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EIGHT OIC OBSERVATORY
REPORT ON
ISLAMOPHOBIA

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FOREWORD BY THE OIC SECRETARY GENERAL

I am pleased to introduce the Eight Report on Islamophobia prepared by the OIC Observatory. The present report covers the period from May 2014 to April 2015.



Secretary General of OIC
Iyad bin Amin Madani

The present report, like that of its predecessors, has been prepared to meet the directives of the highest political decision making organs of the OIC.

It is a regrettable fact that manifestations and incidents of hostile, defamatory, discriminatory, xenophobic and racist discourse and actions against Muslims especially in the West is still on the increase in their scope and intensity.

Although as yet there exists no internationally agreed definition of the phenomenon of Islamophobia, Islamophobia can be defined as a contemporary form of racism and xenophobia motivated by unfounded fear, mistrust and hatred of Muslims and Islam. Islamophobia is also manifested through intolerance, discrimination and adverse political, media and even academic public discourse. Furthermore, differentiating from classical racism and xenophobia, Islamophobia is mainly based on radicalization and demonization of a religion and its followers. As such, Islamophobia is a direct and clear assault on the human rights and dignity of Muslims.

In that respect, Islamophobia causes serious concern not only to Muslims, but also to all people who have a responsible outlook to contemporary developments and who wish to live in a peaceful and stable environment, as Islamophobia also gives room for resurgence of physical and psychological attacks on Muslim minorities, paving the way for serious disturbance of public order, peace and international stability.

I believe that not only the human rights mechanisms of international organizations, but also the whole international community should address this threat properly and firmly.

On the other hand, the OIC believes that negative stereotyping or denigration of persons due to their religion is still another contemporary manifestation of religious hatred, discrimination and xenophobia. Such stereotyping applies not only to individuals, but also to their belief systems. It results in negative portrayal of the followers of those religions and leads to incitement to hate, discrimination, intolerance and violence against them, hence directly affecting their human rights.

I would like to underline that the OIC attaches high importance to the right to freedom of opinion and expression. It is nevertheless our firm belief that the exercise of this right carries with it special duties and responsibilities.

As it is well known, international human rights law clearly prohibits advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred as an important safeguard to ensure the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. The task of improving the human rights condition in a global scale, on the other hand, is not the duty of a single region, group or organization alone. This task befalls on the shoulders of everyone. It is a task that must be borne collectively by all nations represented under the umbrella of the United Nations.

Similarly, the OIC believes that tackling conflicts solely from the angle of security cannot lead to lasting and comprehensive solutions. Short term solutions must give way to mid and long-term approaches requiring proper understanding of the root causes of the conflicts, which often lie in political grievances, backwardness, underdevelopment, lack of good governance, human rights violations and concerns related to preservation of national, ethnic, cultural and religious identities.

In that respect, I am pleased to inform the readers of this report that the OIC has taken concrete steps in the domain of promoting human rights while respecting human dignity. These steps include the adoption of the OIC Plan of Action for Advancement of Women and the establishment of an Independent Permanent Commission on Human Rights. The vision of moderation and modernization of the OIC has thus been put into practice in these vitally important areas.

Finally, I would like to reiterate OIC's call as well as willingness for a constructive and result oriented engagement with all stakeholders, to move beyond rhetorical calls for dialogue to a sustained and structured engagement that would accommodate everybody.

Iyad Ameen Madani
Secretary General of the OIC

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Eight Annual report of the OIC Islamophobia Observatory covers the period from May 2014 to April 2015. The report contains 5 (five) main chapters and 2 (two) Annexes.

Chapter 1 on '*Islamophobia, Intolerance, and Discriminations against Muslims*' describes the increasing trend of Islamophobia under the covering period, indicated by the growing fear against Islam and Muslims in certain parts of the world which led to negative perceptions towards the later. Within such circumstances, Islam was seen as a religion of intrinsic violence whose disciples had a tendency to spread harm to the followers of other religions. Islam was also portrayed as an extreme and violent religion prone to bloodshed, a stigma that trigger intolerant attitudes amongst non-Muslims *vis-à-vis* their otherwise. These negative stereotyping eventually ended up into the dread or hatred of Islam that includes multi-level discrimination against Muslims around the world, reflected through exclusion of Muslims from the economic, social, and public life.

Chapter 2 reveals '*Manifestations of Islamophobia*' around the world, classified into 3 (three) different categories based on geographic consideration: a) the United States and Canada; b) Europe, and; c) the rest of the world. In addition to these, d) 'Islamophobic trends' forms another category under the same chapter as for the latest shows a general trend of fear against Islam and its attires which is not necessary regional or geographic in term of character. For this latest category of Chapter 2, the Observatory focus on Islamophobic gestures and policies against Hijab, Veil, and Burqa; and also discriminations against Muslims in Employment.

Meanwhile, *the first category* of Chapter 2 provides a review on how Islamophobia remained to strongly exist in the United States and Canada, and how it continued to take root through intensive media campaigns and public discourses showing 'fear' towards Islam; and also through the significant number of incidents occurring sporadically against Muslims, mosques, Islamic centers, and Islamic attires. *The second category* reveals the fact that more and more Europeans were critical of Muslim population, a condition that feeds to Islamophobia in the continent and tends to lead European societies towards intolerant attitudes against Muslim minorities. It also presents evidence that the number of European Islamophobes keeps increasing during the period under review, and that the anti-Islam sentiments has been nibbling the whole European continent. Finally for Chapter 2, *the third category* exposes the concerning trend of Islamophobia in 3 (three) locus of different continents: a) Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar; b) the rise of Islamophobia in Australia; and c) situation of Tatar Muslims in Crimea; within which Islamophobia trend deserves particular attention, despite the not-less-significance of other Islamophobic trend in different locus of the rest of the world.

Chapter 3 highlights some '*Positive Developments*' in term of actions, attitudes, sentiments, initiatives as well as other steps and positions taken by governments or by non-Muslim individuals against Islamophobia. All of these positive signs were classified into eight categories through which such friendly signs were reflected, comprising: court decision against Islamophobes, politicians views on Islam, counter-balances to Far-Rights, anti-PEGIDA trends, support on mosques, positive attitude towards hijabs, development on inter-faiths, and another classification of general issues.

Chapter 4 presents the OIC's '*initiatives and activities to counter Islamophobia*' which covers steps, activities, and engagements with the international community within the framework of finding satisfactory and common solutions to fight the growing trend of Islamophobia worldwide, while trying to address its root causes. Among these activities, some initiatives and actions are included in this report such as: deploring Czech President Miloš Zeman's Statement against Islam; conducting on-the-ground Post-Charlie Hebdo Inquiries; optimizing the implementation of Resolution 16/18 through Istanbul Process, and; organizing an extraordinary meeting of the OIC Executive Committee on Combating Terrorism and Violent Extremism.

Chapter 5, which is the last chapter of this report, presents the *conclusion* of the overall chapters, followed by a set of *recommendation* that proposes some steps and actions suggested to be taken by relevant stakeholders, including OIC Member States, International Organizations and Western countries, while to encourage them to consider taking actions to renounce extremism and to counter Islamophobia. The main background of this recommendation is the fact that Islamophobia trend worldwide during the covered period has reached an alarming level hence requires immediate actions at international and national levels. Collective and worldwide endeavor to combat Islamophobia is expected to minimize its negative impacts on social life based on tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

Finally, the report also includes 2 (two) Annexes. *The first* is showing a list of Islamophobic incidents happened around the world under the covering period, and; *the second* is a breakthrough document showing the strong commitment of the OIC as well as its principled position against terrorism and extremism which, at the same time address one of the root causes of Islamophobia.

INTRODUCTION

The term of Islamophobia has been widely recognized and used to define social reproduced prejudices and aversion to Islam and Muslims, as well as actions and practices that bring harm to persons and attires on the basis that they are, or perceived to be Muslims and Islam. Prejudice, hatred, or fear of Islam hence are the keywords, reflected through the unfair treatments and sentiments against Muslims around the world of different trace of history, including during the period under review of this report, which is from May 2014 to April 2015.

As a matter of fact, Islamophobia has been existing since long before its definition was invented, but the Observatory recorded the period under review was particularly amongst the hardest time for Muslims, especially those who were living as minority groups in non-Muslim countries. They were blamed, or victimized by hatred resulted from bad deeds they never did: the actions of killing, kidnapping, and blowing up of innocent people by terrorists and radical groups claiming to be Muslims, and to be doing such terrible actions in the false name of this peaceful religion. Without delay, negative perceptions and fear against Islam were rapidly escalating under the covering period.

One among other major factors contributing towards this growing negative perception should be the ISIS phenomenon, despite the ongoing similar forms of extremism in different parts of the world, such as Boko Haram in Nigeria, Al Shabab in Somalia, and Taleban in Afghanistan. During the period under review, most of eyes were looking at the turbulence happening in the Middle East, as the ISIS phenomenon was rampaging in Iraq and Syria, while beheading some innocent Westerners for political gains. Cameras of worldwide media pointed at the heinous acts by so-relatively-few extremists, skewing the audience's understanding about Islam as a whole. ISIS's ideology was then blatantly associated with Islamic values and jurisprudence, despite the contrary facts in addition to the clear stance of Muslim countries against ISIS as well as its radical ideology. Worse still, the series of ISIS violent acts against western civilians have been abusively manipulated to defame Islam and Muslims in general. The trending topic for instance was saying that "The ISIS has displayed the true face of Islam"; that "Islam has no place in civilized society", and; that "Muslims cannot live in a society based on equality and liberty". In other instances, Islam was paralleled with Nazism and Fascism. Misleading interpretation on Islam was building up and becoming dominant in certain part of the non-Muslim world, particularly in the West.

Such an abrupt prejudice was a kind of pity since Muslims worldwide had never recognized the legitimacy of ISIS, and even widely-respected clerics like Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi (Qatar), Grand Mufti Shawqi Allam of al-Azhar (Egypt) Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdul Aziz al-Sheikh (Saudi Arabia) had not only declared ISIS an illegitimate caliphate, but also deemed it a danger to Islam. On behalf of the tragedies done in its name, however, it became common around the world to dismiss Islam as a religion that desires worldwide domination through violence, and during the period under review many people had in fact thought that way. Very unfortunately, they can hardly be blamed as media and public discourses made it all too easy to believe.

That was unfortunately not the end of the bad story. Such a negative stereotype soon transformed into a bolder stigma against Islam and Muslims when violent acts claiming Islam as justification continued to be undertaken, now was not only by ISIS in Iraq or Syria, but also by extremists living in the West; and to cite amongst the recent cases were the terrorist attack against Charlie Hebdo's Headquarter in Paris in January 2015 and other subsequent attacks in some European countries. These series of attack were further bringing significant impacts towards stigmatizing Islam and Muslims, not less than those of 9/11 tragedy fourteen years ago. At the first place, Charlie Hebdo and its companies have provoked a massive backlash against Muslims and Islamic attires in the West and to give further impression that

Islam and Muslims were becoming less and less welcomed by the western societies. These have also left the western public with a false evidence that Islam is a religion that encourage violence while justified the xenophobic idea that Islam is NOT compatible with liberal values, hence a threat towards the later. Worse still, it created a profound setback to the constructive debates on Freedom of Expression vis-à-vis its limits and manifestation. In brief, during the period under review: the ISIS phenomenon has smeared the peaceful image of Islam, and extremism has added an insult into the already-existing injury. All these factors, altogether, have helped pushing the Islamophobia around the world, up to the sky.

Therefore, the OIC Islamophobia Observatory is glad to submit this report to Member States during these critical period. In fact, this report is partly aimed to serving an annual update on Islamophobia incidents around the world, but more particularly at the current circumstance, it is expected to raise further awareness amongst Member States that during the latest twelve months period, Islamophobia has been highly increasing here and there, especially in the West. Finally, the Observatory would be of the fervent hope that this challenge would be collectively addressed for the sake of Ummah.

1. ISLAMOPHOBIA, INTOLERANCE AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MUSLIMS

1.1. ISLAMOPHOBIA

The trend of Islamophobia under the covering period was increasing, and one of the most apparent signs was that a very significant number of non-Muslims in the West started to see Islam as a religion of 'intrinsic violence' and that its adherence had a tendency to spread harm to the followers of other religions. These non-Muslims tend to equate terrorists claiming to act on behalf of Islam to those the majority of Muslims who always promote peace and tolerance. They perceive the conduct of the horrible acts was undertaken as Islam requires the perpetrators to do so. In addition, Xenophobic discourses denigrating Islam has also gained more and more audiences.

For instance, a Danish psychologist, Nicolai Sennels, wrote a book entitled '*Among Criminal Muslims: A Psychologist's Experience from the Copenhagen Municipality*', and in an essay supporting the book, he claimed that 'Islam creates monsters.' Sennels said Islam was different from other religions because the way it was taught brainwashed its youth with violent messages. Parents inflicted violence on their children repeatedly, Sennels claimed, and at the same time, delivered religious ideology. He said this behavior made Muslim extremists far more violent than extremists of other religious faiths. The brainwashing, as Sennels termed it, began very early on in a child's life, and religious messages were repeated vigorously along with a heavy dose of physical discipline. It was this combination of pain and reinforcement, Sennels claimed, that created Islamic "monsters" who then felt justified in torturing and killing innocent people. Sennels pointed out that parents wanted to indoctrinate their children into the religion as early as possible so that the kids would remain Muslim instead of looking to another faith. He went on to point out that Muslim culture lagged far behind in the "understanding of human development," and therefore, the techniques that, in Sennels' word 'Westerners would call child abuse' were deeply ingrained and normalized among Muslim parents as correct child-rearing strategies. Sennels said that in Muslim culture, the idea of "constructive criticism" did not exist, and any criticism of Muslim identity would result in extreme anger and quite possibly, physical violence. The Quran itself, Sennels claimed, did not allow for the idea of tolerance, and called for Muslims to separate from non-Muslims and viewed people of other faiths as inferior. This, in turn raised hatred, Sennels claimed, and he explained: "*The cultural and psychological cocktail of anger, low self-esteem, victim mentality, a willingness to be blindly guided by outer authorities, and an aggressive and discriminatory view toward non-Muslims, forced upon Muslims through pain, intimidation and mind-numbing repetitions of the Quran, is the reason why Islam creates monsters.*"¹

Regretfully, this kind of misleading perception was adopted not only by ordinary citizens or scholars, but also by prominent persons. President Milos Zeman of the Czech Republic for instance, stated without any doubt in May 2014, that Islamic ideology, rather than individual groups of religious fundamentalists, was behind violent actions similar to the gun attack at the Jewish Museum in Brussels that killed four people. As widely aired by media in that week, two Israeli tourists and a member of the museum staff were killed by an unknown shooter on 24 May 2014, and another staff member died of his injuries on the following day. Zeman's speech sharply condemning the hideous attack, posted on his official website on 27 May 2014, *inter alia*, stating: "*I will not be calmed down by statements that it is only small marginal groups. I believe, on the contrary, this xenophobia and this racism or anti-Semitism stem from the very nature of the ideology on which these fanatical groups rely.*" He even said that one of the sacred texts of Islam called for the killing of Jews, so that the President was intentionally trying to link the Islamic ideology with violence.²

¹ See *Liberty Voice's* entry "Islam Creates Monsters Says Psychologist", in at: <http://guardianlv.com/2014/05/islam-creates-monsters-says-psychologist/>, retrieved on 03.05.2014

² See *Prague Post's* entry "Zeman: Islam is to blame for attack on Jewish Museum in Brussels", in at: <http://www.praguepost.com/eu-news/39288-zeman-islam-is-to-blame-for-attack-on-jewish-museum-in-brussels>, retrieved on 29.05.2014

Observing the period under review, the active agent towards the spreading 'fear' of Islam amongst westerners should be the media, since the language often used in media have perpetuated negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims. Words like 'barbarism' and 'hostile' were very common at discussions on Islamic groups in western media. For instance, Bill Maher, an American comedian while the host of a popular TV program in the US, was spouted in his viral debate in October 2014 with Ben Affleck saying that "*Islam is the mother lode of bad ideas.*"³ Many prominent speakers on the issue excuse other works of violence, such as those committed by The White Supremacists, Fundamentalist Christians, etc. as the work of "a few crazy people," while the violence of Muslim groups was classified by the media as 'dangerous terrorist attacks.' By always casting violence by radical Muslims, in this light, Islamophobia is being cultured in Western minds, and with ongoing turmoil in the Middle East and the expansion of the jihadist group ISIS, the Islamic faith had increasingly fallen victim to this sort of public prejudice.

In addition, it was unfortunate for the Observatory to note that during the period under review, the mainstream media tend to stay silent and deaf when the authoritative Muslim voices were denouncing ISIS, as they have denounced al-Qaeda and terrorism in general for years. In December 2014 for instance, over 100 leading Muslim scholars from every continent issued an open letter to Al-Baghdadi, the leader of ISIS who self-proclaimed 'Caliph', showing how ISIS' ideology and actions stand in flagrant contradiction to traditional Islamic teachings and morality. Such a statement has special weight in the Muslim world, since scholars such as those who signed the letter were the highest authority in Islam. Nonetheless, the mainstream media has taken little or no notice of this significant event. Nor have they taken much notice of the many other Muslim denunciations of the terrorist group, including a statement by the Saudi Arabia Muslim clerical council, an invitation by German Muslims to pray with them at their Friday prayers that no youth go to join ISIS (an action in which 2,000 mosques all across Germany joined), a call by British imams to join in prayer for humanitarian workers threatened by ISIS, and many other statements and actions by local, regional, and national Muslim leaders.⁴

The Observatory also sees a significant role played by internet in spurring violence and hate speech against Muslims. According to report by an advocacy group in San Francisco released on May 2014, anti-Muslim hate speech on the Internet had become a commonplace to spread Islamophobic ideas and hate against Muslims. The report contained examples of hate speech and how it could lead to violence. The report also gives an example of Facebook page of anti-Muslim blogger Pamela Geller, which grew from roughly 19,000 followers in July 2013 to some 78,000 people as of late April 2014.⁵

1.2. GROWING INTOLERANCE AGAINST MUSLIMS

Islamophobia exists almost everywhere in the world; from Canada in the North to New Zealand in the South. However, during the period under review, the clearest sign of Islamophobia which is the anti-Islam incidents, were mostly happening in western realms comprising the United States, Canada, Western and Central Europe, Australia and Oceania; and many of these countries were known as the defender of liberal democracy that uphold multiculturalism, and putting forward the principles of equal rights and tolerance.

Meanwhile, the Observatory noted that Muslim communities in the West were continuously integrated and identified with the indigenous societies amidst blanket suspicion against Islam; resentments in day-to-day life; assaults on their

³ See *Guardian's* entry "Hailey Sanden: Media Coverage Perpetuates Negative Stereotypes of All Muslims", in at: <http://ucsddguardian.org/2014/10/19/quick-takes-islamophobia/retrieved> on 1.11.2014

⁴ See *Peoples World Blog's* entry "Muslims worldwide denounce ISIS, but Islamophobes aren't listening", in at: <http://peoplesworld.org/muslims-worldwide-denounce-isis-but-islamophobes-aren-t-listening/>, retrieved on 01.12.2014

⁵ The Report can be downloaded here: <http://www.muslimadvocates.org/wp-content/uploads/Click-Here-to-End-Hate.pdf>, in at: <http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/lifestyle/57909736-80/report-speech-hate-muslim.html.csp>, retrieved on 07.05.2014

community; and deepen fear and alienation. Islam was constantly but falsely portrayed as an extremist, violent religion prone to bloodshed, a typical stigma as was again shown for instance by Bill Maher's statement saying that Islam is "*the only religion that acts like the mafia*."⁶ Together with all wrong perception about Islam, this stigma has driven intolerant attitudes and negative sentiments amongst the westerners towards Muslims living as immigrants in western countries.

A survey report released on 12 May 2014 by the Pew Research Center⁷ indicated that a significant number of Europeans were critical of the Muslim population and that this European intolerance poses serious danger for these Muslim minorities. Surveying European attitudes towards minority groups living within the European Union. The findings indicated that there were considerable negative sentiments among seven European countries about minorities. The survey also indicated that the negative attitudes were more common among people on the ideological right, paving the way for growing concerns over right-wing extremism and Islamophobia in the EU. According to the survey, people in Italy, Poland and Greece were the most critical of Muslims among the seven European countries. In Italy, 63% of Italians were unfavorable about Muslims living in their country. In Greece and Poland, the results were almost the same with more than half of those surveyed having negative attitudes towards Muslims. In Spain, 46% were critical of Muslims. In addition, the other three countries - the majority in France, Britain and Germany - had been unexpectedly more favorable toward Muslim population living in their countries.⁸

The second part of the survey concluded that people on the right side of the political spectrum among those seven European countries were the most critical of Muslims. The important fact that needed to be focused on was that rising intolerance and negative attitudes towards Muslim people were mostly tied to ideologies with 40% of the French on the political right giving Muslims an unfavorable rating compared to 17% of those on the political left. In Germany, the situation was seen as almost the same as in France with 47% on the right having negative sentiments towards the Muslim population. More than 50% points in Poland, Greece, Italy and Spain indicated that the political right in those European countries were mostly critical of Muslim communities, which was expected to lead to growing intolerance and the rise of rightwing extremism that could threaten the security of the Muslim population living in the EU for many years.⁹

1.3. DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MUSLIMS

Islamophobia is the dread or hatred of Islam that includes discrimination against Muslims through their exclusion from the economic, social, and public life of the nation, and during the period under review, Muslims around the world experienced discrimination at different levels: in the minds, in the discourses, in the market, at works, on street, and everywhere of their day-to-day life.

The sign of such discrimination was very apparent, once again, in the western liberal democracies, where 'immigrant' Muslims were living as minority groups and had to struggle for their blending with the rest majority. The type of discrimination against Muslims was very diverse, as is indicated at the list of incidents attached to this report as **Annex 1**. However, at this section the Observatory wish to present a non-empirical evidence that discrimination against Muslims has indeed rooted very strongly in the souls and minds of western societies.

⁶ See *Salon's* entry "Islam is the only religion that acts like the mafia that will f****g kill you if you say the wrong thing", in: http://www.salon.com/2014/10/04/bill_maher_islams_the_only_religion_that_acts_like_the_mafia_that_will_fking_kill_you_if_you_say_the_wrong_thing/, retrieved on 25.10.2014

⁷ See *Daily Sabah's* entry "European Intolerance Poses Serious Danger for Muslim Population", in: <http://www.dailysabah.com/europe/2014/05/16/european-intolerance-poses-serious-danger-for-muslim-population>, retrieved on 17.05.2014

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

In theory, freedom of religion applies to any liberal democracies, but in practice, it seems to elude certain minorities. For instance in the United States, a society with a Christian majority and a long cultural legacy of Judeo-Christian traditions, Muslims minority suffered plenty of persecution¹⁰. Together with the statistical evidence gathered during the period under review, the Pew Research Center's report is used by the Observatory to draw such a conclusion, and this report should be given a particular credit since it provides a clear picture on how the western societies, particularly Americans, have discriminated Muslims in their countries.

Of this sociological research, there are at least 2 (two) findings underlined by the Observatory:

- a) Public feeling about Muslims as a religious group, and;
- b) Religions' perception towards each other.

First, the research revealed Americans' feeling about religious groups in the US such as Jews, Catholics, Evangelicals, Atheists and Muslims,¹¹ showing that Jews, Catholics and evangelical Christians were viewed warmly by the American public. When asked to rate each group on a "feeling thermometer" ranging from 0 to 100 – where 0 reflects the coldest, most negative possible rating and 100 the warmest, most positive rating – all three groups received an average rating of 60 or higher (63 for Jews, 62 for Catholics and 61 for evangelical Christians). Moreover, 44% of the public rated all three groups in the warmest part of the scale (67 or higher). Buddhists, Hindus and Mormons received neutral ratings on average, ranging from 48 for Mormons to 53 for Buddhists. The public viewed atheists and Muslims more coldly; atheists received an average rating of 41, and Muslims an average rating of 40. Fully 41% of the public rated Muslims in the coldest part of the thermometer (33 or below), and 40% rated atheists in the coldest part.

Second, the Observatory underlines that discrimination against Muslims doesn't exist only amongst the western public, but also between religious groups, and these religious groups were rated more positively by their own members than by people from other religious backgrounds. Catholics as a group, for example, received an average thermometer rating of 80 from Americans who described themselves as Catholic, compared with 58 from non-Catholics. Similarly, evangelical Christians received an average rating of 79 from people who described themselves as born-again or evangelical Christians,

U.S. Public Has Warmest Feelings for Jews, Catholics and Evangelicals

Respondents in a Pew Research Center poll were asked:

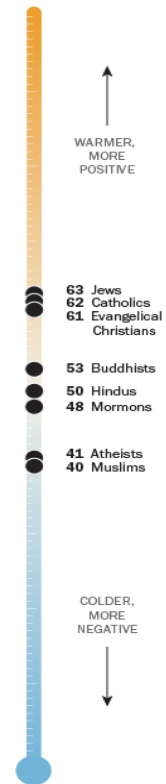
"We'd like to get your feelings toward a number of groups on a 'feeling thermometer.' A rating of 0 degrees means you feel as cold and negative as possible. A rating of 100 degrees means you feel as warm and positive as possible. You would rate the group at 50 degrees if you don't feel particularly positive or negative toward the group."

Results at right show total mean ratings of each religious group

0 to 33 34 to 66 67 to 100

Source: American Trends Panel (wave 4). Survey conducted May 30-June 30, 2014.

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Americans' Ratings of Religious Groups

	Among Total Population (including members of the group in question)				Among everyone EXCEPT members of the group in question			
	Mean Thermometer Rating	Percentage rating group... Warmest (67 or above)	Middle (34-66)	Colest (33 or below)	Mean Thermometer Rating	Percentage rating group... Warmest (67 or above)	Middle (34-66)	Colest (33 or below)
Jews	63*	44%	44%	10%	63*	44%	44%	10%
Catholics	62*	44%	41%	14%	58*	37%	46%	17%
Evangelicals	61*	44%	35%	20%	52*	30%	42%	27%
Buddhists	53*	31%	46%	22%	53*	30%	46%	22%
Hindus	50*	24%	52%	23%	50*	24%	52%	23%
Mormons	48*	23%	46%	29%	47*	22%	47%	30%
Atheists	41*	20%	37%	40%	40*	19%	38%	41%
Muslims	40*	16%	41%	41%	40*	15%	41%	41%

American Trends Panel (wave 4). Survey conducted May 30-June 30, 2014. REL3a-h. Respondents were asked to rate each religious group on a "feeling thermometer" ranging from 0 (coldest, most negative) to 100 (warmest, most positive). Respondents who declined to provide a rating for a group are not included in the calculation of the mean ratings and their responses are not shown here.

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¹⁰ See *Guardian's* entry "Thomas Finn: Muslims and Atheists both experience discrimination", in: <http://ucsdsdguardian.org/2014/10/19/quick-takes-islamophobia/retrieved> on 1.11.2014

¹¹ See *Pew Forum's* entry "How American feel about religious groups", in: <http://www.pewforum.org/2014/07/16/how-americans-feel-about-religious-groups/>, retrieved on 17.07.2014

compared with an average rating of 52 from non-evangelicals. Among non-evangelicals, roughly as many people give evangelicals a cold rating (27%) as give them a warm rating (30%).

Both Jews and Atheists Rated Evangelicals Negatively, but Evangelicals Rated Jews Highly Attitudes among religious groups toward each other range from mutual regard to unrequited positive feelings to mutual coldness. Catholics and evangelicals, the two largest Christian groups being measured, generally viewed each other warmly. White evangelical Protestants gave Catholics an average thermometer rating of 63; Catholics rated evangelicals at 57. Evangelicals also held very positive views of Jews, with white evangelical Protestants giving Jews an average thermometer rating of 69. Only Jews themselves rated Jews more positively. But that warmth is not mutual: despite evangelicals' warm feelings toward Jews, Jews tended to give evangelicals a much cooler rating (34 on average).

When asked about other non-Christian groups, evangelicals tended to express more negative views. White evangelicals assigned Buddhists an average rating of 39, Hindus 38, Muslims 30 and atheists 25. The chilliness between evangelicals and atheists went both ways. Atheists gave evangelical Christians a cold rating of 28 on average. Atheists gave largely positive ratings to several non-Christian religious groups, including Buddhists (who received an average rating of 69 from atheists), Jews (61) and Hindus (58). Atheists tended to give much cooler ratings to Muslims and the Christian groups asked about in the survey. Atheists themselves were rated positively by atheists and agnostics, and they received neutral ratings from Jews and those who described their religion as "nothing in particular." Atheists were rated much more negatively by other religious groups.

Religious Groups' Ratings of Each Other

MOST NEGATIVE 0 to 33 34 to 66 67 to 100 MOST POSITIVE

Mean thermometer ratings given to ...

Ratings given by...	Jews	Catholics	Evangelical Christians	Buddhists	Hindus	Mormons	Atheists	Muslims
Total	63*	62*	61*	53*	50*	48*	41*	40*
Protestant	64	60	73	45	44	47	32	36
White evangelical	69	63	82	39	38	47	25	30
White mainline	63	62	62	54	50	52	41	37
Black Protestant	59	55	73	41	42	42	30	44
Catholic	61	80	57	55	53	51	38	40
Jewish	89	58	34	61	57	48	55	35
Unaffiliated	58	52	41	64	56	44	60	45
Atheist	61	47	28	69	58	39	82	44
Agnostic	58	49	37	70	60	47	66	47
Nothing in particular	58	54	45	62	54	45	53	44

Source: American Trends Panel (wave 4). Survey conducted May 30-June 30, 2014. Respondents were asked to rate each religious group on a "feeling thermometer" ranging from 0 (coldest, most negative) to 100 (warmest, most positive).

Note: Respondents were asked to rate "evangelical Christians" on the feeling thermometer; the question did not ask specifically about white evangelicals or about evangelical Protestants.

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At the least point, these findings present evidence that Islam and Muslims have been treated discriminatively by certain societies.

2. MANIFESTATIONS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

2.1. Islamophobia in the USA and Canada

Both the United States and Canada are very significant in term of Islamophobia issue, and these two have been closely monitored by the Observatory during the period under review. The United States is of particular significance, for the statistics of Islamophobic incident in this country is much larger than that in Canada. More particularly, it is because the number of Muslims living in the US is demographically much higher compared to in any other western country; and the toll shows its continuing growth from time to time, as referred to by the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies that conduct Census on Religion every 10 years. The most recent data released by this US census authority found that Islam was the second largest religion in 20 (twenty) American states after Christianity, and they lived mostly in the Midwest and South.¹² The report gave enough details to highlight that Muslims outnumber any other religious groups in the United States except Christians, even demographically surpassed the number of Jews which, together with Christians, forms the 'indigenous' Judeo-Christian American Society.

This fast growing number of Muslims is somehow considered as a threat by some to the American identity, creating the feeling of fear among the later, perceiving that sooner or later the Muslims' identity, due to their multiplication, would invade and replace the identity of America; that Muslim immigrants will bring with them new values and ways of life which are not entirely compatible with Western values; that the Sharia or the Islamic law will eventually replace the Liberal Democracy of which they have struggled since many generations. This fear of Islam had increased sharply and becomes a phobia of Islam and of anything associated with this religion, a psychological circumstance which turns even worse because of another phenomenon of the most recent two decades: extremism and terrorism falsely claiming Islam as justification.

2.1.1. Polls and Reports on Islamophobia in the United States and Canada

During the period under review, the Observatory notes that a number of polls and surveys had been conducted with the objective of measuring Americans' and Canadians' public sentiments towards Muslims of different time-sequences or with regard to certain issues related to Islam. Some reports relevant to Islamophobia were also released by authorities in both countries, and of these polls and reports, the Observatory highlights the followings:

- a. Hatred against Muslims has been growing in the United States;
- b. Hate Crimes against Muslims and Jews in the United States rises even higher due to violent acts on the falsely name of Islam in different countries;
- c. The majority of Americans used to stand against the cartoons depicting Prophet Mohammed (pbuh), but this stance has changed to the opposite since Charlie Hebdo incident;
- d. Americans have now been starting to question the peaceful nature of Islam due to the spreading violence claiming this religion as the background; and
- e. Most of Canadians living in Quebec disagreed with the existence of Mosques in their city.

¹² See *onislam's* entry "Islam largest religion in 20 US States", in: <http://www.onislam.net/english/news/americas/473379-islam-2nd-largest-religion-in-20-us-states.html>, retrieved on 06.06.2014

To be precise, South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT) released a report titled 'Under Suspicion, Under Attack' presenting documents over 150 incidents of hate violence and xenophobic rhetoric by political figures and government officials that occurred in the United States nationwide from 2011 through mid-2014. The Report stated that South Asians, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Middle Eastern, and Arab communities faced an increasingly hostile climate in the United States, and to emphasize the continuing trend of Islamophobia in the US.¹³

This report also revealed that:

- Over 80% of documented hate violence incidents were motivated by anti-Muslim sentiment. Similarly, an overwhelming majority—over 90%—of xenophobic political comments were characterized by anti-Muslim bias.
- There was a 40% annual average increase in xenophobic political comments since SAALT's last analysis, released in 2010.
- Hate violence 'hot spots' included the New York City/New Jersey metropolitan area; Chicago and its outlying suburbs; and Southern and Northern California.

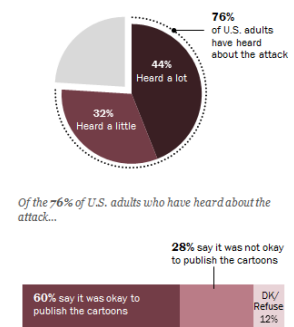
These findings were supported by a report issued the New York City Police Department (NYPD) which is in charge for public safety in that US city. According to NYPD, suspected hate crimes against Jewish and Muslim people were up following unrest overseas, especially since 1st July 2014, when reports about unrest in Gaza and the Islamic State group became front-page news.¹⁴

The incidents were not from any organized group, and the following is the breakdown, according to the NYPD:

- Hate crimes in general are up 17 percent.
- Anti-Semitic hate crimes are up 39 percent.
- Anti-Muslim hate crimes are up 143 percent.
- The increase jumped after July 1 from eight crimes a month to about 18 crimes a month.

Meanwhile, a terrorist act happening outside the United States that brought about significant impact on the perception of Americans against Islam should be the Charlie Hebdo incident in Paris. A new poll from the Pew Research Center showed that the majority of Americans was now standing for the derogatory cartoons, reversing their opposing stance since 2006. According to this report, those who had been following the matter said strongly that publishing cartoons depicting the prophet Muhammad was okay, 60 percent to 28 percent.¹⁵ There was no direct comparison to previous polling asking the same question, but the 32-point edge in favor of publishing the cartoon appeared markedly different from a similar poll conducted the last time such cartoons were in the news by USA Today/CNN/Gallup poll in 2005 and 2006. Since Charlie Hebdo, those numbers had reversed; for about twice as many Americans thought the European newspapers which published such images were acting irresponsibly (61 percent) than those who thought it was responsible to publish them (29 percent). The same poll asked another question getting at the issue from a

Majority Has Heard of Hebdo Attack, Says Publishing Cartoons Depicting Prophet Muhammad Was Okay



Of the 76% of U.S. adults who have heard about the attack...

Survey conducted Jan. 22-25, 2015.
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¹³ See *American Bazaar Online's* entry "Hatred against Muslims growing in America, Says Report", in: <http://www.americanbazaaronline.com/2014/09/10/hatred-muslims-growing-america-says-report/>, retrieved on 11.09.2014

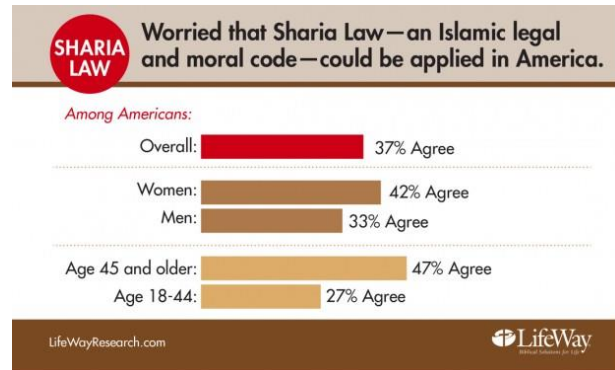
¹⁴ See *CBS'* entry "NYPD: Hate crimes against Muslims and Jews up due to unrest overseas", in: <http://newyork.cbslocal.com/2014/09/17/nypd-hate-crimes-against-muslims-jews-up-due-to-unrest-overseas/>, retrieved on 18.09.2014

¹⁵ See *Washington Post's* entry "Americans Support Publishing Muhammad Cartoons Nine Years after Saying they Were Irresponsible", in: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/wp/2015/01/29/americans-support-publishing-muhammad-cartoons-nine-years-after-saying-they-were-irresponsible/>, retrieved on 30.01.2015

broader perspective, asking whether newspapers had an obligation to publish such images that some religions found objectionable. Fifty-seven percent said they did, while 33 percent disagreed.¹⁶

In regards to Sharia and according to newly released polling data from *LifeWay Research*, more than a third of Americans were worried about its coming to the United States and more than one in four believe that the Islamic State terror group reflected the true nature of Islam.¹⁷

The Observatory put a special highlight on this as the survey found that Americans' views were quite complicated on both Islam and the Islamic State. While 37 percent expressed fears about Shariah law, 27 percent believed that the Islamic State reflects Islam's true nature, and 48 percent disagreed with the statement "ISIS is not Islamic," some see the Muslim faith in a different light. 22 percent of Americans agreed that the Islamic State "is not Islamic", with an additional three in 10 expressing that they were not quite sure where they stood on the matter. Most telling, 47 percent rejected the notion that the Islamic State was evidence of what happens when Islam takes control in society, with an additional 26 percent claiming that they were not sure where they stood. When presented with the statement "true Islam creates a peaceful society," 43 percent of Americans agreed, though 39 percent disagreed and an additional 18 percent were unsure. The research center also spoke with pastors, who took a somewhat more negative stance on Islam, with 61 percent of Protestant senior preachers disagreeing with the notion that "true Islam creates a peaceful society." Additionally, 45 percent said that they believe the Islamic State is an indication of what happens when Islam dominates in a society, though 47 percent disagreed.¹⁸



In Canada, the Observatory wishes to highlight the worrying trend in this democratic country which supposed to protect the religious freedom as part of their most fundamental principle. This concern was because the majority of Canadian Quebecers were against the presence of mosque in their neighborhood. According to a new poll by *SOM for Cogeco Nouvelles*, two-thirds of Quebecers supported the city of Shawinigan's decision to block potential modifications to zoning rules to allow the construction of a mosque, and 65 per cent of Quebecers agreed with the city's decision to turn down organizer's requests for a zoning change, while 24 per cent were not in support, while the rest of respondents abstained from sharing their opinions. The results also suggested nearly the same number of Quebecers did not wish to have a mosque built or moved in their neighborhood. Around 64% of people polled said they 'mostly disagree' or 'completely disagree' with the proposition. Most of those who said they were opposed to the presence of a mosque in their neighborhood lived outside of Montreal, were older than 55 years old and most did not complete post-secondary education programs. Meanwhile, the 28 per cent of people in favor mostly lived in the Montreal region, were between 18 and 34 years of age and obtained a university degree.¹⁹

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ See *The Blaze's* entry "Does 'True Islam' Create a Peaceful Society? Here's Where Americans Stand", in: <http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2015/02/13/does-true-islam-create-a-peaceful-society-and-is-the-islamic-state-truly-a-muslim-movement-pastors-and-the-public-weigh-in-on-shariah-law-and-islam/>, retrieved on 14.02.2015

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ See *Montreal Gazette's* entry "Majority of Quebecers against Presence of Mosque in their Neighbourhood", in: <http://montrealgazette.com/news/quebec/majority-of-quebecers-against-presence-of-mosque-in-their-neighbourhood-poll-suggests>, retrieved on 27.02.2015

2.1.1. *Islamophobic Discourses and Campaigns*

The fear against Islam and Muslims does not exist only in the public's mind in America and Canada, but also manifests itself into discourses and campaigns systematically launched to defame Islam and to marginalize Muslims in the United States; telling people and media that Islam is an evil and nasty religion; that Islam generalizes harms into westerners; that Muslims are terrorists that prone to perpetrate violence; that Islam is not compatible with values adopted in the West; that Muslims should not be given a chance to live in democratic societies; and so on and so forth. For instances, during the period under review, the Observatory underline some derogatory discourses and campaigns reflecting the Islamophobic euphoria, which were spread by prominent and popular figures in the United States:

- *"First Amendment only to protect Christians" -*

A United States public figure tried to tell Americans that their country was meant only for the Christians and denied the rights of other religions to live in the Uncle Sam's land. Speaking at the Pastor for Life Luncheon in May 2014, the Chief Justice Roy Moore of the Alabama Supreme Court declared that the First Amendment only applies to Christians because *"Buddha didn't create us, Mohammed didn't create us, it was the God of the Holy Scriptures who created us"* and he continued: *"They didn't bring the Koran over on the pilgrim ship. Let's get real, let's go back and learn our history. Let's stop playing games."* Mr Moore claimed that America had lost its way, and that he would be publishing a pamphlet that contain copies of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, proving that all founders of the nation knew that America was about God.²⁰

- *"Islam is a cancer that needs to be cut out" -*

American State Republican John Bennett published comments on social media warning people to be wary of Muslim Americans and then refused to apologize in the face of criticism. He said that *"I've read the Koran, and 90 percent of it is violence, and only 10 percent of it is conciliatory, or what some would say is the 'peaceful' part of the Koran."* Bennett went on to say that there is no difference between moderate and radical Islam. He then said that the goal of all Muslims is the destruction of Western civilization from within. He emphasized by saying that *"This is a cancer in our nation that needs to be cut out."*²¹

- *"Islam has no place in civilized society" -*

Head of Christian Anti-Defamation Commission, Gary Cass, argued on his organization's website that the Islamic militant group ISIS had revealed the intentions of all Muslims. He wrote: *"ISSI (sic) has done us all a favor... The true face of Islam is on full display even as Mohammed is burning in hell. We will have to face the harsh truth that Islam has no place in civilized society. Muslims cannot live in a society based on Christian ideals of equality and liberty. They will always seek to harm us."* Cass also dismissed deportation or the forced conversion of Muslims as *"possible solutions, but really there's only one"* – violence. Cass argued: *"The only thing that is biblical and that 1,400 years of history has shown to work is overwhelming Christian just war and overwhelming self defense... Christian Generals Charles Martel in 732 and Jon Sobieski in 1672 defeated Islamic Turks in their attempts to take the West. Who will God raise up to save*

²⁰See *Islamophobia Today Blog's* entry "Alabama's Chief Justice: First Amendment Only Protect Christians", in: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2014/05/03/alabamas-chief-justice-first-amendment-only-protects-christians/>, retrieved on 04.05.2014

²¹ See *Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "Oklahoma Republican Politician Says Islam is a cancer in Our Nation that Needs to be Cut out", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/oklahoma-republican-politician-says-islam-is-a-cancer-in-our-nation-that-needs-to-be-cut-out/#more-36638>, retrieved on 17.09.2014

us this time? Will God even intervene or turn us over to the Muslims for turning against Him?" He warned Christians to prepare for more terrorist attacks at home and abroad, but he said violence was a necessary sacrifice.²²

- *"Islam is comparable to Nazism, Fascism and Communism"* -

Thomas G. McInerney, a US retired three-star general who currently a *Fox News* military analyst presented in September 2014 that the economy, shrinking military and more than a decade's of US policies in the Middle East had only increased the dangers facing the nation. He said that the biggest threat was radical Islam, and the ones for 'cleaning house' had to be on the Muslim community. McInerney added American leaders were afraid of offending Muslims, and said radicals had hidden behind their religion. He compared Islam to Nazis, Fascism and Communism, asserting: *"Political correctness is killing us. It is a global war against radical Islam. Let's call it what it is ... Islam is not a religion of peace."*²³

- *"Liberal ideology is incompatible with Islam"* -

Bill Maher, a commentator and comedian hosting the political satire talk show 'Real Time with Bill Maher' on HBO, stirred controversy on his October 3rd, 2014 broadcast when he claimed that liberal ideologies - like freedom of speech, freedom of religion, marriage equality, and gender equity - were incompatible with Islam. Maher and fellow panelist Sam Harris argued throughout the broadcast that, in Islam, women and gays were subjugated and Muslims lacked the freedom to leave their religion. Three individuals dissented: actor Ben Affleck, former Republican National Committee Chair Michael Steele, and New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof. Maher said during the program, *"[Islam is] the only religion that acts like the mafia, that will f*****g kill you if you say the wrong thing" "It's based on reality, Ben. We're not [making] it up that in the Muslim world [extremism] is mainstream belief."*²⁴

- *"People can't make jokes about Islam and Muslims"* -

Monty Python scion John Cleese had described political correctness as condescending and a barrier to comedy. The comedian mused on the subject on HBO's Real Time with Bill Maher on 21 November. Cleese, who was on the show to promote his memoir, was led into the matter by Maher who gleefully asked him: *"Let's bitch about political correctness."* Cleese said *"I make jokes about Swedes, Germans, French, English, Canadians, Americans... why can't we make jokes about Mexicans? Is it because they're so feeble that they can't look after themselves? It's very, very condescending. Who are the people you can't make jokes about?"* Quick as a shot, Maher replied with a laugh: *"Muslims. Try that, see what your Twitter feed says."* Cleese said: *"That's not saying that you can't, that just means they'll kill you."* Maher responded: *"Oh yes, I've said that. I've made jokes like 'It's a religion of peace... there's a piece of you over there.'"*²⁵

²² See *Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "Christian Activist Calls for Holy War, as Islam Has no Place in Civilized World", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/christian-activist-calls-for-holy-war-islam-has-no-place-in-civilized-society/#more-36303>, retrieved on 06.09.2014

²³ See *Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "Fox News Military Analyst compares Islam to Nazism and Communism", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/fox-news-military-analyst-compares-islam-to-nazism-fascism-and-communism/#more-36645>, retrieved on 17.09.2014

²⁴ See *Islamophobia.org Blog's* entry "Islamophobic Individuals: Bill Maher", in: <http://www.islamophobia.org/islamophobic-individuals/bill-maher.html>, retrieved on 20.10.2014

²⁵ See *Huffington Post's* entry "John Cleese & Bill Maher Debate Political Correctness, Muse 'You Can't Make Jokes About Muslims, They'll Kill You'", in: http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/11/27/john-cleese-bill-maher-debate-political-correctness-muse-jokes-muslims-n_6232548.html, retrieved on 04.12.2014

- "No chance of Muslim Americans blending in to U.S."-

Anti-Muslim activist Brigitte Gabriel made a statement in November that there was 'no chance' of American Muslims ever blending in with American society. During an interview, a presenter told Gabriel that he had recently traveled to Dearborn, Michigan, and did not see homes with an American flag waving outside, and at one point stopped to ask for directions and was ignored. She said: "*Why is it that the Muslim community is not blending in with the rest of American society...because this is what they are being told in mosques across the United States.*" Gabriel claimed that American mosques were instructing their people not to shake hands on Christmas or Easter or wish the Americans a happy holiday.²⁶

- "When there's many bad apples, orchard is rotten" -

After telling the Paris terrorists "*go f**k yourself*," Bill Maher talked radical Islam with Salman Rushdie and observed, "*When there's this many bad apples, there's something wrong with the orchard.*" Maher went down a line of terrorist attacks since 9/11, and both he and Rushdie agreed this was more than a mutation in the Muslim religion. Maher brought up his infamous debate with Ben Affleck, wherein Sam Harris called Islam 'the mother-lode of bad ideas', and Maher claimed, "*The terrorists and the mainstream share a lot of these bad ideas.*" Rushdie told Maher the West must not '*give a f****g inch*' when it comes to free expression and standing against such radicalism.²⁷



In addition to these discourses, hate and prejudice against Islam have been used as a commodity to gain public supports in the United States. During the period under review, for instances, American Islamophobia networks which includes funders, organizations, media outlets, propagandists, activists and political players, were very active in creating a climate of fear, hate and suspicion towards Muslims. One of these Islam-haters was Pamela Geller of whom the Observatory would categorize her as an American Geertz Wilders. Back to 2012, her American Freedom Defense Initiative funded ads throughout the Metro system with a quote from the Quran next to a photo of the burning Twin Towers. In May 2014, she came back with another awful ad, claiming that "Islamic Jew-hatred" was in the Quran.²⁸ Because of the 2012 court stating that Geller's ads were protected speech, a Metro spokesperson said they declined to challenge them this time around. Since August 2014, her notorious anti-Islam campaign in showing ups in New York buses and subways.



Worrisome still, Geller and her advocacy of far-right hate-mongers group were now planning to hold an art exhibit and contest to depict the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) in Texas in May 2015, with a \$10,000 prize for the best cartoon.²⁹ Observing their activities since August 2014, it seems to the Observatory that American Far-rights and Atheist groups

²⁶ See *Islamophobia Today Blog's* entry "Brigitte Gabriel: No chance of Muslim-Americans blending in to us", in: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2014/11/20/brigitte-gabriel-no-chance-of-muslim-americans-blending-in-to-u-s/#>, retrieved on 03.12.2014

²⁷ See *Islamophobia Today Blog's* entry "Maher-Salman Rushdie: On Islam when there is this many bad apples orchards rotten", in: <http://www.mediaite.com/tv/maher-salman-rushdie-on-islam-when-theres-this-many-bad-apples-orchards-rotten/>, retrieved on 10.01.2015

²⁸ See *Islamophobia Today Blog's* entry "Geller is back with another anti-Islam metro ad", in: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2014/05/15/washington-dc-geller-is-back-with-another-anti-islam-metro-ad/>, retrieved on 16.05.2014

²⁹ See *Longview News Journal's* entry "Group protesting Islam planning Muhammad cartoon event in Texas", in: http://www.news-journal.com/news/state/group-protesting-islam-planning-muhammad-cartoon-event-in-texas/article_81569c1c-a65f-556d-abfe-534e7dce1949.html

have a systematic plan to nurture anti-Islam hate in the U.S. Both have continuously campaigned to make American public portray extremism as parts of the Muslim world or as representation of the Islamic faith.

2.1.2. *Surveillance against Islam and Muslims*

Muslims living in the United States have been under close surveillance by the US authorities since the 9/11 terrorist attack in 2001³⁰; and the Observatory believes that this intelligent activity was still ongoing during the period under review. For instances, according to an online documents by NSA whistle-blower Edward Snowden, the US government had spied on thousands of law-abiding Muslim-Americans including top US lawyers and academics since the last two decades. The monitoring activity was authorized under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), a law intended to target individuals involved in international terrorism, espionage or sabotage. The leaked documents published by *The Intercept* included a list of 7,485 email addresses monitored since 2002. Five of the emails identified by journalists had been described as leading “highly public, outwardly exemplary lives”. A document dating from 2006 from the same cache of files instructed intelligence agency staff on how to properly record the identity of those under surveillance and used the fake name of ‘Mohammed Raghead’ as an example. Five of those identified as targets of surveillance included Faisal Gill, a lawyer and one-time Republican candidate for the Virginia House of Delegates who served as a Senior Policy Advisor at the Department of Homeland Security under President George W. Bush.³¹

Other American citizens monitored included Asim Ghafoor, an attorney who had represented clients in terrorism-related

Email Account	Collection Status	Expire Date
@juno.com*	Terminated	2/1/08
@cair.com*	Terminated	2/1/08
@email.com	Sustained	5/16/08
@a	Terminated	2/8/08
@yahoo.com*	Terminated	2/8/08
Under Surveillance		
@amirahmadi.com	Sustained	5/16/08
@rci.rutgers.edu	Sustained	5/16/08

cases; Agha Saeed, a civil rights activist and political science professor; Nihad Awad, executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR); and Hooshang Amirahmadi, a professor of international relations. The documents marked the first time that US citizens had been provided with proof of being individually

targeted by intelligence agencies and could allow those involved to sue the US government for unlawful surveillance.³²

The need for this kind of underground activity seems to gain new support when a trend emerges, which was the phenomenon of foreign fighters who were going to Iraq and Syria to join the ISIS. Especially in the US and Europe, there was a growing public suspicion that mosques and Islamic centers have been used as centers for recruitments and communications of those foreign fighters, hence more and more westerners asked their government to closely monitor the activities of Mosques and Islamic centers. The Iowa Republican Rep. Steve King for instance was openly calling for

³⁰ In April 2014, the NYPD announced that it had disbanded a controversial surveillance unit known as the Citywide Debriefing Team, that had sent plainclothes detectives into Muslim communities to listen in on conversations and build detailed files on where people ate, prayed and shopped, of which *The Times* had reviewed reports generated by the debriefing team in early 2009, giving a up-close view of how the squad operates, functioning as a recruiter for the Intelligence Division, the arm of the department that is dedicated to foiling terrorist plots. They also showed that the division's counterterrorism mission had come to intersect in some new and potentially uncomfortable ways with the department's more traditional crime-fighting work. They showed that religion had become a normal topic of police inquiry in the city's holding cells and lockup facilities. Some reports written by detectives after debriefing sessions noted whether a prisoner attended mosque, celebrated Muslim holidays or had made a pilgrimage to Mecca. The report on the food cart vendor described the location of his Flushing mosque and noted that worshipers were a “mix of Afghani, Persian (Iranians) and Pakistani.” The department's wide-ranging surveillance of mosques and Muslim civic institutions and businesses has stoked controversy since The Associated Press first published documents detailing the monitoring in 2011. Information on these is available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/11/nyregion/new-york-police-recruit-muslims-to-be-informers.html?_r=0, retrieved on 12.05.2014

³¹ See *Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry ‘Mohammed Raghead’ – the name the FBI were giving to Muslim-American ‘Joe Blogs’, in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/mohammed-raghead-the-name-the-fbi-were-giving-to-muslim-american-joe-blogs/#more-33980>, retrieved on 10.07.2014

³² Ibid.

the US government to begin spying on American mosques to stop ISIS' recruitment efforts, and charging the militant organization actively operating in mosques across the country. Although there was no evidence that ISIS was running a nationwide recruitment effort or using mosques as centers to target would be jihadist, King insisted the Obama administration to continue targeting mosques for domestic surveillance activities.³³

During the period under review, the Observatory noted no convincing evidence that the surveillance on Muslims and the US authorities' measures to recruit Muslims as informers has been stopped completely, but it is quite clear that there were controversies in the US on this issue, indicated by public and media's efforts to put more pressures on government to stop this activity. Media such as *New York Times*, *Associated Press*, and *American Civil Liberties Union* had called for limiting the New York Police Department's ability to monitor Muslim communities, despite some resistance such as from the Republican Rep. Peter King. Mr King for instance said that the United States should respond to the 22 October shootings at the Canadian Parliament, by increasing surveillance on Muslims. He also placed blame 'morons' on media which encourage the contrary. He said: "*We can have all the technology in the world, the fact is we have to find out what's happening on the ground in these Muslim communities and we can only do that through increased surveillance...We have to find out what's going on in the mosques which are often incubators of this type of terrorism*".³⁴

As conclusion for this section, during the period under review the Islamophobia remained to exist in the United States and Canada. More particularly in the United States, Islamophobia continued to take root, reflected through the intensive media campaigns and public discourses showing 'fear' towards Islam; and also through the significant number of incidents occurring sporadically against Muslims, mosques, Islamic centers, and Islamic attires as listed in **Annex 1**. Such a 'fear' was also crawling in the minds of Americans, proven by series of polls showing the mistrust and negative perception towards Islam and Muslims; The most recent negative signs were the Americans stance for the derogatory cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) and the Americans' growing fear against Muslim immigrants. Finally, there was a clear indicator that more and more Americans were in doubt that Islam is a 'religion of peace'. American public also feel suspicious over religious activities conducted in mosques hence the government was called to continue spying on mosques to stop ISIS' recruitment, accusing that the ideology of this militant organization was actively operating in mosques across the country. Although there was no evidence that ISIS was running a nationwide recruitment effort, or using mosques as centers to breed jihadist, the U.S authorities continued to target American mosques through surveillance activities.

³³ See *Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "GOP Congressman Spy on US Mosques to Stop ISIS Recruitment", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/gop-congressman-spy-on-u-s-mosques-to-stop-isis-recruitment/#more-36515>, retrieved on 15.09.2014

³⁴ See *Mediate's* entry Peter King: We Need 'All-Out' Muslim Surveillance, Despite 'Moron' Civil Liberties Activists, In at: <http://www.mediante.com/tv/peter-king-we-need-all-out-muslim-surveillance-despite-moron-civil-liberties-activists/>, retrieved on 25.10.2015

2.2. Islamophobia in Europe

As previously mentioned, more and more Europeans were critical of Muslim population, a condition that feeds to Islamophobia in the continent and tends to lead the indigenous societies towards intolerant against Muslim minorities. The Observatory is of the opinion that this condition should be given a particular attention for at least three reasons: *firstly*, the number of European Islamophobes keeps increasing during the period under review, and anti-Islam sentiments has been nibbling the whole European continent from Spain and Italy in the South to Norway and Sweden in the North; and from United Kingdom in the West to Czech Republic in the East; *secondly*, after what was happening in Spain, Italy, France, Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, the rest of European countries would possibly fall under the same situation of being affected by Islamophobia contagion, and; *thirdly*, Europe has been struggling to respond to the region's sagging economy and near record unemployment, while Islamophobia would accumulatively buffet a rise in sentiment against foreigners and Muslims that might segregate Muslims immigrants in Europe from the mainstream societies.

2.2.1. Polls and Reports on Islamophobia in Europe

During the period under review, the Observatory scrutinized a number of polls and surveys were conducted to measure Europeans' public sentiments towards Islam and Muslims, and some of these surveys' results and findings were highlighted by the Observatory, as the followings:

- a. Most of Czechs citizens were afraid of Islam;
- b. Anti-Muslim hate-crimes had increased quite significantly in the United Kingdom;
- c. Racism against Muslims was boosting in Ireland;

In Eastern Europe, **Czech Republic** grabs the Observatory's particular attention for Islamophobia find a fertile ground even in European countries that neither have enough contacts with Islam nor significant number of Muslim immigrants. Alternatively, there might be a connection between the statement of Czech President Milos Zeman in May 2014 with the psychological position of Czechs people against Islam. According to an analysis carried out by the Academy of Sciences Sociological Institute, released on 16 May 2014, around two-thirds of Czechs who had used the European election calculator EUvox considered Islam a threat to Czech society. The institute's conclusion was drawn from its assessment to the opinions of 18,000 Czechs, which was very significant number in term of samplings. According to EUvox, one third of Czechs definitely considered Islam a threat, while two thirds of Czechs were afraid of the religion, hence Islam was seen as a threat in the Czech Republic more than in France or the Netherlands, whose inhabitants have a direct experience with coexistence with the religious minority. On the contrary, less than one tenth of EUvox users are definitely opposed to this opinion. About 20 percent of people do not know, or are indifferent to it. Only about 10% of Czechs were not afraid of Islam.³⁵

The United Kingdom was also very interesting to the Observatory, especially for the extraordinary increase of Islamophobic incidents during the period under review. According to a study by researchers at Teesside University, the number of reported instances of anti-Muslim hate crime in the UK had risen sharply since the murder of a British soldier in London in 2013, with women wearing traditional Islamic dress most likely to be the victims of abuse and street attacks. Researchers believe that a widespread lack of trust to the police in Muslim communities and endemic under-reporting of hate crime masked the true scale of the problem, with most Islamophobic incidents, ranging from online

³⁵ See *Prague Post's* entry "Two Thirds of Czechs Afraid of Islam", in: <http://www.praguepost.com/czech-news/39081-poll-two-thirds-of-czechs-afraid-of-islam>, retrieved on 17.05.2014

trolling to verbal abuse and extreme violence, going unlogged and unpunished.³⁶ The publication of the report came amid concerns expressed by some Muslims about their safety on British streets following the murder of a female Saudi Arabian student in Colchester in June 2014 that might have been religiously motivated because the victim was wearing hijab. According to the report, the majority of abusers were men under the age of 30, although children as young as 10 were among those identified as perpetrators. Meanwhile, on-the-street hate crime was typically targeted at men, and 54 percent of cases recorded by Tell MAMA had been reported by women, including many who felt they had been abused because they were wearing headscarves, face veils or other clothing which visibly identified them as Muslim. The study also highlighted a 400 percent increase since British soldier incident.³⁷

In **Ireland**, another European country where Muslims were counted only a tiny minority of less than 1 percent of the total population, Islamophobia also found a fertile ground. A report on racism and bigotry against Muslims in Ireland was published by the University of Limerick, based on a survey of Irish Muslims on their experiences of anti-Muslim hostility, complemented by one-to-one interviews and focus group discussions. The report found that 36% of respondents felt they had been targeted on the basis of being identified as Muslim. Participants reported experiencing physical assaults (22%) ranging from being struck, having hijabs forcibly removed, to being pushed, spat at; some reported being threatened or harassed (20%). Fewer participants (14%) indicated that they had property damaged. Those who detailed how this manifested referred to tires being slashed, having eggs thrown at their home etcetera. The survey also found that women, who were more easily identified as Muslim because of their dress, experienced higher levels of anti-Muslim hostility (44%) and discrimination (40%) than men (28% and 22% respectively). Women interviewees also reported their frustration at being subjected to anti-Muslim stereotyping and regarded condescendingly as passive victims of male oppression. More generally according to the report, Muslims in Ireland were treated as a 'suspect community' by both the police and the general public.³⁸

2.2.2. *Islamophobic Discourses and Campaigns in Europe*

In Europe, the fear against Islam and Muslims also manifests itself into discourses and campaigns launched to defame Islam and to marginalize Muslims in this continent, again, by telling the crowd that Islam is an evil religion; that Islam generalizes harms into Europeans; that Muslims are terrorists that prone to perpetrate violence; that Islam is not compatible with values adopted in the West; that Muslims should not be given a chance to live in democratic societies, etcetera. During the period under review, the Observatory highlight some derogatory discourses and campaigns in Europe aimed at depriving Islam and Muslims:

- *"Islamic faith is 'satanic' and a doctrine spawned in hell"* -

Senior Pastor James McConnell, a Northern Ireland outspoken evangelical pastor was describing the Islamic faith as 'satanic' and a 'doctrine spawned in hell' as he addressed his congregation at the Whitewell Tabernacle Metropolitan Church on 18 May 2014. Also in his sermon, the minister told his congregation: *"Now people say there are good Muslims in Britain – that may be so – but I don't trust them."* He added: *"Islam is allowed to come to this country, Islam is allowed to worship in this country, Islam is allowed to preach in this country and*



³⁶ See *Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "UK Report anti-Muslim Hate Crime Rising", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/uk-report-anti-muslim-hate-crime-rising/#more-33870>, retrieved on 07.07.2014

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ See *Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "Revealing report on anti-Muslim racism in Ireland", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/revealing-report-on-anti-muslim-racism-in-ireland/#more-34368>, retrieved on 16.07.2014

they preach hate; and for years we are not allowed to give a tract out, we are not allowed in Islam, we are not allowed to preach the gospel.³⁹

- "A bill should be brought before Congress identifying all passages in the Koran which, whether in isolation or taken together, constitute incitement to murder" -

Britain's politician Lord Christopher Monckton called upon the United States to outlaw certain parts of the Islamic holy book the Koran and to make reading them aloud illegal. Monckton falsely claimed, omitting acts of terror by U.S. right-wing militia and the ongoing campaign of brutal violence being waged by Mexican drug cartels: "Nearly all acts of terrorism perpetrated throughout the world in the past quarter of a century were carried out by Muslims in the name of Allah". Then he emphasized that one does not need to look any further than Muslims' holy book, the Koran, and in his inflammatory opinion, Craven public authorities had failed to act against the circulation of the Koran in its present form because they fear a violent backlash.

He said that anti-Islamists should not shrink from banning the portions of the Koran that call for violence against nonbelievers. The rights of free speech, he said, were outweighed by the need to stop incitement, proposing that A bill should be brought before Congress identifying all passages in the Koran which, whether in isolation or taken together, constitute incitement to murder. He went on by saying that, "The bill should specify that anyone who reads any of these passages out loud is to be charged with that crime and, if convicted, subjected to the usual penalty for it — a long prison term." Censoring these passages of the Koran, he theorized, would neutralize the book's radicalizing effects on young Muslims.⁴⁰

- "Islamisation was creeping in the West through Halal Meat" -

Canon Eric Woods, the Vicar of Sherborne, published anti-halal article in 15 May 2014 *Western Gazette*. The article contained the same ignorant nonsense about halal abattoirs slaughtering animals while they were fully conscious. It also featured the paranoid fantasy about 'creeping Islamisation' to the West through the invasion of Halal Meat. The discourse is regrettable since this article was written by someone holding a responsible position in the Church of England, since Sherborne Abbey was part of the Diocese of Salisbury. It was not the first time that Woods had promoted halal hysteria. He wrote an article about 'the invasion of halal meat' for the same paper in 2013.⁴¹



³⁹ See *Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "Belfast pastor James McConnell denounces Islam as the devil's doctrine", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/belfast-pastor-james-mcconnell-denounces-islam-as-the-devils-doctrine/#more-31846>, retrieved on 22.05.2014

⁴⁰ See *Raw Story Blog's* entry "British Lord: US should ban portions of Koran, Jail anyone who reads them aloud", in: http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2014/09/british-lord-us-should-ban-portions-of-quran-jail-anyone-who-reads-them-aloud/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A%20TheRawStory%20%28The%20Raw%20Story%29, retrieved on 17.09.2014

⁴¹ See *Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "Anglican vicar condemns 'invasion of halal meat', says Christians oppose 'the creeping Islamisation of our country'", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/anglican-vicar-condemns-invasion-of-halal-meat-says-christians-oppose-the-creeping-islamisation-of-our-country/#more-31697>, retrieved on 17.05.2014

- *"All Mosques in the Netherlands must be closed" – and,*
- *"Dutch unity, identity and culture are being wrecked by immigration and via wombs" -*

Netherlands' extreme right wing party, Party for Freedom (PVV), headed by Geert Wilders and known for its extremist anti-Islam and anti-Immigration views, had demanded for the closure of all mosques. During a meeting with the Representative Congress, PVV Representative Machiel de Graaf, said that a Holland free of mosques would be better overall, and that *"We want to cleanse Holland from all traces of Islam"*. Saying that Muslims refused to change, assimilate or integrate, De Graaf responded to a question that they did not want Islam in Holland. He added that in comparison to Holland natives, Muslims gave birth to more children, and that Holland was in danger of losing its identity and culture because of the high birth rate of Muslims. He said: *"Dutch unity, identity and culture are being wrecked by immigration and via wombs."*⁴²

- *"Islam as a totalitarian ideology that was against everything modern Britain stands for" –*

Candidate for local election of the United Kingdom Independence party, Mr. Vockrodt, described Islam as a totalitarian ideology that was against everything modern Britain stands for. This offensive views had undermined Nigel Farage's insistence that he did not lead a racist party. In a diatribe complaining about an alleged planning breach by the Afghan community in Brent, north London, Vockrodt said parts of the borough resembled Afghanistan's Helmand province, and Being Muslims, they ignored both refusals and did it anyway. Political correctness was preventing the council taking action, he alleged, for fear of being called racists, where Muslims were grooming children to be sex slaves under the eyes of the authorities.⁴³

- *"Austrian Muslims must use a standardized German translation of the Quran" –*

During the period under review, there was also a campaign in Austria aimed at marginalizing Muslims living in this country. The Austrian parliament on 25 February 2015 passed a law which banned foreign funding for Islamic organisations and demanded that any group claiming to represent Austrian Muslims used a standardized German translation of the Quran. The controversial reforms were added to an existing law that made Islam an official religion in Austria in 1912, and were partly aimed at tackling Islamist radicalism. However, while the law gave Muslims more legal security by protecting religious holidays and training for imams, it also banned foreign funding for mosques and for imams from countries such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia. The law also required Austria's 450 Muslim groups to demonstrate a positive approach toward society and the state, in order to continue receiving official licensing.⁴⁴

2.2.3. *PEGIDA Movements*

Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes (or in English: Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the West), abbreviated PEGIDA, is a German anti-Islam political organization founded in the German city of Dresden in October 2014 by right-winger Lutz Bachmann. This organization had been organizing weekly demonstrations from October 2014 against what it considers the Islamization of the Western world, calling for more restrictive immigration rules, more particularly for Muslims. Since its initiation, the number of people attending PEGIDA's anti-Islam demonstration had increased from an estimated 350 protesters on 20 October to 18,000 on 5 January and

⁴² See *World Bulletin* entry "Dutch Far-Right Party demands closure of mosques", in: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/news/149344/dutch-far-right-party-demands-closure-of-mosques>, retrieved on 01.12.2014

⁴³ See *The Guardian* entry "UKIP candidate lambasts Islam as 'totalitarian ideology'", in: <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/may/15/ukip-candidate-heino-vockrodt-brent-islam-email>, retrieved on 16.05.2014, emphasis added.

⁴⁴ See *Newsweek* entry "Austria Bans Foreign Funding for Islamic Groups", in: <http://www.newsweek.com/controversial-austrian-islam-law-bans-foreign-funding-islamic-groups-309753>, retrieved on 28.02.2015

25,000 people on 12 January.⁴⁵ The similar anti-Islam protests also took place across German cities, including Hanover and Kassel, while anti-Islamic movements held in several German cities, perpetuated the view that Islam was a major threat to society. This PEGIDA movement had gained attention and drawing support from other far-right groups and ordinary citizens and far-right anti-Muslim groups had become more prominent in Germany, such as the PEGIDA-inspired KOEGIDA in Cologne and HAGIDA in Hamburg.⁴⁶

Unfortunately, this Islamophobic movement was copied and pasted by some countries in Europe, through the mobilization of anti-Islam gatherings and demonstrations. In Denmark, PegidaDK held a demonstration against Islamic fundamentalism in Copenhagen in January 2015. Around two hundred people took part in the Copenhagen demonstration, marched along streets of Denmark's capital while waving Danish flags and lighting torches. The organizer was Nicolai Sennels, a Danish psychologist who wrote a book offering a theory that Islam creates Monsters.⁴⁷ In Austria, PEGIDA drew hundreds of supporters in streets of Vienna when it held its first rally on 2 February.⁴⁸ In the United Kingdom, Pegida UK organized a rally in the same month attended by hundreds of protesters.⁴⁹ Since January 2015, the PEGIDA was also spreading into Netherlands, Denmark, and Norway despite their less number of supporters.

2.2.4. *The Aftermath of Charlie Hebdo Incident*

On 7 January 2015, two Muslim brothers, Saïd and Chérif Kouachi, forced their way into the offices of the French satirical weekly newspaper Charlie Hebdo in Paris, killed 11 people and injured 11 others in the same building. They also killed a French National Police officer outside the building, followed by several related attacks in the Île-de-France region, where a further 5 were killed and 11 wounded. The motive of the attack was mentioned as a revenge against the depiction of Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) by the Magazine, hence Charlie Hebdo incident then provoked a worldwide shocks against Islam and Muslims which the Observatory would say, was the most significant turbulence since the terrorist attack on 11 September 2001 in the United States.

Charlie Hebdo incident was given a most particular attention and special treatment by the Observatory for some reasons:

Firstly, for Muslims living in the West, this incident has widened the issue of Islam in Europe away beyond the frame of 'integration'. Islam was then seen as not only a threat to European identity, culture, demography, and society, but also as a political and security threats for the the western world. Based on the Observatory's monitoring, the immediate debates and discourses in Europe subsequent to the Charlie Hebdo incident were focusing around the following questions which more or less tell us about the psychological perception of westerners vis-à-vis Islam and Muslims:

- Does Islam encourage violence?
- Is Islam really compatible with liberal values?

⁴⁵ See *CNN News* entry "Anti-Islam protesters march in Dresden, Germany", in: <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/01/12/europe/germany-anti-islam-marches/>, retrieved on 14.01.2015

⁴⁶ See *Daily Sabah News* entry "Germany leadership unite with Muslims against PEGIDA", in: <http://www.dailysabah.com/europe/2015/01/13/merkel-speaks-out-against-rising-islamophobia>, retrieved on 14.01.2015

⁴⁷ See *UA Today TV* entry "Anti-Islam movement holds protest in Copenhagen", in: <http://uatoday.tv/society/anti-islam-movement-holds-protest-in-copenhagen-403828.html>, retrieved on 21.01.2015

⁴⁸ See *Reuters News* entry "Anti-Islam group PEGIDA holds first Austria march", in: <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2015/02/02/uk-austria-pegida-idUKKBN0L61Z120150202>, retrieved on 03.02.2015

⁴⁹ See *BBC News* entry "'Anti-Islamisation' group Pegida UK holds Newcastle march", in: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-tyne-31657167>, retrieved on 28.02.2015

- Why have there been so many recent attacks by extremist Muslims?
- Why Islam ban all images of the Prophet Mohammed?
- Does Islam need a Reformation to adapt modernity?
- How can the extremists be stopped?

Secondly, the Charlie Hebdo massacre has multiplied the level of Islamophobia in France, for it left Muslims with so much uncertainties during its aftermath, especially for it was then followed by a massive backlash towards Muslims in this country. A huge number of attacks against Muslims were recorded, and to show the significant impact of this incident to Islam and Muslims living in France, the observatory bring forward in this section, some instances as the followings:

- Soon after the incident, shots fired at a Muslim prayer centre in Digne-les-Bains in Provence, and at a mosque in Soissons.⁵⁰
- On 8 January, a homemade bomb went off outside a mosque in the central city of Villefranche-sur-Saone, while a day after a head of a wild pig was placed outside a prayer room in Corte in Corsica. A letter laid beside the head warned “*the next time it will be the head of one of yours.*”⁵¹
- Anti-Islam slogans were daubed on the walls of mosques in the towns of Poitiers, Lieven and Béthune, while in Bayonne on the Atlantic coast the words “*Dirty Arabs*” and “*Murderers*” were sprayed on the facade of a mosque.⁵²
- In L'Oiselet, a secondary school student of north African origin was beaten up by youths shouting racist insults mentioning Islam.⁵³
- In Paris, terrorism expert Thomas Hegghammer tweeted that his taxi driver had told him customers were refusing to ride with him because he was of Arab appearance.⁵⁴
- On 8 January 2015, a mosque in the French city of Le Mans was attacked with grenades. Four training grenades were lobbed into the mosque, one exploded while three others were found undetonated on the mosque property in the morning of that day. A bullet hole was also reportedly found in one of the mosque's windows.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ See *The Telegraph News* entry “Paris shootings: The backlash begins against French Muslims”, in: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/11337938/Paris-shootings-The-backlash-begins-against-French-Muslims.html>, retrieved on 11.01.2015

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ See *TelesurTV* entry “Reports of Grenade Attack on French Mosque”, in: <http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Reports-of-Grenade-Attack-on-French-Mosque-20150108-0005.html>, retrieved on 11.01.2015

- On 8 January 2015, an explosion rocked a kebab shop next to a mosque in Villefrance-sur-Saone in eastern France. The window was blow out by an explosion in the night before.⁵⁶
- On 14 January 2015, a Moroccan man was stabbed to death in his own home in southern France. The attacker forced the front door of his neighbours' house in the picturesque village of Beaucet near Avignon after midnight shouting "*I am your god, I am your Islam*" before repeatedly stabbing Mohamed El Makouli.⁵⁷
- On 16 January 2015, Marie Le Pen said that she wanted a tough response to Charlie Hebdo terrorist attacks, including surveillance of mosques and military service for children. She mentioned that France was facing an enemy from within, so she urged a global response, including immediate suspension of Europe's border-free travel accords, monitoring of mosques and sermons, as well as school uniforms and military service for boys and girls.⁵⁸
- Within one week since Charlie Hebdo incident, more than 50 anti-Muslim incidents including attacks on mosques had been recorded by the Central Council of Muslims in France.⁵⁹

Thirdly, The Charlie hebdo incident has once again brought the issue of 'Freedom of Expression' into the milieu of public debate not only in France but also in Europe; and unfortunately in the aftermath of Charlie Hebdo incident, the constructive debates on freedom of expression vis-à-vis its limits and manifestation tended to be overridden by the strengthening anti-Islam sentiments. Public opinions were overshadowed by the idea that free speech is a 'fixed price' for European societies, and there shouldn't be any space for negotiation with other 'ideologies', including Islam. Iconizing the incident into 'Je suis Charlie' was clearly meant to emphasize this kind of position, since this was another way of saying that 'I stand for Freedom of Expression, and not for anything else. The support was growing fast for this icon was then becoming 'Nous sommes tous Charlie'—[We are all Charlie]; and by millions of people who rushed to buy the 14-January-edition of Charlie Hebdo⁶⁰ simply to show their 'pro'-position; also the gesture of a number of western media to reprint Charlie Hebdo's cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh).

2.2.5. *The Rise of Far-Rights*

During the period under review, the European right groups were very active advocating Christian identity for Europe, not because they want to promote Christianity but because they want to push back against Islam and the integration of Muslims – or what they called as "the Islamization of Europe." Public spaces have become a major battleground. There were bans on head scarves and other signs of religious affiliation in schools (in France) and on full-face veils on the streets (in France and Belgium), and efforts to block the construction of mosques (throughout Europe) or just minarets (in Switzerland). The pushback against Islam also concerned the individual body with campaigns to prohibit circumcision and halal food in Norway. Notably, these measures were being advocated in the name of protecting liberal

⁵⁶ See *Reuters News*' entry "Explosion rocks kebab shop near Mosque in east France", in: <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2015/01/08/uk-france-shooting-explosion-idUKKBNOKH0RQ20150108>, retrieved on 11.01.2015

⁵⁷ See *Al Arabiya News*' entry "Moroccan Man Murdered in 'Islamophobic' Attack in France", in: <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/world/2015/01/17/Moroccan-man-murdered-in-Islamophobic-attack-in-France-.html>, retrieved on 18.01.2015

⁵⁸ See *Myfoxal Blog's* entry "French far right leader wants mosque surveillance, in at: <http://www.myfoxal.com/story/27869302/french-far-right-leader-wants-mosque-surveillance>, retrieved on 17.01.2015

⁵⁹ See *Al Arabiya News*' entry "Moroccan Man Murdered in 'Islamophobic' Attack in France", in: <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/world/2015/01/17/Moroccan-man-murdered-in-Islamophobic-attack-in-France-.html>, retrieved on 18.01.2015

⁶⁰ See *Arabian Business News*' entry "French rush to buy new Charlie Hebdo edition after attack", in: <http://www.arabianbusiness.com/french-rush-buy-new-charlie-hebdo-edition-after-attacks-578568.html>, retrieved on 15.01.2015

secularism. The hijab was said to offend women's rights; circumcision, children's rights; ritual slaughter, animal rights. Oriana Fallaci and Ayaan Hirsi Ali, two radical spokespersons for the feminist resistance to Islam, became darlings of the conservative right in Italy (Fallaci) and the Netherlands and America (Hirsi Ali).⁶¹

This Far Rights' anti-Islam rhetoric was also spreading to the mainstream societies in almost everywhere in Europe. For instance, the coalition government of the Netherlands required would-be immigrants to accept progressive values before they were given a residency visa. Applicants were asked whether they tolerated the mixing of boys and girls in school, gender equality, nudity in public and gay rights. Although all applicants must take these tests, given the concerns revealed in these questions and the demographics of migration into Europe, there could be little doubt that the exams were designed to challenge adherents to Islam.⁶² In some cases, the pushback did not only manifest in discourses and campaigns but also into direct intervention and even eviction, like for instance what was happening in the United Kingdom, when the Britain First Kent battalion activists, in para-military uniforms, invaded Crayford mosque at North West Kent *"to inform the Imams that they have exactly 7 days to remove segregationist signs from outside their building, or they will"*⁶³; and that was not the first time that the Britain First targeted the Crayford mosque.⁶⁴ Such measures were certainly unfair to Muslims, while violated European countries' professed commitment to multiculturalism.

One amongst factors explaining the growing strength of Far Right in Europe is because they made some sort of



coordination with each other. These groups made regular encounters to discuss issues related to Islam and to consolidate their efforts against the later. For instance, Representatives of Eurosceptic and far-right groups from Italy to Bulgaria gathered at the National Front party conference in Lyon by the end of November 2014 to, what they called, warn France and Europe of a 'neo-Ottoman' onslaught of Islam-preaching, benefit-stealing migrants. The Observatory would consider this meeting as the starting point of Far-Rights' most significant take off during the period under review as

the meeting offers some theories to be justified in Charlie Hebdo incident that happen afterwards in January 2015. Amongst the participants were Heinz-Christian Strache, the head of Austria's far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ), France National Front (FN) leader, Marine Le Pen, and the notorious Geert Wilders, the blond leader of Dutch Islamophobic party PVV.⁶⁵

The Far Rights' take off was getting an extraordinary 'boost' from Charlie Hebdo incident. Obviously, the incident was 'smartly' manipulated as a 'told-you-so' moment for Europe. It did not only send immediate shockwaves throughout the continent, but also quickly to blame Islam and immigration, meaning to give a boost on the extreme strand of European publics and politics. When political leaders from across the EU joined millions of French mourners on the aftermath to outpour solidarity, this opportunity was used by Leaders of Europe's far-rights to consolidate their xenophobic ideologies. For instance, the notorious Dutch anti-Islam politicians, Geert Wilders, hailed the incidents with a speech entitled "Never Say That You Were Not Warned" to resonate hostile against Islam, in tango with Marine Le

⁶¹ See *Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "How the right exploits Christianity and secularism to attack Muslims", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/how-the-right-exploits-christianity-and-secularism-to-attack-muslims/>, retrieved on 05.06.2014

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ The reference was to signs indicating the entrance to the women's section of the mosque. Like most mosques, Orthodox Jewish synagogues and Sikh gurdwaras, the North West Kent Muslim Association conducted acts of worship on the basis of gender separation. Britain First did not have a problem with gender separation when Jews or Sikhs engaged, but when Muslims followed this religious practice, Britain First leader Paul Golding thought he was entitled to subject them to threats.

⁶⁴ See *Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "More harassment and threats from Britain First fascists", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/more-harassment-and-threats-from-britain-first-fascists/#more-34321>, retrieved on 15.07.2014

⁶⁵ See *France24 News's* entry "Far-right leaders vow to 'save Europe' at French gathering", in: <http://www.france24.com/en/20141130-france-national-front-europe-far-right-leaders-marine-le-pen-wilders-russia/>, retrieved on 02.12.2014

Pen in France, Nigel Farage in the United Kingdom, Alexander Gauland in Germany, and many other nationalist figures in Europe.

The European Far Rights's popularity hence soared without delay. **In France**, in the wake of the Charlie Hebdo attack, there was no obvious limit to how high Marine Le Pen and National Front could rise. Mainstream French parties had tried to fend off the National Front's advance ever since it unexpectedly made it to the final round of presidential elections in 2002. On May 2014, its nationalist, xenophobic message helped the party capture 25 percent of the vote in the European Union parliament elections. After Charlie Hebdo attack, the party's relevance could no longer be doubted. On the day of the incident, the leader of the increasingly popular party with the slogan "The French Come First," appeared in front of three French flags and hammered out her demands. Marine Le Pen said: "*It is time for frank and clear responses against inaction and denial*", trying to say that the country's two main political parties had failed to stem the Islamist tide, and the voters were now had all evidence that France required new leadership.⁶⁶ **In the Netherlands**, support for the anti-Islamic Freedom Party of Dutch populist Geert Wilders had jumped to its highest level in more than a year after the Islamist militant attacks in Paris. Wilders said after the Paris bloodshed that the West was 'at war' with Islam, drawing a rebuke from Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte on 11 January. According to a poll, if elections were held at the time, his party would be the single largest in the Netherlands, with 31 seats in the 150-member parliament, more than twice as many as it won in the last elections. The governing Liberal and Labour parties, damaged by persistent sluggish growth, would have just 28 seats between them, compared to the 79 they held after the 2012 elections. The Freedom Party was polling 30 seats just prior to the Paris attacks.⁶⁷ **In the United Kingdom**, Nigel Farage of UK Independence Party gained massive support soon after he urged the West to admit some 'culpability' in the Charlie Hebdo attacks as he claimed mass immigration, foreign policy and political decisions had contributed to recent events in Paris. During a debate in the European Parliament on the massacre, the far-Right party leader called for Judeo-Christian culture to be defended throughout the West. Mr Farage said that the West needs an honest admission that actually its political decisions had led too much of what had happened, and claimed foreign policy in countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria had created very deep resentments within the Muslim community.⁶⁸

To close this section, the Observatory concludes that Islamophobia in Europe during the period under review was very alarming, for the fear against Islam was very intense, while incidents targeting Muslims had been soaring in many countries in the region (The full list of incident is indicated in the **Annex 1**).

⁶⁶ See *Slate Blog's* entry "Front National and Marine Le Pen are on the Rise", in: http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/foreigners/2015/01/marine_le_pen_and_the_national_front_on_the_rise_in_france_s_far_right_party.html, retrieved on 11.01.2015

⁶⁷ See *Newsweek's* entry Paris Attacks Boost Support for Dutch Anti-Islam Wilders, in: <http://www.newsweek.com/paris-attacks-boost-support-dutch-anti-islam-populist-wilders-298446>, retrieved on 12.01.2015

⁶⁸ See *Independent News's* entry "Nigel Farage urges the West to admit some 'culpability' in the Charlie Hebdo attacks", in: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/nigel-farage-urges-the-west-to-admit-some-culpability-in-the-charlie-hebdo-attacks-9974176.html>, retrieved on 14.01.2015

2.3. Islamophobia in the Rest of the World

Once again, Islamophobia exists almost everywhere on earth, and apart from those in the United States, Canada, and Europe, in this report the Observatory would focus only at three issues: a) Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar; b) the rise of Islamophobia in Australia; and c) situation of Tatar Muslims in Crimea. It does not mean that other issues in the rest of the world are less significant, but the main reason is that in choosing these selected issues, the Observatory would expect particular attention from the relevant stakeholders.

2.3.1. *Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar*

Despite some positive signs from Myanmar government by giving citizenship to a limited-number of Rohingya Muslims, the Observatory sees that Islamophobia remains strong in Myanmar. The United States' officials testified that they had been troubled by the citizenship verification project since Burmese authorities were pressuring the Rohingya to say that they were Bengali (Muslims), a term the government preferred because it considered them to be illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, even though many have lived in the country for generations. The Burmese Government's intention to legalize as much of the Rohingya population as possible was a positive development, but the way they had gone about it so far had created a potentially bigger problem, since they had required Rohingya to self-identify as Bengali, which most find offensive and many would not do. Human Rights Watch and the Rohingya themselves had accused the Burmese government of a campaign of ethnic cleansing, a charge the government denied.⁶⁹ During the period under review, the Observatory was also concerned by the fact that around 135,000 Muslim Rohingya in the western state of Rakhine were still being held as virtual prisoners in camps with scarce food, water and health care. Dozens had died, many from preventable conditions such as malnutrition.

2.3.2. *The Rise of Islamophobia in Australia*

During the period under review, the Observatory noted that the sentiments of anti-Islam spread across the country in an unprecedented level. A significant number of parliamentary members, politicians, academic figures, and ordinary citizens together showing their fears of Islam while to launch campaign against the offspring of Islamic identities in this country. The words of Islam, Mosques, Sharia, and ISIS were interchangeably used in public without proper distinction. Mosques constructions were boycotted, Anti-Muslim pamphlets were distributed, hate-crimes against Muslims were increasing, mosques were vandalized, Muslim women were abused or threatened, and politicians were gathering forces to ban attributes associated with Islam. Along with the negative trend, the safety of Muslim women were the most concerning issue, since they had been mostly targeted amidst terrorism hysteria in Australia. To cite some examples, one victim wearing hijab had coffee thrown in her face while she was stopped at traffic lights in the southern Brisbane. While other Muslim women at West End had been abused and threatened by a man who wanted to burn their hijab. At Underwood, a 12-year-old girl was insulted by a man riding past on a pushbike while yelling "f***** jihad, f***** off, go back home you".⁷⁰

This anti-Islam euphoria went even worse after an incident took place in Sydney downtown on 15-16 December, when an armed man took at 15 hostages in a coffee shop, forced them to hold up a flag inscribed with Islamic Shahada. While the incident itself was on the spotlight of western media, it was found out later that the hostage-taker was a Muslim of Iranian descent, hence many amongst the Australian simply associated the incident with radical Islam.

⁶⁹ See *The Washington Post News'* entry "New concerns rise over Burmese treatment of Rohingya Muslims", in: http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/new-concerns-rise-over-burmese-treatment-of-rohingya-muslims/2014/11/11/4c0f42fe-5947-11e4-9d6c-756a229d8b18_story.html, retrieved on 01.12.2104

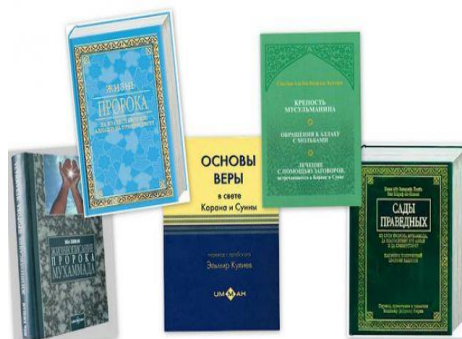
⁷⁰ See *The Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "Queensland's Muslim women targeted amid terrorism hysteria", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/queenslands-muslim-women-targeted-amid-terrorism-hysteria/#more-36861>, retrieved on 22.09.2014

Parliamentary members, politicians, academic figures, and ordinary citizens came together manifesting more ‘fear’ against Islam, while to intensify their negative campaigns against the later. The incident left some hundred thousands of Muslims in Australia being blamed for the siege while they were suffering immediate fears of ‘backlash’ in various level. Islamic groups were reporting a rise in anti-Muslim attacks in Australia, especially since counter-terror raids on September 2014 in Sydney and Melbourne. Muslim leaders were compiling a list of racially or religiously motivated assaults, and testified dozens of incidents, mainly against women wearing the hijab.⁷¹ The highest rate of reported acts of assault and acts of intimidation had been in the state of Queensland, where mosques were threatened and death threats made against Islamic leaders.⁷² It was, however, very relieving that the Australian government remains to show positive gestures and constructive signals towards the protection of Muslim communities in the country. At certain occasions, Prime Minister Abbot firmly stood against the condemnation of Islam while emphasizing that the perpetrator was a deeply unstable person with a long history of violence and mental illness, and that the Australian Muslims should not be blamed for the nasty action of the sick-man, no matter he is a Muslim or non-Muslim.”⁷³

More than 100 people on the same day attended the heated protest at Evandale, where the city’s planning committee recommended approving the application to build the mosque. Placards from the protest decrying Sharia law and invoking images of the beheading of US journalists in Iraq by members of Islamic State were beamed worldwide. The banners included: “Super mosque today, Sharia Law and ISIS tomorrow, beheadings the next”; “Team Australia Vs Team Terror: Aussies rule” and “burqa (sic) or bikinis – you decide”.⁷⁴

2.3.1. *The situation of Tatar Muslims in Crimea*

During the period under review, Russia continued to apply harsh approach towards Muslims in Crimea. The later had been forced to destroy Islamic books and materials included on the Russian blacklist, including copies of the Noble Qur’an and biography of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).⁷⁵ Russian Religious Administration announced through its official website that distribution, production or storage of materials mentioned in the list was forbidden and would entail responsibility. The website also advised Crimean Muslims to study the list and take measures to eliminate prohibited materials if they existed.⁷⁶ Russian authorities also moved further by raiding homes of Crimean Muslims in search of Islamic literatures, including the houses of members of the Crimean Tatar Mejlis (Parliament) Mustafa Salman and Dilyaver Hayreddinov in Nizhnegorsk Rayon. Russian Federal Security Service officers also targeted Crimean madrassas⁷⁷ and Crimean Hijab-wearing Muslims as well as Islamic schools⁷⁸



⁷¹ See *VOA News*’ entry “Muslims Feel Violent Backlash After Australian Anti-Terror Raids”, in: <http://www.voanews.com/content/muslims-feel-violent-backlash-after-australian-anti-terror-raids/2485585.html>, retrieved on 20.10.2014

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ See *The Guardian News*’ entry “Sydney siege: Abbott refuses to blame Islam for Man Haron Monis's actions”, in: <http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2014/dec/17/sydney-siege-abbott-refuses-to-blame-islam-for-man-haron-monis-actions>, retrieved on 17.12.2014

⁷⁴ See *The Islamophobia Watch Blog*’s entry “Another hysterical anti-mosque campaign in Australia”, in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/another-hysterical-anti-mosque-campaign-in-australia/>, retrieved on 12.11.2014

⁷⁵ See *Onislam News*’ entry “Russia to Ban Islamic Books in Crimea”, in: <http://www.onislam.net/english/news/europe/475917-russia-to-ban-islamic-books-in-crimea.html>, retrieved on: 09.03.2014

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ See *World Bulletin News*’ entry “Russian Agents Raiding Homes of Muslims in Crimea”, in: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/muslim-world/143844/russian-agents-raiding-homes-of-muslims-in-crimea>, retrieved on 08.09.2014

⁷⁸ See *Ozziesaffa Blog*’s entry “Russian Police Targets Crimean Hijab-wearing Muslims and Islamic schools”, in: <http://ozziesaffa.blogspot.com/2014/08/russian-police-targets-crimean-hijab.html>, retrieved on 01.09.2014

2.4. Other Islamophobic Trends

2.4.1. Islamophobic Gestures and Policies against Veil, Hijab, and Burqa

Massive phobia against veil, hijab, and burqa started from France in 2010, when President Nicolas Sarkozy and leaders in both houses of the French Parliament overwhelmingly favored the ban, reasoning that face veils threatened France's secularism, women's rights, and public safety. Later step was when the National Assembly of France on 13 July 2010 proposed a bill which then passed by the Senate of France on 14 September 2010, resulting in the ban on the wearing of face-covering headgear, including masks, burqa, helmets, balaclava, niqabs and other veils covering the face in public places.⁷⁹ The key argument supporting this proposal was that face-coverings prevent the clear identification of a person, which was both a security risk, and a social hindrance within a society which relies on facial recognition and expression in communication. Brief, as of 11 April 2011, it was illegal in France to wear a face-covering veil or other mask in public places such as the street, shops, museums, public transportation, and parks. The law was then challenged and taken to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) with regards to human rights claims. The challenger claimed that the law violated Articles 8-10 and Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights, including the "right to respect for private and family life," "freedom of thought, conscience and religion," "freedom of expression," and "prohibition of discrimination."⁸⁰

Unfortunately, the Court decided that the ban did not explicitly target Muslims, siding with the French government on a ban of any clothing covering the face, with few exceptions. The ECHR held that there had been no violation of Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) of the European Convention on Human Rights, and no violation of Article 9 (right to respect for freedom of thought, conscience and religion); no violation of Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination) of the European Convention combined with Articles 8 or 9. The court was accepting the argument of the French government that the law was based on a certain idea of living together.⁸¹ France was therefore endorsed as the first country to ban the veil, followed by Belgium and Netherlands and several European cities.

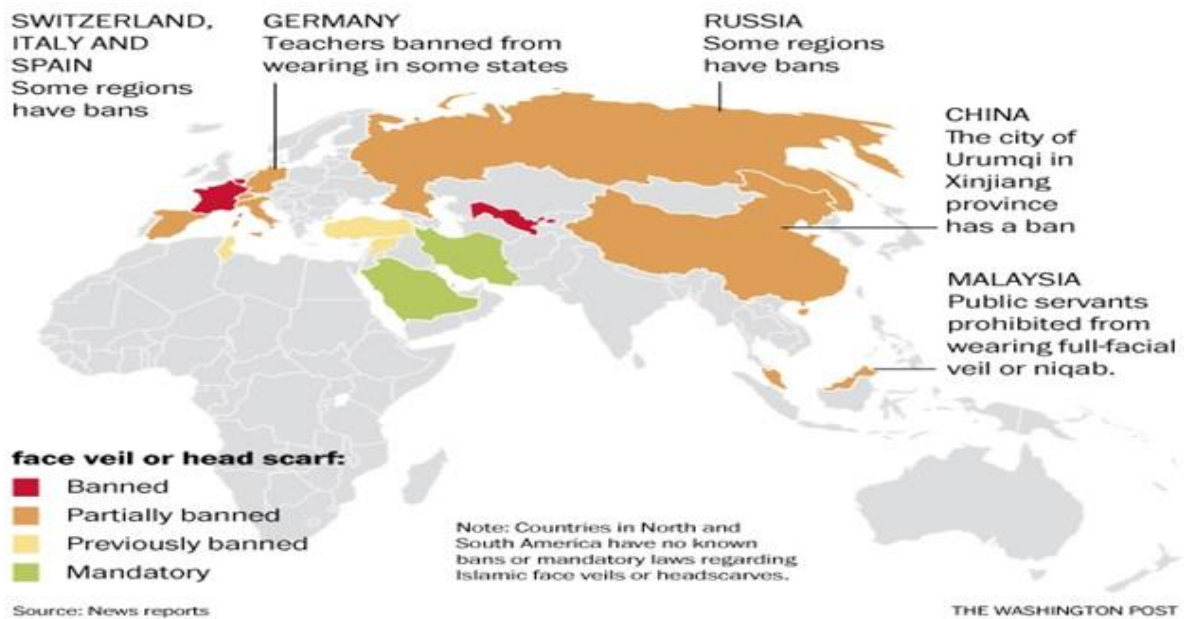
Worse still, the ECHR's decision was referred by many, and the result of which is that burqa, hijab, and veil-phobia have spilled throughout the European continent and affected some other countries in different part of the world. Following this decision, a country followed by another, made anti-burqa, anti-hijab, and anti-veil policies part of their national law, accompanied by sanctions for those who do not comply. Wearing headscarf or hijab in these countries was by consequence considered provocative to local norms or cultures, and at the same time a violation against the Law. In some countries this policy was partially applied, being imposed with conditions such as limitation of location, while in some others public discourses were leading towards the same policy. The following is a map showing countries which applies Burqa-Ban Policies as of April 2015:⁸²

⁷⁹ See *NY Times News*' entry "Parliament Moves France Closer to a Ban on Facial Veils", in: http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/14/world/europe/14burqa.html?_r=0, retrieved on 27.03.2015

⁸⁰ See *Think Progress Web*'s entry "Muslims Lose Their Fight to Overturn Veil Ban", in: <http://thinkprogress.org/world/2014/07/01/3455215/france-veil-ban-hurts-muslims/>, retrieved on 02.07.2014

⁸¹ See *The Guardian News*' entry "France's burqa ban upheld by human rights court", in: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/01/france-burqa-ban-upheld-human-rights-court>, retrieved on 03.07.2014

⁸² See *The Washington Post News*' entry "Map: The places where Islamic face veils are banned", in: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2015/01/16/map-the-places-where-islamic-face-veils-are-banned/>, retrieved on 31.12.2014



The followings are the empirical evidence of spreading gestures and policies against Veil, Hijab, and Burqa around the world during the period under review:

In Austria, Austria's Freedom Party (FPÖ) was calling for a ban on burqas, after the Strasbourg-based European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) backed France's rules on religious headgear on 1st of July 2014, when it ruled the country's law banning full-face veils in public was legal. The party's spokeswoman Carmen Gartelgruber said that in the wide, conservative circles of Islamic immigration society, the opinion prevailed that women were second-class citizens, adding that one of the many instruments for oppressing women was the burqa. A motion was introduced to Austria's parliament in mid-July 2014 to ban the public wearing of the garment, based on the latest ruling.⁸³



It was relieving, however, to note that the proposal by FPÖ to introduce a law on the French model banning the concealment of the face in public space had failed to find a majority in the Austrian parliament, as only the Team Stronach party supported the FPÖ's demand for an anti-burqa bill. While the FPÖ MP Carmen Gartelgruber denounced the veil as a symbol of the oppression of women, Nurten Yilmaz of the Social Democratic Party (SPÖ) questioned the feminist credentials of a party who had opposed changing a line in the national anthem that referred to Austria as the "home of great sons" to "home of great daughters and sons". Maria Fekter of the Austrian Peoples Party (ÖVP) opposed a ban on the basis that the few women who wore the veil were mostly wealthy foreigners at the Zell am See tourist resort whose presence brought economic benefit to that region. Alev Korun of the Greens rejected the FPÖ proposal on the grounds that it helps not one single woman, and Nikolaus Scherak of NEOS said that the veil was not a problem in Austria and a ban would make no sense.⁸⁴

⁸³ See *The Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "ECHR ruling inspires FPÖ proposal for 'burqa' ban", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/echr-ruling-inspires-fpo-proposal-for-burqa-ban/#more-33882>, retrieved on 03.07.2014

⁸⁴ See *The Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "Austrian parliament rejects FPÖ proposal for 'burqa ban'", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/austrian-parliament-rejects-fpo-proposal-for-burqa-ban/#more-34056>, retrieved on 13.07.2014

In Denmark, A ban on people wearing clothing that covered their face in public tried to find its way following a landmark decision at ECHR, while several parties believed a similar ban could be enacted in Denmark. Pia Kjærsgaard, the spokesperson of Dansk Folkeparti (DF) values, thought a ban on face-covering dress, whether it was specifically targeting Islamic burqas or not, should be introduced in Denmark because they could not have women being completely covered as others could not see their facial expressions. If Kjærsgaard took the question to parliament, it would be the third time DF had proposed a burqa ban, as two similar laws were considered in 2004 and 2009. However, neither of them was passed. The Christian Democrats took the same view as the Dansk Folkeparti on this issue. According to a statement by the party's national chairman Stig Grenov, the Christian Democrats were generally opposed to legislating on civil liberties, but of an opinion that to hide the face was an insult to the Christian view of human nature and oppressive to women.⁸⁵

In Norway, Norway's Labour and Progress parties stated that they would consider revisiting the issue of a Muslim veil ban in the wake of a ruling by the ECHR that a public ban does not violate the human rights of Muslim women. Mazyar Keshvari at the Progress Party (FRP) said that his party would consider to promote the proposal again, after ECHR confirmed that a ban is compatible with human rights. Jan Bøhler of the Labour Party (AP) also claimed that the ruling of the court put the Norwegian discussion about the controversial ban in a new light as when parliament rejected such a ban in 2013, the main argument was that Norway risked being censured in the ECHR, hence now that argument falls away. Former Labour Party leader and current Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Thorbjørn Jagland, welcomed the ECHR's ruling Jagland believed 1st July's verdict opened up the prospect of a ban in Norway, and he would think that the judgment could be applied in exactly the same way in other member states, if they want a similar ban.⁸⁶

In Spain, The government of Spain's Catalonia region said on 10 July 2014 that it would push ahead with a planned burqa ban after the European Union ECHR's ruling that banning full face veils in public did not violate the human rights of Muslim women. The Catalan Government first announced its controversial plans to control the wearing of burqas and other face-covering attire in public spaces for reasons of public safety in 2013. Ramon Espadaler, Interior Minister for Catalonia, announced at the time that the move had nothing to do with religion and would also see the public wearing of garments including helmets and masks banned. On 10 July, Espadaler said the Catalan government would restart process of getting the bill approved in the regional parliament after the summer 2014 recess. Spain's Supreme Court in March 2013 annulled previous burqa bans introduced by a number of municipalities, including Leida in western Catalonia, on the grounds that local authorities did not have the jurisdiction to regulate fundamental rights. In that ruling, the court also said that the council in the mid-sized Catalan town had contravened the European Convention on Human Rights, originally signed back in 1950.⁸⁷

Related: This idea of banning burqa in Spain gained a booster when the Interior Minister Jorge Fernández Díaz on 3 September 2014 said the Spanish government would consider including a ban on burqas as part of a packet of planned new security reforms. Speaking at a press conference, Díaz said that a ban on burqas could be included in the final version of Spain's draft Citizen Security Law. Díaz noted that the draft bill, yet to be passed in the country's parliament, already included provisions banning people from hiding their faces in demonstrations. Díaz stressed his department

⁸⁵ See *The Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "Denmark might enact French 'burqa ban'", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/denmark-may-enact-french-burqa-ban/#more-33724>, retrieved on 03.07.2014

⁸⁶ See *The Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "Norway braced for new 'burqa ban' debate", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/norway-braced-for-new-burqa-ban-debate/#more-33722>, retrieved on 03.07.2014

⁸⁷ See *The Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "Catalonia to push ahead with 'burqa' ban plans following ECHR ruling", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/catalonia-to-push-ahead-with-burqa-ban-plans-following-echr-ruling/#more-34024>, retrieved on 12.07.2014

had no powers when it came to issues affecting the dignity of women, but could rule against the wearing of burqas and other full face veils on the grounds they made identification of people difficult.⁸⁸

In Australia, Liberal senator Cory Bernardi had renewed his call for a ban on the Muslim burka, after the same call in 2010. He described the head covering as a 'shroud of oppression' and a 'flag of fundamentalism', adding they were not right in Australia. The call followed police raids across Brisbane and Sydney on 18 September 2014 that resulted in 15 people being detained and the charging of one Sydney man with a serious terrorism-related offence. Senator Bernardi had been a tough critic of the burqa and issues raised by the use of the garment worn by women in some Islamic traditions. —Bernardi's call was heard almost everywhere in Australia, echoed by other Member of Parliaments and provoked wide discourses in the Australian public.⁸⁹

In China, in December 2014 the local government banned the burqa in the mainly Muslim province of Xinjiang's capital, Urumqi. The government had also banned Islamic head coverings and beards in an effort to contain restive Islamic fundamentalism (political Islam) from turning into a full-scale Jihad against the state. Although religious freedom was a constitutional right, Chinese local governments had been outlawing, and limiting Protestant, Catholic, Buddhist, Falun Gong, and Taoist practices since many years back. The country's ideology still view religion as having the dangerous power of dividing citizen's loyalty between private faith and the state. Thus, China had put sort of control on religious practices.⁹⁰

The Observatory noted during the period under review, more and more countries around the World have banned or partially banned Burqa, Hijab, Niqab, Veil and the similar to be used by Muslim women, and the main factor inciting this unfortunate trend was the decision of ECHR on the first of July 2014 that was siding with the French government on a ban of any clothing covering the face.

2.4.2. Discrimination against Muslims in Employment:

During the period under review, the Observatory noted that discriminations against Muslims remained to exist despite a decreasing trend towards the end of the covered period. Workers who happened to be Muslims were fired, alienated, and discriminated because of their religion, or simply because of the dress they put on. Unfortunately, this practice was the case even in most developed world like what was happening in **the United States** on 30 June 2014, when a workplace discrimination lawsuit was filed against a nursing home, Shadescrest Healthcare Center, for refusing to allow a Muslim employee to wear a hijab on the job. Tracy Martin, a Muslim woman, was hired as a certified nursing assistant by Shadescrest Healthcare Center back in 2012. Martin reported to work wearing a hijab, in accord with her sincerely held religious beliefs. Shadescrest refused Martin's request to wear the hijab, despite its religious significance, and instead, told her to remove the head covering or be subject to termination. Subsequently, Martin filed a charge with the *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission* (EEOC) complaining that Shadescrest refused to accommodate her religious beliefs. Weeks after Shadescrest received notice of Martin's charge of discrimination, Martin was summarily fired. According to the EEOC, Martin was fired in retaliation for her complaint to the EEOC and on account of her attempt to exercise her rights under Title VII's religious accommodation provision.⁹¹

⁸⁸ See *The Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "Spain opens door to ban on Burqas", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/spain-opens-door-to-ban-on-burqas/#more-36250>, retrieved on 05.09.2014

⁸⁹ See *ABC Net News'* entry "Cory Bernardi renews calls for burka ban after Sydney, Brisbane anti-terror raids", in: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-09-18/cory-bernardi-renews-call-for-burqa-ban/5752784>, retrieved on 18.09.2014

⁹⁰ See *Breitbart News'* entry "China Becomes Latest Nation to Impose Burqa Ban", in: <http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2014/12/15/china-becomes-latest-nation-to-impose-burqa-ban-in-muslim-western-capital/>, retrieved on 16.12.2014

⁹¹ See *The Islamophobia Watch Blog's* "EEOC sues Shadescrest Healthcare for religious discrimination and retaliation", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/eeoc-sues-shadescrest-healthcare-for-religious-discrimination-and-retaliation/#more-33990>, retrieved on 10.07.2014

Alienation against Muslim worker was also happening in **France**, when a Muslim engineer working for a firm subcontracted by French energy giant EDF had been banned from accessing French nuclear sites where he normally works, a move his lawyer said was pure Islamophobia. The 29-year-old project manager had been granted access to nuclear installations as part of his job throughout 2012 and 2013, but later on the engineer had his pass to enter the Nogent-sur-Seine nuclear power station revoked without explanation. The decision, made by the local administration, was covered by 'Secret Defence', which means the authorities were not required to publicly justify the decision. In June 2014, the lawyer successfully had the engineer's ban revoked by an appeals court, but again, when the engineer turned up for work in July, he found he was refused access to his place of work.⁹²

The fact that discrimination happened in most developed countries was also revealed by Dr Nabil Khattab and Professor Ron Johnston from **the United Kingdom**. These local researchers, using data from the Office for *National Statistics'* *Labour Force Survey* of more than half a million people found that Muslims were facing the worst job discrimination of any minority group in Britain, and that they had the lowest chance of being in a managerial role. According to their findings: Muslim men were up to 76 per cent less likely to have a job of any kind compared to white, male British Christians of the same age and with the same qualifications; Muslim women were up to 65 per cent less likely to be employed than white Christian counterparts. Muslims were also the most disadvantaged in terms of employment prospects out of 14 ethno-religious groupings in the UK, and skin color made little difference to the figures. For women, Muslim Pakistanis and a 'Muslim other' group were 65 per cent less likely to have a job, with Muslim Indians 55 per cent, Muslim Bangladeshis 51 per cent and white Muslims 43 per cent less likely. For men, the 'Muslim other' group was 76 per cent less likely to be in work, followed by Muslim Bangladeshis (66 per cent), white Muslims (64 per cent), Muslim Pakistanis (59 per cent) and Muslim Indians (37 per cent), the Social Science Journal study found. White British men and women of no religion were, 20 and 25 per cent less likely to have a job than Christians were. Black Christians with Caribbean origins were 54 per cent and 48 per cent less likely. The only ethno-religious group with better work prospects than white British Christians were British Jews, with women and men 29 and 15 per cent more likely to be employed. Of those in work, the researchers found only 23 per cent and 27 per cent of Muslim Bangladeshis and Muslim Pakistanis, respectively, had a salaried job. White British Jews had the highest rates, with 64 per cent in salaried jobs, followed by Hindu Indians and white Christian Irish on 53 and 51 per cent respectively. White British Christians, white British of no religion and black Christian Africans were all above 40 per cent.⁹³

To close this section, the Observatory would like to emphasize that discrimination against Muslims at workplace was still a concerning issue, especially since such discrimination continued to happen even in most developed countries.

⁹² See *France24 News'* entry "Muslim engineer banned from French nuclear sites", in: <http://www.france24.com/en/20140818-muslim-engineer-banned-french-nuclear-sites-edf/>, retrieved on 31.09.2014

⁹³ See *Islamophobia Today Blog's* entry "British Muslims face worst job discrimination of any minority group", in: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2014/12/01/british-muslims-face-worst-job-discrimination-of-any-minority-group/>, retrieved on 03.12.2014

3. SOME POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

Despite the alarming trend of Islamophobia in the West, the Observatory noted with pleasure that during the covering period, there were efforts in many countries around the world to positively respond against anti-Muslim and Islamophobic activities, which the Observatory would consider as positive signs towards combatting Islamophobia and incitement of hatred and violence towards Islam and Muslims. The following instances of positive trend are worth mentioning:

3.1. Court Decisions against Islamophobes:

- **UK:** Two football fans were fined right on the beginning of May 2014 after being convicted of tearing up pages of the Koran during a Birmingham City match. Middlesbrough FC supporters Julie Phillips, 50, and Gemma Parkin, 18, admitted tearing up a book. The pair were both found guilty of committing a religiously aggravated public order offence. Both were spared a football banning order. Phillips was fined £300, with £400 costs and a £30 victim surcharge. Parkin was fined £200, with £400 costs and a £20 victim surcharge.⁹⁴
- **Sri Lanka:** On 5 May 2014, four of Sri Lanka's most senior hardline Buddhist monks appeared in court, accused for insulting the Koran, following a spate of religious hate attacks. Police accused the monks, from the nationalist Bodu Bala Sena (BBS), or Buddhist Force, of making disparaging remarks against the Islamic holy book after bursting into a meeting of religious leaders in April 2014. At the meeting, the monks also intimidated a moderate colleague who was promoting religious tolerance on the Buddhist-majority country. They were granted bail in the sum of 100,000 rupees (\$770) each, and to be warned not to indulge in such activities."⁹⁵
- **US:** On 12 May 2014, the U.S. court ruled on that there were limits on the messages that organizations seeking trademarks could embrace, upholding a finding that the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office was right to decline a trademark to a group opposed to Islamic extremism. This decision was in reference to the office's earlier decision that the "Stop! Islamization of America!" website owned by activist Pamela Geller could be denied trademark over some of the essays and content it hosted. The website's name, according to the three-judge panel, "*suggests an association between 'peaceful political Islamization' and terrorism that many Muslims would find offensive.*"⁹⁶

⁹⁴ See *Birmingham Mail News*' entry "Football fans found guilty of tearing pages out of Koran at Birmingham City match", in: <http://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/football-fans-found-guilty-tearing-7061808>, retrieved on 02.05.20

⁹⁵ See *Lanka Business Online News*' entry "Sri Lanka Buddhist monks in court accused of insulting Koran", in: <http://www.lankabusinessonline.com/news/sri-lanka-buddhist-monks-in-court-accused-of-insulting-koran/842681624>, retrieved on 06.05.2014

⁹⁶ See *The Blaze Blog*'s entry "Court says controversial Anti-Islamic Extremism group won't be granted a trademark", in: <http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2014/05/14/court-says-controversial-anti-islamic-extremism-group-wont-be-granted-a-trademark/>, retrieved on 15.05.2014

- **UK:** On 20 May 2014, a man with malicious communication was charged in West Yorkshire. David Lord of West Yorkshire, was arrested and charged by West Yorkshire after officers in Wiltshire were alerted to his derogatory post in social media.⁹⁷
- **US:** On 16 June 2014, Bernhard Laufer was charged for sending threatening emails to Nihad Awad, the national executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). Laufer was already under fire for allegedly stabbing a man inside a Queens mosque in 2012.⁹⁸
- **UK:** In September 2014, a 26-year-old man was charged with spitting at a Muslim woman as she walked through Cabot Circus. Hasina Khan was on her way to work when she was allegedly attacked at about 9am on 21 July 2014. Ms Khan said she had was spat on and verbally abused by a stranger who approached her as she walked through the shopping centre. Avon and Somerset police arrested Jack Hughes of Southville. He was then been charged with racially- or religiously-aggravated common assault.⁹⁹
- **UK:** In December 2014, two men had been convicted of making Facebook threats to 'torch' and 'blow up' a proposed new mosque in Astley Bridge. Leon Richmond wrote on the page that he would not be bothered if the mosque was built as he would 'blow it up' himself. A 23-year-old Darren Hubble posted: "*Bolton people say no, Wigan says not a chance, I'll torch the place if I get half the chance*". Both men were fined £600 as well as being ordered to pay £145 costs.¹⁰⁰
- **Australia:** In December 2014, Broadcaster Alan Jones had been ordered to pay Muslim community leader Keysar Trad \$10,000, ending a nine year battle over a radio segment found to have stimulated listeners to hatred of Lebanese men. The Civil and Administrative Tribunal found Mr Trad's complaint of racial vilification over the comments was substantiated. The letter said Lebanese men "*simply rape, pillage and plunder a nation that's taken them in*". The radio segment followed a story about a group of men, who Jones said 'announced themselves as Lebanese Muslims', gathering at Brighton-le-Sands and The Rocks. Jones and Harbour Radio were ordered to pay the damages, along with some of Mr Trad's legal costs.¹⁰¹
- **US:** In February 2015, Former film star Brigitte Bardot, France's iconic blonde bombshell and 'sex kitten' who reigned supreme from 1952 – 1973, was on trial for the fifth time for insulting Muslims and inciting racial hatred. Bardot had been fined four times and had also received suspended jail sentences. Now, the prosecutor, Anne de



⁹⁷ See *The Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "Man arrested over Trowbridge mosque arson threat", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/man-arrested-over-trowbridge-mosque-arson-threat/#more-31835>, retrieved on 22.05.2014

⁹⁸ See *NY Daily News's* entry "New York man charged with emailing murder threats to Muslim civil rights leader": <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/new-york-man-charged-emailing-murder-threats-muslim-civil-rights-leader-article-1.1832700>, retrieved on 18.06.2014

⁹⁹ See *The Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "Man Charged with Spitting At Muslim Woman as She Walked through Bristol's Cabot Circus", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/man-charged-with-spitting-at-muslim-woman-as-she-walked-through-brisstols-cabot-circus/>, retrieved on 25.09.2014

¹⁰⁰ See *The Bolton News's* entry "Men fined £600 for threatening to 'torch' and 'blow up' Astley Bridge mosque on Facebook", in: http://www.theboltonnews.co.uk/news/crime/11647850.Men_fined_600_for_threatening_to_torch_and_blow_up_Astley_Bridge_mosque_on_Facebook/, retrieved on 06.12.2014

¹⁰¹ See *The Arab News's* entry "Australian broadcaster ordered to pay \$10,000 for racial vilification", in: <http://www.arab-news.biz/islam/2014/12/30/australian-broadcaster-ordered-to-pay-10000-for-racial-vilification/>, retrieved on 31.12.2014

Fontette, wanted a heftier fine and a tougher sentence: the equivalent of \$24,000 and a two month suspended jail term.¹⁰²

3.2. Politicians Positive Views on Islam:

- **Australia:** Prime Minister Tony Abbott urged Australians to stand alongside Muslim communities amid the fallout of the largest terror raids in Australian history. Speaking to Channel Seven and Nine on 19 September, Mr Abbott also addressed the protest against the raids. *"The vast majority of Australian Muslims are absolutely first class Australians,"* and he said he did not want to isolate the Muslim community.¹⁰³

Related: On December 2014, Prime minister said that Lyndt Café hostage taker was a 'deeply unstable person' rather than representative of Islamic community, telling *the ABC*: *"We don't blame the pope for the IRA and we don't blame the Catholics living next door for the folly and madness of some people who may claim Christian motivations."*¹⁰⁴

- **US:** On 19 September 2014, New York City's Mayor Bill de Blasio said that Pamela Geller's anti-Islamic ad campaign on the city's buses was *"outrageous, inflammatory and wrong"*. The ads, which would appear on 100 New York City buses and two subway entrances a week after, had *"no place in New York City, or anywhere,"* he said in a statement. The ads were paid for by the American Freedom Defense Initiative run by blogger. Blasio added: *"These hateful messages serve only to divide and stigmatize when we should be coming together as one city. While those behind these ads only display their irresponsible intolerance, the rest of us who may be forced to view them can take comfort in the knowledge that we share a better, loftier and nobler view of humanity."*¹⁰⁵
- **Australia:** On September 2014, Prime Minister Tony Abbot said Australians should not be concerned about what people wear. Mr. Abbot emphasized that the main issue was not about peoples' religion or about what people wear, but about potential terror attacking Australia He told Australian people *not to afraid about people's faith or about what people wear, but to guard against crime and terror.*¹⁰⁶
- **Germany:** On 24 December 2014, German President Joachim Gauck criticized the anti-Islam protests in Dresden which gathered a record number of 17,000 people in his Christmas message. Mr Gauck said: *"Where we can contribute to maintaining peace or alleviating suffering so that we can build a better future, then we should do everything in our power to do so."* The president added that he was encouraged by the fact that the great majority of Germany do not follow those who want to seal off the country.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² See *The WND News*' entry "Brigitte Bardot on trial again for insulting Muslims", in: <http://www.wnd.com/2015/02/brigitte-bardot-on-trial-again-for-insulting-muslims/#IXyKJOY6qS1S8rd.99>, retrieved on 24.02.2015

¹⁰³ See *The SBS News*' entry "Abbott Urges Australia to Stay United with Muslim Community", in: <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2014/09/19/abbott-urges-australia-stay-united-muslim-community>, retrieved on 22.09.2014

¹⁰⁴ See *The Guardian News*' entry "Abbott refuses to blame Islam for Man Haron Monis's actions", in: <http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2014/dec/17/sydney-siege-abbott-refuses-to-blame-islam-for-man-haron-monis-actions>, retrieved on 17.12.2014

¹⁰⁵ See *The Haaretz News*' entry "N.Y. Mayor Blasts Anti-Islamic Ads on City Transit", in: <http://www.haaretz.com/jewish-world/jewish-world-news/1.616806>, retrieved 21.09.2014

¹⁰⁶ See *The SMH News*' entry "Tony Abbott Dismisses Cory Bernardi Call for Burqa Ban", in: <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/society-and-culture/for-australias-sake-we-need-to-ban-the-burqa-20100506-ubun.html>, retrieved on 22.9.2014

¹⁰⁷ See *The Sputnik News*' entry "German President Slams Anti-Islam Protests, Urges Tolerance in Xmas Speech", in: <http://sputniknews.com/europe/20141224/1016200124.html>, retrieved on 25.12.2014

- **France:** On his 15 January speech at the Arab World Institute in Paris French President Francois Hollande said: "*It is Muslims who are the first victims of fanaticism, fundamentalism and intolerance... French Muslims have the same rights as all other French people... We have the obligation to protect them. The law must be firmly enforced in places of worship such as churches, mosques, and synagogues.*"¹⁰⁸ He also said: "*Anti-Muslim actions, like Antisemitism, must be denounced and severely punished... France was formed by movements of population and the flux of immigration. It is constituted by the diversity of what is in France. A number of my compatriots have attachments in the Arab world, coming from North Africa or the Near East. They might be Jews, Muslims, Christians, they might be believers or no.*"¹⁰⁹
- **France:** A day after the end of the Charlie Hebdo attacks, Prime Minister Manuel Valls of France spoke of waging a war against terrorism, jihadism, radical Islam, everything aimed at breaking fraternity, freedom, and solidarity. But during a traditional New Year's speech on 20 January 2015, Mr. Valls acknowledged that France had a deeply rooted problem that, he implied, had resulted in a divided society. Mr. Valls cited a deep divide in the country, likening it to a state of "territorial, social, ethnic apartheid" that had left part of the population on the cultural fringe.¹¹⁰
- **Germany:** On 31 January 2015, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said that there were about four million Muslims living in Germany, adding that Islamic religion courses were being taught in German schools. She also said that there were university professors specializing in the field of Islamic religion, along with an annual conference on Islam organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Interior that aims to improve the integration of Muslims living in Germany. She pointed out that all these factors proved that Islam was part of Germany.¹¹¹
- **US:** On 19 February 2015, President Obama challenged the idea that terrorist groups like al Qaeda and the Islamic State were connected to the Islamic faith during remarks at the White house Summit to Counter Violent Extremism. Obama said: "*The notion that the West is at war with Islam is an ugly lie... and all of us, regardless of our faith, have a responsibility to reject it.*"¹¹²
- **UK:** On 17 February 2015, Ed Miliband called for social media giants to join in the fight against anti-semitism and Islamophobia online. The Labour leader said there were real fears about rising levels of intolerance in the wake of terror attacks in Paris and Copenhagen. The British Jewish community had called for more protection, fearing copycat attacks on UK soil. Mr Miliband spoke out in the wake of the attacks in the Danish capital, where a gunman shot dead a film director at a cafe event on free speech and then killed a Jewish security guard at a synagogue. The atrocity bore resemblances to the Paris attacks, when several people were killed by extremists at the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo and at a Jewish supermarket. Miliband said the attacks would provoke fear among people

¹⁰⁸ See *VOX News*' entry "Hollande's important speech on Islamophobia: Muslims are the first victims of fanaticism", in: <http://www.vox.com/2015/1/15/7551755/hollande-islamophobia>, retrieved on 16.01.2015

¹⁰⁹ See *Juan Cole Blog's* entry "French President Hollande: Anti-Muslimism is as bad as Antisemitism: Muslims Must be Protected", in: <http://www.juancole.com/2015/01/muslimism-antisemitism-protected.html>, retrieved on 18.01.2015

¹¹⁰ See *The NY Times News*' entry "French Premier Says 'Apartheid' Is Leaving Minorities on the Fringe", in: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/21/world/europe/paris-attacks-suspects.html?_r=0, retrieved on 21.01.2015

¹¹¹ See *MoroccoWorld News*' entry "Angela Merkel: Islam is Part of Germany", in: <http://www.morocoworldnews.com/2015/01/150715/angela-merkel-islam-part-germany-islam-is-part-of-germany/>, retrieved on 01.02.2015

¹¹² See *yahoo News*' entry "President Obama Rejects 'Notion That the West Is at War With Islam'", in: <https://gma.yahoo.com/president-obama-rejects-notion-west-war-islam-193150093.html>, retrieved on 20.02.2015

of all backgrounds. Milliband added that there was real fear among Jewish families, among Muslim families, among people of all backgrounds about the rising intolerance.¹¹³

- **France:** On 23 February French President Francois Hollande vowed to introduce tougher penalties for 'racist, anti-semitic or homophobic' remarks in the wake of January's terrorist attacks in Paris. Speaking at an annual dinner hosted by the country's Jewish community, Hollande called for 'faster, more effective sanctions' against hate speech and added: "*I want such speech to come under criminal law rather than press laws.*" Hollande said anti-semitism should be treated as an aggravating circumstance in the prosecution of all offences. Would-be jihadists would also face stiffer punishment under a draft intelligence bill to be unveiled soon, he added.¹¹⁴
- **Australia:** Gold Coast leaders said a radical anti-Islamic redneck movement was damaging the city's reputation and putting its \$4.2 billion tourism industry at risk. State Tourism Minister Jann Stuckey on 10 September night black-listed the public outpouring against the background of an application to build a mosque in Currumbin, and said: "I am deeply disappointed by this because this [protest] does not represent the people of the Gold Coast or the people of my electorate and are is not helping anyone's cause."¹¹⁵

3.3. Counter-balances on Far Rights.

- **Saudi Arabia:** In May 2014, Saudi Arabia banned Dutch companies from participating in its future projects because the Dutch government did not take action against the leader of the ultra-rightist Freedom Party for abusing the Kingdom and Islam. The Council of Saudi Chambers reportedly received a letter in this respect from higher Saudi authorities urging them not to involve Dutch companies in local projects either directly or indirectly. The government order also called for reducing the number of visas issued for Dutch businessmen and investors and limiting the period of visas, unless they were currently involved in vital projects. The Saudi government had also instructed to halt the exchange of visits by delegations from both countries. The move came after intensive insult of Islam and Saudi Arabia by Dutch right-wing politician Geert Wilders.¹¹⁶
- **Netherlands:** The Netherlands' biggest business association officially apologized over a comments by a Dutch party leader against Islam and Saudi Arabia. Days after Dutch foreign minister Frans Timmermans said he would visit Saudi Arabia to try to prevent trade sanctions against the Netherlands, the VON-NCW, representing 115,000 companies and establishments, including most small and medium-sized firms, said it regretted the provocative statements. It said the entire Dutch business society was completely against the comments, it was reported. Timmermans traveled to Riyadh to make clear that Wilders' views were his own and did not represent the position of the Dutch government. Bilateral trade between the countries came to nearly \$5 billion in 2010 and the Netherlands accounted for nearly four percent of foreign direct investment in Saudi Arabia in 2014.¹¹⁷
- **Belgium:** In July 2014, the Belgium Antwerp prosecutor had opened an investigation into an internet game published on the website of Vlaams Belang politician Filip Dewinter in the run-up to the May 2014 elections. The

¹¹³ See *Standard News*' entry "Ed Miliband: 'Facebook and Twitter must help counter anti-semitism and Islamophobia'", in: <http://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/ed-miliband-facebook-and-twitter-must-help-counter-antisemitism-and-islamophobia-10051629.html>, retrieved on 18.02.2015

¹¹⁴ See *Middle East Online News*' entry "French president vows tougher penalties for hate speech", in: <http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=70292>, retrieved on 25.02.2015

¹¹⁵ See *The Loon Watch Blog*'s entry "Another hysterical anti-mosque campaign in Australia", in: <http://www.loonwatch.com/2014/09/another-hysterical-anti-mosque-campaign-in-australia/>, retrieved on 12.11.2014

¹¹⁶ See *The Arab News*' entry "Dutch firms no longer welcome in KSA", in: <http://www.arabnews.com/news/572116>, retrieved on 18.05.2014

¹¹⁷ See *The Arab Business News*' entry "Dutch business group apologises over anti-Islam MP", in: <http://www.arabianbusiness.com/dutch-business-group-apologises-over-anti-islam-mp-552084.html>, retrieved on 30.05.2014

game was dubbed Minder, minder, minder (Less, Less, Less), citing Dutch politician Geert Wilders' supporters when asked whether they wanted "more or less Moroccans". In the game Elio Di Rupo (PS) and Guy Verhofstadt (Open VLD) were represented as flies, which the player could swat. Also among the "enemies" to be swatted were Muslim terrorists and mosques. Police had received several complaints about the racist nature of the game. This had resulted in the investigation in question and Dewinter being questioned.¹¹⁸

- **Austria:** On mid-August 2014, Michael F, an Austrian far-right activist, received a 5-month suspended prison sentence for incitement as a result of anti-Muslim comments he had posted on the "JA!! zu: Österreich ohne Minarette!!!" (YES!! to Austria without Minarets!!!) Facebook page. These comments included references to 'Muslim scum' and to 'Muslims who live here at our expense and only breed like rats'. "JA!! zu: Österreich ohne Minarette!!!" was launched in 2009 by Robert Faller, a founder and leader of Nationale Volkspartei. In 2012 Faller was given a suspended 18-month sentence for breaching Austria's constitutional ban on National Socialist activity. Despite its clear neo-Nazi links, his Facebook page had attracted over 16,000 likes, including from prominent members of the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ), which claimed to be a mainstream political party with no connection to fascism. In 2014, the Heimat ohne Hass (Home without Hate) website published a list of FPÖ politicians, included party leader Heinz-Christian Strache.¹¹⁹



- **France:** In October 2014, Maxence Buttey, a French far-right of Marie Le Pen's party, councilor reverted to Islam, sending a video message to officials of the anti-immigration Front National Party, to praise the Muslims' holy book, the Qur'an, and asking them to join him. The video was a shock to many members of the party, which announced suspending Buttey from a regional FN committee.¹²⁰

- **Canada:** On 28 November, 2014, V18 director Mario Philip Azzopardi apologised for statements he made on Facebook insulting people's sentiments quoted that he would treat any Muslim who believes in Sharia law with the same contempt he would reserve for Nazis, Klu Klux Klan members and slave traders, reiterating that anyone who does not practice Sharia law is not a Muslim. Mr. Azzopardi said that his erratic comment was his personal opinion and he was sorry if he was not clear or if what he said could be taken to mean he was against cultural diversity. Mr. Azzopardi underlined that he regularly worked in societies where diversity was celebrated in productions and projects inspired by his writings, so he was sorry that he could have insulted the people's sentiments with his writings.¹²¹



¹¹⁸ See *The Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "Vlaams Belang leader questioned about racist internet game", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/vlaams-belang-leader-questioned-about-racist-internet-game/#more-34090>, retrieved on 12.07.2014

¹¹⁹ See *The Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "Austrian Far-Right activist convicted of inciting hatred against Muslims", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/austrian-far-right-activist-convicted-of-inciting-hatred-against-muslims/#more-36170>, retrieved on 04.09.2014

¹²⁰ See *Onislam Blog's* entry "Far-right French Politician Reverts to Islam", in: <http://onislam.net/english/news/europe/478959-far-right-french-politician-reverts-to-islam.html>, retrieved on 1.11.2014

¹²¹ See *Times of Malta News's* entry "V18 director apologises for rant on Islam", in: <http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20141128/local/updated-v18-director-apologises-for-rant-on-islam.545985>, retrieved on 01.12.2014

- **UK:** In November 2014, Matthew Lester, a former member of Britain First had denounced his organisation and visited Crayford Mosque to apologise to the Muslim community. Mr. Lester joined the group six months before to protest Muslim preachers but soon became disillusioned with the group. He told *The Huffington Post* that the Britain First was not just going after extremists, but also going after Muslims.¹²²
- **Netherlands:** In January 2015, Jan Kerkhoff, a provincial parliamentarian in North-Brabant, dropped out of the regional section of PVV because of his dissatisfaction with the party line and his dissatisfaction with party leader Anti-Islamist Geert Wilders. This was for the third time since December 2014, a PVV party official resigned from the party. Before Kerkhoff's departure, Marc Van Kampen (Gerlderland) left the group in late December 2014 and on early January 2015, Matthijs Jansen (Groningen), hopped off as well.
- **UK:** In February 2015, French far-right political leader Marine Le Pen had received a hostile reception at the Oxford Union where she was invited to discuss western values. Crowds of protesters gathered outside the building to denounce the controversial leader of France's far-right Front National. Her speech to gathered union members was delayed by over one hour as the angry crowd attempted to block entrances. Union officials had faced criticism for inviting Ms Le Pen to speak uninterrupted for five minutes, rather than insisting on a more traditional debate format where an opponent would have also been heard.¹²³
- **Sweden:** On 27 February 2015, a university representative said that Sweden's Karlstad University cancelled a lecture by Swedish cartoonist Lars Vilks, author of the Prophet Muhammad cartoons, who was allegedly targeted in a recent Copenhagen shooting. Vilks was expected to talk in front of some 100 student foreign policy association members at the university on March 17.¹²⁴



3.4. Anti-PEGIDA Trends

- **Germany:** On 13 January 2015, amid the growing strength of an anti-Islamic and anti-refugee movement in Germany, German Chancellor Angela Merkel participated in a rally in Berlin to show support for religious tolerance and openness among Germans. The rally was organized by the Central Council of Muslims in Germany and the Turkish Community, under the banner of "*Let's be there for each other. Terror: not in our name!*" in Berlin. Thousands of participants in that day's counter-demonstrations showed up to oppose far-right extremism. The German chancellor condemned Islamophobic



¹²² See *The 5Pillarz News*' entry "Former Britain First Member, Matthew Lester, Denounces Group and Visits Mosque to Apologise", in: <http://www.5pillarz.com/video/matthew-lester-why-i-joined-and-then-left-britain-first/>, retrieved on 01.12.2014

¹²³ See *The Telegraph News*' entry "French far-right leader Marine Le Pen mobbed by Oxford Union protesters", in: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/11394170/French-far-right-leader-Marine-Le-Pen-mobbed-by-Oxford-Union-protesters.html>, retrieved on 06.02.2015

¹²⁴ See *The Sputnik News*' entry "Swedish University Cancels Lecture by Prophet Muhammad Cartoonist", in: <http://sputniknews.com/europe/20150227/1018842239.html>, retrieved on 28.02.2015

populism, which had been strengthened by the right-wing PEGIDA. Merkel also stressed that Islam belongs to Germany.¹²⁵

- **Germany:** In the second week of January 2015, counter-protests against anti-Islam demonstrators were planned in Hanover, Düsseldorf, Hamburg, Munich, Dresden, Leipzig and Berlin. On its Facebook page, the leftist group Dresden Nazifrei (Dresden free of Nazis) called upon its supporters to protest against the anti-Muslim demonstrators. Police tried to keep anti-Muslim protesters and their opponents from clashing, with a heavier presence because of the Paris attacks.¹²⁶
- **Germany:** On 18 January 2015, a weekly rally by a German group protesting what it calls 'the Islamization of the West' was called off on because of a terrorist threat against one of its organizers.¹²⁷
- **Germany:** By end of January 2015, following the resignation of Lutz Bachmann, the former leader of the anti-Islam movement PEGIDA, the new leader of the movement had announced her resignation. Kathrin Oertel had taken over the far-right movement's leadership after the founder quit after posing as Adolf Hitler in a photograph. The unexpected divorce of the current leader from the movement indicated that PEGIDA was started to suffer from a loss in credibility and popularity among Germans. Apart from Oertel's resignation, the anti-Islam group was apparently in disarray as more members of the central core of the movement had reportedly stepped down despite no official statement being released by the movement.¹²⁸
- **Norway:** In February, Tor Bach, a leading expert on the far right has branded the anti-Islamic movement Pegida 'a complete failure' in Norway after just 25 people showed up to take part in a march in Oslo on 9 February. Pegida's Norway head Max Hermansen had hailed the organization's first Oslo march, which came shortly after January's attack on Charlie Hebdo, with nearly 200 protestors attending, but the numbers attending rallies have dropped consistently. Pegida's first march in Sweden, also on the same day, drew only about 30 protestors, while counter-demonstrators numbered close to 3,000.¹²⁹

3.5. Supports on Mosques:

- **Greece:** In June 2014, the Greece Council of State finally approved the government's decision to construct a mosque in the central Athens neighborhood of Votanikos after numerous delays on this 1.1-million-euro project. The project had been beset by delays since it was announced in 2000 following opposition by residents and the Orthodox Church, which had initially objected to the construction of a mosque with minarets.¹³⁰

¹²⁵ See *The Daily Sabah News'* entry "Germany leadership unite with Muslims against PEGIDA", in: <http://www.dailysabah.com/europe/2015/01/13/merkel-speaks-out-against-rising-islamophobia>, retrieved on 14.01.2015

¹²⁶ See "Counter-protests planned across Germany", in: <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/01/12/europe/germany-anti-islam-marches/>, retrieved on 14.01.2015

¹²⁷ See The Huffington Post News' entry "Anti-Islam PEGIDA rally in Germany canceled over threat", in: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/18/pegida-rally-canceled_n_6495902.html, retrieved on 19.01.2015

¹²⁸ See *The Daily Sabah News'* entry "German anti-Islam group PEGIDA loses second leader in a week: Kathrin Oertel", in: <http://www.dailysabah.com/europe/2015/01/29/german-antiislam-group-pegida-loses-second-leader-in-a-week>, retrieved on 30.01.2015

¹²⁹ See *The Local News'* entry "Pegida sees 'complete failure' in Norway", in at : <http://www.thelocal.no/20150210/pegida-norway-a-dead-project>, retrieved on 11.02.2015

¹³⁰ See *The Ekathimerini Blog's* entry "Council of State green-lights construction of Athens mosque", in: http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/_w_articles_wsite1_1_01/07/2014_541007, retrieved on 02.07.2014

- **Australia:** On 14 July 2014, after almost six months of deliberation, a Muslim mosque was given the green light to be built next to an Assyrian Christian church in Coolaroo, Victoria. Hume Council ticked off the Al Sadiq Foundation's application to build the mosque at 60-66 Kyabram St, despite more than 1000 objections.¹³¹
- **UK:** In July 2014, a former Conservative borough council election candidate lost his membership of the party after a campaign poster from the British National Party appeared on his Facebook page. The poster which featured a picture of a mosque with a line through it and the caption "No More Mosques" was displayed on Mr Hogg's page in the first week of July 2014. The post prompted an immediate protest from local Liberal Democrats, who wrote to Cllr John Wilson, the chairman of Maidstone and the Weald Conservatives, to ask if he would remove Roger Hogg from the party's list of approved Conservative candidates, and review Mr Hogg's membership of the party. Cllr Wilson said that he was very disappointed and Mr. Hogg was no longer a member of the Conservative Party.¹³²
- **Australia:** In September 2014, a divisive social media page protesting the development of a mosque in Bendigo had been shut down by Facebook for violating its community standards. The "Stop the Mosque in Bendigo" page was closed because it breached Facebook's policy on hate speech. The page sprang up in response to a City of Greater Bendigo decision in June to grant a planning permit for a \$3 million mosque, the first of its kind for the regional city. It was taken down after Bendigo residents complained about it to Facebook.¹³³
- **Canada:** On 24 October 2014, dozens of people from Cold Lake, Canada showed up to help repair the damage after vandals targeted the mosque early morning on that day. Some helped paint over the damage, while others taped their own messages to the window reading "*You Are Home*" and "*Love Your Neighbour*."¹³⁴
- **US:** On 14 November 2014, Washington National Cathedral and five Muslim groups announced that the first celebration of Muslim Friday prayers at the cathedral were observed. The prayers was attended by Canon Gina Campbell, director of liturgy for Washington National Cathedral, South African Ambassador Ebrahim Rasool, Masjid Muhammad of The Nation's Mosque, and representatives from the Dulles Area Muslim Society, Council on American-Islamic Relations, Islamic Society of North America, and Muslim Public Affairs Council.¹³⁵

¹³¹ See *The Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "Tribunal rules in favour of mosque in Coolaroo", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/victoria-tribunal-rules-in-favour-of-mosque-in-coolaroo/#more-34305>, retrieved on 14.07.2014

¹³² See *The Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry "Maidstone: Tory candidate kicked out of party over BNP 'No More Mosques' Facebook post", in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/maidstone-tory-candidate-kicked-out-of-party-over-bnp-no-more-mosques-facebook-post/#more-33740>, retrieved on 13.07.2014

¹³³ See *The Age News's* entry "Facebook shuts down Bendigo anti-mosque page", in: <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/facebook-shuts-down-bendigo-antimosque-page-20140819-105qyy.html#ixzz3CTFcybDN>, retrieved on 30.09.2014

¹³⁴ See *The Islamophobia Today News's* entry "Town rallies around vandalized Cold Lake mosque", in: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2014/10/27/town-rallies-around-vandalized-cold-lake-mosque/>, retrieved on 1.11.2014

¹³⁵ See *The Islamophobia Today News's* entry "Muslim Friday prayers was offered at Washington National Cathedral", in: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2014/11/11/muslim-friday-prayers-to-be-offered-at-washington-national-cathedral/>, retrieved on 03.12.2014

- **US:** In December 2014, Kennesaw City Council voted 'yes' to let the Suffa Dawat Mosque temporarily move into a strip mall on Jiles Road, reversing a decision earlier in that month to reject the mosque. City Council members originally shot down the proposal 4-1, but all four who voted 'NO' later told Mayor Mark Mathews they had a change of heart.¹³⁶
- **Australia:** On 17 December 2014, Australian police arrested a man for making threatening phone calls to a mosque in Sydney. The 30-year-old man allegedly made several threat calls to a mosque in Auburn in Sydney, and was charged with threatening to destroy property, using a carriage service to threaten serious harm and offend.¹³⁷
- **US:** On 30 January 2015, Bridgeview police had questioned two men to investigate threats made in January on Facebook against the Mosque Foundation in Bridgeview. The two men were interviewed an exchange of comments on Facebook that involved threats made against the Bridgeview mosque. The exchange included calls for possible attacks on the Bridgeview mosque in retaliation for events by extremists at Charlie Hebdo in Paris.¹³⁸
- **Sweden:** On 2 January 2015, thousands of people took to the streets in three of Sweden's largest cities, including Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmo, to demand an end to the attacks on mosques. At a protest rally, outside the parliament in Stockholm, demonstrators held leaflets saying, "*Don't touch my mosque*," to show their solidarity with the Muslim community in the country. As a response, Sweden's government was planning to develop a new national strategy to counter the growing prejudice against Islam in the country. Swedish Minister of Culture and Democracy mentioned that the government would coordinate with local Muslim communities to find ways to fight Islamophobia by spreading awareness about Islam among people.¹³⁹ This act of solidarity was held after three arson attacks were carried out on mosques around Sweden. A mosque in the eastern town of Eskilstuna was attacked in December 2014, injuring five people, while later that month a mosque in the southern town of Esloeve was set on fire. Then, on New Year's Day, yet another mosque, this time in the eastern city of Uppsala, survived any serious damage after a petrol bomb was thrown at it.¹⁴⁰



3.6. Positive Developments on Hijab:

- **Australia:** In May 2015, the Queensland government rejected a push by independents and minor parties to force Muslim women to remove their burqas or veils to prove their identity. The bill, introduced by the independent MP for Nicklin, Peter Wellington, would have allowed lawyers, police, prison officers, justices of the peace and other authorities to require a person to remove any face covering to establish their identity. The state attorney-general,

¹³⁶ See *The Kennesaw City Blog's* entry "Kennesaw city council changes course; votes 'yes' on new mosque", in: <http://www.cbs46.com/story/27628152/kennesaw-city-council-to-vote-again-on-mosque>, retrieved on 16 December 2014.

¹³⁷ See *The Daiji World News's* entry "A man arrested in Sydney for threatening calls to mosque", in: http://www.daijiworld.com/news/news_disp.asp?n_id=284398, retrieved on 18.12.2014

¹³⁸ See *The Desplainsvalley News's* entry "Police, FBI Investigate Threat against Bridgeview Mosque", in: <http://desplainsvalleynews.com/police-fbi-investigate-threat-against-bridgeview-mosque-p1818-90.htm>, retrieved on 01.02.2015

¹³⁹ See *The IB times News's* entry "Sweden Mulls National Strategy to Counter 'Islamophobia' after Arson Attacks on Mosques", in: <http://www.ibtimes.com/sweden-mulls-national-strategy-counter-islamophobia-after-arson-attacks-mosques-1772600>, retrieved on 04.01.2015

¹⁴⁰ See *The Ice News's* entry "Protests in Stockholm after mosque attacks", in: <http://www.icenews.is/2015/01/17/protests-in-stockholm-after-mosque-attacks/>, retrieved on 18.01.2015

Jarryd Bleijie, declined to support the bill, saying he believed in “a free and democratic society. Labor also voted against the bill.¹⁴¹

- **UK:** On 10 September 2014, a teacher was suspended after she allegedly made a comment about a Muslim student’s headscarf. Parents complained to police and Bolton Council following the alleged incident at Sunning Hill Primary School, in the UK. It was claimed a girl at the school was fidgeting with her headscarf and the woman was alleged to have made the comments about the dress in earshot of several pupils.¹⁴²
- **US:** On 30 June 2014, a nursing home, Shadescrest Healthcare Center, was charged for a violation federal law when it refused to allow a Muslim employee to wear a hijab on the job. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), which enforces federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination, filed a lawsuit against Shadescrest.¹⁴³
- **Australia:** In November 2014, the National Foundation for Australian Women (NFAW) and associated groups welcomed the (20/10/14) announcement that the ban on individuals wearing face veiling at Australian Parliament House had been reversed.¹⁴⁴
- **Australia:** In December 2014, Australians had suggested accompanying local Muslims to work in case they were afraid of being targeted on the streets after a Sydney cafe siege on 15 December. They were using the hashtag *#illridewithyou* on Twitter, offering to accompany Muslims wearing religious attire on commuter trains or buses, with drivers ready to offer people a ride in their cars. The campaign on Twitter had been launched over the fears that anti-Muslim sentiments might spread after the Arabic writing ‘There is no god but Allah; Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah’ was seen on a black flag pressed against the window of the Lindt cafe on the hostage day.¹⁴⁵
- **UK:** In December 2014, Sophie, Countess of Wessex, had spoken out in support of the burqa, arguing that fashion was a great way to break down barriers and dispel the myths about Muslim women who choose to wear the Islamic garb. The Countess said that under a burqa there was probably a woman wearing something really quite fashionable. The countess hosted an event at Windsor Castle, on behalf of the Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award, where she met representatives from the Islamic Fashion Festival, allowing a number of designers to showcase their clothes. One of the goals, the countess said, was to try to use fashion to break down barriers and dispel the myths about Muslim women.¹⁴⁶

3.7. Positive Developments on Interfaith Dialogue:

¹⁴¹ See *The Islamophobia Watch Blog’s* entry “Queensland rejects anti-niqab bill”, in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/queensland-rejects-anti-niqab-bill/#more-31863>, retrieved on 22.05.2014


¹⁴² See *The Islamophobia Watch Blog’s* entry “Teacher Suspended over Alleged Comment about Muslim Student’s Headscarf”, in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/teacher-suspended-over-alleged-comment-about-muslim-students-headscarf/>, retrieved on 14.09.2014

¹⁴³ See *The Islamophobia Watch Blog’s* entry “EEOC sues Shadescrest Healthcare for religious discrimination and retaliation”, in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/eec-sues-shadescrest-healthcare-for-religious-discrimination-and-retaliation/#more-33990>, retrieved on 10.07.2014

¹⁴⁴ See *The NFAW Webs’* entry “Women’s groups oppose ‘Burqa Ban’”, in: <http://www.nfaw.org/womens-groups-oppose-burqa-ban/>, retrieved on 1.11.2014

¹⁴⁵ See *The ISputnik News’* entry “Australians Suggest Chaperoning Muslims Fearing Backlash after Sydney Siege”, in: <http://sputniknews.com/asia/20141215/1015875606.html>, retrieved on 16.12.2014

¹⁴⁶ See *The Washington Times News’* entry “Sophie, Countess of Wessex, speaks out in support of Muslim women who choose to wear burqa”, in: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/dec/30/sophie-countess-of-wessex-speaks-out-muslim-burka/#ixzz3NYprDdef>, retrieved on 31.12.2014

- **US:** On 21 May 30 Jewish demonstrators carrying signs such as “Islam does not equate terrorism,” from the 9/11 memorial park. The group protested what they called the interchangeable use of ‘Arab,’ ‘Muslim’ and ‘terrorist’ in a 9/11 Museum film. Waving signs saying “*Edit the Film*” and “*Jews say No to Islamophobia*,” the crowd moved up the street.¹⁴⁷
- 
- **Germany:** In June 2014, Germany established a unique project called the ‘House of One,’ and its aim would be to provide a place of worship and contemplation for adherents of the world’s three main monotheistic faiths, although the building would also be open to all. It would house a church, a synagogue and a mosque under one roof, where Protestant pastor, a rabbi and an imam could realize their shared dream. This house of prayer would open its doors in the German capital in four years’ time, with the building costs being paid for by donations.¹⁴⁸
 - **France:** On 25 February 2015, French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve proposed a plan aimed at promoting a better dialogue with France’s Muslim community that included training imams at university. The minister said that the plan would promote an Islam faithful to the values of the Republic, insisting on France’s tradition of secularism. He added that the creation of a new representative body would help Muslim leaders and French authorities address issues such as security, prevention of radicalization and preventing anti-Muslims acts. This body would meet with the government twice a year, on a model inspired by the dialogue the French government had had with leaders of the Catholic Church since 2002. The French government would also regularly consult with Jewish community leaders via the country’s main Jewish organization, the CRIF council. The plan had been decided together with leaders of the existing French Muslim council, the CFCM, created in 2003. The plan came amid increasing religious tension in France following Charlie Hebdo incident.¹⁴⁹
 - **Myanmar:** In February 2015, residents had petitioned the government to allow them to reintegrate, but some remain skeptical about the neighbors’ prospects for peace. Affected residents submitted letters to President Thein Sein, Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and Parliament Speaker Thura Shwe Mann outlining their request but said they were still awaiting a response. Nearly two years before, when riots broke out between Muslims and Buddhists in Meiktila, leaving at least 40 people dead, more than 60 wounded and thousands displaced. At the time, many residents sought safety in a nearby forest. Hla May, a Buddhist woman lived in one of Meiktila’s internally displaced person (IDP) camps, said: “*We stayed together in the forest and slept for two nights... We’ve now cried together, looking at our burned houses.*” These Muslim and Buddhist residents, whom the government classified as IDPs, were initially placed in shared temporary housing after the riots. Later, the government segregated the homeless residents by religion and sent them to different camps. Myanmar Buddhists and Muslims in the central city of Meiktila were separated along faith lines after interreligious violence destroyed roughly 800 homes in 2013.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ See *The Islamophobia Watch Blog’s* entry “Jews against Islamophobia hold protest against 9/11 museum film”, in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/jews-against-islamophobia-hold-protest-against-911-museum-film/#more-31912>, retrieved on 23.05.2014

¹⁴⁸ See *The Independent News’* entry “Welcome to Berlin’s House of One: a church, synagogue and mosque”, in: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/welcome-to-berlins-house-of-one--a-church-synagogue-and-mosque-9507002.html>, retrieved on 09.06.2014

¹⁴⁹ See *The ABC News’* entry “French Govt Unveils a Plan to Promote Dialogue with Muslims”, in: <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/french-govt-unveils-plan-promote-dialogue-muslims-29209805>, retrieved on 26.02.2015

¹⁵⁰ See *The Religion News’* entry “Separated by violence, Muslims and Buddhists seek to be reunited in Myanmar”, in: <http://www.religionnews.com/2015/02/26/separated-violence-muslims-buddhists-seek-reunited-meiktila-myanmar/>, retrieved on 27.02.2015

3.8. Positive Development on General Issues:

- **Australia:** In June 2014, Australian Broadcaster Michael Smith had been dumped from a guest slot on radio station 2GB after he referred to the prophet Muhammad as a pedophile. Smith had been booked to present Chris Smith's afternoon program for three weeks starting 30 June. However, he has revealed on his website that 2GB's program director, David Kidd, phoned him on 27 June evening and allegedly said: "*We won't be needing you, you can't call a Deity a pedophile.*"¹⁵¹
- **France:** In July 2014, Myriam Bourhail, a Muslim student of Moroccan origin from the Picardy town of Villers-Cotterêts had been ranked as France's top high school student, presenting a role model of active French Muslims who had been suffering from Islamophobia and negative portrayals in the French media over the past years. She had completed faultless papers in English, Spanish, physics, mathematics and science and ended up, despite slightly lower ratings for sport, history, geography and philosophy.¹⁵²
- **UK:** On 1 August 2014, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, said that Muslims in Britain were reinstating tradition British values such as open, honest and difficult public discussion. Mr. Williams was criticizing media outlets who portrayed Muslim as "un-British," and he also complained of religion illiteracy among government figures in the UK.¹⁵³
- **US:** In September 2014, the organization 'September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows' launched a campaign against Islamophobia through a new bus ad promoting religious tolerance and interfaith unity in New York City. That came just after a poll conducted by the Arab American Institute showing that Americans had an increasingly negative attitude toward Muslims in the United States. The group noted in their campaign: "*By developing and advocating nonviolent options and actions in the pursuit of justice, we hope to break the cycles of violence engendered by war and terrorism. Acknowledging our common experience with all people affected by violence throughout the world, we work to create a safer and more peaceful world for everyone. Since 9/11 our families have despaired as hate crimes have been perpetrated against Muslims as well as Sikhs and others appearing to be of Middle Eastern descent. We stand united to firmly assert that this must end.*"¹⁵⁴
- **Myanmar:** On 22 September 2014, Myanmar gave citizenship to 209 Muslims displaced by sectarian violence, after the first phase of a project aimed at determining the status of about a million Rohingya whose claims to nationality were rejected. The Rohingya Muslim minority lived under apartheid-like conditions in Rakhine State in the west, needing permission to move from their villages or from camps where almost 140,000 remain after being displaced in deadly clashes with ethnic Rakhine Buddhists in 2012. Many Rohingya were effectively stateless because they were not recognized as citizens by Myanmar or by neighboring Bangladesh.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ See *The SMH News*' entry "Shock jock Michael Smith dumped over prophet slur", in: <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/shock-jock-michael-smith-dumped-over-prophet-slur-20140628-zsplt.html#ixzz36PJ8MTKS>, retrieved on 29.06.2014

¹⁵² See *Onislam News*' entry "Muslim Student Tops French High Schools", in: <http://www.onislam.net/english/news/europe/475259-muslim-student-tops-french-high-schools.html>, retrieved on 21.07.2014

¹⁵³ See *The Saudi Vision Daily News*' entry "Islam Helps Boost British Values, Former Archbishop Say", in: <http://news.sudanvisiondaily.com/details.html?rsnpid=238773>, retrieved on 08.09.2014

¹⁵⁴ See *The Christian Post News*' entry "9/11 Families Sponsor Anti-Islamophobia Campaign for Anniversary of Tragedy; Study Claims Islamophobia Is on the Rise in US", in: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/9-11-families-sponsor-anti-islamophobia-campaign-for-anniversary-of-tragedy-study-claims-islamophobia-is-on-the-rise-in-us-126069/>, retrieved on 10.09.2014

¹⁵⁵ See *Reuters News*' entry "Myanmar Gives Citizenship to 209 Displaced Muslims, Including Rohingya", in: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/09/22/us-myanmar-rohingya-idUSKCN0HH1BZ20140922>, retrieved on 24.09.2014

- **US:** On 28 November 2014, Republican Party County Chair Jack Whitley resigned after comments on his Facebook page calling Muslims “parasites” and wrote “FRAG ‘EM! when they travel to Mecca, slang for a fragmentation hand grenade.” He was also fired from his hardware store job in Ortonville.¹⁵⁶
- **France:** In December 2014, a controversial figure in French media, Eric Zemmour had been fired from his position on a weekly talk show. The move followed comments Zemmour made about Muslims in France to an Italian newspaper. Zemmour told Italy's *Corriere della Sera newspaper* that ‘Muslims kept to themselves in the suburbs,’ and that as a result of the spread of Muslim neighborhoods outside of cities, the ‘French were forced to move out’. Zemmour was pride himself on his provocative defiance of liberals. He was convicted of inciting racial hatred in 2011 for comments he made on French public TV asserting that human traffickers were mostly black or Arab, and that employers could rightly refuse to hire people of either background.¹⁵⁷
- **US:** In January 2015, a Marvel superhero had made a little bit of make-over in San Fransisco. A street artist was cleverly using Marvel’s Muslim Superhero Kamala Khan ‘Ms. Marvel’ to battle Islamophobic advertisements that had adorned the city buses since August 2014. The Islamophobic ads compared Islam and Nazism, featuring a picture of Adolf Hitler with Muslim leader Haj Amin-al-Husseini that reads: “Islam-Jew hatred: It’s in the Quran.” The



controversial ad campaign was sponsored by Pamela Gellar, the infamous U.S. anti-Islam blogger who launched a number of similar campaigns over 2014.¹⁵⁸

- **US:** On 17 February, more than 50 people in Minneapolis came out for a protest against Islamophobia and racism in response to the killing of three Muslim students the week before. Gathered at a busy intersection in the heart of the local Somali community, near the University of Minnesota campus, they held signs and chanted. Organizers sought to honor the lives of Deah Shaddy Barakat, 23, his wife Yusor Abu-Salha, 21 and her sister, Razan Abu-Salha, 19, who were executed by a neighbor in their home in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, on 10 February.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ See *The Islamophobia Watch Blog's* entry “County GOP official resigns after anti-Muslim remarks”, in: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/minnesota-county-gop-official-resigns-after-anti-muslim-remarks/>, retrieved on 04.12.2014

¹⁵⁷ See *The DW Blog's* entry “Prominent French journalist and TV personality fired for 'Islamophobia'”, in: <http://www.dw.de/prominent-french-journalist-and-tv-personality-fired-for-islamophobia/a-18145516>, retrieved on 23.12.014

¹⁵⁸ See *Carbonated TV News's* entry “This is How A Marvel Superhero Battles Islamophobia in San Francisco”, in: <http://www.carbonated.tv/news/us-street-artist-using-ms-marvel-san-francisco-pamela-gellar-islamophobic-ads-photos>, retrieved on 26.01.2015

¹⁵⁹ See *Fight Back News's* entry “Minneapolis says no to islamophobia and racism, honors murdered Chapel Hill students”, in: <http://www.fightbacknews.org/2015/2/19/minneapolis-says-no-islamophobia-and-racism-honors-murdered-chapel-hill-students>, retrieved on 20.02.2015

4. OIC INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES TO COUNTER ISLAMOPHOBIA

During the period under review, the OIC continued to take steps, organize activities, and engage with the international community in a positive and constructive manner with the view to finding satisfactory and common solutions to fight the growing trend of religious intolerance, especially towards Muslims, worldwide. OIC main activities during the period include the followings:

4.1. Deploring Czech President Miloš Zeman's Statement against Islam

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 shows President Zeman's lack of knowledge and misunderstanding of Islam, but also ignores the historical facts that anti-Semitism and Nazism were a European phenomena through and through, while they had no roots in Islam, neither as a religion nor as a history or civilization; and that President Zeman's statements were nothing more than misinformed stereotyping and Islamophobic. The Secretary General also urged the international community to take collective measures to promote peace, harmony and tolerant co-habitation among peoples of diverse religious faiths, beliefs, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. He also called upon all political, secular or religious leaders to join hands and strengthen their efforts in promoting dialogue and mutual understanding. A press release denouncing President Zeman's statement was released by the OIC.

4.2. To conduct on-the-ground Post-Charlie Hebdo Inquiries

The OIC Secretary General instructed the OIC branches in Europe comprising OIC office in Brussels, OIC office in Geneva, and OIC Representative in UNESCO-Paris to perform a close monitoring with regard to Islamophobia and anti-Islam sentiments in Europe following the Charlie Hebdo incident. A series of measures and strategies on Islamophobia were carefully designed thereafter.

4.3. Optimizing the implementation of Resolution 16/18 through Istanbul Process

In March 2015, at the 28th Session of the Human Rights Council, the OIC Secretary General highlighted the consensus nature of the OIC initiative commonly known as Resolution 16/18 on "*Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence, and violence against persons based on religion and belief*", and the need for effective implementation of its Plan of Action. In this occasion, it was announced that the OIC will host the next round 5th meeting of the Istanbul Process in Jeddah in June 2015, with the view of facilitating a thoroughly evaluation of this process.

4.4. To organize an Extraordinary Open-ended Meeting of the OIC Executive Committee on "Combating Terrorism and Violent Extremism"

The OIC decided to take a package of urgent measures that should be implemented to face up the spread of the phenomenon of terrorism affecting a number of OIC member states and to defend the Muslim world against the dangers of violent extremism. An open ended ministerial meeting of the OIC Executive Committee held at the OIC General Secretariat in Jeddah, called for the convene a meeting of legal and terrorism experts to revisit the OIC Convention of 1999 to lay down the proper mechanisms to counter the new trends of terrorism in the OIC Member States. The meeting also called for an extensive discussion on international terrorism, cross border crime, and the security developments by convening g conferences, symposia and workshops involving political, religious and traditional leaders, scholars; as

well as to seek ways to confront cyber security as a matter of urgency, and to crystalize a new paradigm to confront and remedy the causes of sectarian violence. The meeting requested the OIC to develop partnerships with international and regional organizations on counter terrorism; and the activation of the 'International Terrorism Center of the UN' to coordinate global counterterrorism efforts and commended Saudi Arabia for its contribution of US\$ 100 million to support the activities of the Center. The meeting also requested the OIC to work with the Member States to seek ways to empower the youth and other communities at risk of exploitation by terrorist groups in order to make them less susceptible to recruitment and radicalization, and to hold a series of meetings, workshops, symposia and conferences of Ulama, intelligentsia and social scientist to focus on and dismantle the discourse of extremism and sectarianism. The Final Communique of the Extraordinary Meeting is attached as **Annex 2**.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The latest twelve months period was among the hardest times for Muslims, especially those who were living as minority groups in non-Muslim countries. They were blamed, or victimized by hatred resulted from bad deeds they never did: the actions of killing, kidnapping, and blowing up of innocent people by terrorists and radical groups claiming to be Muslims, and to be doing such terrible actions in the false name of religion. In the most frank words, religious extremism escalating during the period under review has smeared the lofty image of Islam.

Among the obvious consequences was that Islamophobia trend around the world continued to ascend during the last year period, reaching the most significant level since 9/11 tragedy, and reflected through the intensive media campaigns and public discourses showing 'fear' towards Islam, through the growing intolerant attitudes among the Westerners, as well as through the significant number of incidents occurring sporadically against Muslims, mosques, Islamic centers, and Islamic attires. Especially in the West, the Islamophobia trend has been very alarming.

Meanwhile, the constructive debates on freedom of expression *vis-à-vis* its limits and manifestation tend to be overridden by the strengthening anti-Islam sentiments. Public opinions were overshadowed by the idea that free speech is a 'fixed price' for western societies, and there should not be any space for negotiation with other 'ideologies', including Islam.

Suggesting remedial steps towards this end, the Observatory would like to stress upon Muslims to embrace the course of action in such scenario as ordained in the Holy Qur'an:

"... we have made you a median community/a people of moderation in order that you may be a testimony or model for humanity" [2:143], and

"O People of the Scripture, do not exaggerate in your religion beyond the truth, and follow not the vain desires of folk who erred of old and led to many astray and themselves strayed off the balanced way" [5:77],

As well as to the teachings of Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) saying:

"This indeed is a religion of ease. None shall ever argue against it but be defeated. Do therefore endeavour for solidarity and rapprochement, Spread good tidings and help each other in daytime as well as in dusk".

He also cautioned against such attitudes by saying that:

"Be cautioned against excesses in religion – Those who came before had collapsed because of excesses in religion".

The Observatory would also recommend the Members States, International Organizations and Western countries to consider taking the following actions to further renounce extremism and counter Islamophobia:

5.1. Through **Dialogue**, there is a need to

- a. Increase the role of religious and community leaders to curb tendencies of extremism by promoting the ideals of tolerance, moderation, mutual respect and peaceful co-existence.
- b. Strengthen existing mechanisms for intra-Islam dialogue, to help avoiding misperceptions and promote better understanding and mutual respect. Perhaps it is high time to speed-up the implementation of the proposal made by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin

Abdulaziz during the 4th Extraordinary Summit, held in Makkah in 2012, to establish a centre for dialogue among Islamic schools of thought to reach a common understanding.

- c. Encourage inter-faith and inter-religion dialogues within the OIC Member States to raise awareness about religious interpretations and beliefs, and open space for further discussion about Islam and faith.
- d. Initiate relevant projects at the level of United Nations Alliance of Civilizations.

5.2. Through **Media**, there is a need to

- a. Work with the media to promote the understanding of responsible use of freedom of speech.
- b. Hold the media accountable for perpetuating hate speech and extremism.
- c. Use a variety of communications channels to expand public debate and engagement, especially among youth in the OIC Member States.
- d. Speed up implementation of the OIC Media Strategy in Countering Islamophobia, adopted at the Ninth Islamic Conference of Information Ministers (ICIM), held in Libreville, Republic of Gabon, in April 2012.

5.3. In the area of **Development** and **Security**, western countries should be encouraged to

- a. Reform socio-economic development policies and expand the outreach of development programs to the deprived immigrant communities.
- b. Check the discrimination in employment opportunities and social integration in order to deter unemployed Muslim youth from falling prey to extremist ideologies.
- c. Move beyond a sole focus on anti-terrorism and military solutions and incorporate development goals and initiatives into de-radicalization and counter-terrorism efforts.

5.4. In the area of **Education** and **Society**, it is important to

- a. Integrate peace education, including civics, and the importance of human rights and multicultural values into curricula.
- b. Implement programs, and mobilize resources to support community engagement for peace.
- c. Understand the modalities and strategies used to spread extremism, including the social and value-based drivers of extremism, through additional research and policy dialogue.
- d. Ensure that policies and programs address social cohesion and plurality.
- e. Highlight the role of families in countering extremist attitudes and encouraging reconciliation in communities.
- f. Engage religious communities in addressing extremism and sectarian divides. Engagement in multi-religious cooperation would also be helpful for finding common values on which to build understanding and cooperation. Shared values in turn could lead to shared security.
- g. Also engage new actors, such as the civil society, in bringing a fresh perspective on engagement and dialogue from actors who have experience from conflict resolution and cooperation as well as of reform and successful political reconciliation.

5.5. In addition to these, it is also proposed to:

- a. Urge the international community to join OIC Member States to collectively tackle the scourge of extremism and intolerance with resolve and strength.

- b. Encourage all OIC Member States to start the review of the OIC Convention on Combating International Terrorism to conform it to the current developments, and, once finalized, it should be timely signed and ratified by all Member States.
- c. Encourage all OIC Member States to put into practice, the measures and recommendations underlined in UN Resolution 68/127 on “A World against Violence and Violent Extremism” which constitutes a sound basis in creating awareness against violence, extremism and terrorism.

ANNEXES — 1

SOME ISLAMOPHOBIC INCIDENTS

I. Incidents Related to Mosques:

1. France: Fascists desecrate Meximieux mosque — *The Collectif Centre l'Islamophobie en France* reported that the Islamic Cultural Centre at Meximieux in the Rhône-Alpes region of eastern France was defaced by fascists. A Swastika and a Celtic Cross were sprayed on the front of the building. The CCIF notes that this was the fifth desecration of the Meximieux mosque since 2012. *Le Progrès* added that a number of such far-right symbols had also appeared in l'Ain, Belley, Châtillon-la-Palud and Pérouges. In: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2014/05/11/fascists-desecrate-meximieux-mosque/>, retrieved on 12.05.2014



2. France: Graffiti attack on Pont-de-Beauvoisin mosque — The *Comité 15 Mars et Libertés* reported that a mosque in Pont-de-Beauvois, in Isère in eastern France, had been targeted in a graffiti attack by fascists. Swastikas were sprayed on the wall, along with the slogans “Death to Algeria”, “F**k the Arabs” and “Vive la France”. In: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2014/05/11/graffiti-attack-on-pont-de-beauvoisin-mosque/>, retrieved on 12.05.2014



3. UK: ‘Race hate’ arsonists burn down Birmingham Community Centre — Arsonists destroyed a Birmingham community centre — home to the country’s first female Muslim band — in a suspected racially-motivated attack. Ulfah Arts and Media, based at Highgate Craft Centre in Highgate Square, was completely devastated in the 5am blaze on 20 May. It was the home for The Ulfah Collective, the first practising Muslim female band. The group sang traditional Islamic songs alongside Christian gospel music and once appeared in front of 12,000 fans at Wembley Arena with the late Bee Gee, Robin Gibb. In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/race-hate-arsonists-burn-down-birmingham-community-centre/#more-31823>, retrieved on 22.05.2014



4. Ukraine: Residents of Stavropol territory opposed to mosque construction — Residents of Vinsady collected 3,500 signatures against construction of a mosque in their village. A petition was sent to the local parliament. State Duma member Victor Goncharov said that the document had no legal value. Residents of Pyatigorsk, Lermontov and Yessentuki approved the protests started in Vinsady. Head of the Predgorny District Nikolai Gulbyakov said that the construction would undergo public hearings. Regional Mufti Muhammad Rakhimov said that his administration would try to persuade the residents and Cossacks to stop the protests. The mosque construction was permitted in the Predgorny District in May 2014. In: <http://vestnikkavkaza.net/news/society/56269.html>, retrieved on 11.06.2014

5. Ukraine: Crimean mosque attacked and set fire — A Crimean mosque was vandalized on 12 June and set on fire by unknown people throwing three Molotov cocktails. According to the closed-circuit cameras, the provocateurs drew Nazi Swastika signs on the fence and Molotov cocktails were thrown around 5:00 a.m to the Chukurcha-Jami by a male individual. After the attack, the police started an investigation to find attackers. The mosque was also vandalized in 2004 with statements being written on the walls that insulting Islam. In: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/todays-news/138885/crimean-mosque-attacked-and-set-fire>, retrieved on 14.06.2014

6. Australia: Mysterious black balloons hung outside homes of residents who supported plans for a local mosque – Residents of Bendigo, Victoria had been noticing black balloons appearing around the town tied to trees, houses and



office fronts. The balloons were being left by a vocal group of anti-Islam protesters furious about plans to build a mosque in the regional city, after a controversial development proposal was debated and approved at a council meeting on 18 June night. In: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2663377/Anti-Islam-protests-heated-town-hall-meetings-mysterious-black-balloons-The-Australian-town-war-mosque.html>, retrieved on 22.06.2014

7. Poland: Polish Vandals Deface Tatar Mosque – A Tatar mosque in Poland was defaced on 29 June, with pig graffiti in a sign of provoking Muslims' sentiments a few months after banning ritual slaughter in the Central European country.



The wooden mosque is located in one of the oldest Muslim cemeteries in Tatar area. According to the community leader Bronislaw Talkowski, vandals sprayed pig and other insults on the walls of the wooden mosque near the border with Belarus.

In: <http://www.onislam.net/english/news/europe/474447-polish-vandals-deface-tatar-mosque.html>, retrieved on 01.07.2014

8. US: Supreme Court refuses to hear Murfreesboro Mosque case – The U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear the appeal of a group of neighbors who tried unsuccessfully to block the construction of a mosque in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

In: <http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2014/jun/02/supreme-court-refuses-to-hear-mosque-case/>, retrieved on 03.06.2014

9. Scotland: Mosque Bacon Attack: Two Sentenced to Prison for Pork Prank – A man and a woman were going to prison after they threw bacon at a Scottish mosque and wrapped it around door handles. Douglas Cruikshank, 39, and Chelsea Lambie, 18, were convicted of threatening and abusive behavior. Cruikshank received nine months of imprisonment and Lambie was ordered to spend 12 months at a facility for young people.

In: <http://www.newsmax.com/thewire/mosque-bacon-attack/2014/06/20/id/578420/>, retrieved on 22.06.2014

10. Canada: Thornhill, Ontario: Islamic Center vandalized – York regional police were investigating a hate crime at an Islamic Center in Thornhill, as worshippers marked the holy month of Ramadan. The sidewalk in front of the Ja'fari Community Centre at 9000 Bathurst St., near Rutherford Road, was vandalized on 20 July night with anti-Muslim messages. One of the messages read "Arab go home" while the other one read "F**k Gaza." A spray-painted Star of David remained on the sign of the center, and a spray paint cap was found at the scene.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/thornhill-ontario-islamic-centre-vandalised/#more-34711>, retrieved on 22.07.2014

11. US: CAIR-NY calls for hate crime probe of attack on Muslims outside mosque – The New York chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-NY) on 21 July called on law enforcement authorities and public officials to investigate an alleged attack on Muslim worshippers on their way to prayers at a Brooklyn mosque as a possible hate crime. On 18 July evening, witnesses said passengers in a Lexus drove by the Thayba Islamic Center shouting anti-Muslim slurs, including "This is for your Allah," and threw eggs at several members dressed in traditional Muslim attire. A 70-year-old Muslim in traditional Pakistani attire and wearing an Islamic Kufi (scullcap) was reportedly hit in the chest by an egg. In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/cair-ny-calls-for-hate-crime-probe-of-attack-on-muslims-outside-mosque/#more-34720>, retrieved on 22.07.2014

12. UK: Police investigate racist attack at Warrington mosque – Police were hunting for two racist thugs who smashed windows and screamed abuse at people in the mosque in Warrington town centre. Officers from Cheshire Police were called at 11.30pm on 07 July, to reports two men were shouting racist slurs and vandalizing the mosque on Arpley

Street. Residents were inside the address at the time of the attack, although there were no injuries, according to police. In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/police-investigate-racist-attack-at-warrington-mosque/#more-33970>, retrieved on 09.07.2014

13. Canada: Anti-Muslim Vandals Strike Fort Saskatchewan Prayer Room – Members of Fort Saskatchewan’s Muslim community were again cleaning up after a home that they use for prayer was vandalized with anti-Islam insults twice in the beginning of September 2014. Waseem Akhtar, living in the home, awoke to the sounds of something striking the side of the building early morning of 15 September. When he went outside to look, he found his home had been pelted with eggs; many of the bits of eggshells spread across his lawn had anti-Muslim insults written on them in marker. A week earlier, on the anniversary of the 11 September attacks in New York, vandals spray-painted a red cross on the side of Akhtar’s home. In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/anti-muslim-vandals-strike-fort-saskatchewan-prayer-room/#more-36649>, retrieved on 17.09.2014

14. Germany: Two mosques attacked in Germany’s Lower Saxony – Two Turkish mosques in Germany’s Lower Saxony state came under attack by unknown assailants. Police said that the Molotov cocktail attack on the Haci Bayram mosque in Oldenburg in the latest week of August 2014 was an attempt of arson. German authorities begun an investigation into the attack on the mosque, which was bound to the Turkish Religious Affairs Department and served as an official Turkish diplomatic mission for Turkish citizens abroad. Another attack on a Turkish mosque bound to the Turkish Religious Affairs Department, took place in the city of Mölln. That was the second attack on the mosque in that two weeks. There had been five attacks in mosques around Germany during the month of August 2014, four of which involved attempts of arson. In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/two-mosques-attacked-in-germanys-lower-saxony/#more-36237>, retrieved on 06.09.2014

15. UK: Yorktown Islamic Community Center Vandalized; 3 Boys Charged – Three young boys were under arrest for vandalizing a place of worship in Yorktown. Police said they caused a lot of damage at the Hudson Valley Islamic Community Center in Mohegan Lake, including ripping up a Koran. The suspects allegedly ripped items off the bathroom wall, kicked in doors, wrote profanity on blackboards and, worst of all, desecrating the holy books by throwing them on the floor and stomping on them. One had more than 40 pages torn out. The suspects were charged with burglary, but not as a hate crime. In: <http://7online.com/news/3-boys-charged-in-vandalizing-of-yorktown-islamic-community-center/314371/>, retrieved on 19.09.2014

16. Australia: Logan Mosque targeted with anti-Muslim Pamphlets, sparking fears of violence – Muslim leaders in south-east Queensland said they were being targeted by an increase in hate crimes, following an increase in the terror threat level and the arrests of two people allegedly linked with fighting in Syria. Logan mosque spokesman Ali Kabri said that overnight on 13 September, someone left pamphlets outside the mosque filled with abusive language and photographs, saying Australian Muslims were not welcome in the country. Few days before officials also discovered a photo of Mecca and a photo of a pig’s head close by. It followed an incident two months before when body parts of a pig were found outside the mosque. In: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-09-14/logan-mosque-targeted-by-anti-muslim-phamplets/5742726>, retrieved on 15.09.2014

17. Australia: Rise up Australia campaign launch told Islam is a ‘Death Cult’ –On 15 September 2014, the Rise-up Australia party leader, Danny Nalliah, launched the party’s Victorian election campaign, declaring that Islam was a “death cult”. The flag-waving gathering at St Kilda town hall attracted an ethnically diverse crowd of about 100, with supporters from India, China, Hungary and Malaysia united by their fear of Islam. There was lots of rising up – for prayers, rounds of applause and the singing of the national anthem. Australian flags swayed as the crowd sang the party’s theme song. In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/rise-up-australia-campaign-launch-told-islam-is-a-death-cult/#more-36582>, retrieved on 16.09.2014

18. Australia: ‘Evil’ painted on Queensland Mosque – Vandals spray-painted the word “Evil” across a far north Queensland mosque – an act the local mayor described as deeply saddening. Worshippers arrived at the mosque in

Mareeba, inland from Cairns, in the morning of 19 September to find their place of worship defaced with the yellow paint. In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/evil-painted-on-queensland-mosque/#more-36744>, retrieved on 20.09.2014

19. Australia: Brisbane Mosque Vandalised with Anti-Muslim Graffiti – The words “die” and “Muslims are evil and have no respect for our ways” were spray-painted on the Indonesian community mosque at Rocklea. Muslim community leaders and police were alerted to the vandalism in the evening of 24 September. A police forensic team had begun an investigation. It was the second Muslim prayer site in Queensland to be defaced within less than a week. A mosque at Mareeba in far north Queensland was vandalized on 20 September.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/brisbane-mosque-vandalised-with-anti-muslim-graffiti/#more-36971>, retrieved on 25.09.2014

20. US: San Diego mosque under threat –A mosque in San Diego received a threatening letter with an unknown substance in it. There were at least ten mosques in San Diego, and the one that received the threatening letter had not been identified. The local chapter of the Council on American Islamic Relations said the letter referred to 'applying the death sentence' and mentioned Los Angeles, Oakland and San Francisco. As the result of this threat, all California mosques had been notified and asked to report any similar threats, and the FBI had been asked by the council to get involved in the investigation. In: <http://www.kusi.com/story/26755019/san-diego-mosque-under-threat>, retrieved on 1.11.2014

21. Germany: Another German mosque set on fire –A new mosque in Bad Salzuflen in the Lippe district of North Rhine-Westphalia, had been set on fire, raising concerns about a rise in Islamophobia and racism. The attack occurred when unidentified arsonists set the front door of the mosque on fire on October 11. The fire burnt the mosque, at the entrance floor of a building, along with three other apartments in the same floor. Fire department had reportedly saved nine people, three of them were children, the sources said.

In: <http://www.onislam.net/english/news/europe/478445-another-german-mosque-set-on-fire.html>, retrieved on 1.11.2014



22. US: Shots fired at mosque in Southern California –On 4 November morning shots were fired at a mosque in Southern California, while there were people in the building when the Islamic Society of Coachella Valley mosque was hit. The police said the incident was being treated as a potential hate crime. Riverside County Sheriff's Captain Andrew Shouse said at least five shots were fired, including one that struck a Toyota parked in front of the mosque. A man who was in the mosque at the time told the *Desert Sun* that there were four worshipers praying.

In: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2014/11/12/shots-fired-at-mosque-in-southern-california/>, retrieved on 03.12.2014

23. US: St. Cloud mosque vandalized for 4th time in a month – Leaders of the Central Minnesota Islamic Center in St. Cloud were expressing fears for public safety after the mosque was vandalized for the fourth time in December. Mosque spokesman Mohamoud Mohamed said: “*No one was hurt when someone broke a window at the mosque on 15 December night. ... In the past, vandals have thrown rocks and other objects at the mosque and dented windows.*”

In: <http://www.mprnews.org/story/2014/12/18/mosque-vandalized-for-fourth-time>, retrieved on 19.12.2014

24. Austria: Pig's head hung on mosque door in Vienna – In a barbaric affront to Muslim sensibilities, part of a pig's head and some pork tripe were attached to the door of a mosque in Vienna's 21st district on 25 December. The imam of the Kocatepe Mosque spoke to the *Andadolu Press Agency* about the incident, condemning the vandalism as unacceptable act. Austria's Muslim community had suffered several times during 2014 of the similar hate crimes. Not long before, an Imam



Hatip school in Vienna was vandalized; During Ramadan, a pig's head was left in front of the school's door; In August, a pig's head was impaled on a fence at a construction site for a new Islamic school; Another mosque called Eyup Sultan, located in the town of Telfs, was repeatedly vandalized with graffiti. Police were reportedly slow to respond to these incidents.

In: <http://www.thelocal.at/20141227/pigs-head-nailed-to-mosque-door-in-vienna>, retrieved on 28.12.2014

25. Sweden: Five hurt in mosque arson attack—An arsonist set fire to a mosque in central Sweden on 25 December injuring five people, in the latest of a spate of attacks targeting Muslims. The mosque was located on the ground floor of a building in the city of Eskilstuna, some 90 kilometres west of Stockholm.

In: <http://www.thelocal.se/20141226/five-hurt-in-mosque-arson-attack>, retrieved on 27 December 2014

26. Germany: Mosque under construction attacked—A major investigation had been launched after a mosque under construction, named Suleymaniye Mosque, in the suburb of Dormagen was attacked at early morning on 22 December. A 500,000 Euro reward had been posted and police were reviewing security footage. Many people had come together to protest the event and showed solidarity to Muslims in there. Dursun Pekdemir, the mosque representative, said that extreme right wing members wrote anti-Islamic slogans such as "*long live Hitler, long live the NSI*" and "*Let Islam die in Germany*" on the walls in 2012 when the construction first started. In: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/world/151372/racists-attack-a-mosque-under-construction-in-germany>, retrieved on 23.12.2014



28. Bulgaria: Bulgarian Mosque attacked—A fire at the entrance of the Hudavendigar Mosque entrance in the capital of Plovdiv had been extinguished. The mosque, known as the Friday mosque, was targeted by attackers and attempted by arson. Eyewitnesses at the mosque entrance said that the attacker spilt fuel, and fled the scene after starting a fire. The fire was extinguished and the attacker was caught by police when trying to take fuel at a nearby petrol station.

In: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/news/152416/bulgarian-mosque-attacked-fire-extinguished>, retrieved on 08.01.2015

27. Australia: Toowoomba mosque damaged in arson attack—Toowoomba's first Islamic mosque had been attacked by unknown offender, in an attack which was suspected to have taken place between late 23 January night or Early morning on 24 January. A man suspected of the attack could be seen on a security footage although the police said that they were trying to enhance the image in order to identify the criminal. The arsonist attempted to burn the mosque with flammable objects and initially tried to burn the meeting hall. According to the police, the gas stove was left open, but it failed to ignite saving the mosque from major damage. In: <http://australianmuslimtimes.com/2015/01/26/toowoomba-mosque-damaged-in-arson-attack-4777.html>, retrieved on 27.01.2015

28. UK: Death threats received at London mosque—A north London mosque had received death threats and Islamophobic hate mail following Paris attacks. Some 15 emails and letters had been sent which include hand drawn images depicting the Prophet Mohammed as a devil worshipper. Mohammed Kozar, the general secretary at Finsbury Park Mosque, told *Sky News* that despite many messages of support, there had been a spike in abuse. He said: "*Most of them are nasty drawings about our prophet and our books... Some of them make death threats against our community, so it's quite frightening for our community and our mosque.*"

In: <https://uk.news.yahoo.com/death-threats-received-london-mosque-110416906.html#cheWb7g>, retrieved on 18.01.2015

29. US: Fire burns Islamic center in Houston, Texas — It was yet to be known what caused the fire that gutted a section of the building used for storage. Federal investigators were then looking for the source of the blaze. Kenyatta Parker, public information officer said that he was unable to comment regarding reports citing the Imam and his son who said that the fire was either an arson attack or started accidentally by a homeless person trying to shelter from the cold. "*We currently have no official statement regarding the fire and it remains under investigation.*"

In: <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/world/2015/02/13/Fire-burns-Islamic-center-in-Houston-Texas.html>, retrieved on 14.02.2015

30. US: D.C. mosque vandalized for 2nd time in a week—On 23 February, the Ivy City Majid & Islamic Education Center, on Gallaudet Street, was found in disarray; shelves with holy BOOKS was in pieces and glass littered the ground. Mohammed Mobaidin, director of the center, said: “*Somebody grabbed the chair and smashed it into the big window of the mosque.*” Then on 26 February, Mobaidin arrived to find the mosque has been damaged again. Fencing used inside the mosque was broken; a podium was in shambles and a very large piece of religious artwork was stolen.

In: <http://wtop.com/dc/2015/02/d-c-mosque-vandalized-for-2nd-time-in-a-week/>, retrieved on 27.02.2015

31. US: Local mosques receive threatening phone calls—Two Columbus mosques received profanity-laced threatening phone calls in which the caller referred to Islam as a ‘fairy-tale religion,’ called Muslims ‘garbage’ and ‘scum,’ and said they would be ‘vaporized.’ The calls, made on 17 February, originated from the same Columbus phone number, said Romin Iqbal, staff attorney at the Ohio chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). The council released an audio recording of two calls made to the Omar Ibn El-Khattab Mosque on the Northwest Side. The caller, at times unintelligible, repeatedly swore and used racial slurs. In: <http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2015/02/19/threats-against-mosques.html>, retrieved on 21.02.2015

32. UK: Vandals Smash Norwich Mosque Windows—A mosque in Norwich city in the British central county of Norfolk was vandalized on 7 February, sending a shock wave among the Muslim community who vehemently condemned the Islamophobic attack. The attack had alarmed Norwich Muslim community who had been living in peace for decades.

In: <http://www.onislam.net/english/news/europe/482815-vandals-smash-norwich-mosque-windows.html>, retrieved on 09.02.2015

33. Australia: White Supremacists Attack Perth Mosque—Islamic mosque in Perth had been vandalized by white supremacist graffiti, in a clear manifestation of growing intolerance in the Australian community. Security cameras showed a number of teenagers running away, and letters ‘KKK’ were found scrawled on glass doors and on walls in black letters. The attack was not the first to target the mosque. In November, a pig’s head was dumped outside the mosque’s doors. Another attack was reported in June when a swastika and the phrase ‘white power’ were sprayed on the walls. In: <http://www.onislam.net/english/news/asia-pacific/483055-white-supremacists-attack-perth-mosque.html>, retrieved on 19.02.2015

34. Japan: Mosques in Japan harassed in wake of hostage crisis—At least six mosques and a Muslim organization in Japan had received threats since the hostage crisis that saw two Japanese men killed by the Islamic State militant group. These mosques received abusive messages such as “Die,” “Religion of murderers” and “I hate even the sight of Muslims,” as well as threats such as “Get out of Japan right now if you don’t want to be killed.” Some of the mosques, concerned about the safety of children attending prayers, contacted local police and were advised on security measures. Staff at a mosque in Sendai said that while they were not directly harassed, a Muslim student attending a local graduate school was turned away by an apartment landlord who vowed to refuse to rent to Muslim students.

In: http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/02/23/national/mosques-japan-harassed-wake-hostage-crisis/#.VO1yD_mUc1M, retrieved on 24.02.2015

35. India: No mosque possible in Ayodhya: Yogi Adityanath—BJP MP from Gorakhpur, Mahant Yogi Adityanath had ruled out the proposal for an out-of-court settlement with regard to the Ayodhya issue. He said that just as there could not be a temple in Mecca or in the Vatican City, there was no possibility of a mosque in Ayodhya. He said that Ayodhya, the land of Sanatan Dharma, was a sacred city since it is the birthplace of Lord Ram. Adityanath was responding to questions on the proposal for a dual shrine at the dispute site in Ayodhya. “Hashim Ansari (main litigant in the case) and Mahant Gyan Das (Akhara Parishad head) were making statements they should not be making. Adityanath said: “They should first understand the sentiments of millions of Hindus before making such uncalled for statements.”

In: <http://www.deccanchronicle.com/150227/nation-current-affairs/article/no-mosque-possible-ayodhya-yogi-adityanath>, retrieved on 28.02.2015

II. Campaigns against Islam and Muslims:

1. Dublin Vandals tape bacon to posters of candidate with Turkish background

—Memet Uludag, originally from Turkey but had been living in Ireland since 1998, was running for a Fingal County Council seat in the Castleknock Ward in May 2014's local elections. He said that as he passed through Blanchardstown Main Street on 1st May, he spotted strange objects attached to two of his posters. On closer inspection, he discovered that large, raw pieces of bacon had been stuck on to them with Sellotape.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/dublin-vandals-tape-bacon-to-posters-of-candidate-with-turkish-background/#more-31051>, retrieved on 03.05.2014



2. India Muslims censure calls to ban Adzhan — Days after Narendra Modi's ascension to power, Muslims in India were facing a threat to their religious freedom with some Hindu organizations pitching for a ban on use of loudspeakers during Fajr adzhan (prayer call from mosque at dawn). Troubles erupted in May 2014 when a Hindu outfit called Rashtriya Hindu Andolan organized a protest in Mangalore city in the southern Indian state of Karnataka demanding a ban on morning Adzhan. Protesters claimed that the Muslim call to prayer at dawn disturbs people of other faiths. Vijaylakshmi, an activist of another Hindu outfit Sanatana Dharma, said: "*We believe that no community should misuse religious freedom in such a way to disturb other communities. India has granted freedom to every community to practice their religion in whatever way they want but their way of practice should not cause inconvenience to others.*"

In: <http://onislam.net/english/news/asia-pacific/473179-india-muslims-censure-calls-to-ban-adhan.html>, retrieved on 03.06.2014

3. Myanmar nationalist group organizes anti-Islam boycott — Nationalist monks in Myanmar were to launch a campaign to boycott a Qatar-owned telecommunications company on 8 June because it was "from an Islamic country". U Parmaukha, a radical Buddhist abbot based in Yangon told the local *Irrawaddy News* website that the boycott had been organized to protect the integrity of Myanmar and Buddhism, adding: "*we doubt that we will have freedom when talking over their mobile network because the company is from an Islamic country.*" A group called the Burmese Nationalist Youth was to start distributing leaflets and CDs in Yangon on the aforementioned date Saturday urging people not to buy Ooredoo's SIM cards when they went on sale at some point from July 2014. They also wanted supporters to refuse to answer calls from people using the company's services.

In: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/muslim-world/138375/myanmar-nationalist-group-organizes-anti-islam-boycott>, retrieved on 07.06.2014

4. Anti-mosque demonstration in French Polynesia — About 1,000 people in French Polynesia marched through Papeete in protest at plans to build Tahiti's first mosque. The rally was directed mainly at the 23-year-old imam, Hicham El Barkani, who in 2013 set up a prayer room in town, and was then asking for donations from Muslims in France for a Tahiti mosque. Some demonstrators said his form of Islam was dangerous while some women at the rally had been quoted as saying they feared losing their rights. At time of this news, there were about 500 Muslims in the territory, most of them teachers or members of the French military. The church has denounced the demonstration while the imam made no comment. In: <http://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/249634/anti-mosque-demonstration-in-french-polynesia>, retrieved on 15.07.2014

5. Anti-Islam protest takes place near Sydney hostage site—A group of Australian residents organized an anti-Islam protest near the notorious Sydney café, where several people were taken hostage by an extremist on 19 December. Four men gathered at Sydney's Martin Place, shouting anti-Muslim slogan 'Islam is evil' and calling Muslims 'murders'. A slogan on their banners said: "*Muslim terrorists not wanted here - neither are their leftist supporters*", while another said: "*Tony Abbott - will you protect us from multiculturalism?*" In: <http://sputniknews.com/society/20141219/1016045730.html>, retrieved on 20.12.2014

6. Book featuring Muhammad cartoons goes on sale in Japan—Tokyo-based publisher *Daisan Shokan* released a book on 10 February containing cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad previously published in the French satirical weekly magazine *Charlie Hebdo*. Around 500 bookstores nationwide had expressed interest in selling the book, titled 'Islam Heito Ka, Fushi Ka' (Anti-Islam Hate, or Satire?), but would use discretion in deciding whether to stock it. The 64-page book had an initial print run of 3,000 copies. It contained 48 satirical cartoons alongside comments by 10 cartoonists and researchers on Islam. In: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/02/10/national/book-featuring-muhammad-cartoons-goes-on-sale-in-japan/#.VPH5YGilUeJA>, retrieved on 11.02.2015

7. China publicly humiliates imams—Moslems of eastern Muslim majority district of Xinjiang had been asked to dance in the street, and swear to an oath that they would not teach religion to children as well telling them that prayer is harmful to the soul. During the incident, reported by *World Bulletin* on 9 February, Muslim imams were forced to brandish



the slogan that 'our INCOME comes from the CKP not from Allah'. State Chinese news said the imams were gathering in a square in the name of civilization where they were forced to dance and chant out slogans in support of the state. The slogans included statements glorifying the state over religion such as 'peace of the country gives peace to the soul'. They also gave speeches telling youth to stay away from mosques, and that the prayer was harmful to their health, encouraging them to dance instead. Female teachers were instructed to teach children to stay away from

religious education and made to swear an oath that they will keep children away from religion. In: <http://muslimvillage.com/2015/02/12/62823/state-islamophobia-china-publicly-humiliates-imams/>, retrieved on 13.02.2015

III. Intolerance against Islam and its Sacred Symbols:

1. US: Qurans burned at Dearborn mosque—Several Qurans were burned in front of a mosque at about noon on 10 June in possible connection with anti-Islam Pastor Terry Jones' expected visit to the city on 14 June. The three copies of the Quran were set on fire and left to burn at the curb in front of the Karbalaa Islamic Educational Center, 15332 W. Warren Ave. In: <http://www.pressandguide.com/articles/2014/06/13/news/doc5399f810f0f03443588853.txt>, retrieved on 14.06.2014

2. US: CAIR-NY asks authorities to probe rash of anti-Muslim graffiti in Brooklyn neighborhood—The New York chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) on 9 July called on local law enforcement authorities and public officials to investigate a rash of anti-Muslim graffiti in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Kensington. The graffiti, including such slurs as "Islam is evil," "Allah is e***" and "Islam is barbaric," had been sprayed on mailboxes and other places around the neighborhood. Similar graffiti had been spotted in the ethnically-diverse area since 2012. In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/cair-ny-asks-authorities-to-probe-rash-of-anti-muslim-graffiti-in-brooklyn-neighborhood/#more-33985>, retrieved on 10.07.2014

3. US: Massachusetts Parents angry to find out Islam is part of school curriculum—Parents in Massachusetts were upset when they found out Islam being taught as part of the school curriculum that included a declaration that Allah was the only god. In: <http://therightscoop.com/massachusetts-parents-angry-to-find-out-islam-is-part-of-school-curriculum/>, retrieved on 25.10.2014

4. US: Duke cancels Muslim call to prayer—Duke University found itself at the center of a controversy when it announced plans to allow a Muslim call to prayer from the university chapel's famed bell tower — and then reversed its decision after outcry from Christian evangelist Franklin Graham. The North Carolina university had announced it would allow the school's Muslim Students Association to broadcast a Muslim call-to-prayer, known as adzan, on Fridays from the bell tower of the school's chapel. Muslim prayers had taken place at Duke previously in the chapel basement, but the call to prayer had not previously been broadcast from the chapel bell tower. In: <http://www.msnbc.com/msnbc/duke-cancels-muslim-call-prayer>, retrieved on 17.01.2015

5. US: Texas Muslim Capitol Day marred by anti-Islam protesters—On 29 January, hundreds protesters from Dallas, San Antonio and Houston, mostly women and children, yelling *"We don't want you here!", "Go home!", "ISIS will gladly take you", "remember 9/11", "You don't have to dress that way! Take it off", and "Islam is the war on women!"* Christine Weick stormed the succession of speakers, grabbing the microphone and yelling, *"Islam will not dominate the United States, and by the grace of God, it will not dominate Texas."* In: http://www.mrt.com/news/article_ab07f71e-a7fe-11e4-8fbd-4b6cd4bcb9ae.html, retrieved on 30.01.2015



IV. Discrimination against Muslim Individuals and Communities:

1. Canada: Montreal police arrest a man during arson attack on Muslim community centre — Police apprehended a 47-year-old man at a Muslim community centre in the Rosemont neighbourhood early morning of 20 May. Authorities confirmed that they were forced to use a stun gun after the man resisted arrest. He was caught trying to throw a Molotov cocktail through a window of the Assahaba Islamic Community Centre on the corner of Belanger and 23rd Avenue. Police said that the attempted attack was the fifth over the month. The man was caught because officers had been staking out the community centre after previous incidents. The man was described as a white Quebecer, with possible links to an extremist organization. In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/montreal-police-arrest-man-during-arson-attack-on-muslim-community-centre/#more-31809>, retrieved on 21.05.2014

2. UK: Anti-Muslim slurs on Wikipedia came from government computers — Muslim misrepresentations are nothing new. However, the fact that explicit hostilities were disseminated by the UK government served as an important reminder: intolerance knew no limits. The dynamics of *Wikipedia* are well known as anyone can edit its pages. This included ill-informed people who often perpetuated insularity. *Wikipedia* views this as vandalism. However, one would not expect the UK government to follow suite. The *BBC* found the phrase "all Muslims are terrorists" edited into a Wikipedia's page on veils. That statement was not just false and malicious, but also in bad, bad taste. It was not a lone incident. It happened to be just one of the hundreds of fallacious edits and instances of flagrant discrimination tracked back to two IP addresses, identified as UK government machines, (195.92.40.49 and 62.25.106.209). These computers were allegedly Whitehall-based, belonging to the administrative center of British government in London.

In: <http://muslimvillage.com/2014/05/07/53096/uk-anti-muslim-slurs-on-wikipedia-came-from-government-computers/>, retrieved on 08.05.2014

3. Bosnian Muslims complain of increasing attacks — Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina complained about the increasing incidents of abuse they encounter in the town of Zvornik after a young man was attacked in front of the local Rijecanka Mosque. In a separate incident, an 81-year-old ethnic Serb killed a Muslim man with an axe after a public dispute after the latter refused to receive Easter eggs during the Christian festivities. The next day, the Muslim man, Ahmed Hasanovic, was found dead in front of his home in Kozluk, near Zvornik. According to *Balkan Insight*, the Muslim cemetery in Zvornik's main mosque was vandalized after eggs were thrown at tombstones. Another four Muslims were attacked in the town in 2013 by a gang of young Serbs as they were walking to the mosque. The town of Zvornik, which was once a Muslim dominated town, saw a mass exodus of its Muslim residents during the 1992-1995 civil war after acts of ethnic cleansing by the Serbs. Since the war ended, only a few Muslims returned home.

In: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/news/136496/bosnian-muslims-complain-of-increasing-attacks>, retrieved on 18.05.2014

4. Ireland: Belfast Muslims attacked after rally — A few hours after Belfast's anti-racism rally, two Muslim men were attacked by a group of racists who vandalized their home, injuring one of the victims who was taken to hospital. Muhammad Asif Khattak, 24, a Pakistani immigrant who was attacked by extremists told the *Guardian*: *"If we go outside in the street, people will start swearing at us ... What can we do? We are just foreigners, we don't feel accepted. ... We are scared now and my family and friends are telling me to come back to London."* Khattak and another man were victims of a hate crime that targeted their residence at the Parkmount Street where they were subjected to racist taunts and physical abuse. In the morning of 1st June, the windows of the home were broken. By the afternoon, the assailants

followed the victims, storming their residence and injuring Khattak. According to a police spokesman, the 24-year-old man had been subjected to racist taunts by a group of people outside the property and was sent to the hospital. The racist attack followed an earlier day's anti-racism rally which drew thousands of angry protesters. The rallied crowds demanded a public apology from North Ireland first minister Peter Robinson for insulting the country's Muslim population. The controversy erupted ten days before when pastor James McConnell of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in north Belfast told his congregation that "a new evil had arisen" and "there are cells of Muslims right throughout Britain".

In: <http://www.onislam.net/english/news/europe/473215-belfast-muslims-attacked-after-rally.html>, retrieved on 03.06.2014

5. Sri Lanka: Three Muslims killed in by mob attack – Local authorities said on 16 June that hard-line Buddhists hurled gasoline bombs and looted homes and businesses in attacks in several Muslim towns in southwestern Sri Lanka, killing three Muslims and seriously wounding more than 50 people. The overnight attacks were led by a mob from Bodu Bala Sena, or Buddhist Power Force, which railed against the country's Muslim minority. The group had been gaining followers and was believed to enjoy state support. Gotabhaya Rajapaksa, Sri Lanka's powerful defense secretary and the president's brother, once made a public appearance supporting the group's cause. The violence in the towns of Aluthgama, Darga Nagar and Beruwala erupted after an afternoon rally on 15 June by Bodu Bala Sena. Video clips showed the group's general secretary, the Rev. Galagoda Atte Gnanasara, telling the crowd that Muslim-owned shops were in danger. *Associated Press* journalists saw dozens of shops gutted, as well as motorbikes and bicycles piled up and set on fire in the rampage. Residents said mosques were also defaced. Justice Minister Rauf Hakeem accused his own government of failing to protect Muslims. He said three Muslims died in the violence. Police spokesman Ajith Rohana said 51 people were hospitalized with injuries. President Mahinda Rajapaksa promised an investigation into the violence.

In: <http://www.deccanchronicle.com/140616/world-neighbours/article/3-muslims-killed-sri-lanka-mob-attack>, retrieved on 17.06.2014

6. UK Muslim woman stabbed to death in UK over headscarf – A Saudi woman in her early 30's was murdered and was found to have injuries to her face and stab wounds to her body. Detectives said they believed the Saudi young woman was brutally murdered in a frenzied knife attack as she was targeted for wearing an Islamic attire and headscarf known as hijab. She was a student in her early 30s who was wearing a hijab and a full-length navy blue robe, called an abaya. She was knifed to death on a footpath in Colchester on 17 June morning. The police said she passed away at the scene due to facial injuries and stab wounds to her body.

In: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/muslim-world/139223/fascist-mosque-attacks-worry-british-muslims>, retrieved on 20.06.2014

7. China bans Muslims from fasting in Xinjiang – Muslims in China's Xinjiang region working as civil servants, students and teachers had been banned from fasting during the holy month of Ramadan on 2nd July. The move has sparked condemnation from an exile group. The state-run Bozhou Radio and TV university said on its website that it would "enforce the ban on party members, teachers, and young people from taking part in Ramadan activities. . . We remind everyone that they are not permitted to observe a Ramadan fast." China had in the past said that restrictions on fasting were meant to ensure the health of government employees. Dilxat Raxit, a spokesman for the exiled World Uyghur Congress, told *AFP* citing local sources that on 30 June, Chinese authorities reportedly encouraged Uighurs to eat free meals, and inspected homes to check if the fast was being observed.

In: <http://thedebateinitiative.com/2014/07/02/china-bans-muslims-from-fasting-in-xinjiang/>, retrieved on 03.07.2014

8. China: No Beards, Head Scarves or Veils Allowed on Xinjiang Buses—In this China's western region, people wearing head scarves, veils and long beards were no longer allowed to board city buses, for fear they might perpetrate a terror attack. Five "types" of passengers were now banned from riding buses in Xinjiang: Those who wear veils, head scarves, a loose-fitting garment called hijab, clothing with the crescent moon and star, and those with long beards. The ruling Communist Party said on 4 August that "Those who do not comply, especially those five types of passengers, will be reported to the police."

In: <http://www.inquisitr.com/1395618/china-persecutes-muslims-no-beards-head-scarves-or-veils-allowed-on-xinjiang-buses/>, retrieved on 20.09.2014

9. Australia: We are the ones being terrorized, Australian Muslims say – A car has been damaged and daubed with offensive comments, threatening letters have been sent and women have been abused in the street. Anti-Muslim sentiment had been felt around Australia and people were reporting graffiti on mosques and attacks on homes. Threatening letters had been sent to businesses, bookshops and religious leaders with handwritten messages such as “*we will fight you ... terror for terror ... blood for blood and ... bomb for bomb*”. In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/we-are-the-ones-being-terrorised-australian-muslims-say/#more-36863>, retrieved on 22.09.2014

10. Canada: Muslim women told ‘get out of his country, you don’t belong, terrorists’—Idaho local leaders in the Muslim community were urging two women to pursue charges against a man who verbally assaulted them at Wall Mart on 18 October. General Secretary of the Islamic Society of Eastern Idaho Daniel Hummel said the two women were sought-after by a man who apparently had a longstanding history of anger toward the Muslim community. “*He was telling them to get out of his country, ‘you don’t belong, terrorists.’ It kept coming up, and it scared them,*” Hummel said, noting the women tried to get away from the man before the store managers were called to intervene. The Chubbuck Police Department also stepped-in, but the women decided to not pursue any legal charges against the man at that time. Chubbuck Police Dept.’s Lieutenant Bill Guiberson said, as much as hateful words could be harmful, legally this case was not considered a hate crime under Idaho law.

In: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2014/10/23/idaho-muslim-women-told-get-out-of-his-country-you-dont-belong-terrorists/>, Retrieved on 1.11.2014

11. UK: Criminologist receives online threats after publishing research into Islamophobia—a leading Birmingham criminologist was bombarded with vicious hate mail and violent threats after publishing his research into online Islamophobia. One internet troll even accused Imran Awan, of Birmingham City University, of being worse than members of the barbaric jihadist group Islamic State. Mr Awan said he was shocked by the sheer number of vitriolic hate-filled messages he received after an online discussion about his detailed research on anti-Muslim abuse on the internet. He revealed how he received anonymous threats and how one far-right website had put him under official investigation – labelling him a troublemaker.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/criminologist-receives-online-threats-after-publishing-research-into-islamophobia/#more-39123>, retrieved on 04.12.2014

12. US: FBI investigates man for hate crime after teen killed outside mosque—A sophomore at Staley High School was killed on 4 December after police said he was purposely hit by an SUV. Community members said they recognized the SUV as the one covered in anti-Quran graffiti, driven by a man who had since been banned from Somali markets and restaurants for his rants against Muslims. They showed *KCTV5* a photo they took two months before. The writing on the back window read, “Quran is a virus disease worstest than Ebola.” One community member said people did confront the man in that SUV back then and it turned violent. In: <http://fox2now.com/2014/12/07/fbi-investigates-man-for-hate-crime-after-teen-killed-outside-mosque/>, retrieved on 08.12.2014



13. US: ‘Hate Crime’: Taxi Cab Driver Survives Brutal Attack—A 26-year-old man was arrested on 7 December after he called a taxi driver a ‘terrorist’ and beat him unconscious, causing the cab to drift out of control and strike several parked cars before slamming into an apartment building in Seattle’s Magnolia neighborhood. Investigators labeled the attack a ‘hate crime’. Adam Gaal, the 34-year-old cab driver, told police the incident began when he picked up three men and a woman in Belltown just before 2am at that day, and drove them to the 4200 block of 27th Avenue West. The suspect then gave Gaal his credit card to pay for the trip and apparently became angry at how long the transaction was taking. Gaal told Seattle police that the man said to him: “*You know where you are? You’re in America, this is not where you come from. You are an immigrant, this is not your country. You are terrorist. You are ISIS*”.

In: <http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2014/12/10/hate-crime-taxi-cab-driver-survives-brutal-attack/>, retrieved on 09.12.2014

14. Germany: Four Germans attack Muslim woman—A Muslim woman had been verbally and physically attacked on mid-December by four German men, leaving her severely injured after she was hit by their car while crossing the street. The woman was hit by a car from which four people, aged 20 to 22 years, came out and insulted the Muslim woman, a police statement cited by the *Braunschweiger Zeitung*. The police statement added: “*The driver suddenly grabbed her by the collar of the jacket when surrounding witnesses shouted at them, assisted the women and the racists escaped by car*”. The authorities were now looking for witnesses to the incident dubbed xenophobic act.

In: <http://www.onislam.net/english/news/europe/481011-four-germans-attack-muslim-woman.html>, retrieved on 22.12.2014

15. Australia: Outrage after Aussie cafe declares ‘Sorry, no Muslims’—A Queensland cafe had come under fire for an anti-Muslim sign only a week after Australians appeared to unite against Islamophobia, when #illridewithyou went viral in support of the Muslim community following the Sydney siege. The owner of Eagle’s Nest Bar and Grill in Longreach had refused to apologise for a sign that read “*Sorry, no Muslims*”. The words came at the bottom of a sandwich sign which also said: “*2000 years ago Jesus Christ made headlines turning water into wine...the tradition continues...We turn money into beer*”. In: <http://tvnz.co.nz/world-news/outrage-after-aussie-cafe-declares-sorry-no-muslims-6211042>, retrieved on 25.12.2014



16. India: In challenge to Modi, India Hindu group to convert Muslims, Christians—The head of India’s most powerful Hindu group vowed to press ahead with a campaign to convert Muslims and Christians to Hinduism, stoking a sensitive debate that had stalled parliament and threatened Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s economic reform agenda. Mohan Bhagwat of the rightwing Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh, which is also the ideological wing of Modi’s party, said India is a “Hindu nation” where many Hindus have been forcibly converted to other religions. He said: “*We will bring back those who have lost their way. They did not go on their own....They were lured into leaving.*” These comments came after Modi’s Bharatiya Janata Party said it does not support forced religious conversions and called for an anticonversion law. In: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/12/21/world/social-issues-world/challenge-modi-india-hindu-group-convert-muslims-christians/#.VKY3ASuUeJA>, retrieved on 22.12.2014

17. Canada: Muslims uneasy after windows shot out at school on Cavendish—Montreal police were busy investigating an attack on the Muslim Secondary School on Cavendish Blvd. after six windows were shot out with a gun. Students and teachers arrived at the Montreal Muslim Secondary School 9 February morning to discover at least six windows had been hit. School authorities called police immediately after noticing the damage, but they were not certain when the windows were broken, and said it could have happened any time. Nobody was hurt, and nobody was at the school when the attack took place.

In: <http://montreal.ctvnews.ca/muslims-uneasy-after-windows-shot-out-at-school-on-cavendish-1.2229866>, retrieved on 14.02.2015

4. US: Dearborn woman saw Muslim man attacked at Kroger—Dearborn Police said they were investigating an alleged bias assault by two white men against an Arab-American Muslim man who was shopping on 12 February at a Kroger grocery store in the city. The incident sparked fears among Arab Americans in Dearborn that they were not safe from bias attacks even in a city that has the highest concentration of Arab Americans in the U.S. Kathy McMillan Bazzi, of Dearborn, testified that two white men attacked the Arab-American man and taunted his daughter, who wore an Islamic headscarf, or hijab. Bazzi said the pair were passing by the man and his family while making insulting comments about ISIS and Muslims. Bazzi said the men used derogatory words against the Arab-American man. Bazzi said “*I hear ‘ISIS,’ I hear ‘terrorist,’ I hear ‘go back to your country’ and ‘raghead,’*” Then, “all of a sudden, the man is punching this Arabic man, fists started flying.”

In: <http://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/wayne/2015/02/13/dearborn-muslim-attack/23388379/>, retrieved on 14.02.2015

8. US: Man stabs two after asking about religious beliefs—A Detroit man stabbed two people at a suburban bus stop after asking his victims whether or not they were Muslim. Both of the victims were standing at the bus stop outside of

Detroit with the suspect on 14 February, Southfield Police Chief Eric Hawkins said. Several people there engaged in conversation until the suspect, identified by Hawkins as 39-year-old Terrence Lavaron Thomas, "*asked some of the folks there if they were Muslims.*" Two of them answered they were not Muslims. Thomas was not happy with that answer and shortly after, Thomas pulled out a 3-inch folding knife and attacked one of them. The FBI had been looking at it as a potential hate crime to determine whether federal charges were warranted.

In: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2015/02/17/man-stabs-two-at-a-bus-stop-after-asking-them-if-theyre-muslim/>, retrieved on 18.02.2015

V. Incidents Related to Hijab:

1. Australia: Christian college in Brisbane rejects student teachers who wore hijab – The principal of a Christian College come under fire for transferring two student teachers after they turned up for work dressed in traditional Muslim headwear. The two women, in their final year of a teaching degree, had started a work placement at Redlands College in 2014. In a newsletter addressed to the school's parents on 20 May, principal Mark Bensley outlined his reasons for dismissing the pair, explaining he had acted out of a duty of care, as he had "*...a duty of care to ensure that those teaching at the College are actively supporting the Christian principles, practices and beliefs of the College...I see the wearing of the hijab as openly acting in a manner that is contrary to or inconsistent with these principles, practices and beliefs.*" The principal explained that he had arranged for both students to transfer to another school to complete their respective field work because "*While I respect their desire to wear a hijab, I feel it's inappropriate to do so at Redlands College.*" A statement issued to *The Sunday Mail* said, as a Christian school, Redlands College respects and loves all people, from all backgrounds and religions.

In: <http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/brisbane-christian-college-rejects-student-teachers-who-wore-hijab/#more-31963>, retrieved on 26.05.2014

2. Belgium: Belgium Burqa Ban: Brussels Officer Strips off Niqab from Qatari Princess—A diplomat in the city of Brussels has come under fire for reportedly ripping off the Niqab of a woman, who happened to be a Qatari princess (Sheikhah) travelling to the Belgian capital. Jean-Marie Pire, 60, employed by the Brussels council to welcome foreign dignitaries to the Belgian capital and also known by the designation of 'Chief of Protocol', was reportedly approached by the wealthy woman wearing a Niqab along with two of her female companions. The officer was said to have forcibly opened her black full-faced veil, in an incident that would be considered a taboo in the Muslim world. The incident occurred on 14 August when the Qatari princess was making her way to the famous Grand Place in the centre of Brussels. The woman, seeking knowledge about the city, wanted to ask someone with good familiarity with the area and approached the officer who reportedly was distracted by the Niqab worn by the princess. Pire, who was not on duty at the time of the incident, refused to answer their questions, but instead jumped in to tear apart the Niqab off the woman's face, reports suggest. But little did he know that the woman he just manhandled was a princess. "*I said I don't talk to anyone if I can't see their face,*" Morocco World News quoted the 60-year-old officer as saying. "*With this reply, I wanted to make it clear that the veil is banned in Belgium.*"

In: <http://www.ibtimes.co.in/belgium-burqa-ban-brussels-officer-strips-off-niqab-qatari-princess-607294>, retrieved on 27.09.2014

3. UK: Camden School Bans Muslim Teenager from Taking A-levels because She Wears the Niqab—A Muslim teenager had been barred from starting her A-levels at one of London's top state schools because she wore a full-face veil. The 16-year-old, who had studied at Camden School for Girls for five years, decided to wear the traditional Islamic niqab to cover her hair and face when she returned this month to start in the sixth form. However, the north London school was refusing to allow the girl to begin her 'A' levels if she insisted on wearing the veil. Although the school had no uniform, it said the Niqab went against an appearance policy.

In: <http://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/camden-school-bans-muslim-teenager-from-taking-a-levels-because-she-wears-the-niqab-9750269.html>

4. France: Paris Opera ejects woman for wearing veil during performance—France's government was drawing up a new set of rules for theatres after Paris Opera ejected woman for wearing a veil during a performance on 19 October. The incident took place when a veiled woman was spotted on the front row of a performance of *La Traviata* at the Opera

Bastille. The woman was sitting just behind the conductor, visible to monitors, wearing a scarf covering her hair and a veil over her mouth and nose during the performance on 3 October.

In: <http://www.themalaymailonline.com/world/article/paris-opera-ejects-woman-for-wearing-veil-during-performance>, retrieved on 25.10.2014

5. Spain: Woman Told to Get off Bus for Wearing Burqa – A woman wearing a burqa had been forbidden from travelling on a bus in Spain. According to witnesses, the bus driver forbade the woman from entering the vehicle as she was wearing the Islamic veil, which covers the entire body, with a semi-transparent cloth covering the eye. The incident occurred on early November in Vitoria, a city in northern Spain, where the driver was urging his colleagues to sign a petition to support his stance. The local transport company, Tuvisa, has opened an investigation into the incident. Muslim women were not barred from wearing the burqa in public in Spain, however the government announced in September it was considering a ban on the Islamic garment on grounds of security. “*The ban could be included in the country’s new Citizen Security Law*” said Interior Minister Jorge Fernández Díaz. Vitoria already bans women from bathing in public swimming pools while wearing Islamic swimsuits. In: <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/spain-woman-told-get-off-bus-wearing-burqa-1473992>, retrieved on 01.12.2014.

ANNEX - 2

OIC Communiqué on “Combating Terrorism and Violent Extremism”

Extraordinary Open-ended Meeting of the OIC Executive Committee on “Combating Terrorism and Violent Extremism”

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation Ministerial level Executive Committee, OIC/EC, held an emergency meeting at the OIC General Secretariat on February 15, 2015 to discuss the threat posed by violent extremism in the Muslim world; and the unabated spread of terrorism affecting many OIC Member States.

After exhaustive discussions and deliberations, the participants unanimously agreed on the following:

1. The Meeting recalled the relevant provisions of the OIC Charter relating to terrorism, extremism, and the promotion of moderation; it further recalled relevant OIC legal instruments, specifically the OIC Code of Conduct on Combating Terrorism (1994) and the OIC Convention on Combating International Terrorism (1999), the relevant provisions of the Ten-Year Program of Action (TYPOA) 2005, the resolutions of the Islamic Summit and the Council of Foreign Ministers, as well as the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council, particularly resolution 2199 (2015).
2. The Meeting reiterated its principled position against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomsoever and wherever; and reaffirmed its unequivocal rejection of all attempts to associate any country, race, religion, culture or nationality with terrorism.
3. Rejection of terrorist acts which targeted Member States was reaffirmed, including:
 - a. The Meeting reiterated its condemnation of continuous violations of the basic rights of the Palestinian people and practice of state terrorism by Israel in the occupied territories, especially aggressions against people, land and sacred sites in Al-Quds As-Shareef, and the blockade it imposes on the Gaza Strip in total disregard to international law and international humanitarian law.
 - b. The Meeting condemned the heinous crimes perpetrated by "Daesh" on Iraq's land and against its people. It condemned, specifically and in the strongest terms, the barbaric crime committed by that organization by burning alive the Jordanian prisoner pilot Mo'az Al-Kasasbah; reaffirmed Member States' solidarity with the King, Government and people of Jordan in their efforts to counter terrorism and extremism; expressed appreciation of the sacrifices of the Jordanian Armed Forces; and urged the international community to work closely with Jordanian authorities to bring the perpetrators of these terrorist acts to justice.
 - c. The Meetings also condemned the terrorist acts in Afghanistan, especially the attack on a volleyball stadium in Yahyakhail district in Paktika on 24 November 2014; the attack on a school in Peshawar, Pakistan, on 16 December 2014; the terror attack on Corinthia Hotel in Tripoli, Libya on January 28, 2015; and the current escalation in terrorist activities in Egyptian cities in January, including the terrorist attack in the Sinai Peninsula on 29 January 2015; the repeated attacks and mass killings perpetrated by "Boko Haram" in Baga in January 2015, and the abduction of hundreds of school girls in Chibok, as well as the recurrent acts of murder committed by "Daesh", "Boko Haram", "Al-Shabab", "Al-Qaeda", and other comparable terrorist groups.
 - d. The Meeting stressed that such crimes blatantly run against both Islamic and universal human values, as all terrorist groups which committed those crimes adopt a radical extremist ideology and are involved in the ongoing flow of arms, fighters and field experience. In this connection, the Meeting commended all measures adopted and efforts exerted by the Member States in confronting international terrorism, consistent with the OIC Charter, relevant Convention and other relevant international agreements and mechanisms.

4. The Meeting expressed serious concern at the exacerbation of the political and security situation in the Republic of Yemen, which threatens the security, stability and territorial integrity of Yemen. It calls, in this regard, on all parties to endeavour, through peaceful means and without the use of violence, to resume the political process consistent with the terms of reference of the GCC Initiative and its implementation mechanisms and the outputs of national dialogue, and to implement UNSC resolution 2140 (2014). The Meeting rejects all unilateral measures taken by Houthi militias to impose the fait accompli by force, and the attempt to alter the structure and nature of the Yemeni society; supports the legitimate authority and its existing institutions; rejects the detention of Yemen's President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, Prime Minister Khaled Bahah and Ministers and officials, calling for their immediate release, and rejects the so-called constitutional declaration by Houthi militias.
5. The Meeting expressed its full solidarity with Nigeria and countries in the Lake Chad Basin in the face of the escalating attacks by the terror group "Boko Haram". It welcomes the efforts of the region to establish the Multi-national Joint Task Force as a platform to coordinate their actions to combat the group which continues to pose a threat to the peace and stability of the region.
6. The Meeting expressed serious concern over the increase of intolerance and discrimination against Muslims resulting into the upsurge of Islamophobia, a phenomenon which is an affront to the human rights and dignity of Muslims. In this connection, the Meeting recalled the UNHRC resolution 16/18 titled "Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons based on religion or belief" (A/HRC/RES/16/18) as an important tool to counter radicalization, marginalization and alienation, and called for its effective implementation by the international community as a means to deprive terrorist groups of any justification for violent extremism on the grounds of ethno-religious stigmatization and discrimination.
7. The Meeting recognized that terrorism cannot not be tackled by security or military means alone, and that due attention and concrete plans of action must address the following aspects and dimensions of the phenomenon of terrorism:
 - a. The political and socio-economic contexts that bring forth conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and violent extremism, such as continued economic deprivation, exclusion, alienation, separation and marginalization of people, and the forced dismantling of political, legal, security and socio-cultural institutions.
 - b. The deep impact and legacy of historical injustices done to colonized peoples or those under occupation, their sufferings and the forced destruction of their national institutions, culture and identity, and the denial of their rights to self-determination.
 - c. The need to counter all types of radical extremist discourse in order to delegitimize the violent and manipulative acts committed in the name of religion, ideology or claims of cultural superiority.
 - d. The need to revisit the OIC relevant documents in regard to terrorism, including the Code of Conduct on Combating Terrorism, the OIC Convention on Combating International Terrorism and the numerous resolutions issued by the different organs of the OIC in order to effectively address the new trends of terrorism and extremism.
 - e. Take action at the international level with a view to holding an international conference on combating terrorism which would come up with a consensual international definition of terrorism.
 - f. The underlying causes of sectarian violence, the attempts to politicize the sectarian differences, the emphasis on sects as the essence of identity, and the waging of campaigns to convert Muslims from one sect to the other.
 - g. The potential of external actors penetrating terrorist and extremist groups for the purpose of serving their own political agenda, and the threat of non-Arab and non-Muslim foreign fighters.
 - h. The role of the media and the advent of cyber terrorism through the utilization of new information and communication technologies by terrorist groups for the purpose of recruitment and incitement to terrorism.
8. In light of the above, the Meeting called for the following urgent actions:
 - a. It requested the Secretary General to convene a meeting of legal and terrorism experts to revisit the OIC Convention of 1999 in a bid to lay down the proper mechanisms to counter the new trends of terrorism in the OIC Member States. It also requested the Secretary General to maintain the momentum of the debate on international terrorism, cross border crime, and security

developments by convening conferences, symposia and workshops involving political, religious and traditional leaders, scholars etc. in collaboration with OIC partners, including Member and non-member State; and to hold specialized conferences to review educational curricula.

- b. The Meeting requested the Secretary General to strengthen partnerships with international and regional organizations on counter terrorism; called for the activation of the 'International Counter Terrorism Center of the UN' to coordinate global counter-terrorism efforts and commended Saudi Arabia for its contribution of US\$ 110 million to support the activities of the Center, as well as the ongoing cooperation between the OIC and the UN Counter Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED).
- c. The Meeting called on the Secretary General to work with Member States in order to demonstrate further solidarity with affected countries by undertaking investments that would create jobs with a view to eradicating unemployment and poverty.
- d. The Meeting called upon the Secretary General to work with the Member States to crystalize a new paradigm to confront and remedy the causes of sectarian violence.
- e. The Meeting requested the Secretary General to work with the Member States to seek ways to empower the youth and other communities at risk of exploitation by terrorist groups in order to make them less susceptible to recruitment and radicalization.
- f. The Meeting requested the Secretary General to hold a meeting of experts from the Member States to seek ways to confront threats to cyber security as a matter of urgency with due respect to human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law.
- g. The Meeting called upon the Secretary General to work with the Member States to encourage them, consistent with their commitments to the OIC Convention and other relevant international agreements, to take the necessary and appropriate measures prohibiting incitement to terrorism, refrain from providing any direct or indirect form of support to entities or persons involved in terrorism, dry up the sources of terrorism by refraining from paying ransoms in order to free hostages and prohibit such practice, step away from the causes of abominable dissension and discord among Muslims and incitement to violence and extremism against other nations, respect the wishes of peoples in choosing their representatives; and abstain from hosting and providing safe shelter to insurgent groups, and from financing them and providing them with any form of assistance whatsoever to wage political campaigns.
- h. The Meeting requested the Secretary General to hold a series of meetings, workshops, symposia and conferences of Ulama, intelligentsia and social scientists to study and dismantle the discourse of extremism and sectarianism; and called upon him to build bridges with Muslim communities outside OIC Member States in order to stress the discourse of Islam's values of moderation, justice, equality and tolerance, and monitor violence committed against these communities.
