative commentary from certain mainstream media outlets that had an impact on the representation of Muslims in the UK (see below). The killing of British tourists in Tunisia in June led to a tightening of security at public events, e.g. the British Open Tennis Championships ('Wimbledon')[2]. Securitisation and profiling in the current era often go hand in hand, and increased securitisation around the issue of so-called Islamist terrorism has had an impact on Muslim profiling. The discourse of securitisation has legitimised individual attacks at the street level, as

1. Ali, S. (2015) British Muslims in Numbers. London: MCB

2. Green, C. (2015) Wimbledon 2015: Security tightened for tennis tournament following Tunisia attack – The Independent. [Online] Available at: http://www.independent.co.uk/sport/tennis/wimbledon- 2015-security-tightened-for-tennis-tournament-following-tunisi a-attack-10352672.html

well as the implementation of policies and laws that justify differential treatment of citizens based on their ethnicity/religion[3] [4].

The continued rise of Daesh/ISIL has also contributed to a slew of negative opinion from media commentariat, as well as from political circles.

The so-called 'Migrant Crisis' was another key event that lasted almost the entire year; at various time the mingling of anti-Muslim sentiment and anti-refugee migrant sentiment could be witnessed. According to Ameli and Merali[5] the demonization of refugees is a parallel process which borrows from Islamophobic tropes, but which is not targeted solely against Muslims, rather being part of an anti-refugee and migrant discourse. According to Goodfellow[6]:

> "This dehumanisation fits in well with the Government's xenophobic policies, which are pursued in the name of balancing the books. Last year in the face of evidence that advised them to do otherwise, the Government decided they would no longer support any search and rescue operations for migrants and refugees drowning in the Mediterranean. By mid-April over 1,500 people had died."

Whilst there was and continues to be significant support and sympathy for refugees from sections of society, the process of dehumanisation (as outlined below) is part and parcel of the process of hate representation which allows policies like the stopping of rescue missions or the bombing of countries to take place.

The general election saw a majority Conservative government returned to parliament. Already credited with ratcheting up anti-Muslim tension through the lens of security whilst in coalition with the Liberal Democrats, the Conservative party manifesto contained measures that could be classified as anti-Muslim in their impact and reach (see below), accompanied by further political speech which targeted Muslims as inimical to 'British values'. The mantra of 'British values' became a recurring anti-Muslim trope which had an impact on education, media and political security policy. Indeed, the process of the 'casting out' of the Muslim subject, outlined by Razack[7] proceeded at such a pace that Prime Minister Cameron was able to label the new leader of the

3. Ameli, S.R. & Merali, A. (2015) *Environment of Hate: The New Normal for Muslims in the UK.* Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission

4. Ameli, S. R., Mohseni, E. & Merali, A. (2013). *Once Upon a Hatred: Anti-muslim Experiences in the USA*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission.

5. Ameli, S.R. & Merali, A. (2015) *Environment of Hate: The New Normal for Muslims in the UK.* Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission

6. Goodfellow, M. (2015) "The Migrant Crisis" The real issue here is here is inconvenienced British holidaymakers – Media Diversified. [Online] Available at: http://mediadiversified.org/2015/07/30/the-migrant-crisis- the-real-issue-here-is-inconvenienced-british-holidaymakers/

7. Razack, S.H. (2008). Casting Out: The Eviction of Muslims from Western Law and Politics. Toronto: University of Toronto Press

opposition, Jeremy Corbyn, as a 'terrorist sympathiser' for his opposition to the bombing of Syria by the UK, proposed in the wake of the Paris attacks. Despite calls for an apology, the prime minister has refused to retract this statement. This shift in discourse is so extreme that an establishment figure can be maligned in the same way as a member of a marginalised community, showing how Islamophobic rhetoric has been instrumentalised and normalised in the UK today. Whilst it has been extremely effective in closing down political spaces for Muslims, this rhetoric has in actuality closed down a great deal of space for dissent according to cause. The reach of Islamophobia beyond the Muslim community will be highlighted elsewhere in this report.

This narrative of exclusion is part of the longue duree of history and has been part of European cultural identities, however its latest manifestation has in part been instrumentalised by neo-conservative circles. It has been argued[8] that in the UK the Henry Jackson Society is deeply embedded in this process. Whilst claiming to be a bipartisan think tank HJS's activities are distinctly neoconservative:

- Promoting a strongly pro-Israel agenda;
- Organising anti-Islam activities, focusing particularly on British Muslim students;
- Advocating a transatlantic military and security regime;

Furthermore, the evolution of HJS into a right-wing think tank also indicates that it does not exist for the public benefit; it has increasingly embraced an illiberal approach domestically towards British Muslims in particular. This trend is particularly pronounced in its support for limiting the civil liberties of Muslim charities in the name of the 'War on Terror'.

The impact of the Trojan Horse affair of 2014 continued to be felt, even though a parliamentary committee confirmed that despite allegations there was no evidence behind the claims that there was an Islamist conspiracy to take over schools in Birmingham. The narrative of British values that arose as part of this

8. Griffin, T. et. al. (June 2015). The Henry Jackson Society and the Degeneration of British Neo-Conservatism: Liberal Interventionism, Islamophobia and the War on Terror. London: The Cordoba Foundation.

affair dovetailed with the prevailing tropes of the security discourse.[9]

The dilemma faced by Muslims in the UK can best be summed up by the findings of a BBC poll in February, 2015. Ninety-five percent of one thousand Muslims polled in the survey stated they feel loyalty to Britain and 93% agreed that Muslims should obey British laws. Yet nearly half of them (46%) felt that it was difficult being a Muslim in Britain because of prejudice against Islam[10] [11] [12]. This finding mirrors repeated research which highlights the conflicted reality of Muslims who show high levels of loyalty, yet experience worsening treatment[13] [14].

Street Islamophobia, including a rise in hate attacks (from 14% in 2010 to 18% of Muslims surveyed in 2014[15] and the rise of far-right street movements, continued to be an issue. Rallies were held against mosque developments and existing Muslim spaces, including places of worship and schools, as well as the development of new Muslim spaces. A case in point has seen more than £500,000 spent on policing in one year in Burton on Trent, where multiple demonstrations were held by numerous far-rights groups against a proposed mosque[16].

9. According to Richard Adams (Adams, R. (14 October 2014) Jewish schools complain over 'hostile' Ofsted inspections – The Guardian. [Online] Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/oct/14/jewish-schools-complain-ofsted-inspections Accessed: 12.08.2015) 21 Birmingham schools were dragged into the heart of a cabinet row over how to tackle extremism. It began with a letter sent to Birmingham city council in November 2013. The letter, quickly dubbed the "Trojan horse", purported to be a plan of attack sent from a Birmingham circle of Islamist plotters to counterparts in Bradford, advising them how to carry out a similar takeover of Bradford schools, by hijacking boards of governors in state schools in mainly Muslim areas and forcing out opposition.
The letter was detailed and refers to events in Birmingham going back many years. But it is widely thought to be a fake or hoax. The letter then bounced around inside Birmingham city's administration, then was passed onto the West Midlands police and back again. Eventually someone forwarded it to the Home Office, which forwarded it to the Department for Education. And there it rested, until February 2014, when it became public through leaks to the media.
The affair has led to a number of separate inquiries: three were ordered by the education secretary, Michael Gove, including the Ofsted inspections of 21 schools. Investigations were also held by the Education Funding Agency, with a separate inquiry into extremism led by the former Met police anti-terrorism chief Peter Clarke. The fourth inspection was a city-wide inquiry being conducted by Birmingham city council.
The definition of extremism used in this affair was dangerously wide, and led to schools, some of which had been previously ranked as outstanding, falling foul of new inspections; as a consequence they were downgraded and led to mass and often forced personnel changes. This was despite the fact that none of the enquiries found anything bar a single incident in one school which could be considered of concern. The accusation of extremism and the 'evidence' of Muslim self-organisation at the level of parent-governor was seen as worthy of labelling and dismantling.

10. COMRES (undated). Available at http://www.comres.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/BBC-Today-Programme_British-Muslims-Poll_FINAL-Tables_Feb2015.pdf

11. BBC (25 February 2015). Most British Muslims 'oppose Muhammad cartoons reprisals'. Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-31293196

12. IHRC, (26 February, 2015). 'Muslim loyalty findings belie community's 'fifth column' stereotype' accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11369-press-release-muslim-loyalty-findings-belie-communitys-fifth-column-stereotype

13. Ameli, S.R. & Merali, A. (2004a). *Dual Citizenship: British, Islamic or Both? Obligation, Recognition, Respect and Belonging.* Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission.

14. Ameli, S.R. & Merali, A. (2015) *Environment of Hate: The New Normal for Muslims in the UK.* Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission

15. ibid

16. ibid

The Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 (CTS) became law after a speedy reading in parliament in February. The main provision was the legal imposition of a five-year sentence for public sector workers who failed to refer those that they suspected to be extremists. This requirement covers inter alia doctors, nurses, social workers, teachers and nursery workers. It effectively made law the already highly criticised PREVENT strategy. It is this event that perhaps best depicts the experience of Muslims in 2015; the report examines how this has contributed to the creation of a hate environment, whilst simultaneously impacting hate representation and hate policy[17].

THE LAW AS AN INSTRUMENT OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

Employment and the Law

A study by Ameli and Merali[18] compared data from 1,700 respondents in 2010 and 2014. The experience of discrimination at work was found to be at 40.9%; the largest group of 17.8% stating they experienced discrimination rarely. Whilst those who claimed that discrimination was always low (never over 0.6% of the total sample for any age range), the fact that such a significant group experiences this nevertheless bodes ill for those in employment (as opposed to self-employed). In terms of the age range, those between 30 and 44 had the highest experience, with more than half of 30 -34 year olds and 35 – 39 year olds experiencing job discrimination of some sort. Every category, except those who experience it "always", has seen an increase in experience.

Work status was also a significant variable in this regard. Just under or over half of all respondents who were employed, self-employed or unemployed felt that they had experienced work-related discrimination. Whilst the largest category (or the second largest category) of each variable was the 'rarely' experience, it is notable that those who stated they were employed were more likely to say 'sometimes' in other categories, suggesting again, like the findings above, that for those employed the workplace is a problematic arena.

Experiences proffered by respondents of discrimination and those who complained about it highlight the problematics of systems in which anti-Muslim hatred is not recognised or is reproduced as victim complaints[19].

The authors contend that discrimination and hate attacks occur in a certain context. To illustrate, a case litigated by IHRC Legal (which was ultimately successful) involved a young waitress. A few months into her employment the owners of the

17. Ameli, S. R. Merali, A. and Shahghasemi, E. (2012). *France and the Hated Society*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission.

18. Ameli, S.R. & Merali, A. (2015) *Environment of Hate: The New Normal for Muslims in the UK*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission

19. ibid

restaurant began subjecting her to regular and repeated verbal abuse – the outbursts were apparently sparked by negative media coverage of Muslims.

She was called a terrorist and a member of Daesh/ISIL, subjected to insulting comments about Allah (God) and Prophet Muhammad, Muslims were referred to as 'bedouins' and it was claimed that all Muslims are fanatics and forced people to convert to Islam.

The waitress was also reported that she could not eat or bring halal meat to the accommodation arranged by the employer, and that she must eat the meat which the employers provided; in particular, she was told to eat pork. To aggravate her grievances, the abuse was perpetrated in front of other staff[20].

Experiencing discrimination at work 2010 and 2014		
	2010	2014
Never	71.9	59.1
Rarely	6.2	17.8
sometimes	6.5	13.6
Often	4.5	7.1
Always	10.9	2.4
Total	100	100

The problem of Islamophobia at work (as with educational settings and other public settings) is compounded by the issue of double discrimination, that is, those who suffer discrimination do not report it for fear of experiencing further discrimination. Double discrimination can be explained as:

"... the additive and adverse effects of multiple factors.... Firstly, when conflating two indicators or signifiers of social exclusion and discrimination, such as ethnicity and gender… or religion and ethnicity…; and secondly, when describing processes of discrimination, for example, where a victim of a crime reports it to the police and experiences further discrimination at the hands of the police."[21]

Examples which support the 2015 findings were supplied by respondents in the qualitative part of their questionnaire e.g.

"-being told I cannot work at my place of work if I wore the hijab because parents wouldn't feel safe leaving their children with a hijabi."

"Intheworkplacebeingleftoutandshunnedandspokenoverthetopofbycolleagues... I did not complain about individual instances because I was not aware racism was a criminal offence. I also have no confidence in institutions and perceive them to contain racists at various levels, including management and director."

"...I went for a few job interviews after I became Muslim and was rejected outright because of my hijab (even after having a phone interview and being given the job over the phone.)"

20. IHRC (28 July, 2015). 'IHRC Legal Fund secures first anti-Muslim discrimination victory' accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11503-press-release-uk-ihrc-legal-fund-secures-first-anti-muslim-discrimination-victory

21. Ameli, S. R., Mohseni, E. & Merali, A. (2013). *Once Upon a Hatred: Anti-muslim Experiences in the USA*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission.

A study using the Office of National Statistics data (with a sample of 500,000)[22] found that Muslims are facing the worst job discrimination of any minority group in Britain, finding they had the lowest chance of being in work or in a managerial role.

Muslim men were up to 76 percent less likely to have a job of any kind compared to white, male British Christians of the same age and with the same qualifications. And Muslim women were up to 65 per cent less likely to be employed than their white Christian counterparts. This effect has been described as the 'Muslim penalty'[23].

Whilst in 2004 the UK introduced anti-discrimination-at-work laws which covered the issue of religious discrimination (under an EU Directive), no legal aid is available to potential litigants. Additionally, the onus is on potential litigants to prove discrimination, unlike cases brought under the Race Relations Act 1976 (which covers by dint of case law, Jewish, Sikh and to a lesser extent Rastafarian communities), where the defendant needs to prove that they did not breach the act.

Thus the law, whilst excellent on paper is (a) impractical and (b) sets out a different legal regime for Muslims from other minority religious groups.[24]

Education and Law

The educational setting in the UK has seen a vast shift around the issue of Muslims. Hitherto hailed as an exemplar, the UK's 'multicultural settlement' in previous decades was perceived as accommodating identity rather than obfuscating it or demanding assimilation. However, a combination of the CTS measures, the existing the PREVENT regime prior to CTS and the fall-out of the Trojan Horse affair have all led to this aspect of education almost entirely wiped out as a concept.

In early 2015, Education Secretary Nicky Morgan revealed that her department would expand the role of "counter-extremism" in schools. The increased focus on 'extremism' followed multiple inquiries into the so-called 'Trojan Horse' affair that revolved around an alleged plot by Muslim extremists to take over 21 Birmingham inner-city schools.

None of the inquiries discovered hard evidence of any such plot and the disproportionate attention the case drew was largely perceived as being a personal Islamophobic agenda being pursued by the then-education secretary, Michael Gove. As a result of the allegations, other Muslim schools around the country were also investigated, again without conclusive results.

However, the lack of evidence did not prevent the government from using the allegations as a pretext for raising scrutiny of Muslim-managed schools nor

22. Nabil and Johnston, 2014 cited in Dobson, R. (2014) British Muslims face worst job discrimina- tion of any minority group, according to research – The Inde- pendent. [Online] Available at: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home- news/british-muslims-face-worst-job-discrimination-of-any- minority-group-9893211.html Accessed: 03.12.2014

23. Heath, A. and Martin, J. (2010). 'Can religious affiliation explain 'ethnic' inequalities in the labour market?' in Ethnic and Racial Studies. Vol. 36, Iss. 6, 2013

24. Ameli, S. R., Elahi, M. & Merali, A. (2004b). *Social discrimination: Across the Muslim divide. British Muslims' expectations of the government*, Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission.

from treating any signs of Islamic values as proof of 'extremism'[25]. Whilst the primary targets of the witch-hunt that occurred subsequent to the so-called Trojan Horse affair were Muslim governors, teachers at schools with a Muslim majority and the schools themselves, it is notable that Jewish schools have become caught up in the anti-Muslim discourse, finding themselves also marked out as extremist and thus failing new governmental and OFTSED criteria focusing on 'British values'. [26] The end of 2014 saw the government issue advice on the Promotion of British Values as part of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students, and 2015 saw that the impact of this programme continued in cross-cutting ways with the rolling out of PREVENT and the provisions of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015.

One school was judged as not having taken the necessary steps to protect pupils from "extremist influences and radicalisation", in failing to take action over a pupil who had posted on social media that fellow students shouldn't attend a school-leaving party because it involved music. Staff and parents at one of the Birmingham schools under investigation were told by teachers that they would be reported to police under the PREVENT strategy if they questioned whether an alleged new uniform policy excluded the hijab.

The impact of PREVENT can be seen in cases like that of a 15-year old school student who was referred to the police for handing out leaflets calling for the boycott of Israeli goods, and for asking a dinner-time supervisor if the food being served came from Israel. His story, later taken up by Al-Jazeera[27], also includes details of his treatment once he was visited by the police who asked him if he supported ISIS. His response - that he was a Shia Muslim - did not register with the police officer as a denial[28]. The discursive praxis of PREVENT may be one of, if not the most significant, the factors in the rise of 'street-level' hatred against those perceived to be Muslim, as well as in normalising differential treatment of communities of colour and culture using the rhetoric of community cohesion and British values (as a challenge to and heralding the end of state sanctioned multi-culturalism)[29].

The impact of this practice on education and the effect of it becoming law through the CTS has raised serious concerns amongst Muslims and civil rights ad-

25. IHRC (30 January 2015). 'Schools anti-extremism drive is an attack on Muslim rights'. Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11348-press-release-schools-anti-extremism-drive-is-an-attack-on-muslim-rights

26. Adams, R. (14 October 2014) Jewish schools complain over 'hostile' Ofsted inspections – The Guardian. [Online] Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/oct/14/jewish- schools-complain-ofsted-inspections Accessed: 12.08.2015

27. Hooper, S. (23 July 2015). 'Stifling freedom of expression in UK schools' accessed at: http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2015/07/stifling-freedom-expression-uk-schools-150721080612049.html

28. Ameli, S.R. & Merali, A. (2015) *Environment of Hate: The New Normal for Muslims in the UK*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission

29. ibid

vocates, as well as some teaching and lecturers' unions. Additional measures have been proposed by the government or have been implemented. In March the then Con-Dem coalition proposed new guidelines (under CTS) that: "Universities must take seriously their responsibility to exclude those promoting extremist views that support or are conducive to terrorism"[30].

The anti-terrorism laws, notably the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, have been instrumental in creating not only a hate environment, but in solidifying in law a state of reasonable fear on the part of Muslims that they are under pervasive surveillance. The analogy of the Stasi state pertains, whereby under the CTS Act public servants, be they teachers, lecturers, nursery school staff, doctors etc., are under a duty to report anyone they believe to be an extremist. The issue is further compounded by the fact that no concrete definition of what 'extremism' might be is proffered, leaving such referrals open to the subjective vagaries of those making the references[31].

In this environment at least two cases of questionnaires allegedly seeking to establish whether a child could be deemed an extremist have been circulated [32] [33]. Children at the predominantly Muslim Buxton School in Leytonstone, East London, were issued with questionnaires soliciting their views on a range of issues and hypothetical cases designed to tease out any "extremist" tendencies[34]. After distributing a similar questionnaire, Greenleaf Primary, in the same London borough, released the names of 7 children they had identified as a result of the questionnaire as being at risk of radicalisation. The questionnaires asked a series of highly loaded questions which seem to be based on a perception of extremism and radicalisation held by right-wing neo-cons. Those questionnaires asked pupils aged between 9-11 if they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements such as 'It is better to be a dead hero than live impassively', 'If a student was making fun of my race or religion I would try to make them stop even if it meant hurting them' and 'God has a purpose for me'. They were also asked to tick three boxes with which they identify, choosing from British, Muslim, student, artist, athlete, Christian or young[35].

30. IHRC (2 March 2015). 'New laws should not be a licence to discriminate against Muslims.' Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11370--uk-new-laws-should-not-be-a-licence-to-discriminate-against-muslims

31. Ameli, S.R. & Merali, A. (2015) *Environment of Hate: The New Normal for Muslims in the UK*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission

32. IHRC (22 May 2015). 'Outrage over Muslim schoolchildren being profiled for 'extremism" Accessed at: http://www.ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11441-press-release-uk-outrage-over-muslim-schoolchildren-being-profiled-for-extremism-

33. IHRC (1 December, 2015). 'IHRC appalled by primary school 'extremism' questionnaire'. Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11573-press-release-uk-ihrc-appalled-by-primary-school-extremism-questionnaire

34. IHRC (22 May 2015). 'Outrage over Muslim schoolchildren being profiled for 'extremism" Accessed at: http://www.ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11441-press-release-uk-outrage-over-muslim-schoolchildren-being-profiled-for-extremism-

35. IHRC (1 December, 2015). 'IHRC appalled by primary school 'extremism' questionnaire'. Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11573-press-release-uk-ihrc-appalled-by-primary-school-extremism-questionnaire

Referrals to deradicalisation programmes have risen exponentially since the reporting of people suspected of extremism became an official requirement for public bodies on July 1. The figures show that there were more referrals between June and August than for the whole of 2012/13 – the first year the scheme was introduced across England and Wales. The number is also more than double the level of referrals recorded in the first three months of 2014/15. Approximately 40% of the referrals were of people under the age of 18. Moreover, during the same period, of the 796 individuals reported to the Channel programme for possible intervention, only about one-fifth have required intervention in the form of deradicalisation sessions. These figures were compiled over a period when schools and educational institutions were closed for the summer break. The likelihood is that referrals would rise even further once school reopened in September[36].

There is paucity of research on the content of textbooks, however key incidents have come to public attention over the year. A worksheet issued in North Lanarkhshire states 'they [the Palestinians] have turned to terrorist methods for over 30 years'. It then gives the example of 'SUICIDE BOMBINGS' as a terrorist activity. This establishes the connection that all Palestinians are terrorists, and potentially also that all Palestinians are suicide bombers[37].

At the same time, the National Union of Teachers was forced to pull a resource pack it had produced on Palestine after pressure from pro-Israel groups[38].

Politics and Law

As detailed above, there has been conflation between anti-migrant rhetoric and anti-Muslim rhetoric, both in the run-up to the general election and subsequently. However, aside from issues emanating from the so-called migrant crisis, the UK saw anti-Muslim hate policy and hate representation[39] coalesce to help foster an environment of hate.

The Department for Communities and Local Government played a particularly prominent role in fostering a sense of Muslim otherness through speech and policy. In January, the communities secretary, Eric Pickles, wrote a letter to the UK's over 1000 mosques in which he demanded they do more to counteract religious extremism. The very fact that the government singled out Muslim leaders as the recipient of these letters suggests to us that the government believes that Muslims are at best not committed to the fight against so-called religious extremism and at worst aid-

36. IHRC (14 October, 2015). 'Deradicalisation programme is demonising Muslims'. Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11540-press-release-uk-deradicalisation-programme-is-demonising-muslims

37. IHRC (5 March 2015). 'Scottish council urged to drop anti-Palestinian school worksheet'. Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11375-press-release-uk-scottish-council-urged-to-drop-anti-palestinian-school-worksheet

38. Elgot, J. (6 August 2015) 'NUT defends controversial teaching kit featuring life of Palestinian children'. Accessed at: http://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/aug/06/nut-defends-controversial-teaching-kit-featuring-life-of-palestinian-children

39. Ameli, S. R. Merali, A. and Shahghasemi, E. (2012). *France and the Hated Society*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission.

ing and abetting the perpetrators. This was a simple regurgitation of Islamophobic tropes on Muslim disloyalty and enmity to so-called British values.[40]. Only a month later the DCLG became embroiled in a row created by an article by Andrew Gilligan in the right-wing broadsheet The Sunday Telegraph. The article accused Baroness Warsi, a co-founder of the Cross-Government Working Group on anti-Muslim hatred, of presiding over the infiltration of Muslim 'radicals' into the committee. It then goes on to quote the DCLG defending itself against the allegations saying: "We are very clear that we will not fund or engage with groups which promote violent or non-violent extremism. All individuals represented on the cross-government working group on anti-Muslim hatred are committed to the peaceful integration of all communities." According to IHRC:

> "the article's charge of "entryism" or loading committees and parties with one's own supporters is a tactic that is often used by bigots to attack minority groups and prevent them from exercising their fundamental rights in society. For the government to accept it as gospel instead of swiftly condemning it suggests that the government too is using the pretext of extremism to exclude Muslims from policymaking."[41]

The introduction of the Counterterrorism and Security Act into law at the beginning of the year, discussed above, contained many serious issues of concern, including a category of 'thought crime', in the introduction of local panels to prepare a plan for those at risk of so-called radicalisation. Not only will those targeted have no way of challenging the panel's decisions, it is staggering to think that the government believes it has the right to determine what others are allowed to think and believe and impose "de-radicalisation" plans on those who disagree with the government's notions of acceptable beliefs. The government also now has the power to seize passports of those it suspects are travelling for terrorist purposes. This has implications for innocent travellers who are now liable to be detained at ports if they 'look like a terrorist' or are travelling to destinations, such as Turkey or Lebanon, that are deemed to be staging posts for terrorism. The government's own data shows that the existing Schedule 7 stop-and-search powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 have relied on profiling and led to a disproportionately high number of non-whites and Muslims being detained. Since 2001 some 70% of all arrests under anti-terrorism legislation have been of non-whites.

The introduction of temporary exclusion orders which prevent people deemed to pose a risk to the UK's security from entering is also worrying. Exclusion orders taken on the basis of mere suspicion could lead to individuals being arrested in foreign coun-

40. IHRC (19 January 2015) 'Govt letter to Muslim leaders betrays Islamophobic premise'. Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11340-press-release-govt-letter-to-muslim-leaders-betrays-islamophobic-premise

41. ibid

tries and treated as suspects of terrorism. The law smacks of an abdication by the government of its responsibilities and an abandonment of judicial oversight and safeguards, with the consequence that it could place British citizens at risk abroad[42].

In the run up to the general election, the Conservative party (which later won a majority to form the new government) included a xenophobic assault on the Muslim community in the Conservative election manifesto under the issue of security; this had little relation to the alleged fight against terrorism. The proposals included plans for a review of Shariah councils in England and Wales to examine whether they were compatible with British values, orders to ban groups that did not reach the current threshold and labelled as extremists and civil "extremism disruption orders", similar to ASBOs (anti-social behaviour orders), which impose curfews and other non-custodial punitive sanctions against individuals. They also outlined their intention to initiate a review of supplementary schools, which are currently unregulated, ostensibly to "protect children from extremists"[43]. By the end of the year, these and a focus on home schooling were also included in the policy under consultation and formulation[44].

The focus on Shariah courts, or Muslim mediation councils, is a trope that has appeared in the past[45], and exemplifies not just inequality between faith communities (Bet Din courts for Jews and the Synod for the Church of England are both courts constituted under British law), but subalternises Muslims in a way that delegitimises their aspirations as minorities who are in conformity with the experience of other minorities or religious groups. Even the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, was widely castigated by media commentators for stating in 2008 that it was inevitable that there would be Shariah courts in the UK which litigated on civil matters for Muslims[46].

In November 2015, Narendra Modi, the prime minister of India, paid a state visit to the UK. The double standards on 'extremism' were apparent to many commentators who noted that Modi had hitherto been banned from the UK for his extremist views and allegations of his complicity in the 2002 Gujarat massacres of

42. IHRC (13 January 2015b) Proposed Counter Terrorism and Security Bill: An Orwellian Possibility. Accessed at: http://www.ihrc.org.uk/publications/briefings/11330-proposed-counter-terrorism-and-security-bill-an-orwellian-possibility

43. IHRC (23 March 2015). 'Home Secretary should be ashamed of playing Islamophobia card'. Accessed at: http://www.ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11393-press-release-home-secretary-should-be-ashamed-of-playing-islamophobia-card

44. McTague, T. (19 December 2015). 'Nicky Morgan orders review on home schooling amid fears children having minds 'poisoned' by radicalised parents'. Accessed at: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/nicky-morgan-orders-review-on-home-schooling-amid-fears-children-having-minds-poisoned-by-a6779886.html

45. Ameli, S. R., Merali, A. (2006). *Hijab, meaning, identity, otherization and politics: British Muslim women*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission.

46. BBC (7 February 2008). 'Sharia law in UK is 'unavoidable" http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7232661.stm

Muslims[47]. On the basis that criticism of UK foreign policy is perceived as extremist, yet Modi, who perhaps best embodies the term extremist, is feted, it appears that legitimate dissent was the target of UK government policy. Likewise, General Sisi, the leader of the coup against the elected president, Morsi, of Egypt, also paid a state visit to the UK in November.

This type of discourse and policy impacts lower down the political system. In one reported case, Manchester City Council was called upon to discipline a councillor who was found guilty of breaching the council's code of conduct after allegations of racism and Islamophobia were levelled against him. An official investigation into Councillor Mark Hackett found that he had abused and intimidated his victim, a Muslim man, who along with his Christian wife, had volunteered to help at an event organised by Manchester Stop the War Coalition (STWC) called, "Remember the Children of Gaza". Cllr. Hackett responded to an email request by the victim to support STWC activities by accusing the victim and his supporters of supporting Hamas and Daesh/ISIL and suggesting that the councillor's attendance would invite attacks against his own person and family; this correspondence was copied to all other Labour councillors. The councillor then sent another malicious email in which he suggested that the volunteer had played a "possible role in the abduction of the Salford taxi driver in Syria" and also a "possible role as Islamic State sleeper in Salford". In yet another email he elaborates on this idea: "You may think I am being over cautious and alarmist but look at the Salford Taxi Driver betrayed to IS and abducted by them by someone (sic) in Salford presumably"[48].

In July, David Cameron made a speech setting out the government's five-year strategy for tackling 'extremist ideology'; here he stated: "the root cause of the threat we face is the extremist ideology itself." This speech emphasised once again the government's focus on non-violent extremism, which, as the Trojan Horse affair demonstrated, can be defined as widely as any type of religious conservatism, e.g. gender segregation, praying in school/work etc.[49]. This speech followed on from Cameron's 'Munich 2' speech in June, when he addressed a security conference in Slovakia, and warned of the so-called dangers posed by those who "quietly condone" the extremist ideology of Daesh/ISIL militants and stressed the importance of tackling radicalisation at its source. The implication, quickly seized upon by members of the media and other politicians, is that Muslims in the UK somehow covertly supported Daesh/ISIL. This was followed by an article in the Telegraph in which Cameron

47. IHRC (13 November 2015). 'Modi visit exposes UK double standards'. Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11561--press-release-uk-modi-visit-exposes-uk-double-standards

48. IHRC (21 September 2015). 'Manchester City Council must take action against Islamophobic councillor'. Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11525-press-release-uk-manchester-city-council-must-take-action-against-islamophobic-councillor

49. IHRC (21 July 2015). 'British government is in denial over extremism'. Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11493-press-release-uk-british-government-is-in-denial-over-extremism

stated that Britain could only defeat extremism by standing up for British values of "peace, democracy, tolerance and freedom" and being more intolerant of intolerance – rejecting anyone whose views condone the Islamist extremist narrative and create the conditions for it to flourish". He was joined by the mayor of London, Boris Johnson, who stated that there should be no rejection of using the words "Muslim" or "Islamic" when describing the terrorists responsible for extremist attacks. "That just lets too many people off the hook," he said. "If we deny any connection between terrorism and religion, then we are saying there is no problem in any of the mosques; that there is nothing in the religious texts that is capable of being twisted or misunderstood; that there are no religious leaders whipping up hatred of the west, no perverting of religious belief for political ends"[50]. These tropes of inherent Muslim violence and disloyalty were prominent in political discourse throughout the year and punctuated output from the right-wing (and some left-wing) commentariat[51], legitimising both a state of inequality vis a vis Muslims, while increasing securitisation and demonisation.

In October yet more plans were announced by the government to tackle so-called extremism. Under the strategy, the government will intensify the campaign against extremism by creating a raft of laws aimed at stemming at source what ministers believe is a terrorism conveyor belt that starts with the radicalisation of individuals[52]. This is despite the now well-established debunking of the conveyor-belt theory by academics like Arun Kundnani[53] and people like former proponent Marc Sageman[54].

New policies proposed by the government included creating blacklists of 'radicals' and 'extremist' groups and making them subject to banning orders. Public sector organisations would be forced to blacklist those on the list. The plans also included new powers to close mosques and bolster powers available to Ofcom, the media regulator, to sanction channels that broadcast so-called extremist content or gave a platform to 'hate preachers'.

Again such policies and proposed measures creates a drip feed of demonisation and criminalisation into existing facets of society. A Palestine Solidarity Committee/ Friends of al-Aqsa demonstration in support of Palestine was called in October; two

50. IHRC (29 June 2015). 'Cameron just doesn't get the terrorism problem'. Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11474-press-release-uk-cameron-just-doesnt-get-the-terrorism-problem

51. Sayyid, S., Law, I., & Sian, K. (2013). Analysis of integration policies and public State- endorsed institutions at national/regional levels: Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). Centre for Ethnicity and Racism Studies, University of Leeds (CERS/ULeeds). Accessed at: http://www.ces.uc.pt/projectos/tolerace/media/WP2/WorkingPapers%202_UK.pdf

52. IHRC (19 October, 2015). 'Anti-terror laws are a war on Muslims'. Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11544-press-release-uk-anti-terror-laws-are-a-war-on-muslims

53. Kundnani, A. (2013) The Muslims Are Coming. London: Verso

54. Breen-Smyth, M. (2015). Presentation at the Prevent Conference, organised by IHRC and CAMPACC, July 2015, London, UK.

protestors, one carrying a Hizbullah flag and one wearing a green bandana, claimed to be related to Hamas, were asked by organisers to remove said items. The protestors eventually left the demonstration, but it was claimed that they were arrested at the request of the organisers. Whilst the PSC has denied this, the two men, who were initially arrested for breach of the peace, found themselves questioned under anti-terrorism laws and their homes were raided. The PSC gave a comment to the pro-Israel Jewish News newspaper stating: "it actively discourages protesters from flying Hamas or Hezbollah flags. "We ask that those present respect the Palestinian national flag, and use only this flag," a spokeswoman said"[55]. The two men were charged according to the article less than a month after police had confirmed that flying a Hizbullah flag did not constitute an offence. As Kundnani[56] observes, the discourse of radicalisation impacts wider than the supposed targets; Muslim civil society, as well as civil society at large, are inadvertently and sometimes deliberately complicit in the process, as they have been pushed into a corner:

> "Everyone who rejects the game of fake patriotism falls under suspicion, as opposition to extremism becomes the only legitimate discourse... the spectacle of the Muslim extremist renders invisible the violence of the ... empire. Opposition to such violence from within the imperium has fallen silent, as the universal duty of countering extremism precludes any wider discussion..."[57]

The appointment of former Henry Jackson Society member William Shawcross for a further three-year term as head of the Charity Commission continued to stoke anti-Muslim tension, with an increased focus on Muslim charities. According to the charity newsletter Third Sector[58], according to an anonymous source, Shawcross has "a very ideological view of charities as doing good …He's by far the most ideological of all the people who have been in this role.. His letting forth to The Times was very revealing - talking about sanctions against charities and taking a sideswipe at Muslims having a victim mentality. It's clear from his history that he's a neo-conservative, so I think he can't look at Muslim charities in a dispassionate way."

The politicisation of the police force is another issue that raised concern; in particular the comments made by a senior Metropolitan police officer Mak Chisty on radicalisation. Chisty claimed in May that authorities needed to move into 'the private space of Muslims' because "it is in these private spaces where this (extremism) first germinates". Chisty goes on to describe the types of views that would qualify as extremism. They include Muslim children considering Christmas to be "haram", or

55. Oryszczuk, S. (21 October 2015). 'Police confirm two arrests for flying Hezbollah flags'. Accessed at: http://www.jewishnews.co.uk/police-confirm-two-arrests-for-flying-hezbollah-flags/

56. Kundnani, A. (2013) The Muslims Are Coming. London: Verso

57. ibid

58. Cook, C. (28 September 2015). 'Profile: William Shawcross, chair of the Charity Commission'. Accessed at: http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/profile-william-shawcross-chair-charity-commission/governance/article/1365006

to individuals criticising and boycotting Marks and Spencer[59] [60].

The effect of these policies and representation inter alia is to push Muslims further away from the concept of citizen. As such, polls like those regarding the candidature for mayor of London in 2015, saw 1 in 3 respondents in London (a city itself with a 65% majority non-English population) state that they felt uncomfortable with the idea of a Muslim mayor (at the time two candidates for party nominations were Muslim, at the time of writing the Labour Party candidate is Muslim)[61].

A further poll found that 55% of people polled accepted the claim that: "There is a fundamental clash between Islam and the values of British society"[62] A further dissection of the results in terms of political affiliations shows little improvement: "Among Tory supporters, this gap increases to 68 percent who say 'clash' versus 17 per cent who think 'compatible'. Ukip supporters look almost unanimous on the issue (89 per cent 'clash' versus 4 per cent 'compatible') while roughly half of Labour supporters take the negative view (48 per cent 'clash' versus 27 per cent 'compatible') and Lib Dems are divided (38 per cent 'clash' versus 39 per cent 'compatible')"[63].

Respondents to a 2010 survey[64] and 2014 survey[65] were asked whether they had witnessed political policies that negatively affected Muslims, whether they felt politicians did not care about Muslims and whether politicians condoned anti-Muslim acts. In all categories those agreeing with or seeing examples of the above rose between the two surveys.

The Media and the Law as Mutually Constitutive

The themes of anti-Muslim representation [66] [67] [68]as summarized by Ameli and Merali, referring additionally to Progler and Poole, revealed the following prevail:

59. Dodd, V. (24 May 2015). Jihadi threat requires move into 'private space' of UK Muslims, says police chief. Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/24/jihadi-threat-requires-move-into-private-space-of-uk-muslims-says-police-chief

60. IHRC (26 May 2015). 'IHRC addresses Metropolitan Police over anti-Muslim statements'. Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11443-press-release-uk-ihrc-addresses-metropolitan-police-over-anti-muslim-statements

61. Yougov / LBC cited in 5Pillars (2015) Poll: One in three Londoners feel "uncomfortable" about the Muslim mayor. [Online] Available at: http://5pillarsuk.com/2015/08/13/poll-one-in-three- londoners-feel-uncomfortable-about-muslim-mayor/

62. Faulkner Rogers (30 March 2015). 'The majority of voters doubt that Islam is compatible with British values'. Accessed at: https://yougov.co.uk/news/2015/03/30/majority-voters-doubt-islam-compatible-british-val/

63. ibid

64. Ameli, S. R., Mohseni, E., Shahghasemi, E., Rahimpour, M. (2011). *Getting the message: The recurrence of hate crimes in the UK*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission.

65. Ameli, S.R. & Merali, A. (2015) *Environment of Hate: The New Normal for Muslims in the UK*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission

66. ibid

67. Progler, Y. (2008) Encountering Islam: The Politics of Knowledge and Scholarship. Penang: Citizens International

68. Poole, E. (2011) Change and Continuity in the Representation of British Muslims Before and After 9/11: The UK Context. Global Media Journal – Canadian Edition, 4(2), 49-62.

The sexual groomer, peadophile, predator (reference the Rotherham and Oxford scandals), harking back to the idea of the seraglio. Tied to this is the idea of perverse and extreme violence, sexual depravity, misogyny and disloyalty. All of these feed into the idea of inferiority to a Western, i.e. white British majority, but also to that of an inherent lack of values, a deficiency that can never be overcome. Privot[69] argues that gender equality is one such idea; this is used to define a sense of identity of the 'European' against the 'Muslim' and has dovetailed with the reporting of stories surrounding even education and gender segregation as an aspiration in schooling for many Muslims.

Tied to this is an obsession with the veil, in particular face veils. The face veil continued to be discussed through the prism of security, gender equality and British values.

Despotism[70], was another longstanding trope that was regurgitated in the reporting of Islam and Muslims, tying them to images of Daesh/ISIL. In a piece in which he claims radicalisation should be seen as a form of child abuse[71], London mayor Boris Johnson writes again about 'Our values', setting them against Islamic ones (earlier in the piece he refers to British values again). By associating paedophilia and FGM with Islamic radicalisation he further catalyses the imagery of the Muslim as sexual predator. This can be said to characterise most negative reporting of Muslims.

CONCLUSION:

Policy Recommendations for Politics and CSO's / Best Practices

The following recommendations come from an overview of the findings of Ameli and Merali[72] as suggested by respondents, as well as a review of civil society initiatives.

Education, Interfaith and Awareness Raising

Many respondents stated that the general public required education. There have been many civil society initiatives that show the efficacy of such an approach, notably the so-called 'tea and biscuits with the EDL' episode, where members of a mosque in a northern town invited in protestors from the right-wing street movement, the EDL. The EDL members accepted the invitation and ended up also playing football with the members of the mosque. Other initiatives like the MCB's National Open Mosque Day are further such good practice. Likewise, many interfaith programmes already exist, and more should be organised. However, the independence and diversity of such programmes must be preserved and enhanced.

69. Privot, M. (11 November 2014). 'Islamophobia, a foreseeable consequence of ultra-liberalism?' Accessed at: https://www.opendemocracy.net/author/michaël-privot.

70. Progler, Y. (2008) Encountering Islam: The Politics of Knowledge and Scholarship. Penang: Citizens International

71. Johnson, B. (2014) The children taught at home about murder and bombings – The Telegraph. [Online] Available at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/10671841/The- children-taught-at-home-about-murder-and-bombings.html.

72. Ameli, S.R. & Merali, A. (2015) *Environment of Hate: The New Normal for Muslims in the UK.* Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission

However, if there is to be a far-reaching cultural shift in the understanding of Islam and Muslims, the onus for education rests with institutions, notably the government.

Media Regulation and Self-Renewal

This recommendation emerged after the Leveson Inquiry Report[73] which called for the setting up of a more powerful independent press watchdog. Whilst the new watchdog, the Independent Press Standards Organisation, is indeed more powerful and has the ability to fine up to 1% of a newspaper's turnover (capped at £1million) as well as having interventionist investigatory powers, newspapers are free to opt out of the system.

As with its predecessor, the code it implements is vague, if not exclusionary, on issues of generalised demonisation. An individual who is maligned can bring a case, but what about the issues of stereotyping, encoded ideas of inferiority, etc.?

The issue of dealing with structural inequalities and systemic racist discourse remains untouched, with regulatory mechanisms, such as they are, still working within the framework of a post-racial society, as opposed to issues of institutional racism being dealt with.

Ameli et. al[74], have called for a sea change in the UK media that can only be internally driven. This is not simply a question of equal opportunities in terms of Muslim representation as professionals in the media, though this is required. This involves a cultural shift in the thinking of media institutions. With regard to the UK, Ameli et al[75] argued that a sea change in reporting and cultural activity has already transformed media practice on issues of anti-Semitism, anti-Catholic prejudice and sexuality, as well as in other prejudices

Deninciation of Islamophobic Structures, Policies and Acts

Organisations that work on issues of anti-racism, community cohesion, faith relations and human rights need to be prepared to take a much stronger stand in speaking out against these ways of thinking and publicly denounce those who adopt such a discourse, even if, as is increasingly the case, those who do so are speaking from a position of sound 'liberal' or 'left-wing' credentials as Kundnani argues[76]. Cases in point relate not only to the operation of stereotypes and misrepresentation in news media print, audio/visual and digital, but also the reproduction of demonised

73. (29 November 2012) 'An inquiry into the culture, practices and ethics of the press: report [Leveson]' http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140122145147/http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/hc1213/hc07/0780/0780.asp

74. Ameli, S.R., Marandi, S.M., Ahmed, S., Kara, S. & Merali, A. (2007). *The British media and Muslim representation: The ideology of demonisation.* Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission

75. Ameli, S.R., Marandi, S.M., Ahmed, S., Kara, S. & Merali, A. (2007). *The British media and Muslim representation: The ideology of demonisation.* Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission

76. cited in Ameli, S.R., Marandi, S.M., Ahmed, S., Kara, S. & Merali, A. (2007). *The British media and Muslim representation: The ideology of demonisation.* Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission

discourse in film and literature. Critiques of demonised discourse cannot exist in academia alone, and the implications of demonised representations of peoples and countries by filmmakers and writers perceived to be progressive must be denounced.

Community Alliances

There ought to be stronger relationships between Muslim organisations and groups that have campaigned against racism and prejudice in the media. Although such alliances will present challenges to both parties, they are a prerequisite for bringing about change, as Kundnani states[77]. This goes without saying; however, much can be learned from past and ongoing campaigns.

Monitoring of Demonised Representation

Such monitoring can and must work on a variety of levels, including in academic institutions, by community organisations and major civil society organisations (perhaps in partnership) and by media outlets themselves. This monitoring process should be done in earnest with a view to assessing the levels and ways Muslims are demonised in order to avoid innocent and negligent repetition of such tropes. As Joseph and D'Harlingue[78], in their study on the Wall Street Journal's Op-eds, point out: "[G]iven the power of these representations on other fields, such as politics, we suggest that the WSJ, whether inadvertently or intentionally (investigating intentionality is not our subject), contributes to the demonization of Islam and Muslims."

This reference to Joseph and D'Harlingue is pertinent in particular (as this was their focus) to the writings of the commentariat. It can have wider application to 'simple' reporting, e.g. in the case of Trojan Horse.

Monitoring needs to work towards identifying how to transform the structure from one that participates in oppression to one that challenges it. While the initial onus of this must be on broadcasters and those responsible for media representation of Muslims, government needs to be involved in this process, commissioning studies if necessary or facilitating the requisite debate around alienation and the impact of media on the process, in the hope that this will generate more than just a superficial self-analysis by media producers[79].

Community Agitation for a Fair Media

Many such projects already exist, and the authors emphasise the following actions: writing letters of complaint, letters to the editor, submitting alternative opinion pieces and such; these are essential components of this process. However, the authors

77. ibid

78. Joseph, S. and D'Harlingue (2012) The Wall Street Journal's Muslims: Representing Islam in American Print News Media. *Islamophobia Studies Journal,* 1(1), 131-162.

79. Ameli, S.R., Marandi, S.M., Ahmed, S., Kara, S. & Merali, A. (2007). *The British media and Muslim representation: The ideology of demonisation.* Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission

contextualise these actions as important as follows:

- To foster a feeling of confidence among the community.
- To empower the community and its members to interact and protest at a time when immense pressure is put on Muslims and wider dissident voices to be silent.
- To ensure that media producers are aware that they are under scrutiny and that they are failing to meet the standards expected of them.

At the same time, it is important that community groups and organisations that run such campaigns also become familiar with and raise awareness of the structural issues that surround the media and its problematic role. They must not inadvertently foster an idea that the media is structurally sound and it is solely the lack of Muslim voices or interaction with the media that causes misrepresentation of Muslims to occur.

A related recommendation to civil society is to interact and seek training from organisations and academics that have a shared understanding of the structural issues involved. It is also important that organisations and activists target the way politicians, the judiciary and security and law enforcement agencies use the media.

Campaigning for the End of the Anti-Terror Laws; Seeking Parity in the Consultation Process; Boycotting Prevent

In February 2015 a campaign was launched calling for the abolition of all anti-terror laws in the UK on the grounds that sufficient criminal laws already existed to prosecute perpetrators of any criminal acts of political violence. Launched by way of a letter to the Guardian and followed by a conference on Prevent, the campaign was co-organised by IHRC and CAMPACC[80]. The campaign argues that sufficient laws exist under the existing criminal laws of the country to prosecute any terrorist act. The many anti-terror laws that have been enacted, in this analysis, are not only not necessary, but serve to demonise the Muslim community.

This campaign has galvanized diverse parts of civil society. Actors involved see both the institutionalisation of Islamophobia in these laws, but also the curtailment of civil liberties that can in theory and have to some extent, in practice, impacted much more than the Muslim community in curtailing legitimate political activism and dissent.

This campaign, and also the cessation of taking part in government consultations, which are simply rubber stamping exercises, on the part of civil society organisations[81], are difficult but increasingly more necessary stances that civil society must adopt.

Additionally, momentum is required to boycott the Prevent strategy. Currently, certain unions and union figures are discussing ways in which this can be systematically done.

80. Levidow, L. et. al. (5 February 2015). Groundless Anti-Terror Laws Must Go. Available at http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/feb/05/groundless-antiterror-laws-must-go

81. IHRC (13 January 2015) IHRC to end participation in anti-terror laws consultations. Available at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11331-press-release-ihrc-to-end-participation-in-anti-terror-laws-consultations

Reimagining Citizenship and Acceptable Behaviours

The double standards that Muslims face in their treatment is a recurring theme of this research. From failures to address Islamophobia as a form of racism, to the failure to ban far-right rallies or enact laws that effectively protect from discrimination, there is a litany of grievances being expressed, despite the demonisation of the Muslim grievance.

Nevertheless, it has also been noted that complaints about foreign policy in qualitative responses have fallen off in comparison to previous years, and this begs the question as to whether the climate of fear induced by frequent anti-terror laws and ubiquitous praxis under PREVENT has resulted in a greater muting of Muslim complaints, beliefs or thoughts.

Whereas hate-filled newspaper inches, twitter feeds and multiple other platforms are justified under the aegis of the so-called British value of 'free speech', critique expressed otherwise by non-Muslims becomes 'dangerous' and in need of being silenced if expressed by a Muslim.

This reimagining comes from law, but also from government practice. De Menthon[82] recommends that:

"It will be more productive for the government to build trust, and address the needs of the Muslim community in the interest of social justice, rather than through the lens of anti-terrorism.

"In order to do this, Islamic grass root organizations must be involved in procedures implemented by the government. The government should prioritise addressing Islamophobia and Institutional anti-Muslim discrimination within mainstream agencies such as within central government, local authorities, health services, police and others."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

(29 November 2012) 'An inquiry into the culture, practices and ethics of the press: report [Leveson]' http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140122145147/http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/hc1213/hc07/0780/0780.asp

5Pillars (2015) Poll: One in three Londoners feel "uncomfortable" about the Muslim mayor. [Online] Available at: http://5pillarsuk.com/2015/08/13/poll-one-in-three-londoners-feel-uncomfortable-about-muslim-mayor/

Adams, R. (8 June 2014) Is the Trojan horse row just a witch hunt triggered by a hoax? - The Guardian. [Online] Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/jun/08/trojan-horse-extremism-political-storm-michael-gove-ofsted

82. De Menthon, L. (23 August 2013). 'British Muslims – 'The Suspect Community'?'. Accessed at: http://www.ihrc.org.uk/publications/briefings/10686-british-muslims-the-suspect-community

Adams, R. (14 October 2014) Jewish schools complain over 'hostile' Ofsted inspections – The Guardian. [Online] Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/oct/14/jewish- schools-complain-ofsted-inspections Accessed: 12.08.2015

Ali, S. (2015) British Muslims in Numbers. London: MCB

Ameli, S. R. Merali, A. and Shahghasemi, E. (2012). France and the Hated Society. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission.

Ameli, S. R., & Faridi, B., & Lindahl, K., & Merali, A. (2006). Law & British Muslims: Domination of the majority or process of balance?. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission.

Ameli, S. R., Azam, A., Merali, A., & Islamic Human Rights Commission (Great Britain). (2005). British Muslims' expectations of the government: Secular or Islamic? What schools do British Muslims want for their children?. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission.

Ameli, S.R. & Merali, A. (2004a). Dual Citizenship: British, Islamic or Both? Obligation, Recognition, Respect and Belonging. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission.

Ameli, S. R., Elahi, M. & Merali, A. (2004b). Social discrimination: Across the Muslim divide. British Muslims' expectations of the government, Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission.

Ameli, S. R., Merali, A. (2006). Hijab, meaning, identity, otherization and politics: British Muslim women. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission.

Ameli, S. R., Mohseni, E. & Merali, A. (2013). Once Upon a Hatred: Anti-muslim Experiences in the USA. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission.

Ameli, S. R., Mohseni, E., Shahghasemi, E., Rahimpour, M. (2011). Getting the message: The recurrence of hate crimes in the UK. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission.

Ameli, S.R. & Merali, A. (2015) Environment of Hate: The New Normal for Muslims in the UK. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission

Ameli, S.R., Marandi, S.M., Ahmed, S., Kara, S. & Merali, A. (2007). The British media and Muslim representation: The ideology of demonisation. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission

BBC (7 February 2008). 'Sharia law in UK is 'unavoidable" http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7232661.stm

BBC (25 February 2015). Most British Muslims 'oppose Muhammad cartoons reprisals'. Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-31293196

Breen-Smyth, M. (2015). Presentation at the Prevent Conference, organised by IHRC and CAMPACC, July 2015, London, UK.

COMRES (undated). Available at http://www.comres.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/BBC-Today-Programme_British-Muslims-Poll_FINAL-Tables_Feb2015.pdf

Cook, C. (28 September 2015). 'Profile: William Shawcross, chair of the Charity Commission'. Accessed at: http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/profile-william-shawcross-chair-charity-commission/governance/article/1365006

De Menthon, L. (23 August 2013). 'British Muslims – 'The Suspect Community'?'. Accessed at: http://www.ihrc.org.uk/publications/briefings/10686-british-muslims-the-suspect-community

Dobson, R. (2014) British Muslims face worst job discrimina- tion of any minority group, according to research – The Inde- pendent. [Online] Available at: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home- news/british-muslims-face-worst-job-discrimination-of-any- minority-group-9893211.html Accessed: 03.12.2014

Dodd, V. (24 May 2015). Jihadi threat requires move into 'private space' of UK Muslims, says police chief. Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/24/jihadi-threat-requires-move-into-private-space-of-uk-muslims-says-police-chief

Elgot, J. (6 August 2015) 'NUT defends controversial teaching kit featuring life of Palestinian children'. Accessed at: http://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/aug/06/nut-defends-controversial-teaching-kit-featuring-life-of-palestinian-children

Faulkner Rogers (30 March 2015). 'The majority of voters doubt that Islam is compatible with British values'. Accessed at: https://yougov.co.uk/news/2015/03/30/majority-voters-doubt-islam-compatible-british-val/

Green, C. (2015) Wimbledon 2015: Security tightened for tennis tournament following Tunisia attack – The Independent. [Online] Available at: http://www.independent.co.uk/sport/tennis/wimbledon- 2015-security-tightened-for-tennis-tournament-following-tunisi a-attack-10352672.html

Griffin, T. et. al. (June 2015). The Henry Jackson Society and the Degeneration of British Neo-Conservatism: Liberal Interventionism, Islamophobia and the War on Terror. London: The Cordoba Foundation.

Goodfellow, M. (2015) "The Migrant Crisis" The real issue here is here is inconvenienced British holidaymakers – Media Diversified. [Online] Available at: http://mediadiversified.org/2015/07/30/the-migrant-crisis- the-real-issue-here-is-inconvenienced-british-holidaymakers/

Joseph, S. and D'Harlingue (2012) The Wall Street Journal's Muslims: Representing Islam in American Print News Media. Islamophobia Studies Journal, 1(1), 131-162.

Heath, A. and Martin, J. (2010). 'Can religious affiliation explain 'ethnic' inequalities in the labour market?' in Ethnic and Racial Studies. Vol. 36, Iss. 6, 2013

Hooper, S. (23 July 2015). 'Stifling freedom of expression in UK schools' accessed

at: http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2015/07/stifling-freedom-expression-uk-schools-150721080612049.html

IHRC (13 January 2015) IHRC to end participation in anti-terror laws consultations. Available at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11331-press-release-ihrc-to-end-participation-in-anti-terror-laws-consultations

IHRC (13 January 2015b) Proposed Counter Terrorism and Security Bill: An Orwellian Possibility. Accessed at: http://www.ihrc.org.uk/publications/briefings/11330-proposed-counter-terrorism-and-security-bill-an-orwellian-possibility

IHRC (19 January 2015) 'Govt letter to Muslim leaders betrays Islamophobic premise'. Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11340-press-release-govt-letter-to-muslim-leaders-betrays-islamophobic-premise

IHRC (30 January 2015). 'Schools anti-extremism drive is an attack on Muslim rights'. Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11348-press-release-schools-anti-extremism-drive-is-an-attack-on-muslim-rights

IHRC, (26 February, 2015). 'Muslim loyalty findings belie community's 'fifth column' stereotype' accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11369-press-release-muslim-loyalty-findings-belie-communitys-fifth-column-stereotype

IHRC (2 March 2015). 'New laws should not be a licence to discriminate against Muslims.' Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11370--uk-new-laws-should-not-be-a-licence-to-discriminate-against-muslims

IHRC (5 March 2015). 'Scottish council urged to drop anti-Palestinian school worksheet'. Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11375-press-release-uk-scottish-council-urged-to-drop-anti-palestinian-school-worksheet

IHRC (23 March 2015). 'Home Secretary should be ashamed of playing Islamophobia card'. Accessed at: http://www.ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11393-press-release-home-secretary-should-be-ashamed-of-playing-islamophobia-card

IHRC (22 May 2015). 'Outrage over Muslim schoolchildren being profiled for 'extremism" Accessed at: http://www.ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11441-press-release-uk-outrage-over-muslim-schoolchildren-being-profiled-for-extremism-

IHRC (26 May 2015). 'IHRC addresses Metropolitan Police over anti-Muslim statements'. Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11443-press-release-uk-ihrc-addresses-metropolitan-police-over-anti-muslim-statements

IHRC (22 May 2015). 'Outrage over Muslim schoolchildren being profiled for 'extremism". Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11441-press-release-uk-outrage-over-muslim-schoolchildren-being-profiled-for-extremism-

IHRC (19 June 2015). 'Cameron should look closer to home for reasons for ISIS' rise'. Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11462--press-release-uk-cameron-should-look-closer-to-home-for-reasons-for-isis-rise

IHRC (29 June 2015). 'Cameron just doesn't get the terrorism problem'. Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11474-press-release-uk-cameron-just-doesnt-get-the-terrorism-problem

IHRC (21 July 2015). 'British government is in denial over extremism'. Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11493-press-release-uk-british-government-is-in-denial-over-extremism

IHRC (28 July, 2015). 'IHRC Legal Fund secures first anti-Muslim discrimination victory' accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11503-press-release-uk-ihrc-legal-fund-secures-first-anti-muslim-discrimination-victory

IHRC (21 September 2015). 'Manchester City Council must take action against Islamophobic councillor'. Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11525-press-release-uk-manchester-city-council-must-take-action-against-islamophobic-councillor

IHRC (14 October, 2015). 'Deradicalisation programme is demonising Muslims'. Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11540-press-release-uk-deradicalisation-programme-is-demonising-muslims

IHRC (19 October, 2015). 'Anti-terror laws are a war on Muslims'. Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11544-press-release-uk-anti-terror-laws-are-a-war-on-muslims

IHRC (3 November 2015). 'Why is Cameron so keen to shake Sisi's blood-stained hand?' Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11558-press-release-ukegypt-why-is-cameron-so-keen-to-shake-sisis-blood-stained-hand-

IHRC (13 November 2015). 'Modi visit exposes UK double standards'. Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11561--press-release-uk-modi-visit-exposes-uk-double-standards

IHRC (1 December, 2015). 'IHRC appalled by primary school 'extremism' questionnaire'. Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11573-press-release-uk-ihrc-appalled-by-primary-school-extremism-questionnaire

IHRC (2015). Questions to the Charity Commission regarding Charities Granting Aid to Organisations and Charities in Israel including but not exclusively the Israeli Defense Forces Accessed at: http://ihrc.org.uk/publications/reports/11579-questions-to-the-charity-commission-regarding-charities-granting-aid-to-organisations-and-charities-in-israel-including-but-not-exclusively-the-israeli-defense-forces

Johnson, B. (2014) The children taught at home about murder and bombings – The Telegraph. [Online] Available at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/10671841/The- children-taught-at-home-about-murder-and-bombings.html

Joseph, S. and D'Harlingue (2012) The Wall Street Journal's Muslims: Representing Islam in American Print News Media. Islamophobia Studies Journal, 1(1), 131-162.

Kundnani, A. (2013) The Muslims Are Coming. London: Verso

Levidow, L. et. al. (5 February 2015). Groundless Anti-Terror Laws Must Go. Available at http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/feb/05/groundless-antiterror-laws-must-go

McTague, T. (19 December 2015). 'Nicky Morgan orders review on home schooling amid fears children having minds 'poisoned' by radicalised parents'. Accessed at: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/nicky-morgan-orders-review-on-home-schooling-amid-fears-children-having-minds-poisoned-by-a6779886.html

Oryszczuk, S. (21 October 2015). 'Police confirm two arrests for flying Hezbollah flags'. Accessed at: http://www.jewishnews.co.uk/police-confirm-two-arrests-for-flying-hezbollah-flags/

Poole, E. (2011) Change and Continuity in the Representation of British Muslims Before and After 9/11: The UK Context. Global Media Journal – Canadian Edition, 4(2), 49-62.

Privot, M. (11 November 2014). 'Islamophobia, a foreseeable consequence of ultra-liberalism?

' Accessed at: https://www.opendemocracy.net/author/michaël-privot

Progler, Y. (2008) Encountering Islam: The Politics of Knowledge and Scholarship. Penang: Citizens International

Razack, S.H. (2008). Casting Out: The Eviction of Muslims from Western Law and Politics. Toronto: University of Toronto Press

Analysis of integration policies and public State- endorsed institutions at national/regional levels: Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

Sayyid, S., Law, I., & Sian, K. (2013). Analysis of integration policies and public State- endorsed institutions at national/regional levels: Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). Centre for Ethnicity and Racism Studies, University of Leeds (CERS/ULeeds). Accessed at: http://www.ces.uc.pt/projectos/tolerace/media/WP2/WorkingPapers%202_UK.pdf

Islamophobia or anti-Muslim racism poses a growing threat to the democratic foundations of European constitutions and social peace as well as the coexistence of different cultures throughout Europe. Both civil society actors and states should acknowledge the seriousness of this issue and develop concrete policies to counter Islamophobia.

As the leading think tank in Turkey, SETA felt an urgent need to address this problem. In fact, there are still people denying the very existence of racism against Muslims. Many state and civil society institutions, from the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) to the countless civil society organisations throughout Europe, have done priceless work to prove and establish the opposite. Yet, institutions like the FRA publish only irregular reports on a restricted number of countries while most civil society organisations tackle racism in general and only few focus on Islamophobia in particular -this is the urgent gap our report wishes to fill.

The European Islamophobia Report (EIR) is an annual report, which is presented for the first time this year. It currently comprises 25 national reports regarding each state and the tendencies of Islamophobia in each respective country. The current report features the work of 37 extraordinary scholars. In the years to come we will attempt to cover even more countries. This report aims to enable policymakers as well as the public to discuss the issue of Islamophobia with the help of qualitative data. At the same time, several of its unique characteristic features make a difference to the current state of the debate on Islamophobia. Studies on Islamophobia have in the past predominantly concentrated on Western Europe. This is especially the case with reports focusing on Islamophobia. The EIR is the first to cover a wide range of Eastern European countries like Serbia, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania and Latvia. This will enrich the debate on racism in general and Islamophobia in Europe in particular.

About SETA

Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA) is a non-profit research institute based in Turkey dedicated to innovative studies on national, regional and international issues. SETA is the leading think tank in Turkey and has offices in Ankara, Istanbul, Washington D.C. and Cairo. The objective of SETA is to produce up-to-date and accurate knowledge and analyses in the fields of politics, economy, and society, and inform policy makers and the public on changing political, economic, social, and cultural conditions. Through research reports, publications, brain storming sessions, conferences and policy recommendations, SETA seeks to guide leaders in government, civil society, and business, and contributes to informed decision making mechanisms.

SETA

ANKARA • ISTANBUL • WASHINGTON D.C. • CAIRO

9 786054 023684