



SIXTEENTH OIC
REPORT ON

ISLAMOPHOBIA

February 2023 – April 2024

2023-2024

PRESENTED TO THE
50TH SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF
FOREIGN MINISTERS



منظمة التعاون الإسلامي

ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION
ORGANISATION DE COOPÉRATION ISLAMIQUE

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ABOUT

The OIC Islamophobia Observatory is a specialized Unit, or Center, currently operating under the supervision of Political Affairs Department at the OIC General Secretariat. The Observatory has been functioning for around 17 years now, started in 2007, precisely since the 34th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers held in Islamabad.

Its establishment was driven by 3 (three) main factors: the massive wave of anti-Islam sentiments in the West after 9/11; the growing trend of Islamophobia that seeks to defame and denigrate Islam through distortion and misperception; and by the introduction of laws in some non-Islamic countries that specifically discriminate, or target Muslim minorities. Altogether, that was an issue of great concern for the Muslim world, hence the 3rd Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Summit Conference held in Makkah in 2005, affirmed the need to counter Islamophobia. Brief, the OIC Islamophobia Observatory was an implementation of Recommendation put-on by the Leaders of Muslim world during the third Session of Extraordinary Islamic Summit.

Particular mandate given to the Observatory is to monitor all forms of Islamophobia, to report to all Member States, and to address the issue in cooperation with Governments and NGOs. Based on this mandate the OIC Islamophobia Observatory monitors manifestations of Islamophobia on daily basis, reading the trend, and drawing maps on how the situation related to Islamophobia develops time to time; by which reports, policy recommendation, and measures to address the issue of Islamophobia are initiated thereafter.



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FOREWORD BY THE OIC SECRETARY GENERAL



I am honored to present the 16th Annual Report on Islamophobia to all Member States during the esteemed 50th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM). This comprehensive report has been meticulously prepared by the OIC Islamophobia Observatory, a dedicated center operating under the auspices of the Political Affairs Department of the General Secretariat. The Observatory's primary mandate is to diligently monitor and document incidents of Islamophobia, hatred, racism, and discrimination targeting Muslims worldwide, as well as any actions directed against the religion of Islam itself. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) remains resolute in its commitment to leveraging this report as an effective tool to raise awareness about the pressing challenges posed by Islamophobia and the myriad difficulties faced by Muslim communities across the globe.

This report fulfills a crucial mandate bestowed upon the OIC General Secretariat, which is to monitor all forms of Islamophobia, report to all Member States, and proactively address this issue. Through this comprehensive document, the General Secretariat presents a codified catalogue of the various manifestations of Islamophobia that have seriously disrupted the broad aspects of Muslims' lives across the world since the

previous session of the CFM. It is our hope that this report will serve as a valuable resource in the ongoing efforts to combat Islamophobia and promote greater understanding, tolerance, and respect for the Islamic faith and its adherents.

Islamophobia represents one of the most insidious threats to religious freedom, human rights, and social cohesion in today's world. What began as an irrational fear or dislike of Islam has metastasized into something far more sinister - a toxic brew of racial hatred, intolerance, prejudice and discrimination deliberately stoked by far-right extremist groups.

The consequences have been devastating for Muslim communities worldwide who have endured persecution, desecration of sacred symbols, insults against venerated religious figures, vandalism of mosques and Islamic centers, and even violent hate crimes. These reprehensible acts seek to inflame sentiments, provoke outrage, and disrupt the peaceful coexistence of diverse faiths. Please make no mistake - Islamophobia is not merely a threat to Muslims, but an assault on the very principles of justice, equality, freedom and human dignity that underpin modern civilization. It debases humanity's collective achievements and mocks the sacrifices made to establish institutions designed to safeguard our universal rights and values. Confronting this burgeoning crisis demands a coordinated, multilateral response from the international community driven by dialogue, cooperation and solidarity. We must take concerted legal, cultural, religious, academic, political and humanitarian measures to raise awareness, counter hate narratives, promote religious pluralism and mutual understanding.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has been at the forefront of these efforts, tirelessly working to tackle Islamophobia through advocacy, positive engagement with diverse stakeholders, and sustained initiatives aimed at fostering peaceful coexistence and mutual respect between faiths. Yet, our work is far from complete. Islamophobia continues unabated, metastasizing across the globe in alarming ways that command an appropriate and resolute response from decision-makers across the Islamic world. We must double down on firm, determined policies and actions at both national and international levels to extinguish this scourge once and for all. The scourge of Islamophobia remains a pernicious and deeply troubling phenomenon afflicting societies around the world. This Annual Report lays

bare the harsh realities and experiences faced by Muslim communities who have endured acts of discrimination, hatred, and violence motivated by irrational fear and animosity toward their religion and beliefs.

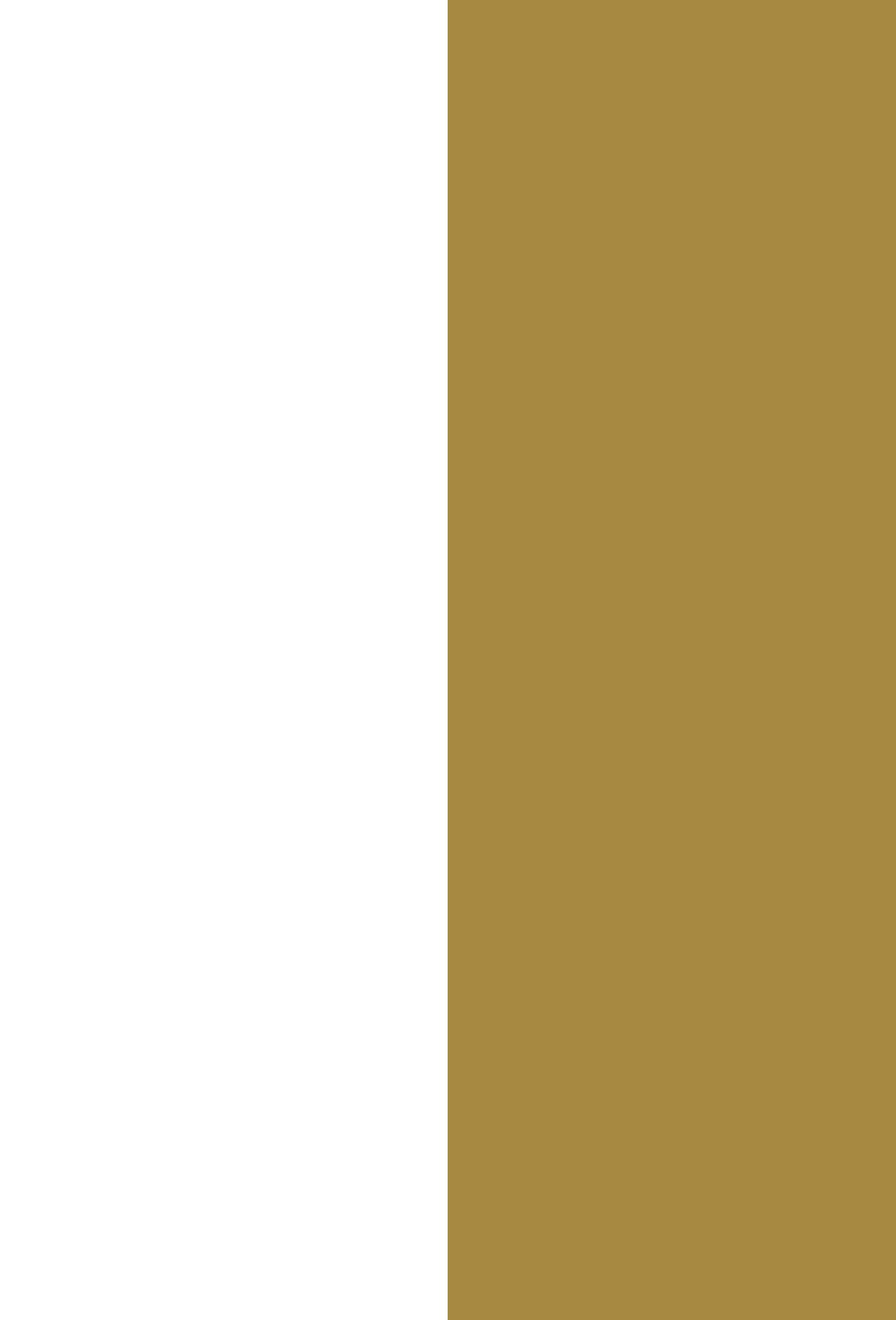
The data compiled in this report is a sobering reminder that Islamophobia is not a fleeting issue, but rather a systemic problem that has become more widespread and insidious in recent years. The accounts documented here reveal how Islamophobia transcends borders, manifesting in various guises - from physical attacks and vandalism of mosques to institutional discrimination in employment, education, and public services.

Perhaps most disconcertingly, the report exposes how the desecration and public burnings of the Holy Quran have escalated into provocative displays that deliberately inflame religious sensibilities. These vile acts, often perpetrated by far-right extremist elements, represent not just a violation of the sacred but a direct assault on the values of mutual respect and solidarity that should unite us all as a human family.

While the findings render a grim portrait, this report is more than just a archive of injustices. It serves as an urgent call to action for governments, civil society, faith leaders and citizens of conscience to stand united against the forces of hate, bigotry and divisiveness. Combating Islamophobia requires robust legal protections, proactive engagement with Muslim communities, and educational initiatives that dismantle stereotypes and promote pluralism.

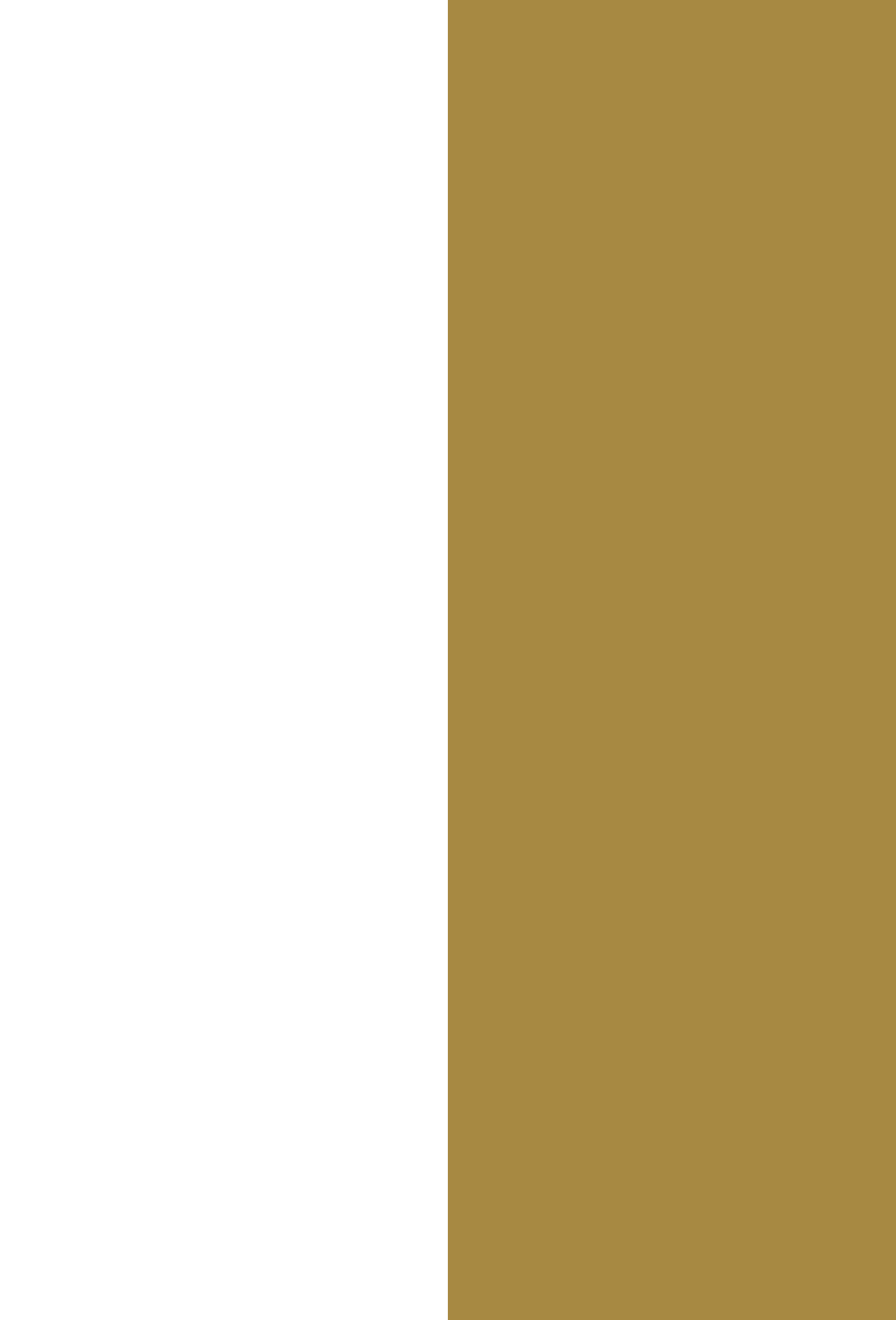
Ultimately, our collective ability to uphold religious freedom, celebrate diversity, and foster social cohesion hinges on confronting Islamophobia in all its manifestations. This Annual Report provides a critical evidence base – it is incumbent upon all of us to study it, internalize its lessons, and translate its insights into meaningful actions that make the world more just, inclusive and harmonious for all people, irrespective of their beliefs. Our collective security, universal human rights and the very fabric of our social cohesion depend on it.

In presenting this 16th Annual Report on Islamophobia, I urge all member states to treat this issue with the utmost urgency and dedicate robust resources to upholding religious freedom, celebrating diversity and rejecting all forms of hate, bigotry and prejudice.



TREND OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

(February 2023-April 2024)



Trend of Islamophobia

(February 2023-April 2024)

Islamophobia refers to a complex set of negative feelings and prejudiced beliefs directed not just towards Muslims as individuals, but also anything associated with the religion of Islam itself. This includes fear, hatred and discrimination targeting mosques, Islamic centres, the Holy Qur'an, hijabs, halal food, Arabic-sounding names, men with beards, the call to prayer, minarets, domes and other Islamic symbols and practices. Islamophobia manifests through stigmatization, racism and discriminatory treatment in daily life, in the media, at workplaces and in the political sphere. At its core, it resides in the minds of individuals and communities, breeding offensive and intolerant attitudes. In its extreme forms, Islamophobia leads to violent actions like burning mosques, vandalizing properties, verbal and physical abuse towards women wearing hijabs, insulting the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him), defaming revered Islamic figures, or desecrating sacred Islamic symbols.

Islamophobia is prevalent not just in non-Muslim societies, but within Muslim populations as well. However, empirical evidence suggests that Islamophobia tends to be more pronounced in non-Muslim societies or areas where Muslims are a numerical minority compared to the majority population. Being a minority is not the sole factor driving Islamophobia, as its roots can vary from one place to another. In some cases, Islamophobia may stem from domestic political dynamics or bargaining by the party in power. At times, it is institutionalized through government policies. Often, Islamophobia is linked to issues like unemployment, immigration, and refugees. In other instances, it arises as a backlash following terrorist incidents. Given our increasingly interconnected world, Islamophobia can also emerge due to events unfolding in distant parts of the globe. In essence, Islamophobia can be fueled by multiple factors across diverse contexts and dimensions. During the 15-month period spanning February 2023 to April 2024, the OIC Islamophobia Observatory remained vigilant in monitoring incidents, scrutinizing public sentiments, and analyzing materials that could

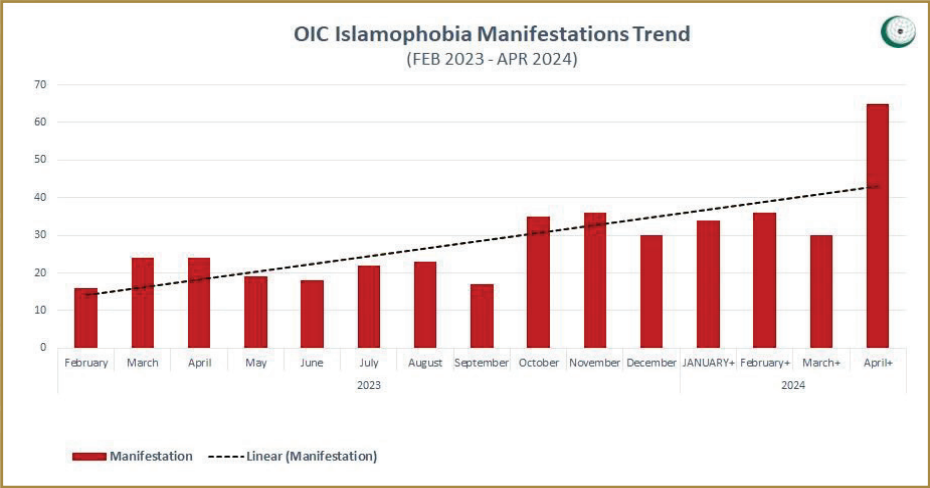
potentially serve as indicators of Islamophobia. The Observatory scanned various sources, including news reports, social media platforms, government policies, and public statements, to identify and document any instances of discrimination, hatred, or prejudice directed towards Muslims or Islamic practices. This monitoring process aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of the prevailing trends and patterns of Islamophobia across different regions and contexts. The information gathered during this period was then carefully compiled and presented in this report, offering Member States with a detailed and nuanced understanding of the ongoing challenges posed by Islamophobia.

Overall, this report is expected to serve as a resource enabling policymakers and stakeholders to grasp the multifaceted nature of Islamophobia and its manifestations across different spheres, including the political, social, and cultural domains. By shedding light on these trends, the report equips Member States with the necessary materials to develop informed and tailored strategies, policies, and initiatives to effectively combat Islamophobia and promote greater understanding, tolerance, and respect for the rights and dignity of Muslim communities worldwide.

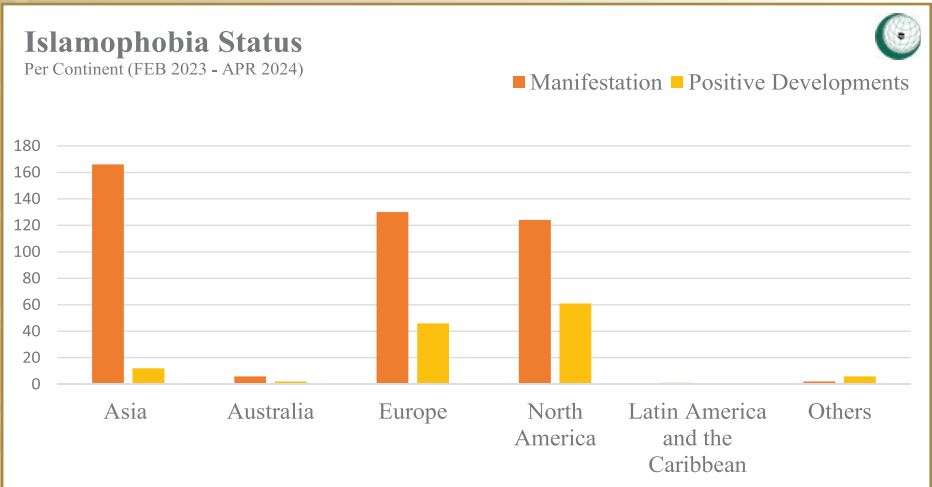
The following is the summary of trend on Islamophobia during the 15-months period, from February 2023 to April 2024:



Throughout 2023, Islamophobia exhibits a fluctuating pattern with periodic increases and decreases, but a significant upward spike is observed towards the end of the timeframe, specifically in April 2024. This concerning upward trend in the latter part of the period could be indicative of a multitude of factors contributing to heightened tensions and discrimination against the Muslim community.



One potential factor behind this worrying spike could be the sociopolitical tensions in regions like Gaza, where long-standing conflicts and instability may have exacerbated existing prejudices and fueled Islamophobic sentiments. Additionally, the economic challenges faced by Europe and other parts of the world in the aftermath of the war in Ukraine could have strained resources and perpetuated an environment conducive to scapegoating and discrimination against minority groups, including Muslims. Furthermore, geopolitical tensions and conflicts in the Middle East, coupled with heightened tensions between various social groups during election periods in countries like India, may have collectively amplified divisive rhetoric and fostered an atmosphere of intolerance, ultimately contributing to the rise in Islamophobic manifestations across the globe.



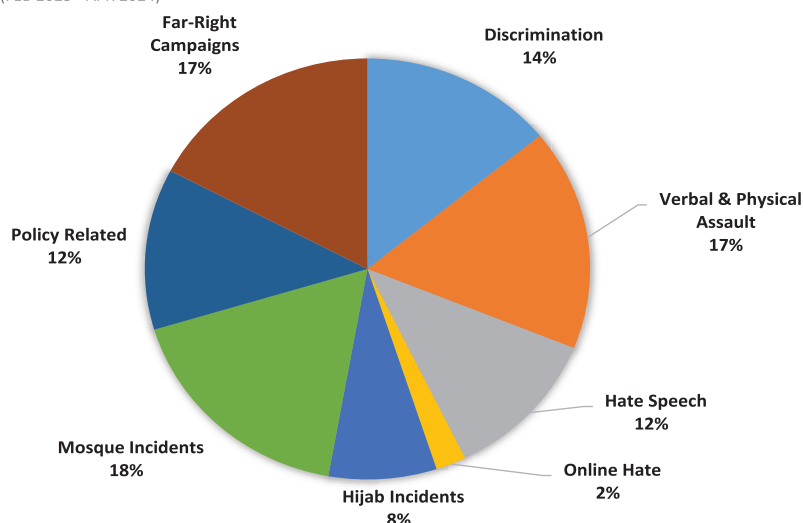
Observation on different continents during the period from February 2023 to April 2024 shows evidences that manifestations of Islamophobia outnumber positive developments across most regions.

Asia appears to have experienced the highest number of Islamophobic incidents during this timeframe, significantly surpassing other continents. Europe and North America also witnessed notable levels of Islamophobia, though not as severe as Asia. While there were some positive developments in countering Islamophobia in these regions, the manifestations far outweighed the progress made. Interestingly, the Observatory found no positive developments in Australia, Latin America and the Caribbean, suggesting a concerning lack of efforts to address Islamophobia in these areas, or simply due to the less availability and accessibility to the relevant information. Overall, the Observatory underscores the global prevalence of Islamophobia and the need for concerted efforts to combat this issue across all regions. The largest segment, accounting for 17% of incidents, is in the category of ‘Verbal & Physical Assault.’ This alarming statistic highlights the prevalence of direct violence and attacks targeting individuals based on their Islamic faith or appearance. Closely tied are ‘Far-Right Campaigns’ and ‘Discrimination,’ both at 17% and 14% respectively. These figures point to organized efforts by extremist groups to propagate anti-Muslim narratives and discriminatory practices in various spheres of life, such as employment, education, and public services.

Policy-related manifestations make up 12% of the total manifestation, indicating that Islamophobia is also institutionalized through government policies and regulations in certain contexts. Hate speech constitutes another 12% of cases, reflecting the normalization of anti-Muslim rhetoric and the spread of harmful stereotypes across various platforms. Mosque incidents (18%) and hijab incidents (8%) specifically target Islamic places of worship and the religious attire worn by Muslim women, underscoring the vulnerability of these symbols to acts of vandalism and harassment. While online hate (2%) appears relatively low, it represents a concerning trend of Islamophobic content proliferating in digital spaces.

MANIFESTATION

PER TYPE (FEB 2023 - APR 2024)



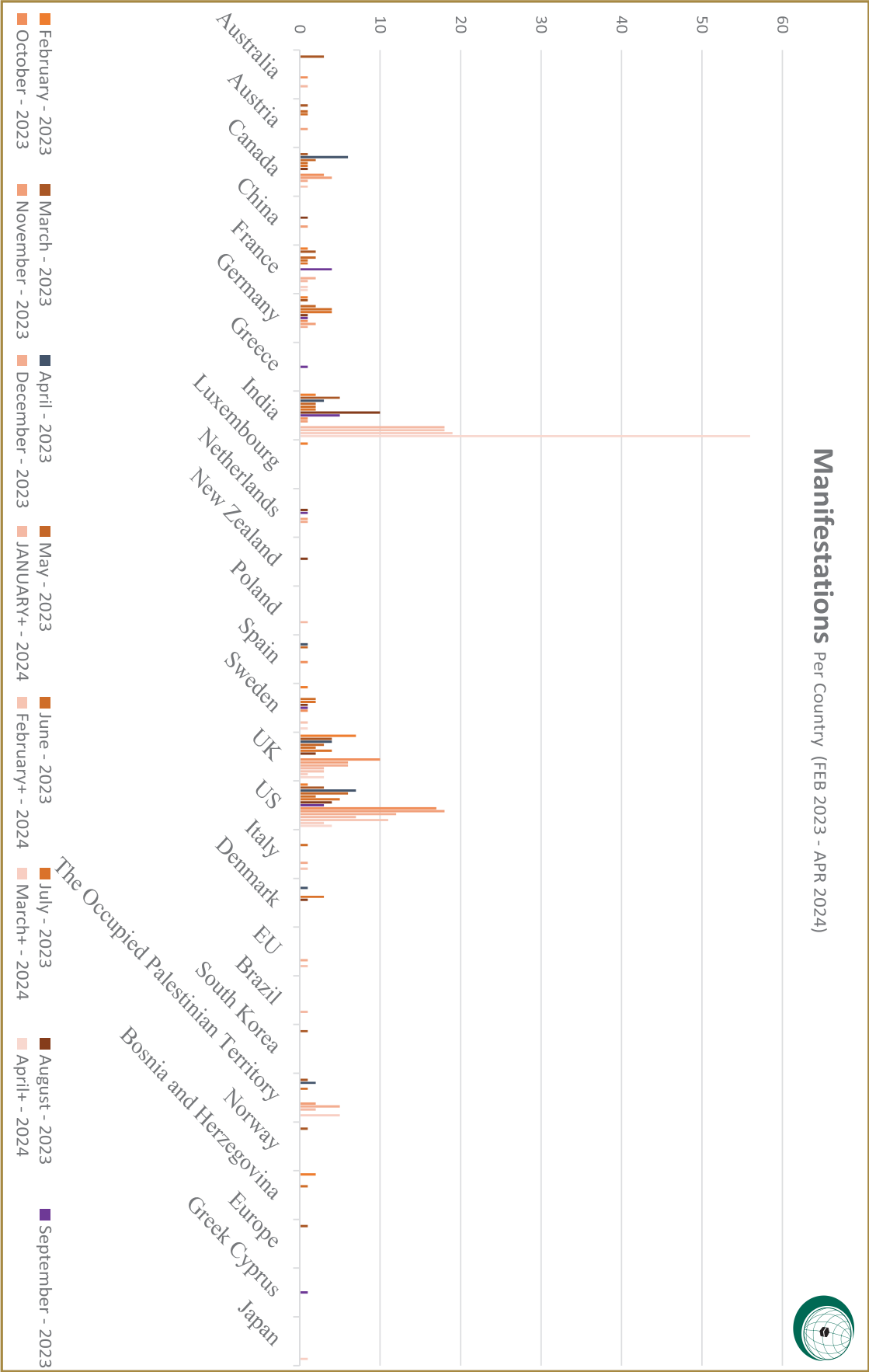
The empiric shows a striking figure that India accounts for a staggering high of the total recorded incidents, far surpassing any other country, potentially stemming from religious tensions and the marginalization of its Muslim minority. This alarming statistic highlights the deeply concerning levels of discrimination and intolerance faced by India's Muslim minority population. The high prevalence of Islamophobic incidents in India points to the urgent need for concerted efforts to address religious tensions, promote inclusivity, and protect the rights of its Muslim citizens.

The United States emerges as the second-highest contributor to Islamophobic manifestations, accounting for almost one third of the total incidents during the reviewed period. This figure is particularly troubling for a nation that prides itself on its diversity and principles of equality. The data underscores the persistence of anti-Muslim sentiments and biases within segments of American society, necessitating proactive measures to combat hate, discrimination, and promote understanding between communities.

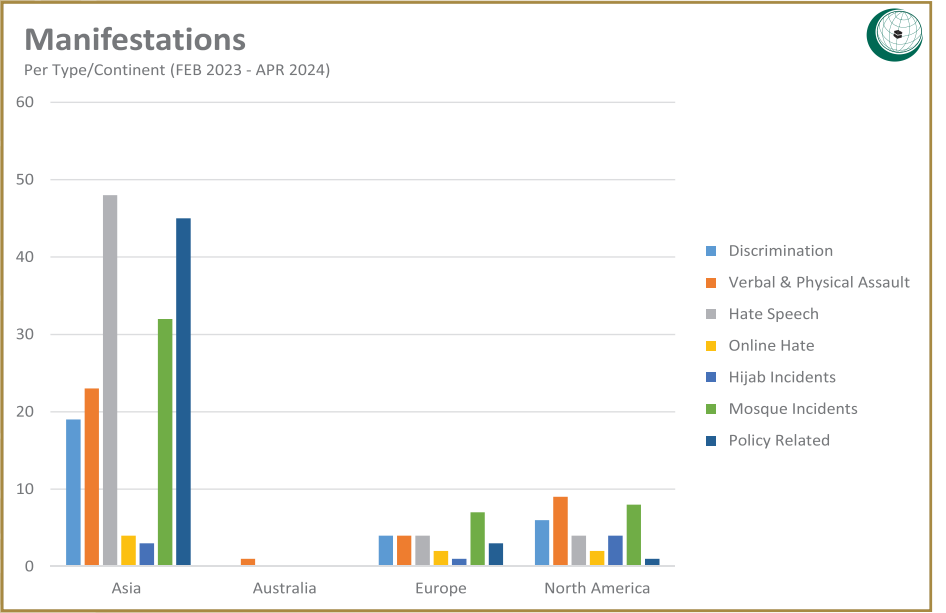
Another glaring observation from the empirics is the concerning level of Islamophobic incidents in certain European countries like the United Kingdom, Germany, and France. The United Kingdom stands out with one of the highest bars, indicating a persistent issue of discrimination and intolerance towards its Muslim population and Islamic practices. Germany and France also witnessed numerous cases, reflecting the deep-rooted

nature of anti-Muslim sentiments in parts of Western Europe. While the data for some European nations like Italy and Spain shows relatively fewer incidents compared to others, it is crucial not to overlook the impact of even isolated cases of Islamophobia. Every act of discrimination, hate speech, or violence can have far-reaching consequences for affected communities and societal cohesion. The presence of some European nations on the list should also raise concerns about the integration and acceptance of Muslim communities within these societies.

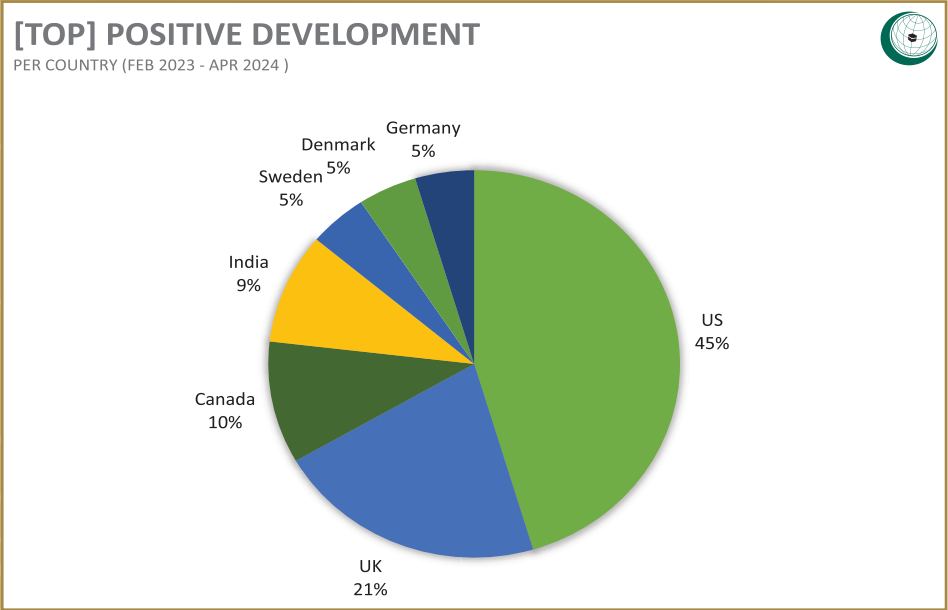
Notably, several Muslim-majority countries also experienced Islamophobic manifestations during this timeframe. Countries like Palestine and Bosnia & Herzegovina faced instances of discrimination and hate, underscoring the complex dynamics of Islamophobia even within societies with substantial Muslim populations. Palestine presents a complex case where Islamophobia is intricately intertwined with the long-standing political conflict and broader ideological tensions. The Observatory's findings paint a concerning picture of discrimination and marginalization faced by Palestinian Muslims, particularly in areas under Israeli control. Restrictions on religious freedoms, such as limitations on access to holy sites and instances of desecration or vandalism of mosques and Islamic institutions, violate fundamental rights and contribute to a climate of fear and insecurity. Moreover, the discourse surrounding Islam and Muslims in this context has been marred by negative stereotypes and vilification, with Israeli groups propagating the notion that Islam is inherently violent or incompatible with peace, justifying policies or actions that disproportionately affect Palestinian Muslims. This rhetoric not only perpetuates harmful stereotypes but also exacerbates tensions and hinders efforts towards peaceful resolution. Furthermore, systematic discrimination in various spheres, such as employment, education, and access to essential services, violates principles of equality and human rights, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and disadvantage for Palestinian Muslim communities.



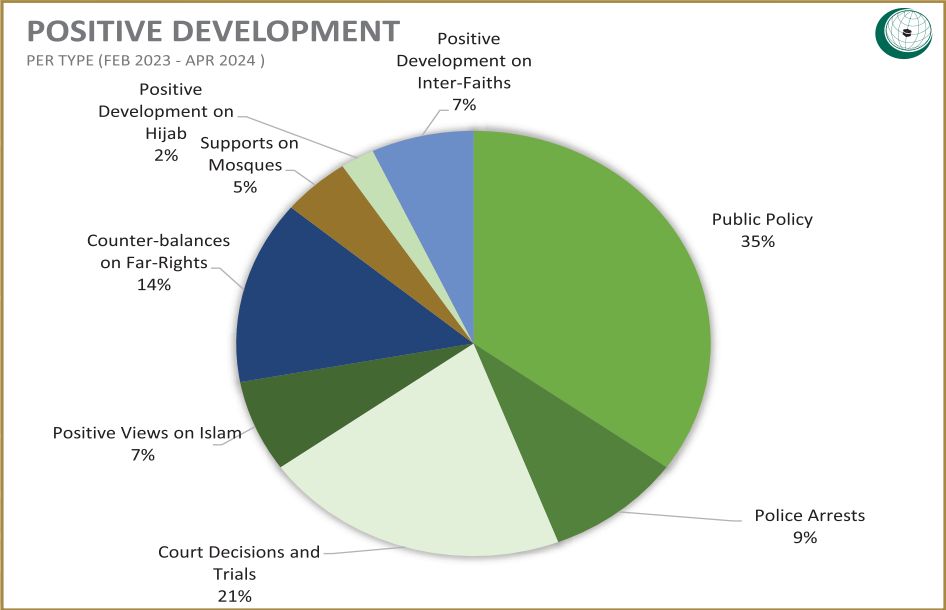
Meanwhile, there have been encouraging signs of progress in addressing the discrimination and Islamophobia faced by Muslim women who choose to wear the hijab, niqab, or other religious attire. The global experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, which necessitated widespread use of face coverings, inadvertently helped normalize the presence of such garments in public spaces. This shared experience may have contributed to a gradual desensitization and increased acceptance of diverse forms of dress, potentially mitigating some of the prejudices and phobias previously associated with Muslim women’s traditional attire.



Moreover, there is a growing recognition among governments, civil society organizations, and the general public of the importance of respecting individual freedoms and religious practices. Initiatives aimed at promoting religious tolerance, cultural understanding, and the protection of fundamental human rights have gained momentum. Several countries that had previously implemented restrictive policies banning or limiting the wearing of hijabs in public institutions are re-evaluating their stances, acknowledging the need for inclusivity and accommodation of diverse beliefs and practices. While challenges undoubtedly remain, these positive developments signal a potential decrease in anti-hijab sentiments and a broader commitment to upholding the rights and dignity of Muslim women across various spheres of life.



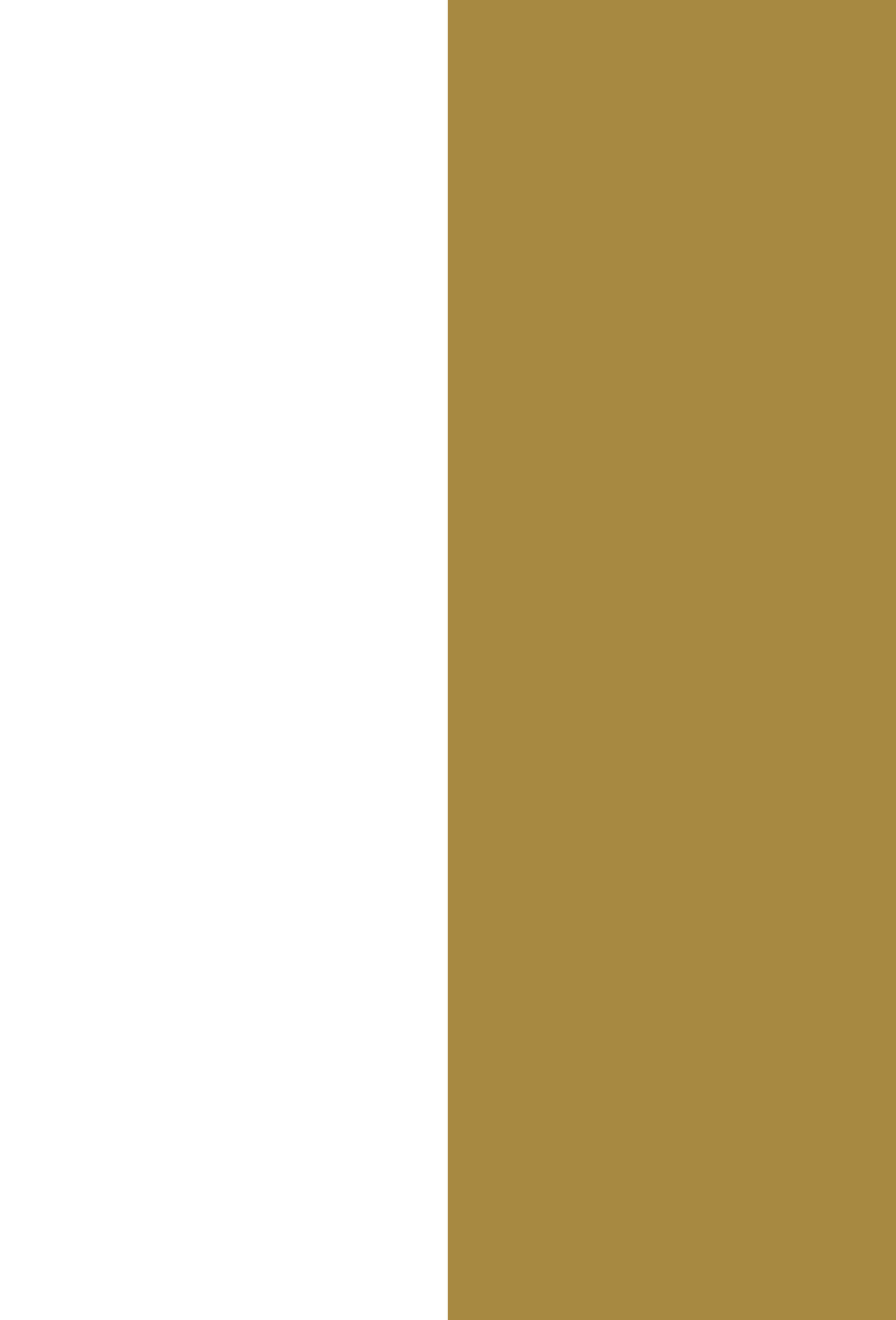
Despite the concerning trends of Islamophobia during the covered period, it is encouraging to note that efforts have been made in various parts of the world to promote harmony, tolerance, and counter anti-Islamic sentiments and activities. These initiatives, undertaken by governments, civil society organizations, and community leaders, can be considered positive signs in the ongoing battle against Islamophobia and the incitement of hatred and violence towards Islam and Muslims. In addition, there have been significant measures implemented to ensure better protection for Muslim communities and other minority groups. Within the Muslim world itself, some countries have taken a more proactive stance, engaging in global efforts to address Islamophobia and raise awareness about the harmful consequences of discrimination and intolerance based on religious beliefs. These developments, though quite modest in the Observatory’s opinion, represent important steps towards fostering a more inclusive and respectful society that celebrates diversity and upholds the fundamental rights and dignities of all individuals, regardless of their faith or cultural background.



Another significant sign of progress in the fight against Islamophobia has been the widespread events held across the world commemorating March 15 as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia. These events were organized in response to UN Resolution 76/254, titled “International Day to Combat Islamophobia,” which was adopted during the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. The global observance of this day represents a collective acknowledgment of the need to address the pervasive issue of Islamophobia and a commitment to taking tangible steps towards fostering a more inclusive and tolerant society.

Moreover, the recent adoption of Resolution A/78/L.48 on Measures to Combat Islamophobia by the UN General Assembly in March 2024 further solidifies the international community’s determination to tackle intolerance, discrimination, stereotyping, and incitement of violence against individuals based on their religion or beliefs. These resolutions mark a significant breakthrough in the field of combating religious intolerance, building upon the foundation laid by UN Resolution 16/18 over a decade ago. The global recognition and concerted efforts demonstrated through these initiatives signify a positive shift towards promoting religious freedom, understanding, and respect for diversity on a global scale.

**HOT SPOTS OF
ISLAMOPHOBIA
AND ISSUE THAT
NEED PARTICULAR
ATTENTION**

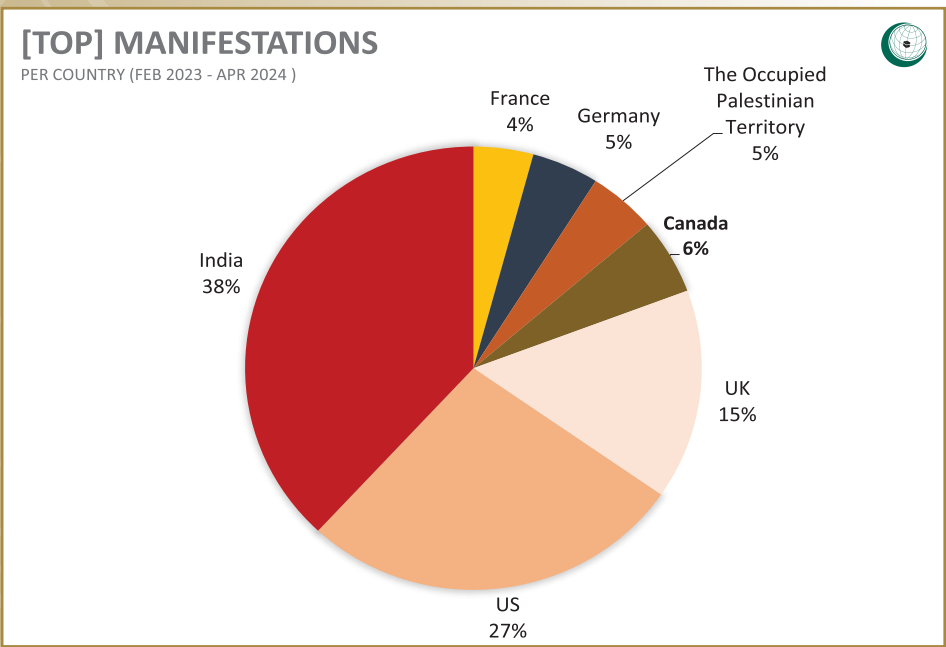


HOT SPOTS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA AND ISSUE THAT NEED PARTICULAR ATTENTION

HOT SPOTS

Through Resolutions No. 32/49-POL on Combating Islamophobia and Eliminating Hatred and Prejudice against Islam, the OIC Member States *“Further requests the OIC’s Islamophobia Observatory to prepare a list of “countries of concern” where Islamophobic policies and actions are prevalent, endangering in particular safety of religious sites”* (OP-40).

Accordingly, the Observatory has been working cautiously to review the countries showing the most prevalent indicators of Islamophobia during the past 15-months period, thereafter being referred as ‘hotspots’, namely: India, United States, United Kingdom, Canada, The Occupied Palestinian Territory, Germany, and France.



The term “hot spots” refers to areas or regions that are experiencing heightened levels of activity, tension, or conflict compared to their surroundings. These hot spots can arise in various contexts, such as

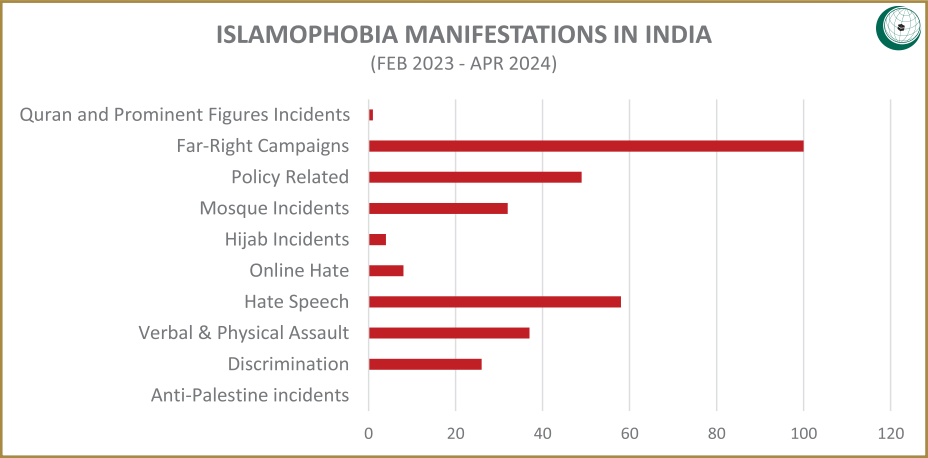
geopolitics, economics, social issues, or environmental concerns. They often represent focal points where complex factors intersect, leading to intense situations that demand close attention and potentially prompt action. Hot spots can be geographical locations, like regions embroiled in armed conflicts or territories facing severe environmental degradation. They can also be conceptual or thematic, such as industries facing disruption, emerging technological trends, or social movements gaining momentum. Identifying and understanding hot spots is crucial for OIC Member States and decision-makers, as these areas have the potential to significantly impact global dynamics, shape policies, and influence the course of events. By closely monitoring and analyzing hot spots, stakeholders could better anticipate challenges, mitigate risks, and seize opportunities that may arise from these high-intensity situations.

Islamophobia, the fear, hatred or prejudice towards Islam and Muslims, has become a disturbing phenomenon in many parts of the world and at varying degrees across different regions, but at these ‘hot spots’ Islamophobic attitudes and incidents are particularly pronounced:

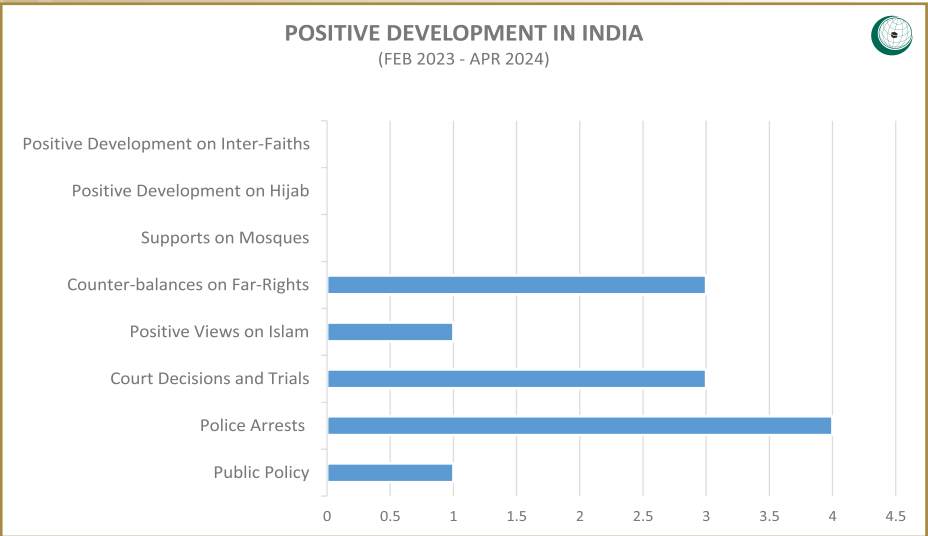
India

One area that has gained alarm for Islamophobia is India. At least since the past 5 years, there has been a concerning rise in anti-Muslim rhetoric, policies and violent attacks against the minority Muslim population in India, fueled by a potent mix of Hindu nationalism, majoritarian politics and deep-rooted societal biases. This tense environment has made India an epicenter of Islamophobic tensions that demands urgent attention and action from civil society, government and the international community.

India has witnessed a troubling surge in Islamophobic rhetoric, policies, and violence targeting its Muslim minority population. This alarming trend has cast a dark shadow over the country’s commitment to pluralism and raised serious questions about the safety and rights of around 200 hundred millions of Indian Muslims, particularly at the times when the country is expecting an election.



At the heart of this issue lies the rise of Hindu nationalism, fueled by the ideology of Hindutva – a belief system that envisions India as a Hindu nation. Proponents of this ideology have increasingly sought to marginalize and disenfranchise the Muslim community, portraying them as a threat to India’s cultural and religious identity. This narrative has been amplified by certain political leaders and parties, who have employed divisive rhetoric and policies to consolidate their support base among Hindu voters.



The consequences of this anti-Muslim sentiment have been far-reaching and devastating. Hate speech and inflammatory statements targeting Muslims have become increasingly commonplace, with little to no accountability for the perpetrators. Instances of mob violence, lynchings, and attacks on Muslim-owned businesses and places of worship have surged, creating an atmosphere of fear and insecurity within the community. Moreover, the Indian government has implemented policies that many critics argue

are discriminatory and aimed at undermining the rights of Muslims. The controversial Citizenship (Amendment) Act of 2019, which facilitated citizenship for non-Muslim immigrants from neighboring countries, sparked widespread protests and concerns about the marginalization of Indian Muslims. The recent decision to ban hijabs in educational institutions in certain states has further exacerbated tensions and raised questions about the infringement of religious freedoms.

One of the most egregious incidents was the demolition of the historic Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in 1992, which was then replaced with a Hindu temple on the site quite in January 2024. This event not only inflicted deep wounds on the Muslim community but also set a dangerous precedent for the potential conversion of other mosques into Hindu temples. Alarming, there have been reports of plans to convert as many as 40,000 mosques across India into Hindu temples, further fueling tensions and undermining the principles of religious freedom and harmony.

The judicial system in India has also been criticized for its perceived bias against Muslims, with allegations that the courts often fail to provide adequate protection or justice for the community. This perception has been exacerbated by the controversial concept of “love jihad,” which has been twisted into the notion of “vote jihad” – a baseless accusation that Muslim men engage in romantic relationships with the ulterior motive of converting their partners and gaining political advantage. These narratives have been weaponized by certain groups, such as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) to stoke fear and marginalize Muslim communities.

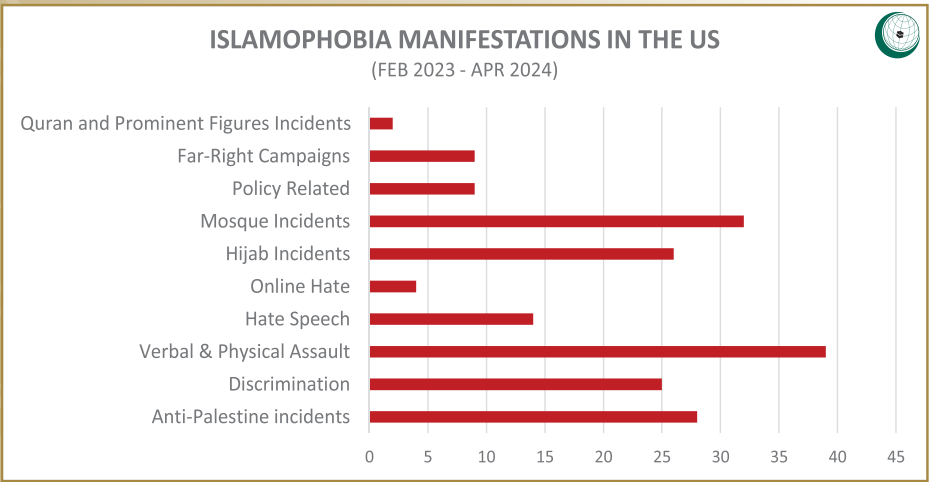
Additionally, the issue of cow slaughter has been a long-standing point of contention, with the RSS and its affiliates actively promoting an anti-cow slaughter agenda. This has led to numerous instances of violence and harassment against Muslims involved in the cattle trade or the consumption of beef. The situation has been further exacerbated by the failure of law enforcement agencies to effectively address these incidents, creating an environment of fear and insecurity for the Muslim population. It is crucial that the Indian government takes decisive action to address these alarming trends, safeguard the rights of all citizens, and promote an inclusive and tolerant society that upholds the principles of religious freedom and equality.

The OIC has been very much concerned by the situation related to Islamophobia in India. A number of International human rights organizations and advocacy groups have also sounded the alarm over the deteriorating situation for Muslims in India. News and reports of increasing discrimination, hate crimes, and the portrayal of Muslims as “anti-national” elements have raised concerns about the erosion of India’s secular principles and the potential for further polarization and conflict.

The General Secretariat is of the opinion that the rising tide of Islamophobia in India should be given a serious attention by all OIC Member Countries.

The United States

The pervasive nature of Islamophobia in the United States is deeply troubling, as it pervades various aspects of society, from politics and media to education and the workplace. At the political level, inflammatory rhetoric vilifying Muslims has become increasingly commonplace, with some politicians and public figures propagating the harmful narrative that Muslims are inherently un-American or a threat to national security. Such divisive rhetoric not only perpetuates negative stereotypes but also emboldens those harboring bigoted views, contributing to a climate of fear and mistrust.



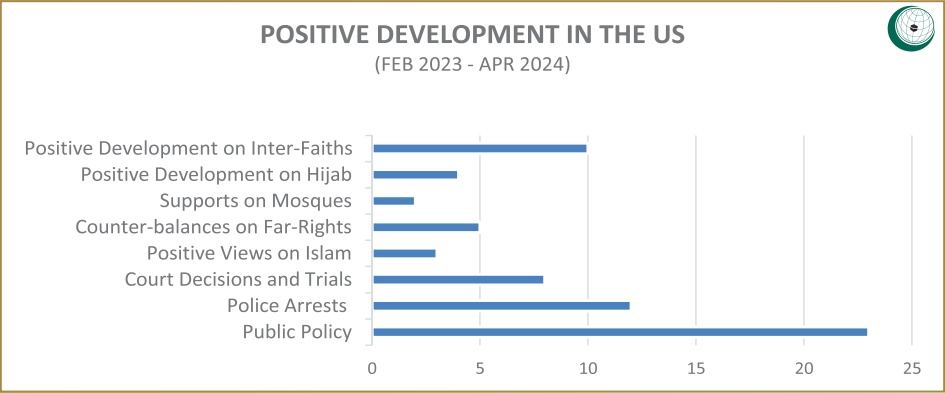
The media’s portrayal of Islam and Muslims has also played a significant role in fueling Islamophobia. Sensationalized and often one-sided coverage of terrorist incidents involving Muslim perpetrators has led to the conflation

of Islam with violence and extremism. This skewed representation fails to capture the diversity and nuances within the Muslim community, reinforcing negative stereotypes and promoting a monolithic view of a faith embraced by over a billion people worldwide.

In America's educational settings, Muslim students have faced discrimination, bullying, and marginalization due to their religious identity. Reports of Muslim girls being targeted for wearing hijabs, Muslim students facing harassment and verbal abuse, and instances of curriculum materials perpetuating harmful stereotypes about Islam have been documented across various educational institutions. This not only creates an unwelcoming and hostile learning environment but also perpetuates a cycle of ignorance and intolerance that can have long-lasting impacts on young minds.

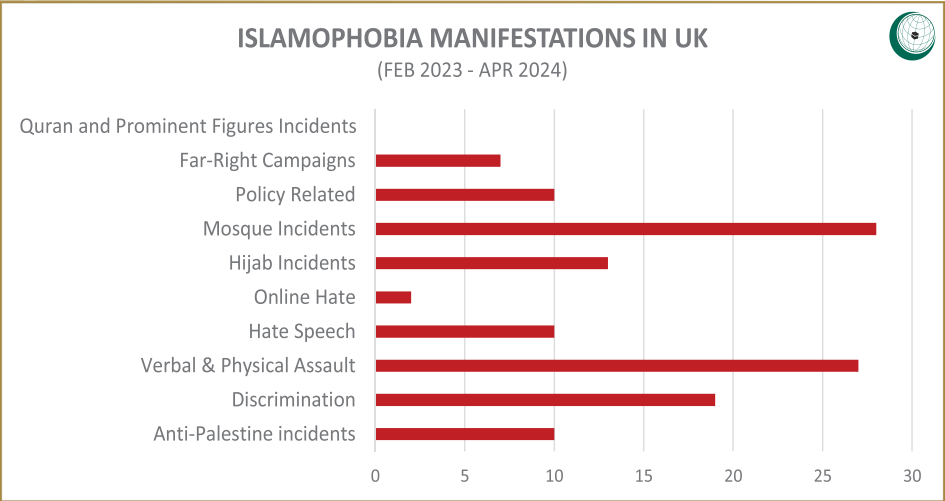
The workplace in America has also been a battleground for Islamophobia, with Muslim employees facing discrimination in hiring, promotion, and workplace treatment. Studies have shown that individuals with Muslim-sounding names are less likely to receive job callbacks, while Muslim women who wear hijabs often face greater obstacles in securing employment and advancing their careers. This form of discrimination not only violates principles of equal opportunity but also deprives organizations of the valuable talents and perspectives that a diverse workforce can bring.

One of the most concerning manifestations of Islamophobia in America is the rise in hate crimes and incidents targeting Muslims. From vandalism and arson attacks on mosques to verbal and physical assaults against individuals, the level of violence and harassment directed at Muslim communities has remained alarmingly high during the observed period. These acts not only violate the fundamental rights of individuals but also create an atmosphere of fear and insecurity, eroding the sense of belonging and safety that all Americans should enjoy.



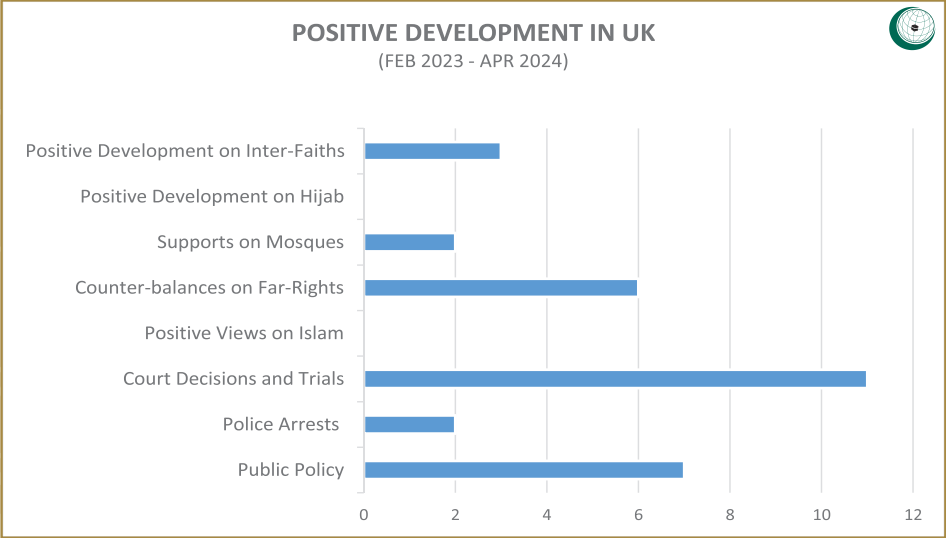
The United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has actually grappled with the insidious challenge of Islamophobia since the past few years. This form of prejudice and discrimination against Muslims has manifested itself in various spheres of British society, undermining the principles of equality and social cohesion that the country prides itself on.



One of the most concerning aspects of Islamophobia in the UK is the rise in hate crimes and incidents targeting Muslims, as the Observatory detected an alarming trend of verbal and physical assaults, vandalism, and harassment directed at Muslim individuals and institutions. These acts, often fueled by xenophobic and bigoted ideologies, not only violate the fundamental rights of British Muslims but also create an atmosphere of fear and insecurity within their communities.

The political discourse surrounding Islam and Muslims in the UK has also been a source of concern. Certain politicians and public figures have been accused of perpetuating negative stereotypes and stoking fears about the perceived “Islamization” of British society. Such rhetoric, often amplified by sensationalist media coverage, has the potential to normalize and legitimize anti-Muslim sentiment, contributing to a climate of intolerance and marginalization.



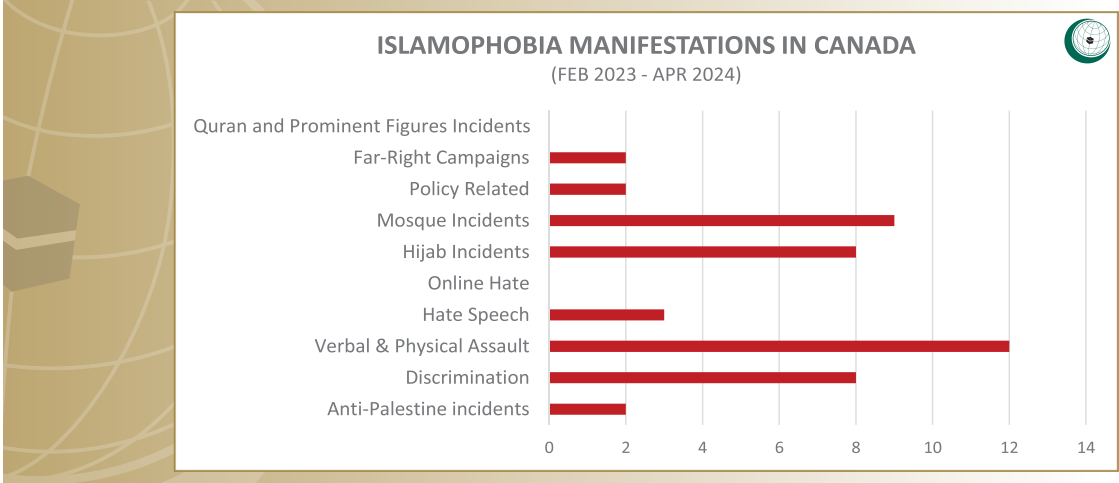
Like in America, in the realm of employment and workplace opportunities, British Muslims have also faced significant challenges. The empirics revealed that individuals with Muslim-sounding names are less likely to receive job callbacks, and Muslim women who wear hijabs often encounter greater obstacles in securing employment and advancing their careers.

Educational settings have also been battlegrounds for Islamophobia in the UK. Cases of Muslim students facing bullying, harassment, and discrimination due to their religious identity have been documented by the Observatory and being presented along this report. This not only creates an unwelcoming and hostile learning environment but also perpetuates a cycle of ignorance and intolerance that can have long-lasting impacts on Muslim population. The Observatory analyzes that Islamophobia in the UK is not just a problem for British Muslims; it is a threat to the very fabric of British society and the values of equality, diversity, and respect that the nation prides itself on. Failure to address this issue not only undermines the rights and well-being of a significant segment of the population but also erodes the social cohesion and trust that are essential for a vibrant and harmonious democracy.

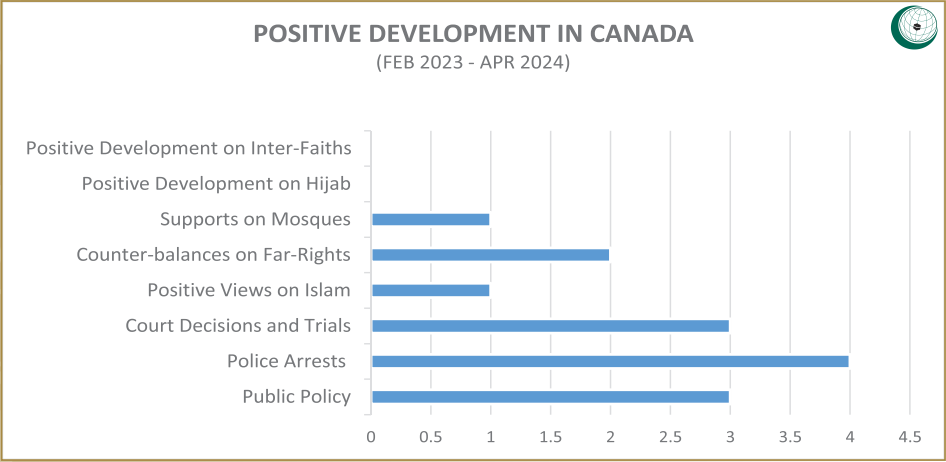
Canada

While Canada is often lauded for its commitment to multiculturalism and diversity, the reality is that Islamophobia – the fear, hatred, or prejudice towards Islam and Muslims – remains a concerning issue within the country. This form of discrimination not only undermines the rights and well-being of Canadian Muslims but also threatens the very values of inclusivity and tolerance that are fundamental to Canadian society.

One of the most visible manifestations of Islamophobia in Canada is the rise in hate crimes and incidents targeting Muslims. The Observatory has documented a troubling trend of verbal and physical assaults, vandalism, and harassment directed at Muslim individuals and institutions across the country. These acts, fueled by xenophobic and bigoted ideologies, create an atmosphere of fear and insecurity within Muslim communities, eroding their sense of belonging and safety.

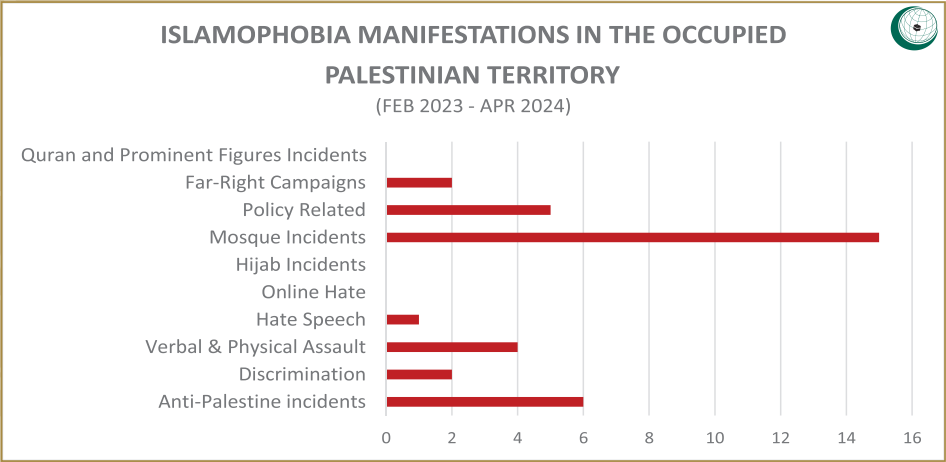


The political discourse surrounding Islam and Muslims in Canada has also been a source of concern. While the country has generally maintained a more moderate tone compared to some other Western nations, there have been instances of politicians and public figures perpetuating harmful stereotypes or stoking fears about the perceived “threat” of Islam. Such rhetoric, even if not overtly discriminatory, has apparently given much contribution to a climate of intolerance and marginalization in the country.



The Occupied Palestinian Territory

The occupied Palestinian territories, which have long been embroiled in a complex and protracted conflict, have also witnessed manifestations of Islamophobia, adding another layer of complexity to the already volatile situation. In this context, Islamophobia often intertwines with broader political and ideological tensions, fueling hatred and mistrust between communities.



One of the most apparent forms of Islamophobia in the Occupied Palestinian territories is the discrimination and marginalization faced by Muslims, particularly in areas under Israeli control. The Observatory detected numerous case of restrictions on religious freedoms, such as limitations on access to holy sites, as well as instances of desecration or vandalism of mosques and Islamic institutions. These actions not only

violate the fundamental rights of Palestinian Muslims but also contribute to a climate of fear and insecurity within their communities.

Moreover, the discourse surrounding Islam and Muslims in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has, at times, been marred by negative stereotypes and vilification. In addition to the occupying Israeli Government, certain groups and individuals have propagated the notion that Islam itself is inherently violent or incompatible with peace, using this narrative to justify policies or actions that disproportionately affect Palestinian Muslims. Such rhetoric not only perpetuates harmful stereotypes but also exacerbates existing tensions and hinders efforts towards peaceful resolution.

On daily life, Palestinian Muslims faced discrimination and marginalization in various spheres, including employment, education, and access to essential services. This form of systematic discrimination not only violates principles of equality and human rights but also perpetuates a cycle of poverty and disadvantage, further compounding the challenges faced by Palestinian communities.

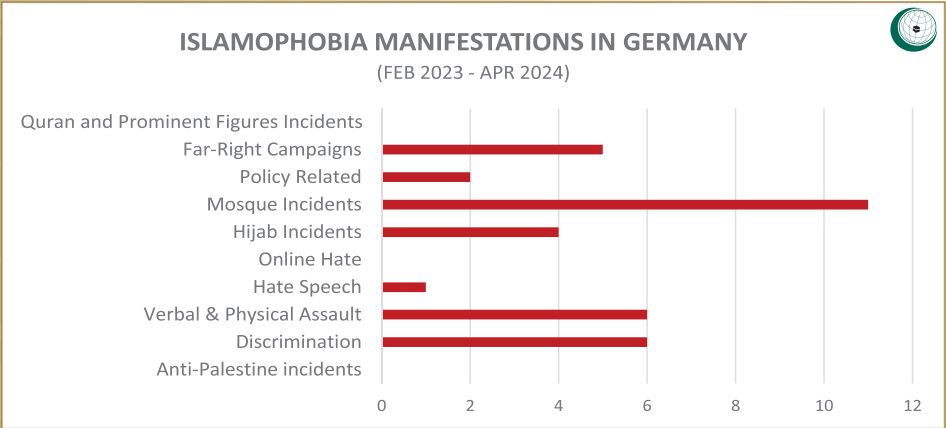
The Observatory is of the opinion that overcoming Islamophobia in the Occupied-Palestinian territories is not only a moral imperative but also a crucial step towards achieving lasting peace and stability in the region. It is essential that all stakeholders, including political leaders, civil society organizations, and international actors, work together to combat hate speech, discrimination, and violence, while fostering an environment of dialogue, reconciliation, and respect for diversity.

Germany

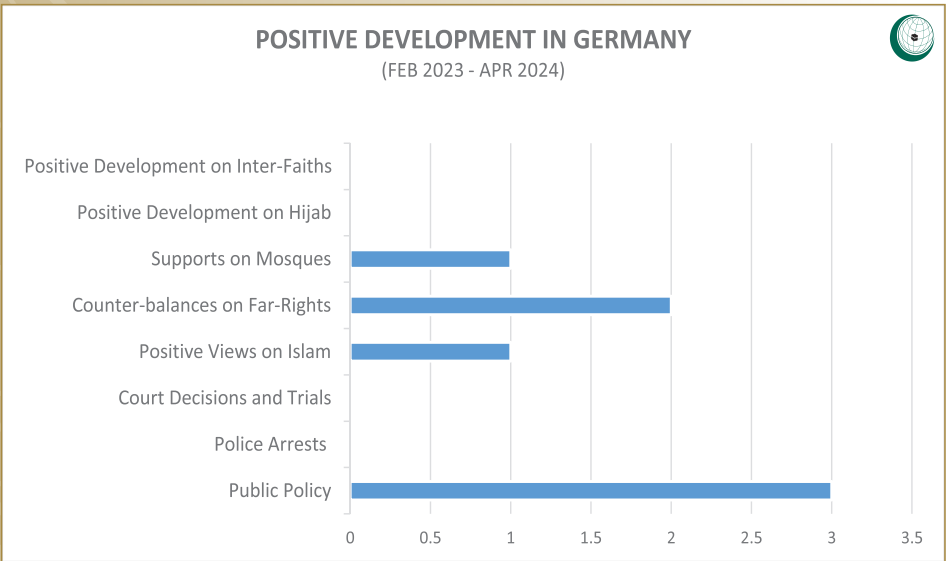
Despite its reputation as a progressive and tolerant nation, Germany has grappled also with the concerning issue of Islamophobia during the past few years. This form of prejudice and discrimination against Muslims has manifested itself in various spheres of German society, posing a threat to the country's values of equality and social cohesion.

One of the most visible manifestations of Islamophobia in Germany has been the rise in hate crimes and incidents targeting Muslims. The Observatory has

documented a troubling trend of verbal and physical assaults, vandalism, and harassment directed at Muslim individuals, institutions, and places of worship. These acts, often fueled by xenophobic and far-right ideologies, create an atmosphere of fear and insecurity within Muslim communities, eroding their sense of belonging and safety.

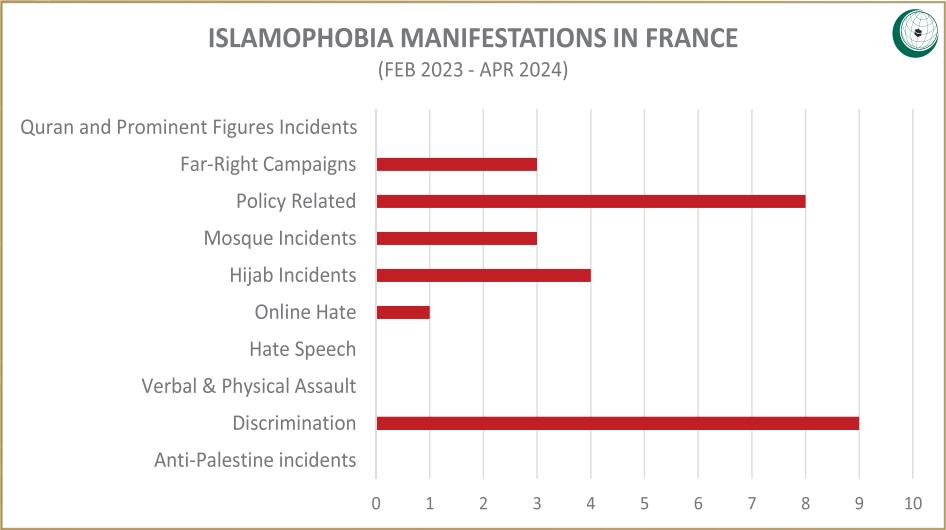


The political discourse surrounding Islam and Muslims in Germany has also been a source of concern. While the country has generally maintained a more moderate tone compared to some other European nations, there have been instances of politicians and public figures perpetuating harmful stereotypes or stoking fears about the perceived “Islamization” of German society. Such rhetoric, even if not overtly discriminatory, can contribute to a climate of intolerance and marginalization.

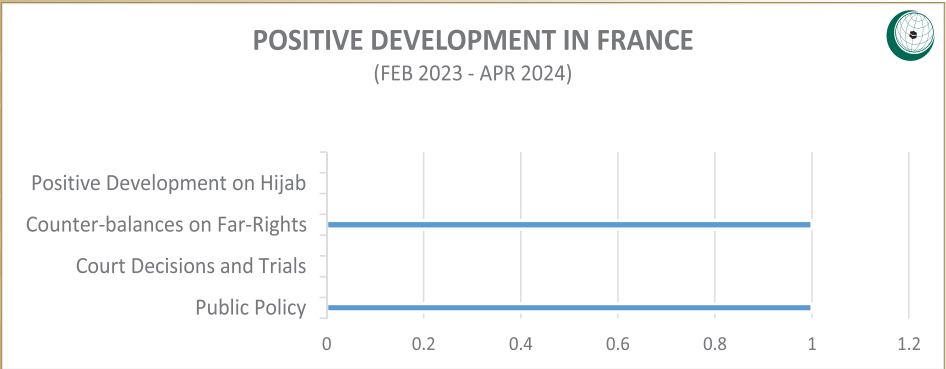


France

France, a nation that prides itself on its secular values and commitment to equality, has also grappled with the complex issue of Islamophobia, as prejudice and discrimination against Muslims has manifested itself in various spheres of French society, sparking debates about the balance between secularism and religious freedom.



One of the most visible manifestations of Islamophobia in France has been the recurring controversies surrounding Islamic dress codes, particularly the wearing of headscarves and face coverings. The country’s strict laws on secularism in public spaces, coupled with a vocal segment of the population that views such attire as a challenge to France’s secular identity, have led to instances of discrimination and marginalization against Muslim women who choose to wear religious garments.

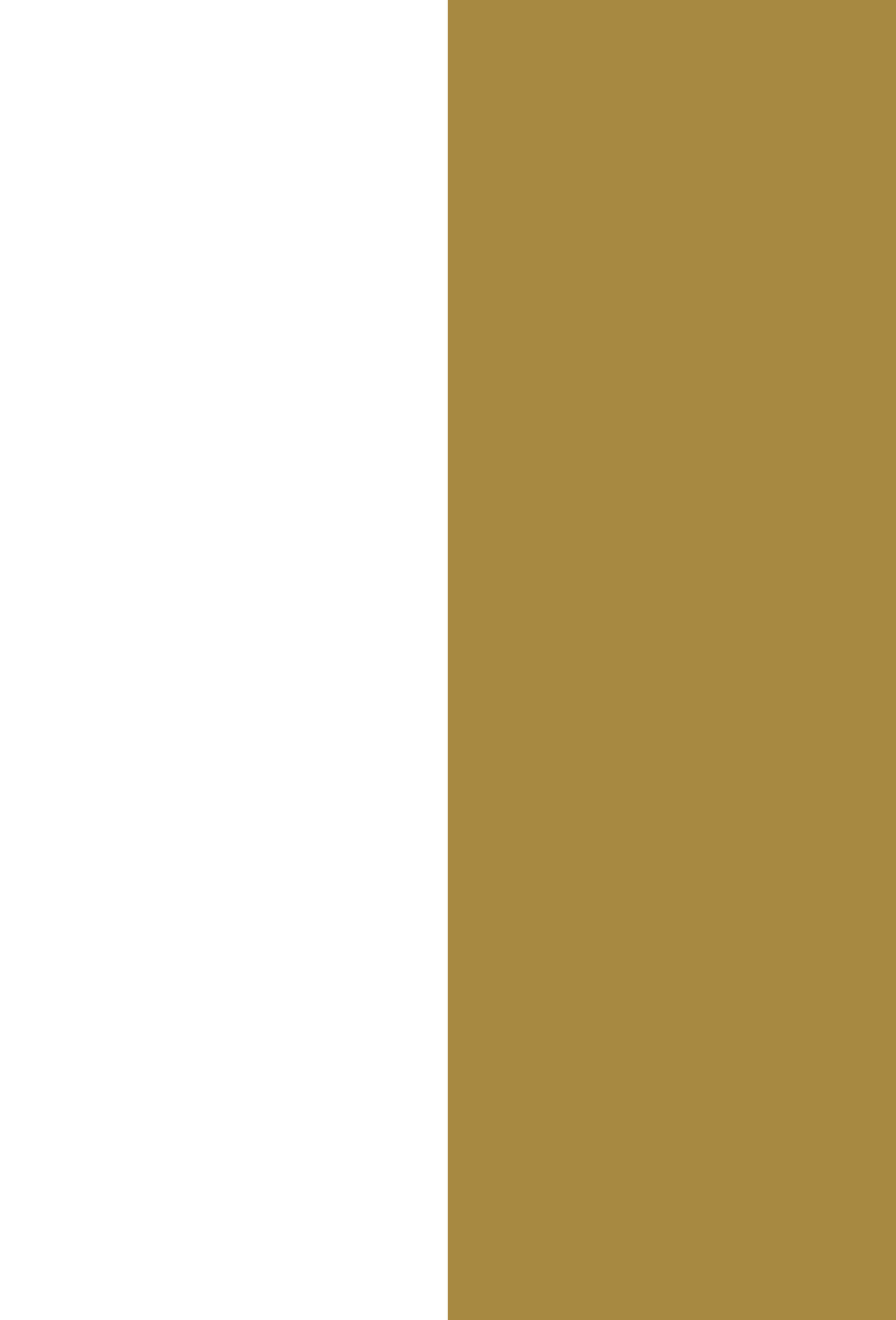


Beyond the issue of dress codes, French Muslims have also faced broader forms of discrimination and intolerance. The Observatory have documented

a concerning trend of hate crimes, verbal and physical assaults, and vandalism targeting Muslim individuals, institutions, and places of worship. These acts, often fueled by far-right ideologies and xenophobic sentiments, create an atmosphere of fear and insecurity within Muslim communities, eroding their sense of belonging and safety.

The political discourse surrounding Islam and Muslims in France has also been contentious. While the country has long championed its secular values, certain politicians and public figures including those in the government, keep perpetuating negative stereotypes or stoking fears about the perceived threat of “Islamization” to French secular society.

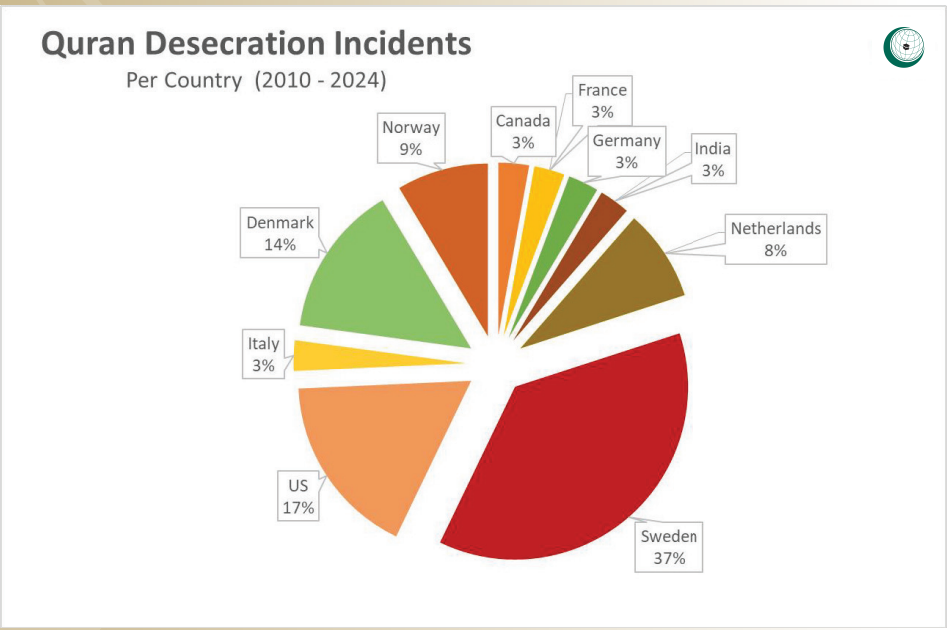
ISSUE NEEDS PARTICULAR ATTENTION



ISSUE NEEDS PARTICULAR ATTENTION

Since the first half of 2022, the world had witnessed a disturbing trend of public burnings of copies of the Holy Qur'an, Islam's sacred scripture. These provocative acts, primarily carried out in Nordic countries like Sweden, Denmark, and the Netherlands, were often perpetrated by individuals seemingly permitted and even protected by authorities.

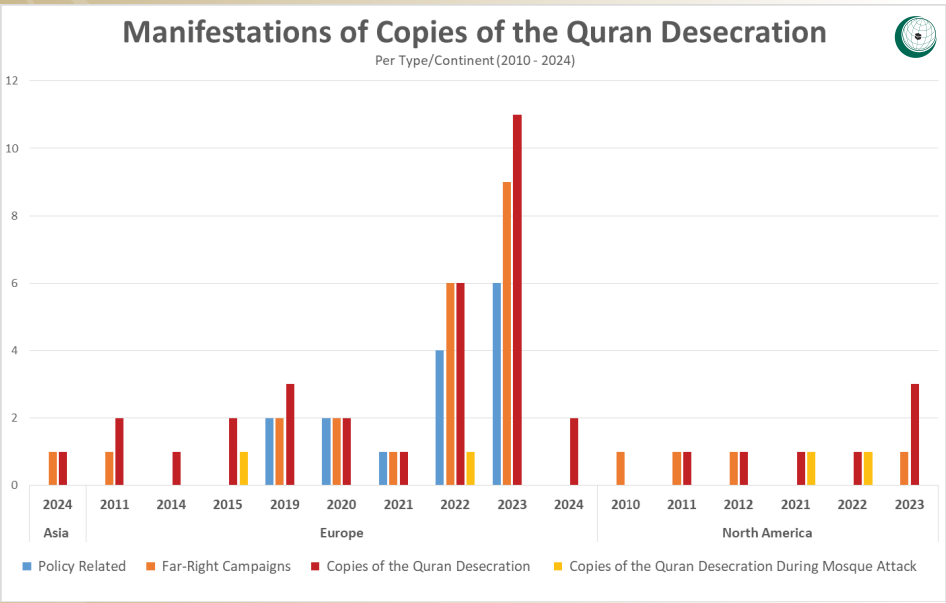
While such sacrilegious actions are not entirely new, having occurred sporadically over the past two decades, they have recently become far more frequent and intense. There appears to be a concerted effort by certain groups to use the Islamic holy Book burning as a means to advance political agendas.



One of the early incidents involving provocation against Islam occurred in July 2010, when Terry Jones, a pastor in Gainesville, Florida, announced plans to burn 200 copies of the Qur'an on the anniversary of 9/11. This gained widespread media attention and outrage across the Islamic world. Jones' threat led to protests in the Middle East and Asia that resulted in at least 20 deaths. In September 2010, Jones canceled the event and vowed never to burn a Qur'an again. However, a few months later in March 2011,

Jones oversaw the burning of a Qur'an at a small Florida church, which again sparked violent reactions including an attack on a UN compound in Afghanistan that left several dead. A year after that in April 2012, Jones personally burned a Qur'an and broadcast it online in protest over the arrest of an Iranian Christian cleric.

Around the same time period, similar acts of desecrating the Qur'an occurred in the United Kingdom, but the British authorities responded appropriately. For example, in April 2011, police arrested Sion Owens, a far-right British National Party candidate, after he burned a copy of the Qur'an in his garden and posted a video showing him pouring kerosene on the holy book and setting it on fire. Also in April 2011, a former British soldier named Andrew Ryan was sentenced to 70 days in prison for burning a Qur'an he had stolen from a library, admitting to religiously motivated harassment. A few years later in December 2014, British police again arrested a man who tore up a translated English copy of the Qur'an, placed it in a toilet, and then burned it, though he was later released on bail.



The situation remained relatively calm until December 2015, when a Danish man burned a copy of the Qur'an in his backyard and posted a video of it online. The Danish authorities charged him with blasphemy for burning copy of the Holy Qur'an, which was punishable under Danish law with a maximum of 4 months in prison. However, the public prosecutor

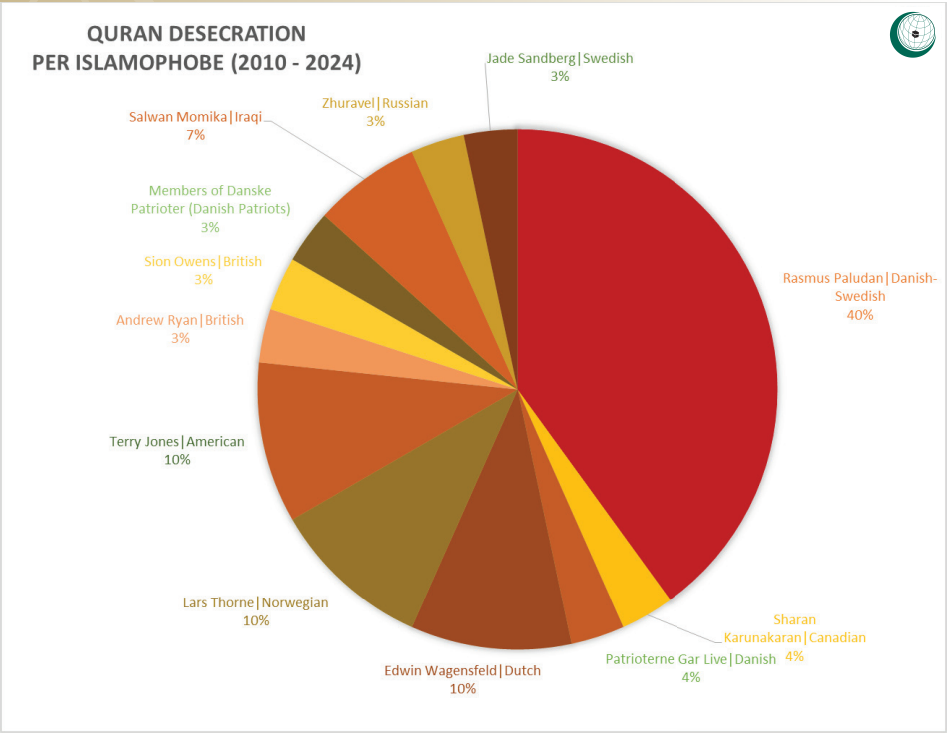
stated that if convicted, the man would likely only face a fine. Also in that same month, a group of demonstrators in Ajaccio, on the French island of Corsica, attacked a Muslim prayer hall. They vandalized the prayer space and burned copies of the Holy Qur'an.

Since 2019, provocative acts of desecrating the Qur'an intensified, often carried out to promote far-right agendas. In March 2019, the notorious Rasmus Paludan burned copies of the Qur'an in front of the Danish Parliament while Muslims there protested the New Zealand mosque attacks. Two months later in June 2019, about 50 torn Qur'ans were found inside a mosque in Bremen, Germany.

In November 2019, the anti-Islamic 'Stop the Islamization of Norway' (SIAN) group threw and burned Qur'an copies during a protest in Norway, prompting attacks against them. In August 2020, Paludan's party burned a copy of Holy Qur'an in Malmo, Sweden leading to violent clashes with police. That same month, a Norwegian anti-Islam group tore and spat on Qur'an pages during a rally in Oslo.

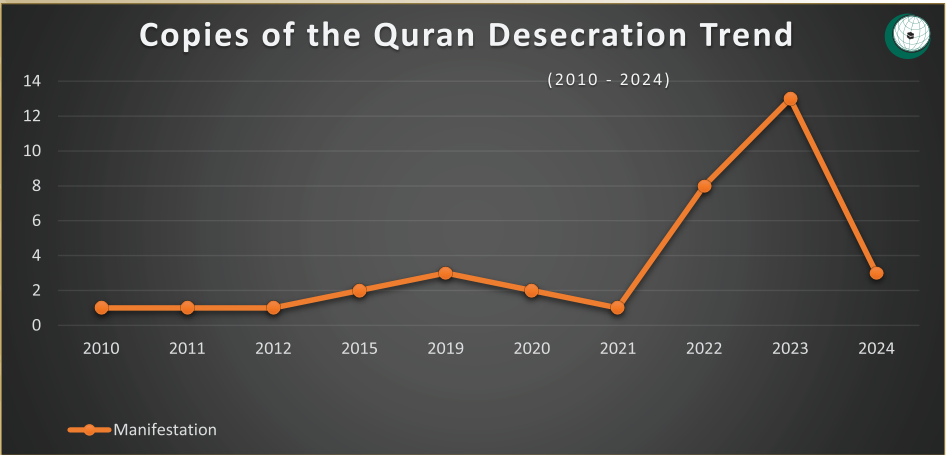
In September 2021, Paludan provocatively threw a Qur'an on the ground near a mosque in Stockholm amid heavy security before being evacuated. In December 2021, a man was arrested at Arizona State University for significantly damaging property, including tearing and burning Qur'ans in the library's interfaith room.

On February 22, 2022, Paludan got permission for a rally in Gothenburg, Sweden where his group planned to burn a Qur'an and display a caricature of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). On April 14, 2022, Paludan burned a Qur'an in a Muslim area of Linköping, Sweden under police protection, leading to clashes injuring 40 people and damaging 20 police cars. On April 30, he announced burning another Qur'an outside a mosque in Jonköping despite being denied a permit. Paludan continued burning Qur'ans in front of Swedish mosques in May 2022 without permits, fleeing after counter-protests tried to stop him.



In July 2022, Lars Thorne, leader of the anti-Islamic SIAN group, burned copies of Qur’an in a Muslim neighborhood of Oslo, Norway, angering residents who tried to extinguish the fire amid protests. In October 2022, Dutch police dispersed a planned Qur’an burning rally by the Islamophobic Pegida group in Rotterdam, arresting a leader.

In December 2022, a mosque in Stockholm, Sweden was targeted, with a Holy Qu’ran destroyed and hung by chains at the entrance. In January 2023, Dutch Pegida leader Edwin Wagensfeld tore up and burned a copy of Holy Qur’an in front of parliament in The Hague under police protection, sharing video of his provocative act.



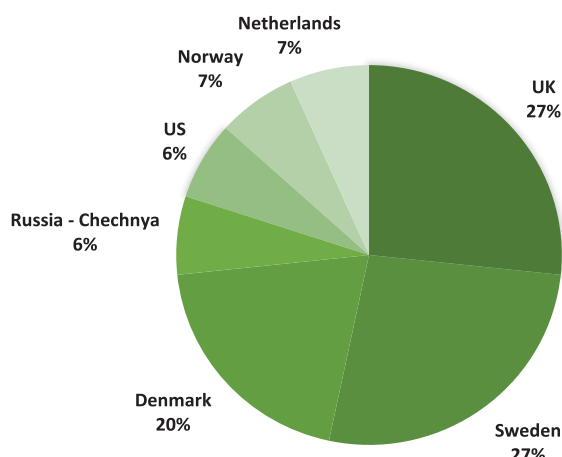
On January 21, 2023, Rasmus Paludan again burned copy of Holy Qur'an near the Turkish embassy in Stockholm with police protection. A week later on January 27, he repeated this in front of a Copenhagen mosque after Friday prayers, waving insulting material about Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). In February 2023, Norway cancelled permission for a Qur'an burning after Turkey warned of diplomatic sanctions. That month, Stockholm police also denied permits for planned Qur'an burnings at the Turkish embassy, while three desecrated copies of Holy Qur'ans were found in different Swedish locations. On March 24, 2023, the Danish far-right group 'Patrioterne Gar Live' burned copies of Holy Qur'ans and a Turkish flag outside the Turkish embassy in Copenhagen.

Some Western countries took action to curb such provocations, by implementing various measures to address the growing issue of desecrating copies of the Holy Qur'an. A significant portion of these efforts involve police arrests made in response to desecration incidents, suggesting that law enforcement action has played a crucial role in tackling this problem. Additionally, public policy initiatives have been implemented, indicating the involvement of policymakers in addressing these incidents. Court decisions and trials have also been part of the measures taken, reflecting the judicial system's involvement. Interestingly, preventive measures have been put in place, such as denying permits for desecration events. Furthermore, efforts have been made to counter far-right groups, highlighting the importance of addressing the root causes and ideologies that contribute to such incidents.

For instance, in March 2023 the UK barred entry to Paludan who planned to burn copy of Holy Qur'an in Yorkshire during Ramadan. In April, a Canadian man was arrested for hate crimes after tearing up a copy of Holy Qur'an at a mosque in Ontario. In May 2023, Sweden issued an arrest warrant for Paludan on suspicion of multiple crimes like inciting hatred. On June 28, an Iraqi immigrant in Sweden named Salwan Momika burned a copy of Holy Qur'an pages outside Stockholm's main mosque under police permit, facing investigation for agitation against an ethnic group.

POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT RELATED TO QURAN DESECRATION INCIDENTS

PER COUNTRY (2010 - 2024)

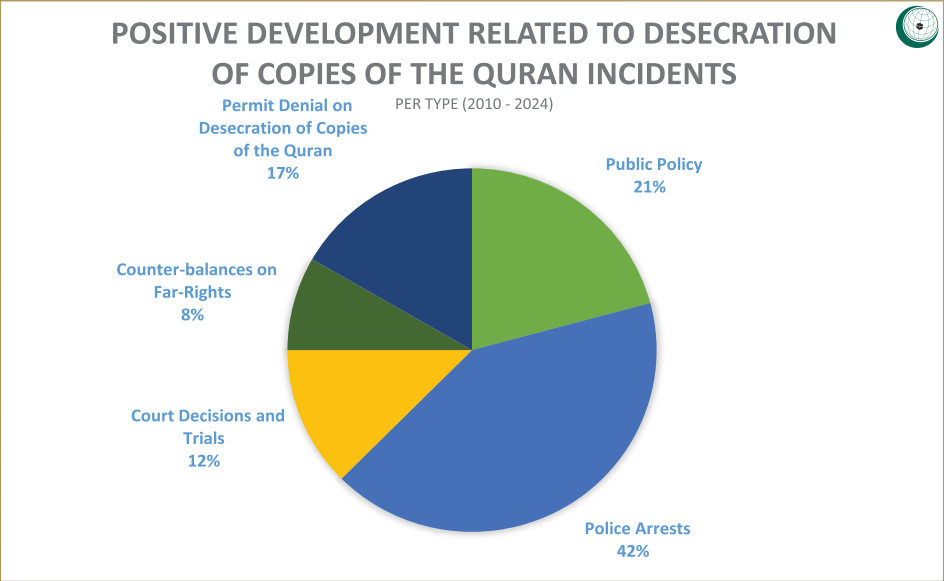


The chronicle makes it clear that incidents desecrating copies of the Qur'an were becoming increasingly frequent and routine occurrences, happening regularly in some European countries. Alarming, desecrating the sacred Islamic text was viewed as something 'normal'.

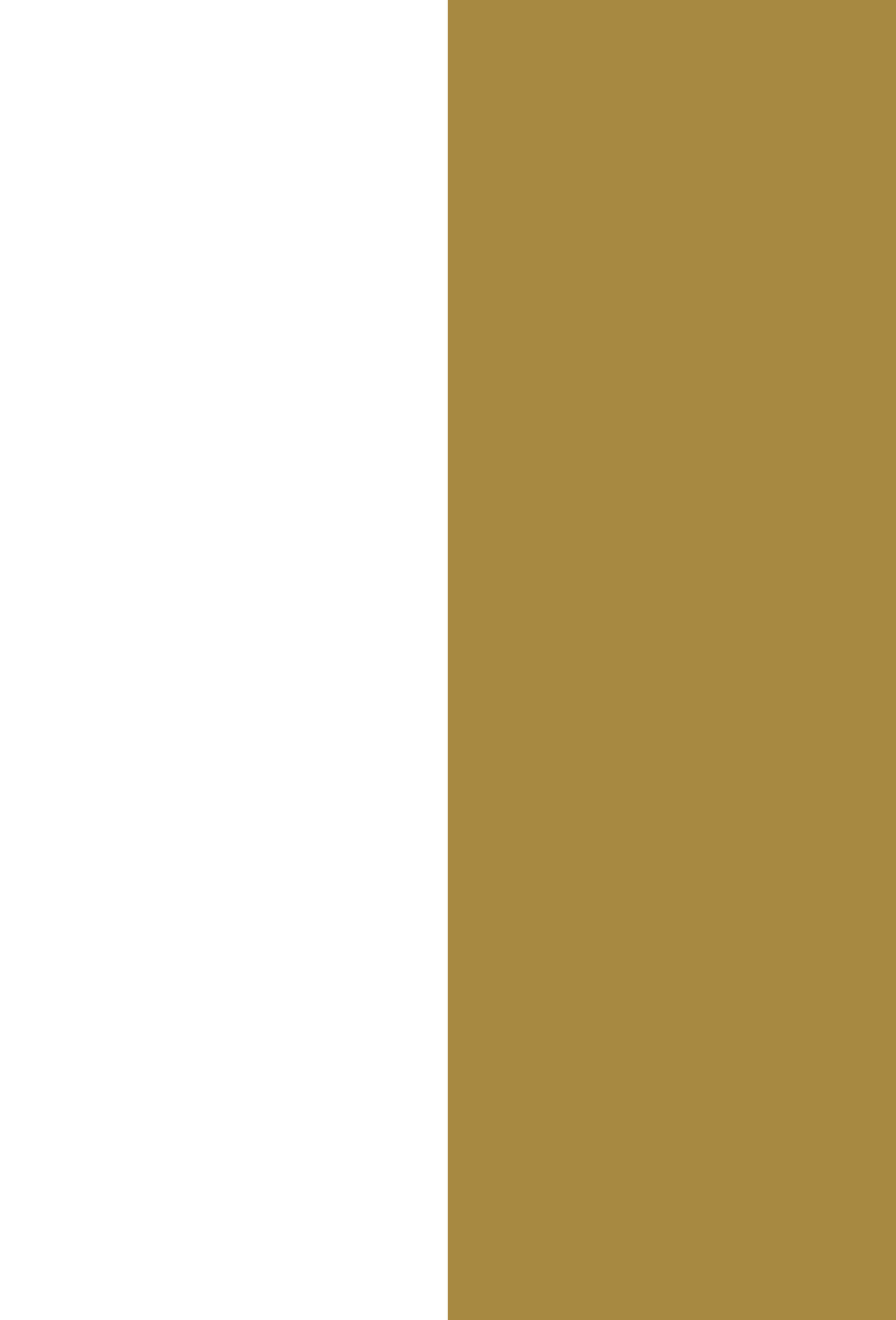
Compounding the issue is a troubling tendency towards normalization of these acts in some Western nations under the guise of freedom of expression. Whereas, freedom of expression does not, and must not extend to acts that intentionally incite hatred, violence, and disrespect toward the religious beliefs of others. What may have once been condemned as fringe, abhorrent behavior is metastasizing into an alarmingly frequent occurrence that threatens to further inflame religious and cultural tensions globally.

The Observatory identified some potential consequences when such actions continued:

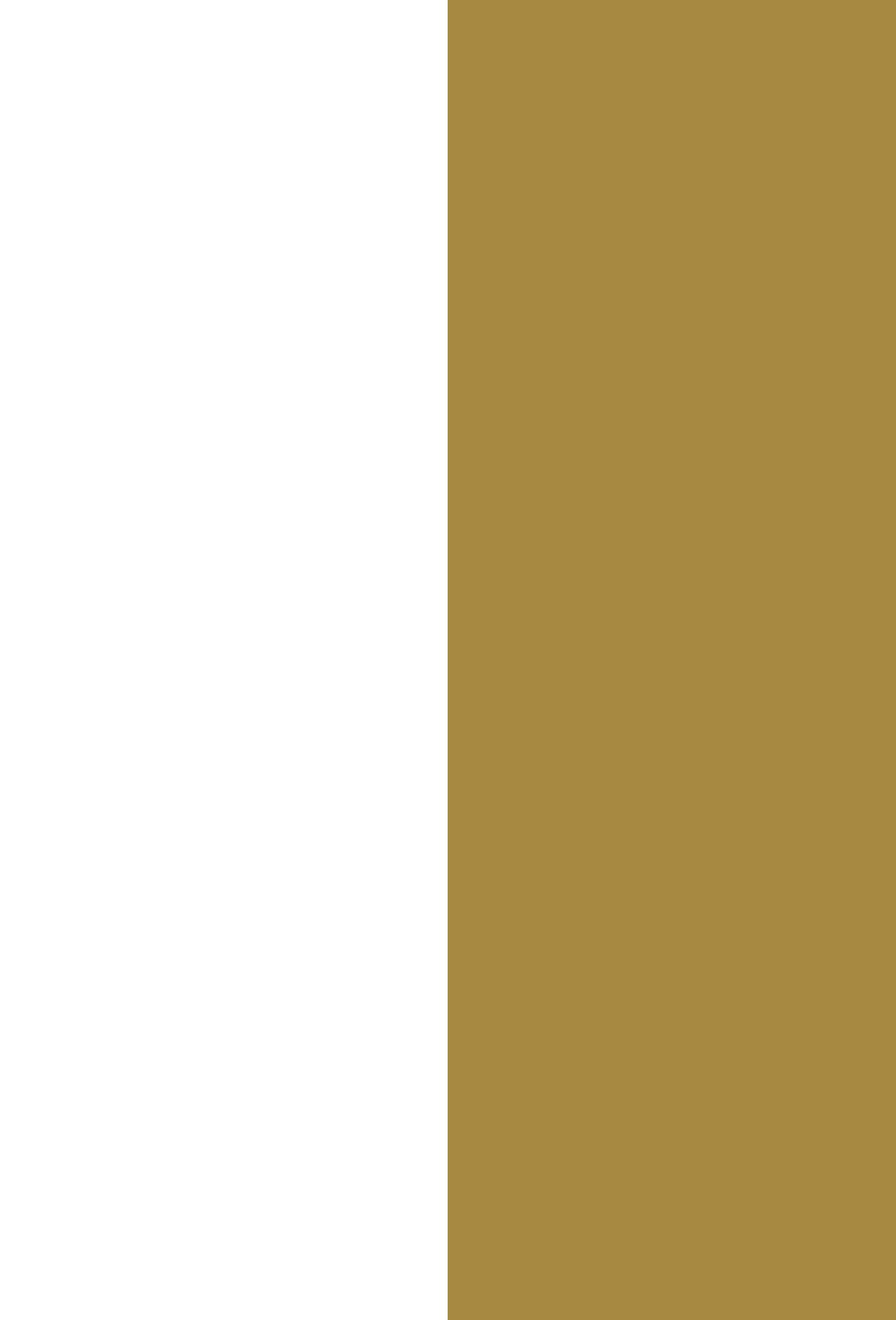
- Stoking anger and unrest among Muslim populations worldwide
- Lending legitimacy to extremist narratives and recruitment efforts
- Escalating cycles of provocation and retaliation between communities
- Undermining principles of religious tolerance and respect



It is truly expected that governments, religious leaders, and civil society unequivocally denounce such provocative acts that needlessly denigrate the sacred texts and beliefs of others. Concrete steps must be taken to de-escalate these cycles of provocation while upholding the rights and dignity of all religious communities. The Observatory urges all member states to take note of this concerning trend.



RECOMMENDATION



RECOMMENDATION

To find a comprehensive solution to Islamophobia, a multilayered approach involving collective work and active contributions from various stakeholders is necessary. The Observatory suggests the following layers that comprise an effective strategy:

Layer 1: Dialogue Front

- Increase the role of religious and community leaders to curb extremism through the promotion of ideals of tolerance, moderation, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence.
- Strengthen the existing mechanisms for interreligious and intra-faith dialogue to avoid misperceptions and promote better understanding and mutual respect within and among all religions.

Layer 2: Media Front

- Collaborate with the media to promote the understanding of responsible use of freedom of speech.
- Hold xenophobic media accountable for perpetuating hate speech and extremism through government policies.
- Utilize various communication channels to expand public debate and engagement.

Layer 3: Development and Security Front

- Expand the outreach of development programs to deprived Muslim immigrant communities, particularly in Western countries.
- Initiate multilateral and bilateral talks to review issues of discrimination in employment, opportunities, and social integration, to deter unemployed Muslim youth from falling prey to extremist ideologies.
- Incorporate development goals into de-radicalization and counterterrorism efforts, moving beyond a sole focus on anti-terrorism and military solutions.

Layer 4: Education and Society Fronts

- Integrate peace education by incorporating human rights and multicultural values into school curricula.
- Implement programs and mobilize resources to support community engagement for peace.
- Conduct continued research and policy dialogue to understand the modalities and strategies used to spread extremism, including the social and value-based drivers.
- Ensure that policies and programs in countries address social cohesion and plurality by highlighting the role of families in countering extremist attitudes and encouraging reconciliation in communities.
- Engage religious communities in addressing extremism and sectarian divides, and find common values on which understanding and cooperation can be built.
- Collaborate with civil society organizations that have experience in conflict resolution, cooperation, and political reconciliation.

Layer 5: Legal and Policy Front

- Enforce necessary legislation against acts that lead to incitement of hatred, discrimination, and violence against persons based on their religion.
- Foster efforts to address Islamophobia through creative projects and implementable policies, such as boosting youth engagement, integrating Islamophobia-related elements into school curricula, and providing moderate content for early-age children.
- Establish centers dedicated to studying and fighting against Islamophobia to help coordinate national efforts and deconstruct Islamophobic discourse and ideology.

Layer 6: International Front

- Recognize that Islamophobia is intertwined with other global challenges, such as terrorism, extremism, radicalization, human rights, conflict among religions, intra-religious tensions, and religious-based genocide.
- Launch extensive campaigns to project a positive image of Islam,

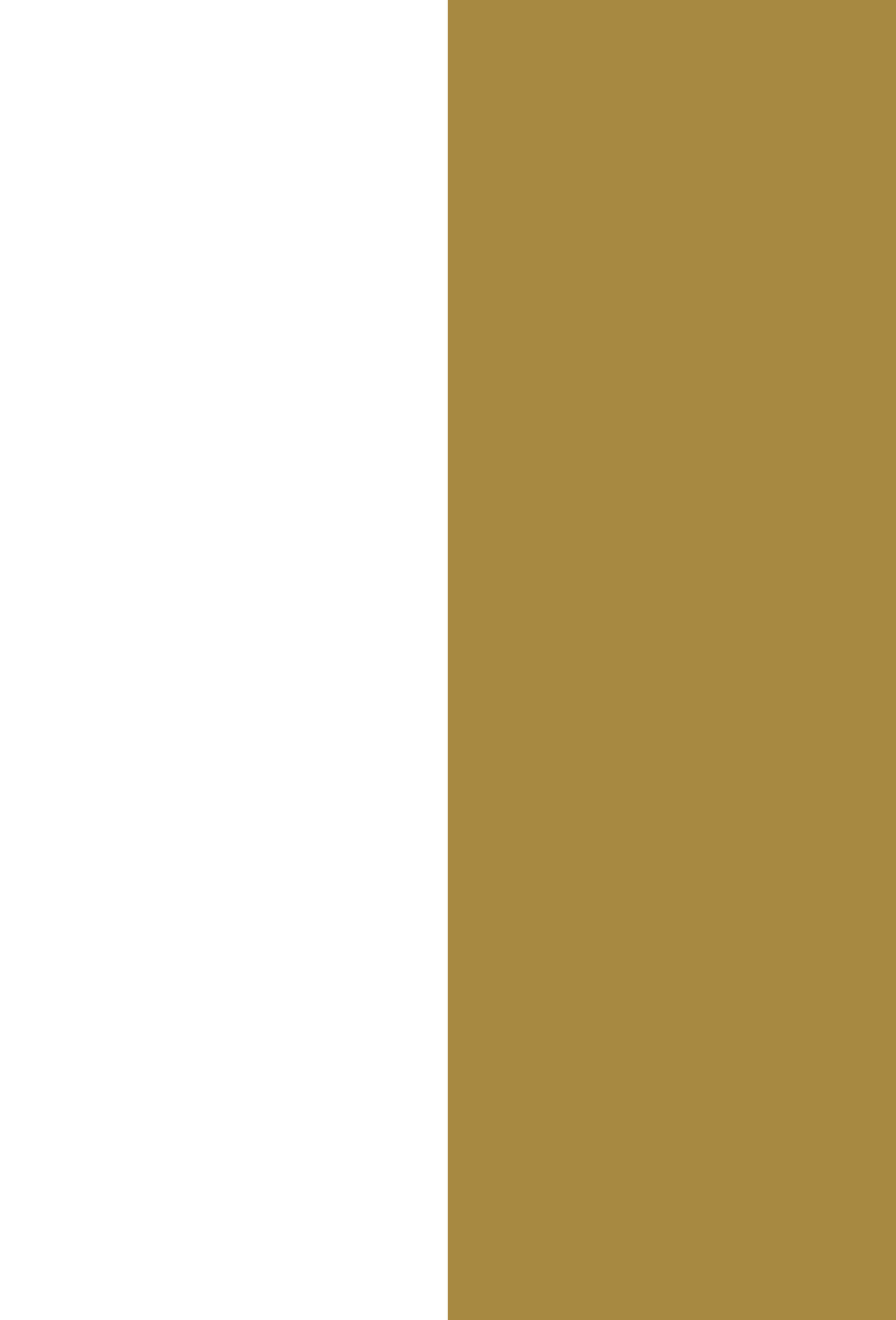
particularly in countries where Islamophobia is most palpable, with the help of Muslim communities in non-OIC countries.

- Increase support for Muslim communities in non-Muslim societies to empower them to fight and resist acts of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief.
- Promote inter-faith and inter-religious dialogues to raise awareness about well-founded interpretations of religious precepts and teachings, and open up spaces for discussion about Islam among non-Muslims.
- Reach out to the Muslim diaspora in non-Muslim countries, engaging them in constructive dialogue with their non-Muslim fellows to develop sustainable mechanisms for countering discrimination against Muslims or any other religious minority.
- Utilize existing OIC mechanisms, such as the Contact Group on Muslim Minorities in Europe and the Contact Group on Peace and Dialogue, to coordinate the Muslim world's collective efforts in combating Islamophobia internationally.
- Generate projects for countering Islamophobia through close collaboration with international entities like the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), NGOs, and CSOs that advocate counter-Islamophobia at the grassroots level.
- Keep the issue of Islamophobia high on the agenda of the UN's Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly, and implement the UN Resolution 16/18 on combating incitement to hatred, discrimination, and violence against persons based on their religion.
- Work collectively as an international community to tackle the scourge of Islamophobia, extremism, and intolerance with resolve and strength.
- Implement the formula and recommendations prescribed by U.N. Human Rights Council Resolution 16/18, which is a sign of hope for global action on tackling discrimination, intolerance, and stigmatization based on religion and belief.
- Ensure progress on the international consensus of Resolution 16/18 by actively participating in the follow-up mechanism of the annual Istanbul Process sessions.
- Provide support to the Islamophobia Observatory in the General

Secretariat by allocating necessary resources to establish a network with other hate-speech monitoring platforms worldwide.

- Organize various events to commemorate the ‘International Day to Combat Islamophobia’ that correspond to 15 March of each year.
- Optimize the role of OIC Special Envoy for Islamophobia to boost OIC’s engagement with international and regional organizations on this critical issue.

MANIFESTATION OF ISLAMOPHOBIA



MANIFESTATION OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

In general term, Islamophobia refers to the irrational fear, hatred, or prejudice toward Islam and Muslims. It manifests itself in various ways, including discriminatory attitudes, hate speech, physical attacks, institutional discrimination, and social marginalization. Some common manifestations of Islamophobia include negative stereotyping of Muslims as terrorists or extremists, verbal and physical assaults against individuals due to their Muslim identity, restrictions on religious practices like wearing hijabs or building mosques, and systemic discrimination in areas such as employment, housing, and education.

The Observatory defines Islamophobia as a combination of fear, hate, and prejudice against Islam, against Muslims, and against anything associated with Islam (as a religion), such as Mosque, Islamic centre, Holy Qur'an, Hijab, etc. Islamophobia also constitutes stigmatization, racism and discriminations in daily life, on Media, at workplace, in political sphere, etc. It rests in the mind and it reflects in attitudes, and could be manifested through violent actions, such as burning mosques, vandalizing properties, abusing women wearing hijab, or insulting prophets or sacred symbols in Islam.

This Chapter elaborates different manifestations of Islamophobia by looking at indicators that comprise statements, events, and incidents that happened in different countries during the period under review, those being classified into Discrimination, Islamophobic policy, far right, verbal and physical assault, hate speech and online hate, and defamation of hijab, veil, and burqa.

DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination is the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, sex, or disability. It involves making distinctions between human beings that are not relevant to their individual qualities or merits. Discrimination denies equal treatment and

equal opportunity by imposing unequal burdens, disadvantages, or creating preferential treatment for certain individuals based on their membership, perceived membership, or association with a particular group or category.

Discrimination can take many forms - it can be institutional and systemic through policies, practices, laws and societal norms, or it can manifest through individual behaviors, words and actions that display prejudice, hate, bias and intolerance towards others. Some of the most pervasive forms of discrimination happen on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability status, religion, socioeconomic status and sexual orientation.

Discrimination goes against the core principles of human rights by depriving people of their inherent dignity, freedoms and opportunities based on arbitrary characteristics rather than merit. It perpetuates inequality, marginalizes groups, and prevents people from fully participating in society. Discrimination especially occurs when individuals or groups are unfairly treated in a way, which is worse than other people are treated, on the basis of their actual or perceived membership in certain groups or social categories. It involves restricting members of one group from opportunities or privileges that are available to members of another group.¹

Specific for this report, the Observatory monitored the unjustified distinctions targeting Muslim individual or a group on the ground of their faith or religion.

In the US, a Muslim advocacy group accused Dallas-based Southwest Airlines of denying a Maryland worker's request for a schedule change so he could attend a Friday prayer meeting and then fired him when he took a day off. In a complaint to the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) said the carrier fired Baltimore-Washington International Airport ramp agent Justin Mavins after the company's "*accommodations team*" said he could not switch shifts to attend Jum'ah services on a Friday afternoon. During the company's December meltdown, he then used a personal day to go to the prayer meeting and was fired shortly after.²

Three Muslim women who wear hijabs sued Amazon saying that they were subjected to religious discrimination while working at a Pittsburgh

distribution center in 2022. Yvette Smith and her two daughters, Tiara Smith and Sadaira Smith, of Pittsburgh’s Marshall-Shadeland neighborhood, filed a federal complaint on 30 October 2023 alleging religious, race and gender discrimination, hostile work environment, retaliation, battery and negligent supervision. Amazon spokesperson Sam Stephenson said the company was reviewing the lawsuit. The lawsuit alleged that even before the women began working for Amazon, a security guard working at the Roswell Drive location would not allow them to enter the facility to begin the onboarding process. The location was in Pittsburgh’s Fairywood neighborhood. The complaint alleged that they attempted to go to the facility four times between September and November 2021 to begin new employee training. *“When the Smiths casually attempted to walk into the distribution center, a security guard, having observed their physical attributes and characteristics, including their religious apparel, gender, race and/or perceived race, immediately refused them entry into the distribution center,”* the lawsuit said. Even after they began working there, the lawsuit continued, the Smiths were not properly trained by their managers and continued to be discriminated against. One supervisor said to them: *“You’re wearing these (expletive) hijabs and scarves and you need to take them the (expletive) off,”* the lawsuit said. The women claimed they were frequently subjected to negative comments about the hijabs.³

Tariq Khan, a former assignment editor and weekend foreign news desk manager for Fox News, claimed that the network unjustly fired him as retaliation after he repeatedly complained about his boss’s misogynistic, Islamophobic and bigoted behavior. In a complaint filed 28 September 2023 in the Southern District of New York, Khan asserts that Fox’s VP of news coverage Greg Headen—who previously ran the network’s foreign news desk—frequently used foul and homophobic language in the workplace. Additionally, Khan alleges, Headen, who was his immediate supervisor, also *“repeatedly demonstrated prejudice towards Muslim people and made a handful of remarks at work associating Islam with terrorism in the presence of Mr. Khan, who practices Islam.”* Khan, who also served as the network’s resident Academy Awards expert, claimed that Fox News *“unlawfully terminated”* him in May 2023, allegedly violating his rights

under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and the New York City Human Rights Law. *“Mr. Kahn’s persistent allegations were thoroughly investigated throughout his tenure and deemed meritless,”* a Fox News spokesperson said in a statement. *“We are fully committed to defending against these baseless allegations in court.”*⁴

Still in the US, a former teacher filed suit in January 2024 claiming she was demoted after filing a discrimination complaint at the Mary Institute and St. Louis Country Day School. The suit filed on behalf of Ghada Ead, a Muslim woman who taught at the Ladue private K-12 school for about five years, claimed she was demoted in April 2023 months after she complained about comments made by an administrative assistant at the school. A school spokesperson, Amy Zlatic, told the Post-Dispatch in an email that Country Day did not comment on pending litigation. The suit claimed Ead dressed modestly and wore a hijab as part of her religious beliefs. In August 2022, according to the suit, one of the school’s administrative assistants placed a bulk order for homecoming week T-shirts for students and teachers but refused Ead’s request for a long-sleeved version of the shirt.⁵

In Canada, Quebec Muslim groups took the provincial government to court over the enacted prayer room ban in public schools, the groups argued that the order was discriminatory and violates the Charter rights to freedom of religion and association. Five Muslim organizations filed their case in Quebec Superior Court, seeking a judicial review of the ban and to have it declared unconstitutional.⁶

An MP was stopped from boarding a flight to Canada with other members of parliament *“because his name was Mohammad”*, the Commons heard on 23 October 2023. Mohammad Yasin, Labour’s MP for Bedford, was due to fly to Canada with other MPs from the Commons levelling up, housing and communities committee when he was delayed for questioning *“for a considerable period”* at airports in both countries the week before. Clive Betts, the chair of the committee, said the incident was unacceptable because of its *“racist and Islamophobic nature”*, and that he would write to the Canadian high commissioner in the UK. He added that his colleague was asked if he was carrying a knife or any other weapon and where he was born when he was taken aside by officials from Air Canada. Yasin

then underwent similar questioning from officials on his return trip to the UK, MPs were told. Betts, who had raised a point of order about the “serious incident”, told the Commons: *“When the committee checked in for their flights at Heathrow, all Members got through with the exception of the member for Bedford, who was delayed for questioning for a considerable period. “He was told it was because his name was Mohammad.” Betts added: “The questioning was undertaken by officials from Air Canada and we believe the Canadian government, and despite him already having been given a visa to enter Canada. After proving he was an MP with the help of my committee clerk, he was eventually allowed through. “At Montreal airport, the same issues were raised by Canadian immigration. On return at Toronto airport on the way back, he was again challenged and got on his flight with the assistance of my consul general, who was very helpful.” Betts went on to say Yasin “has received apologies from the parliamentary secretary to the Canadian minister for immigration and Air Canada” but “given the racist and Islamophobic nature of these challenges”, he planed on “writing to the Canadian high commissioner”.*⁷

In the UK, a Muslim police officer described how he had bacon placed inside his boots while a Sikh colleague had his beard cut as part of racist behavior written off in the Metropolitan Police as “pranks” and “banter”. Numerous examples of appalling racism and discrimination in the UK were also highlighted, like a Muslim officer who described how he had been targeted because of his faith but had been too afraid to speak up. He said: *“I found bacon left in my boots inside my locked locker. I was horrified but kept an open mind as to who this could be, I was hoping to identify who the culprit was and take appropriate action. I didn’t want to be branded a person who played the race card and out of fear of reprisals did not tell anyone at the time.”* Another officer said told the review, led by Baroness Louise Casey: *“There have been a number of incidents where baptised [Sikh] officers are picked on. One officer had his beard cut because an officer thought it was funny”.* The report said racist and other discriminatory behaviour was often *“tolerated, ignored or dismissed as ‘banter’.”*⁸

Also in the UK, the British army had admitted that a Muslim soldier was a victim of “anti-Islamic bias”, after settling a landmark religious

discrimination case brought after fellow soldiers refused to let the claimant properly observe Ramadan while deployed in Cyprus. Ebrima Bayo, from Huddersfield, said he was denied hot food given to fellow soldiers when he broke his fast, and forced to sign a waiver committing him to spend extra time in the gym, claiming it was necessary to ensure he was fit. *“My understanding was they were trying to break my willpower. You said you were going to fast but we are going to make life difficult for you and eventually you will crack, buckle and stop,”* Bayo said. The former private described been taunted and harassed by colleagues when he went out for Friday prayers during the holy month. *“When we would put on our mosque attire, we would get people calling us names, trying to be funny, saying what have you got underneath that, why are your pockets full?”* he said. The discrimination took place in 2017 while Bayo was on deployment in Cyprus with the Royal Logistic Corps, and eventually led him to leave the army, despite it was a job to which he had aspired since he was young. The MoD resisted Bayo’s complaint and it took the former soldier five and a half years to win an apology and compensation. That came only in March 2024 after a ruling that Bayo could have his case heard in a public employment tribunal. The army said it *“apologises for the anti-Islamic bias, both conscious and unconscious within the unit”* and for a *“culturally insensitive attitude on the part of the chain of command”*. It said Bayo was an *“excellent”* soldier and he had received an undisclosed sum in compensation. The veteran said he believed that *“yes, the British army is institutionally racist”*, partly because of what happened and the way his complaint was originally handled and subsequently contested over an extended period by the MoD.⁹

Still in the UK, the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) had written to the Prime Minister, Chancellor and others urging the protection of universal banking rights, irrespective of someone’s religious or cultural background or political views. The group said *“many law-abiding Muslim individuals and Muslim-led organisations”* had been *“gravely impacted by the arbitrary withdrawal of banking services”* and argued that it had *“become par for the course over the past decade”* with no action taken to address it. MCB called for an impartial review that not only addresses the mechanisms behind bank account closures but also examines why British Muslims were

disproportionately affected by this issue.¹⁰

In France, Mouhssine Zouine's a Moroccan-French baker opened his bakery, "*Dina L'Amie du Pain*," in 2020 in the town of Saint Marcellin, in the Isere department in southeastern France, 51 kilometers from the city of Grenoble. The bakery, which sold oriental and traditional pastry products, was all the fruit of decades of savings to honor Zouine's lifelong commitment to and passion for bakery. However, the French-Moroccan baker's life efforts soon turned into a nightmare after racist campaigns targeted him and his business. "*The problem started in November 2021*," Zouine told Morocco World News (MWN). He stressed that that was when he first faced various challenges, including boycott, verbal threats, trash being thrown on his door, among many other hostile acts. The baker, emphasized that he thought that the issue would stop after he opened up to the media, where he spoke about his situation for the first time. "*But it has not stopped*," he said, noting that he does not know why such racist, Islamophobic campaigns continue to target him. "*I don't know, there is no problem with my products, the problem is that I am a Moroccan Muslim and (thank god) I am proud of it*," he said.¹¹

In Australia, someone named Ali sent \$30 as a gift for his 9-year-old nephew, who was named Ibrahim* Muslim. He entered "*Muslim BDAY*" into the description field for the transfer. Ali then received an email from St.George Bank, requesting he contact the bank's economic and trade sanctions team to provide more information about the transfer to prevent it from been cancelled. "*Please confirm what Muslim refers to*," the email read. "*If [Muslim refers to] an individual please provide Full name, DOB and address*." Muslim is a common given name among adherents of the Islamic faith. As a Bank of Melbourne customer, Ali was confused to receive correspondence from St.George, and suspected it may be a hoax. "*St.George — a division of Westpac Banking Corporation (Westpac) have a statutory obligation to ensure that the transactions we process comply with various Australian and international laws including those relating to economic and trade sanctions*," the email read. Ali and Fatima both live in Australia, so it was also unclear why the information was being requested by the economic and trade sanctions team.¹²

According to Islamophobia Register of Australia, discrimination at workplaces and schools had increased in the past years. The report mentioned a case when a Muslim man was reading a foreign policy book at work, when his supervisor came over and asked him what the book was about. *“I told him that it was a book about foreign policy and relations between the US and Pakistan and their involvement in Afghanistan,”* the employee recalled. The supervisor’s response, the man says, was so *“inappropriate”*. He said, *“Don’t read books, such that you may end up blowing yourself up in Australia,”* the employee remembered his supervisor saying. Right after that he said, *“Do you read the Qur’an, have you read the Qur’an?”*¹³

In Spain, some academics who converted to Islam concealed that they were Muslims so that their careers would not be harmed, one such academic who worked in the field of international relations said 11 May 2023. Luci Hurtado highlighted the discrimination against Muslim academics at universities in Spain. Hurtado said she was a Catholic before she became a Muslim in 2010. Hurtado said she earned a doctorate in international relations at one of the prestigious universities in Spain in 2011 and that she was not discriminated against because she was not wearing a headscarf at the time, but Muslim Spaniards around her were excluded from the academy. She noted that Spanish academics who were Muslims were more pressured than Muslim academics coming from foreign countries. *“The pressure started before you enter academic life. They research you for a long time during the application. This is not a procedural thing. The professors of the department call your professors at the university you come from and investigate whether you are a Muslim or a ‘radical’ person. If it turns out that you are a Muslim, you are not accepted into the academy. If you ask the people who do this, they deny it because what they’re doing was illegal,”* she said. Hurtado noted that Spanish academics who were discovered to be Muslims were branded as *“traitors who betrayed their country.”* She said Spanish lecturers who were Muslims also had difficulties in applying to other universities. *“No Spanish academics who choose to become a Muslim will answer the questions you ask me because they are afraid of being stigmatized and exposed. The universities we apply to look at our religion more than our*

academic career. If it turns out that we are Muslims, the credibility of our articles, analyses and research will be questioned,” She said.¹⁴

In India, on 2 August 2023, members of a right-wing Hindu outfit sought a complete ban on namaz been offered in open spaces from 11 August 2023. In a meeting with Gurugram Deputy Commissioner Nishant Yadav, members of Samagra Hindu Seva Sangh, Haryana, demanded that the permission given to the Muslim community to offer namaz at six designated open spaces in the city be revoked.¹⁵

ISLAMOPHOBIC POLICY

A policy is a deliberate system of principles to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. Policies are commonly instituted by governments, organizations, companies, and other entities to set directions, define acceptable procedures and behaviors, and outline how resources should be allocated to meet intended goals.

At government level, policies are laws, regulations, and prescribed courses of action that are formally approved and adopted by governing bodies or leaders, that may include fiscal policies, foreign policies, healthcare policies, and education policies. These dictate governmental decision-making on major public issues.

Islamophobia could be one of such intended outcomes, hence the Observatory presents below, Islamophobic policies in countries as empirical instances of Islamophobia during the reviewed period.

In the US, an organization that advocates for Florida’s Muslim community called on state education officials to reverse course on a recent decision to approve conservative PragerU video content to be shown in public schools. The week before, a spokesperson for the state Department of Education said that videos from PragerU Kids had been reviewed by the department and that their content “*aligns*” with state education standards guiding civics and government instruction. CAIR in a news release pointed to a “*factsheet*” published by the Georgetown University Bridge Initiative, which was described on its website as “*a multi-year research project on Islamophobia*”

housed at Georgetown. “A number of PragerU’s videos spread anti-Muslim rhetoric and conspiracy theories,” the document published in 2020, said. The Bridge Initiative document cited multiple PragerU videos. For example, the Bridge Initiative took issue with videos titled “*Is Islam a Religion of Peace?*” and “*Where are the Moderate Muslims?*”¹⁶

The US news network MSNBC had suspended the shows of three Muslim anchors amid rising tensions in Gaza. On 14 October 2023, Mehdi Hasan, Ayman Mohieddine and Ali Velshi were “*quietly taken out of the anchor’s chair since Hamas’ attack on Israel.*” According to the source, the left-leaning news network did not air a scheduled 12 October night episode of “*The Mehdi Hasan Show,*” and dropped a plan for Mohieddine to anchor Joy Reid’s show on Thursday and Friday. Sources also revealed that Velshi was being replaced by another anchor for his upcoming weekend shows.¹⁷

A leading American law firm said it rescinded job offers to three law students who were involved in groups which signed statements criticizing Israel’s role in the Israel-Hamas conflict, according to a report. Davis Polk, one of the world’s largest law firms, said in an internal email that it had revoked offers to the Harvard and Columbia university students because they allegedly supported letters blaming Israel for the violence. The decision to revoke the job offers came as other companies had said they would not hire students who backed letters that were critical of Israel.¹⁸

On 2 November 2023, Representative Ryan Zinke introduced a bill that would revoke the visas and refugee status of a number of Palestinians. ‘The Safeguarding Americans From Extremism Act’ would require the Department of Homeland Security to refrain from issuing visas or granting refugee, asylum, or temporary protected status to anyone holding a passport issued by the Palestinian Authority. It would also revoke visas and refugee or asylum status for anyone who was granted it on or after 1 October 2023. The bill also directly orders Immigration and Customs Enforcement to remove those who lose their lawful status in the country under the new criteria.¹⁹

The suspect in the shooting in Vermont of three college students of Palestinian descent on 25 November 2023 pleaded not guilty to three counts of attempted second-degree murder on 27 November and was ordered by a

judge to be held without bond. The suspect, Jason J. Eaton, appeared at an arraignment at the Chittenden County Criminal Court in Burlington via a remote video feed from the county jail, where he had been held since his arrest on 26 November.²⁰

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) has submitted a discrimination complaint on behalf of Hajur El-Haggan, a Black Muslim Arab American teacher in Maryland, reported CNN. El-Haggan, a middle school math teacher at Argyle Middle School within the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) since 2015, was placed on administrative leave on 20 November due to her email signature, which included a phrase supporting Palestinian rights. According to the complaint filed on 6 December, the email signature contained the phrase “*From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free,*” interpreted as a call for Palestinian freedom, dignity, and self-determination.²¹

An advocacy group announced it filed a complaint against Ann Arbor Public Schools, alleging that a school counselor made a discriminatory remark against a Muslim student. The Michigan chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-MI) filed the complaint with the Office of Civil Rights for the US Department of Education. Officials claimed that a counselor at Tappan Middle School referred to the eighth-grade student as a “*terrorist.*” The complaint alleges that on 14 November, the student was waiting to speak with his guidance counselor when he asked the sixth-grade counselor if he get a drink of water, to which the employee told him he could not. When the student asked why, the counselor allegedly said “*I don’t negotiate with terrorists,*” according to the complaint. “*The words of the guidance counselor referring to an 8th-grade student as a ‘terrorist’ were not only discriminatory but also deeply painful to the student,*” CAIR-MI executive director Dawud Walid said in a written statement.²²

In Canada, Canadian authorities had taken action against a security guard for objecting to a Muslim man offering prayers in a secluded corner of a train station in Ottawa, Canada. Ahmad, at the Ottawa train station, offered prayers in an empty corner of the station after which the guard walked up to him and asked him not to pray there but instead to pray outside. The incident occurred when Ahmad was reportedly waiting for a

delayed bus from Toronto. In videos from the incident that emerged on social media, the security guard could be seen arguing with Ahmad asking him not to pray at the station. *“Don’t pray here. We don’t want you praying here. You are bothering our other customers. Okay?”* said the guard. *“Not one person has anything to say. I went to the end of the hallway,”* retorted Ahmad. *“Pray outside next time. Okay?”* demands the guard and attempts to walk away when Ahmad questions, *“Outside in the cold, when I am here inside?”* The rail company, Via Rail, apologized and said that it condemned Islamophobia.²³

On 5 April 2023, Education Minister Bernard Drainville banned school service centres from transforming classrooms into places of prayer. In a joint statement issued 6 April 2023, representatives from several mosques with the Table de concertation des organismes musulmans (TCOM) expressed their shock and indignation at the decision. The TCOM points out that the move came in the middle of Ramadan, which run from March 23 to April 23 this year. *“It brought up a lot of emotions in our community,”* said the president of the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec, Mohamed Labidi.²⁴

On 14 June 2023, A Quebec Superior Court judge denied a request by a Muslim advocacy group and a civil liberties organization to suspend the province’s ban on prayer rooms in public schools. The Canadian Civil Liberties Association and the National Council of Canadian Muslims had argued that the ban was causing irreparable harm to Muslim students and needed to be suspended immediately. Muslim students could not wait while the wider legal challenge made its way through the courts, they said. Following news reports about at least two Montreal-area schools allowed Muslim students to pray, Education Minister Bernard Drainville banned schools from offering dedicated prayers spaces, citing the province’s policy on institutional secularism. In response, the Muslim and civil liberties groups filed a lawsuit on behalf of a 16-year-old student at a Montreal-area high school, identified as “X” in court documents.²⁵

In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Israeli authorities barred Palestinians from entering the Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied East Jerusalem for the 12th consecutive Friday. A large number of Israeli police personnel were deployed throughout the city to restrict worshipers’ access to the mosque.²⁶



In addition, Israeli forces beat and prevented Muslim worshippers from entering the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem on the first night of the holy month of Ramadan on 11 March 2024. In video footage shared online, armed Israeli police officers were seen hitting Palestinians in the streets of the Old City, while they were walking towards the holy site to attend taraweeh prayers²⁷.

Israel had also erected barbed wire on a fence around the Lions' Gate area adjacent to the Al-Aqsa Mosque complex in occupied East Jerusalem, Palestinian authorities said on 11 March 2024. *"This is a dangerous precedent that has never occurred since 1967,"* the Jerusalem governor's office said in a statement. The Lions' Gate, also known as Bab al-Asbat, is located within Jerusalem's Old City and is one of the main gates leading to Al-Aqsa Mosque. Nasser Qaws, a leader of the Palestinian group Fatah, said the Israeli move *"aims to prevent Palestinians from entering Al-Aqsa Mosque during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan,"* media reported.²⁸



On 12 March 2024, Hundreds of Jewish settlers again stormed the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in occupied East Jerusalem amid Israeli forces' security protections and tightened measures against Palestinians. According to the Palestinian official news media, the settlers escorted by Israeli forces stormed Al-Aqsa Mosque in groups from the Al-Mugharbah Gate area on the holy mosque's west side. Earlier on that day, approximately 275 Israeli settlers entered the Al-Aqsa Mosque complex on calls given by Jewish groups to intensify incursions into the mosque during Ramadan.²⁹

On the following week, Israeli restrictions have prevented tens of thousands of Palestinian Muslims from attending weekly Friday prayers at Al-Aqsa Mosque for the 17th Friday since the war began in the Gaza Strip. Only 13,000 people were able to enter the mosque to perform prayers, compared to more than 50,000 on regular Fridays, said an official in the Islamic Endowments Department in Jerusalem. Eyewitnesses told media that the mosque seemed almost empty of Muslim faithful due to Israeli restrictions.³⁰

An Israeli minister had called for the cancellation of Islam's holy month Ramadan as a solution for tensions in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. Israeli Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu told Army Radio, *"The so-called month of Ramadan must be wiped out, and our fear of this month must also be wiped out."* Eliyahu was a member of the far-right Otzma Yehudit party, led by National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir³¹.

In Italy, the closure of two Islamic community centers and prayer spaces

in the Monfalcone district of Italy's northeastern province of Gorizia had frustrated the Muslim community of mainly Bangladeshi workers in the shipyard area, media reports said on 12 December 2023. Mayor Anna Maria Cisint, who was with the right-wing populist Lega party, closed the centers in November and moved to prevent Muslim prayers in a former supermarket by declaring it as a construction site, according to the media. Left-wing politician Furio Honsell noted that the mayor's decision violated the most essential articles of the Constitution. Two Catholic priests, Flavio Zanetti and Paolo Zuttion, said in a statement that freedom to worship is a value that should be respected.³²

Mayor Anna Maria Cisint had banned Muslim prayers in the Adriatic port town of Monfalcone in Italy. Soon after, the far-right extremist mayor banned Muslim prayers, a Muslim cultural center in the small Italian town received an envelope containing two partially burned pages of the Quran. The cultural center's president, Bou Konate, told *The Guardian*, *"It was hurtful, a serious insult we never expected. However, it was not a coincidence. The letter was a threat, generated by a campaign of hate that has stoked toxicity."* Cisint, who had been nurturing anti-Islamic rhetoric in the town, was backed by Matteo Salvini's League party and by Brothers of Italy, the party led by the Italian prime minister Georgia Meloni. She won an easy reelection in 2022 because of her anti-immigration stance, which facilitated the rise to power of Italy's far right. Moreover, one of her first policies was to remove the benches in the main square, which were reportedly used by immigrants. Cisint even tried to limit the number of foreign students in schools and also scrapped cricket from the sports festival, given its importance in Muslim communities. Furthermore, Cisint accuses Muslims of not wanting to learn Italian, and when they do, their primary objective is to obtain citizenship.³³

In France, teaching unions and anti-racism charities had demanded an inquiry after French police sent a request to schools for information on the number of pupils absent on the Muslim festival of Eid. The French government had confirmed that it asked for *"an evaluation"* of the number of pupils absent from schools in one south-western city on the day of Eid al-Fitr the month before, but had rejected claims the controversial

request amounted to a census on faith. Police asked school principals in Toulouse to tell them the number of students absent on the day, according to reports as part of a “*request from the intelligence services*” to calculate “*the percentage of absenteeism [...] during the Eid holiday [on April 21st]*”. The request was made directly to schools, without the involvement of local education authorities, the Toulouse rectorate said. “*As soon as the heads of establishments and school principals informed us of this request, instructions were obviously given not to respond to it,*” the rectorate told AFP. “*We see this as a serious drift, a stigmatization of Muslim students and an attack on their freedom of conscience.*”³⁴

A 2004 law bans wearing clothes or symbols revealing someone’s religion in educational settings, including large crosses, Jewish kippas and Islamic headscarves. Unlike headscarves, abayas -- a long, baggy garment worn to comply with Islamic beliefs on modest dress -- occupy a grey area and face no outright ban. However, some believed they flout the secular principles, intensifying a recurring debate about the influence of Islam in schools. “*They talk about ‘modest dress’, but it looks a lot like a Trojan horse of Islamist entryism,*” Le Parisien newspaper wrote in an editorial. Eric Ciotti, leader of the right-wing Republicans party, said abayas “*have no place*” in French schools and denounced legal “*ambiguities*” that “*benefit Islamists*”. Abayas “*should never be tolerated. We have to be uncompromising*”, parliament speaker Yael Braun-Pivet, a member of President Emmanuel Macron’s centrist party, told media. The media reported from a school in the southeastern city of Lyon and quoted a teacher who requested anonymity as saying the abaya-wearing girls were creating “*pressure*”, even if unintentionally. “*There are a few teachers who gave us bad looks, but none dared to speak*” about their abayas, the channel quoted students as saying.³⁵



On 27 August 2023, the education minister of France said his government would ban children from wearing the abaya, the loose-fitting, full-length robes worn by some Muslim women, in state-run schools. *“I have decided that the abaya could no longer be worn in schools,”* Education Minister Gabriel Attal said in an interview with TV channel TF1. *“When you walk into a classroom, you shouldn’t be able to identify the pupils’ religion just by looking at them,”* he said.³⁶

On 7 September 2023, the State Council, France’s highest court for complaints against government authorities, said it had rejected a motion by an association for an injunction against the ban decreed by the government on August 2023, saying it was not discriminatory towards Muslims. President Emmanuel Macron’s government announced it was banning the abaya in schools, saying it broke the rules on secularism in education that had already seen Muslim headscarves banned on the grounds that they constitute a display of religious affiliation. But an association representing Muslims filed a motion with the State Council, France’s highest court for complaints against state authorities, for an injunction against the ban on the abaya and the qamis, its equivalent dress for men. The association argued the ban was discriminatory and could incite hatred against Muslims, as well as racial profiling. The State Council had been examining the motion, filed by the Action for the Rights of Muslims (ADM), since 5 September, and ruled in favour of maintaining the ban.³⁷

At least 67 students were denied access to schools after they refused to remove their abayas following a controversial ban on the baggy, modest dress in France. Defying a ban on the dress nearly 300 girls showed up on 4 September 2023 morning wearing an abaya, Education Minister Gabriel Attal told on 5 September. *“Most agreed to change out of the dress, but 67 refused and were sent home,”* he claimed, adding, *“I do not want to be able to identify students’ religion in schools by looking at their outfit.”* The left has accused the government of centrist President Emmanuel Macron of trying with the abaya ban to compete with Marine Le Pen’s far-right National Rally and shifting further to the right. Clementine Autain, a lawmaker for the hard-left France Insoumise, criticized what she called the *“clothes police”* and a move *“characteristic of an obsessional rejection of Muslims.”*³⁸

On 26 September 2023, Amelie Oudea-Castera France's sports minister announced the ban on headscarves for French athletes at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games. The Sport Minister said during the 'Sunday In Politics' show on TV, that no member of the French delegation would be allowed to wear the hijab or headscarf and expressed her support for "*strict secularism*," according to multiple media reports. "*We agree with the recent judiciary system decision which the Prime Minister also expressed clearly, supporting strict secularism in sport. This means the prohibition of any kind of preaching and public sector neutrality. This means that members of our delegation, in our sports teams, will not wear the veil*," Oudea-Castera was quoted as saying.³⁹

The French government on 4 October 2023 dissolved the far-right Catholic party Civitas, accusing it of advocating war against the state, inciting Islamophobia, and anti-Semitism. After a Cabinet meeting, government spokesman Olivier Veran announced the decision to dissolve Civitas, which had operated as an association since 1999 before becoming a political party in 2016.⁴⁰

France would end funding for the country's biggest Muslim high school on the grounds of administrative failures and questionable teaching practices, a local official said on 11 December 2023, the latest in what some rights groups said was a wider crackdown on Muslims. Private school Averroes, the first Muslim high school to open in mainland France in 2003 in the northern city of Lille, had more than 800 pupils and had been under contract with the state since 2008. Pupils follow the regular French curriculum, and were also offered religion classes.⁴¹

The February 29 to March 6, 2024 issue of the French magazine Marianne had been banned in Morocco. This decision by the Moroccan authorities was taken under articles 31 and 94 of the law on the press and publishing, which prohibit the publication of any document attacking the Muslim religion. In its Events section, pages 14 and 15, the French weekly published a debate under the title "*have young people become anti-secular?*", between Martin Lom, president of the Génération Charlie association, and Samuel Grzybowski, founder of "*Coexistence*", an "*interconvictional youth movement*", in order to debate the subject of secularism among young

people. On page 15, as an illustration of the exchange between the two speakers, Marianne took the photo from the front page of Charlie Hebdo from February 2006, caricaturing the prophet Mohammed, with the title “*Mohammed overwhelmed by extremists*” and the fictional quote “*It’s hard to be loved by idiots*”. These caricatures were at the origin, on January 7, 2015, of an attack against the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo, which left 12 dead and 11 injured. Marianne Magazine regularly provokes controversy in certain Muslim countries for its editorial line considered Islamophobic.⁴²

In the UK, a four-year-old British Muslim student was questioned by police after teachers overheard him talk about Fortnite. This was part of the review into the Government’s Prevent strategy, which aimed to “*reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists*”. The People’s Review of Prevent, which called to abolish the strategy, found that “*there is no problem of integration of British Muslim communities and no basis for regarding them and their families with suspicion*” and slammed the policy as ‘Islamophobic’. It is also found it “*discriminatory in the way in which it approaches far-right terrorism differently from that of Islamist terrorism in guidance, training and application*.”⁴³

Michaela community school in Brent, One of England’s highest performing state schools, had been challenged in the high court for its policy of banning prayer rituals on school premises. The case against the school in Brent, had been brought by one of the school’s Muslim pupils, who said the ban was discriminatory. The judicial review hearing was told the ban had fundamentally changed how the pupil felt about being a Muslim in the UK. Not being able to pray at school made her feel guilty and unhappy, the court heard. The prayer policy was introduced in March 2023 by the school’s founder, Katharine Birbalsingh – frequently described as Britain’s strictest headteacher – when the school found itself the target of abuse and harassment after pupils were seen praying in the school playground by passersby. About 30 students took part, some kneeling on their blazers as they were not permitted to bring in prayer mats, the court heard.⁴⁴

On 14 March 2024, The UK government unveiled a new definition of extremism which appeared to target Muslims, despite an eruption of hate crimes against Jews and Muslims since the 7 October 2024 Gaza conflict.

Earlier on March 2024, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak claimed that Britain's multi-ethnic democracy was been deliberately undermined by both "Islamist" and "far-right extremists", and more needs to be done to tackle the perceived problem. *"Today's measures will ensure that government does not inadvertently provide a platform to those setting out to subvert democracy and deny other people's fundamental rights,"* said Michael Gove, the communities minister who heads the department that produced the new extremism definition. *"This is the first in a series of measures to tackle extremism and protect our democracy."* It was notable that the Muslim organisations named in a draft version of Gove's ministerial statement seen by the Guardian and thus appeared to be targeted by his definition of "extremism" were all prominent in their support for Palestinian rights and freedom from Israeli occupation. They included MEND (Muslim Engagement and Development), CAGE, Friends of Al-Aqsa, 5Pillars and the Muslim Association of Britain. CAGE had issued a joint statement with Palestine Action and Black Lives Matter UK, describing Gove's definition of extremism as, *"A continuation of the decades-long strategy aimed at inciting and exploiting fears against Muslims to build an authoritarian and repressive infrastructure that suppresses any dissent that is not licensed by Whitehall."* The new definition, said Ismail Patel, the chair of Friends of Al-Aqsa, was not only anti-Palestinian in its objectives, but also Islamophobic. *"This is an example of the divisive policies of the Conservative government and its efforts to stoke a culture war in Britain ... The party has been driven by Islamophobia for years. It's response to the genocide in Gaza is a symptom of this insidious attitude."* he told media. The definition states that extremism *"is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance"*, that aimed to destroy fundamental rights and freedoms; or undermined or replaced the UK's liberal parliamentary democracy; or intentionally created an environment for others to achieve those results. *"A broad cross-section of British society will see through the government's divisive extremism proposals. Extremism is a grave concern, and we all stand in opposition to it, despite the efforts of bigots to suggest otherwise through baseless accusations,"* said Zara Mohammed, secretary general of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB).⁴⁵

In Sweden, on 12 June 2023, A Swedish appeals court said police had no legal grounds to block two gatherings where protesters had planned to burn the Quran on February 2023. Police refused to authorize two requests, one by a private individual and one by an organization, to hold Qur'an burnings outside the Turkish and Iraqi Embassies in Stockholm in February. Police argued the January protest organized by Rasmus Paludan had made Sweden “a higher priority target for attacks.” After appeals from both protest organizers, the Stockholm Administrative Court overturned the decisions, and said the cited security concerns were not enough to limit the right to demonstrate. But Stockholm police in turn appealed the rulings to the appeals court, which on 12 June sided with the lower administrative court. In both rulings — on the two separate applications — the appeals court said “the order and security problems” referenced by the police did not have “a sufficiently clear connection to the planned event or its immediate vicinity.”⁴⁶

At the European Union hemisphere, on 28 November 2023, The Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) had ruled that Employees can be banned from wearing signs of religious belief such as the Islamic headscarf in EU member states. The issue came before the courts again in Belgium, after an employee of the eastern municipality of Ans was told she could not wear one while at work. Lawyers for the woman, who performed her duties as head of office primarily without being in contact with users of the public service, argued that her right to freedom of religion had been infringed. The Court said authorities in member states had a margin of discretion in designing the neutrality of public service they intended to promote. However, this objective must be pursued in a “consistent and systematic manner” and measures must be limited to what is strictly necessary. It was for a national court to verify that these requirements were complied with. The CJEU ruled for the first time on women’s wearing of the headscarf in 2017, when the Luxembourg court found that the garments could be banned, but only as part of a general policy barring all religious and political symbols.⁴⁷

The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) upheld two Belgian regions to prohibit Islamic halal slaughter without stunning. Two of the country’s three regions – Flanders and Wallonia – in 2017 and 2018 banned the

slaughter of livestock that have not been stunned on animal rights grounds. The practice was still allowed in the capital region of Brussels. The measure was seen as effectively outlawing the Muslim halal and Jewish kosher traditions, which require livestock to be conscious when their throats were slit. Members of both religious communities and several non-governmental organizations filed a case with the ECtHR, argued that the rulings violated their right to freedom of religion and were a form of discrimination. But the ECHR found both regions were within their rights to impose such a ban.⁴⁸

In India, on August 2023, over 3,000 poor Muslims had fled a business hub outside New Delhi, fearing for their lives after Hindu-Muslim clashes and sporadic attacks targeting them, residents, police and a community group said. Shops and shacks owned or run by Muslims and their houses in two large slum areas were padlocked when Reuters visited them more than a week after seven people were killed in clashes in Nuh and Gurugram districts in Haryana state, adjoining the Indian capital.⁴⁹

On 6 March 2023, a local court granted bail to seven Hindu men accused of murder of a Muslim man during the 2020 northeast Delhi pogrom, saying no serious evidence had come up against them despite the examination of prime witnesses. Additional Sessions Judge Pulastya Pramachala was hearing the bail applications of Prince, Sumit Chaudhary, Sandeep, Tinku, Vivek Panchal, Pankaj Sharma and Himanshu in the murder case of Amir Ali during the pogrom on 26 February 2020, near Johripur Jal Board Pulia in Gokalpuri, PTI news agency reported. *“I do not find it appropriate to keep the applicants behind bars till the conclusion of the trial, as despite examination of prime witnesses, no serious evidence has cropped up against them. Hence, all the bail applications are allowed and accused or applicants are admitted to bail, on their furnishing personal bonds and surety bonds of Rs 30,000 each with one surety in the like amount,”* the judge said. Amir Ali, and his brother Hashim Ali, were killed and their bodies were thrown into the Bhagirathi Vihar drainage by anti-Muslim rioters during the Delhi pogrom. The brothers were beaten to death when they were returning to their house in the area on 26 February in the night.⁵⁰

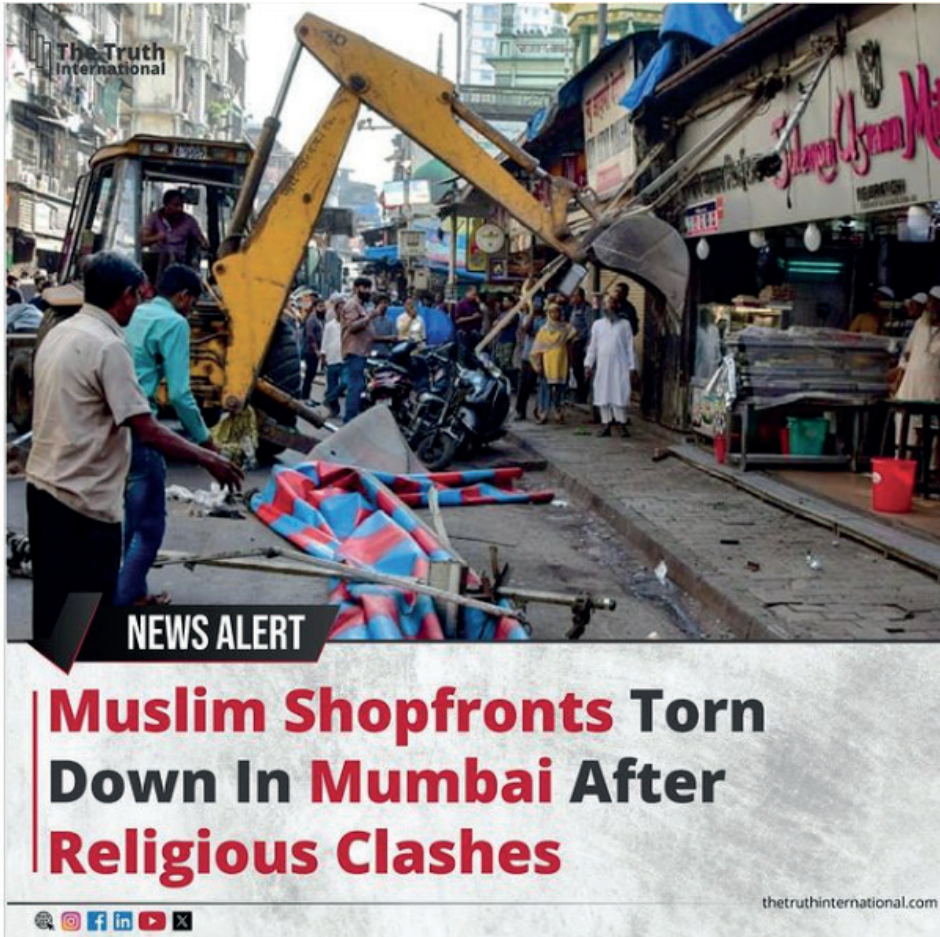
On 9 August and 14 August 2023, officers of the Agra division of the North Central Railway demolished 135 houses in Mathura town’s Nai Basti, a

cluster of brick and cement homes 250 m behind the Krishna Janmasthan temple complex, a group of Hindu temples that bring this town in western Uttar Pradesh (UP) several million tourists a year. Muslim and Hindu homes shared boundary walls in a few places in Nai Basti, but Hindu houses remained untouched, said residents. Some said they had lived in these houses for more than seven decades; the houses themselves were 50 to 60 years old, standing on land being cleared by the railway for a project to connect the town with the nearby temple town of Vrindavan, lying 14 km north. Mr. Kadir Khan, sat under a tree near a heap of rubble that used to be his home in Nai Basti. *“We have understood that this is a measure to remove us from here,”* he told Article 14. *“They do not want Muslims here.”* He said the Hindu houses behind his house had not been touched. His demolished home used to share a boundary wall with a row of homes that were still standing, he said, all belonging to Hindus. Khan, who ran a small bakery shop next to his house, is now without livelihood. Kunwar Narendra Singh of the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD), an opposition party in UP, told Article 14 that the North Central Railway had avoided clearing land where the Hindu community lived. *“From the centre of the railway track, 36 feet were to be taken from either side, but they took 56 feet from one side,”* said Singh. Houses of Hindu baniya caste traders, standing 12 feet to 15 feet from the track on the other side, were spared, he alleged *“If they are doing this by targeting only Muslims, then it is wrong,”* said Singh.⁵¹

Authorities in India’s most populous state of Uttar Pradesh had banned the distribution and sale of Halal-certified products, including dairy, garments and medicines saying it was illegal. Bakery products, sugar, edible oil and other products which were labelled as ‘Halal-certified’ by the companies manufacturing them would be banned from distribution and sale, a state government notification said on 18 November 2023. *“Halal certification of food products is a parallel system which creates confusion regarding the quality of food items,”* the notification said. Uttar Pradesh, which was been ruled by firebrand Hindu monk Yogi Adityanath, who belonged to Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, had been India’s largest and most populous state.⁵²



On 22 January 2024, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi had opened a Hindu temple built on the ruins of a historic Mughal-era mosque in the northern town of Ayodhya. The consecration of the temple, embodies the triumph of Modi's muscular Hindu nationalist politics and marked an unofficial start to his re-election campaign in general elections scheduled in 2024. The temple had been built on grounds where the Babri mosque, named after Mughal emperor Babur, stood for centuries before it was torn down in 1992 by a Hindu mob. The demolition of the 16th-century mosque triggered the worst religious riots since independence – killing more than 2,000 people, most of them Muslims – and shook the foundations of India's officially secular political order.⁵³



Authorities in India’s financial capital Mumbai had torn down several Muslim-owned makeshift shopfronts after religious clashes sparked by a divisive Hindu temple opened on 22 January 2024 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Minor clashes broke out 21 January in parts of Mumbai, including one incident where Hindus chanting religious slogans passed through a Muslim neighborhood on the megacity’s outskirts. No serious injuries were reported in the melee but by 23 January, authorities had called in excavators to knock down more than a dozen shopfronts belonging to Muslims in that locality, according to local media reports. The following evening another 40 shopfronts were knocked down on Mohammed Ali Road, a major downtown thoroughfare and center of local Muslim commerce that had also seen weekend clashes.⁵⁴

A Muslim man was arrested and sent to jail on 6 January 2024 for offering ‘azan’ at a 250-year-old mosque in Uttar Pradesh’s Shamli. *“The accused, identified as Umar Qureshi, is a resident of Jalalabad. He was booked under*

IPC section 505 (2) (promoting enmity) and IT Act following a complaint by Neeraj Kumar, a representative of a village head in Gausgarh,” media quoted Shamli SP, Abhishek. The police claimed that Qureshi went to the site on 5 January and tried to perform prayers, thereby violating a 1940 British order. The structure, albeit partly in ruins, stands today. Muslims refer to it as a Mughal-era mosque, while Hindus associate it with Manahar rajas.⁵⁵

A truck driver was arrested for allegedly offering ‘namaz’ (prayers) on the side of a busy road without permission in Gujarat’s Banaskantha district, police said 14 January 2024. A case was registered against Bachal Khan (37) after a video surfaced on social media, in which he was seen offering prayers in front of his truck parked on the side of a busy crossroad near Palanpur city, an official from Palanpur (west) police station said.⁵⁶

India’s most populous state had stopped paying some 21,000 teachers of subjects including mathematics and science in Muslim religious schools, or madrasas, an official said on 11 January 2024, and they could lose their jobs altogether. The teachers worked at madrasas in Uttar Pradesh, ruled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Hindu nationalist party, and the move came ahead of Modi seeking his third straight term in a general election due by May. “Over 21,000 teachers are set to lose their jobs,” Iftikhar Ahmed Javed, chief of Uttar Pradesh’s madrasa education board, told Reuters. “Muslim students and teachers will go back by 30 years.” According to a document seen by Reuters, the federal government stopped funding the programme, called the Scheme For Providing Quality Education in Madrasas, in March 2022. The document, from the Ministry of Minority Affairs, showed Modi’s government did not approve any new proposals from states under the programme between the 2017/18 and 2020/21 fiscal years, before closing it altogether.⁵⁷



A Muslim boy, assaulted and paraded naked by a Hindutva mob celebrating Ayodhya's Ram temple consecration at Morgi, a village on the border with Karnataka in Telangana's Sangareddy district, was sent to jail with four other Muslims for disrespecting a religious flag, while his attackers remained unarrested. Though the incident happened on 22 January, it came to light on 25 January. However, a case has been registered against the teenager, identified as Abbas, for allegedly disrespecting the saffron flag. He was arrested and sent to jail. Villagers of Morgi and adjacent village from Karnataka reached Morgi in large numbers and caught the 19-year-old boy. He was thrashed and attacked by pushing him on to the ground in full public view. The teenager was also stripped and paraded naked in the village. One of the members of Hindutva mob also threw fire on his private part, but he managed to doused it before it hurt him. The brutal attack was also shot by one of them and shared it on social media platforms.⁵⁸



On 26 February 2024, The Allahabad High Court had ruled in Favour of Continuation of Hindu Prayers at Gyanvapi Mosque's Basement. A citizen right guaranteed under Article 25 of the constitution (freedom of religion) *"cannot be taken away by arbitrary action of state"*, noted the Allahabad high court, as it ruled in favour of the continuation of Hindu prayers in the basement of the Gyanvapi Masjid in Varanasi. The court dismissed a plea filed by the caretakers of the mosque challenging a controversial district court order handing over a southern cellar of the Mughal-era Muslim place of worship to Hindus for worship in the midst of pending suits in the Gyanvapi Masjid – Kashi Vishwanath Temple matter in which Hindu plaintiffs were seeking religious rights within the mosque as well as its ultimate possession from Muslims. The HC held that the Muslim side had failed to establish *prima facie* possession over the cellar when the property was iron-fenced and barricaded in 1993, on the directions of the Supreme Court after the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. On the other hand, the court ruled that the Uttar Pradesh state government, then run by the Mulayam Singh-led Samajwadi Party, had stopped the worship and Hindu rituals in the cellar of the mosque by the Vyas family, the Hindu plaintiffs, *"by illegal action of State without there being any order in writing."* District judge A. K Vishvesha had on 31 January 2024, his last day of work before retirement, directed the district administration to make arrangements for puja and other Hindu activities inside the southern tekhana of the mosque within seven days. The district court order was passed on an application filed by a local priest Shailendra Kumar Pathak of the Acharya Ved Vyas Peeth temple, who had sought rights to worship the Maa Shringar Gauri and other alleged visible and invisible deities he claimed were in the cellar of the mosque. The caretakers of the mosque had, however, rejected all claims made by Pathak that there were idols kept inside the previously-sealed cellar and that his ancestors used to carry out puja inside the cellar. They challenged the order and its hasty execution by the district administration in the middle of the night on 1 February 2024 in the HC and demanded a stay on the puja. On 26 February 2024, Justice Agarwal ruled that there was *"a strong prima facie evidence"* of possession of the cellar in favour of the Vyas family from the British era till 1993.

Justice Agarwal held that allowing worship and rituals in the basement under the supervision of the receiver (district magistrate) appointed by the lower court required no interference.⁵⁹



On 31 January 2024, a centuries old mosque in Delhi's Mehrauli, the Masjid Akhonji was abruptly demolished by officials from the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) under heavy police presence. The mosque, which stood for over 600 years, was razed to the ground without any prior notice. It had left the local residents, mosque-goers, and the Madrasa students shocked and in disbelief. In a video that surfaced online the mosque's imam, Imam Zakir Hussain mourned the loss of the mosque and stated that it not only housed a madrasa where students came to learn called the Madrasa Bahrul Uloom but also held the sacred graves of revered figures. The demolition allegedly took place just before the call to the morning prayers and caught the local residents and early day worshippers by surprise and shock. The Imam had further accused the DDA officials of being careful to remove the demolition debris so as to hide signs of the demolition from the public. Furthermore, he had claimed that the authorities even forcefully took the phones from him and other people present at the incident due to which

none of them could document the demolition. The Imam also further stated that the authorities did not even let him and others salvage the copies of the holy Qur'an before the demolition. Furthermore, the Imam had also stated that not only were the sacred artefacts and books within the mosque desecrated, but officials also destroyed the belongings and properties, such as food and clothing items, of the 22 students studying at the Madrasa. The demolition, reportedly, took place with a considerable amount of police presence. Citizens online have decried the “*unconstitutional*” nature of the demolition. The demolition comes in the line of various incidents where various state governments have selectively carried out demolitions of properties owned by Muslims.⁶⁰



On 14 The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) claimed that the Shahi Masjid in New Delhi's Dhaula Kuan and madrasa were part of Central Ridge, a protected forest area where residential and commercial activities were prohibited, and that permission to raze the structure had been granted by the Delhi government's Religious Committee. Now its fate would be decided by the Delhi High Court. Members of the Muslim community, the mosque committee, and the Imam claimed that Shahi Masjid was more than a hundred years old. “*How can it suddenly become an encroachment? This is our history,*” said Mohammad Younus, the general secretary of the mosque committee.⁶¹

The Kolhapur Municipal Corporation's anti-encroachment team demolished Alif Anjuman Madrasa in Laxtirth Vasahat colony, triggering

strong opposition from the Muslim community on 31 January 2024. As per reports, during the demolition, a large crowd gathered in the area, including women and children and raised slogans. The move by the municipal corporation raised questions as reports suggest that the madrasa's appeal in court was scheduled for 2 February 2024. People from the Muslim community were asking if the court was about to hear the case regarding the alleged illegal structure, why was it razed a day before it. Hindutva organisations had asked that the Alif Anjuman madrasa in Laxtirth Vasahat Colony be closed down after their protests of Hindutva organisations, the trust received a notice from the local corporation instructing them to remove the structure. In the meanwhile, the trust submitted a petition to the court. Following the court hearing on the petition, a temporary stay was granted for a certain period of time. Later, the court had denied the application to restrict the action in a hearing on 23 January 2024. However, the Municipal Corporation anti-encroachment team made all the necessary preparations and headed to demolish the Madrasa on 31 January at approximately seven in the morning. The madrasa was razed down with the help of three JCBs, a dumper, fire department vehicles, etc.⁶²

On 8 February 2024, the administration demolished a mosque and madrasa in Banbhoolpura, in the city of Haldwani in Nainital district. Six people were killed in a flare-up of violence that followed, and police cracked down on Muslim residents, detaining several men and barricading the areas in which they lived. Seven people, including a journalist, were under treatment at three different hospitals. Three of them were said to be in a serious condition. Others had been discharged. Addressing a press conference on 9 February 2024, Nainital DM Vandana Singh termed the incident as a *“planned conspiracy”*. *“The riot on Thursday was totally unprovoked and the handiwork of unruly elements who were not trying to protect the structures being demolished but were targeting the authorities, the state machinery, law and order,”* Singh told media. Meanwhile, police have lodged three FIRs and arrested 10 persons in connection with the incident. State chief secretary Radha Raturi and DGP Abhinav Kumar reached Haldwani to take stock of the situation.⁶³

The district court in Uttar Pradesh's Baghpat released a judgment to a decades old dispute over a shrine of a Muslim saint and a Muslim graveyard. The court gave ownership rights over 100 bighas of land along with the sacred tomb located in Barnawa village to the Hindu community. The verdict came at the beginning of the Indian election year 2024 as the legal battle had been going on for over 50 years. Civil judge Shivam Dwivedi rejected the claims of the Muslim petitioners and awarded the land to the Hindu claimants. According to reports, more than ten witnesses from the Hindu side served as witnesses in the courtroom. The site was disputed by both communities. The Hindu claim was that the contested land was a site of relevance from the times of the ancient Lakshagriha from the Mahabharata era, where, according to the text, Kauravas sought to eliminate the Pandavas in a battle. The Muslim petitioners had posited that the tomb in question was the sacred resting place of Sufi saint Sheikh Badruddin. According to a report by the Times of India, the site was a protected site by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).⁶⁴

Ministry of Minority Affairs (MoMA) had ordered the closing down of Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF) which was seen as a severe blow to the educational growth of Muslims. The order to close down the foundation that was set up in 1988 on the birth centenary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, was issued by minority ministry's under-secretary Dhiraj Kumar on 7 February 2024. However, the order does not give any reason for shutting down the foundation.⁶⁵

Assam government had decided to repeal the Assam Muslim Marriages and Divorces Registration Act of 1935. The State Cabinet, which met late on 23 February 2024, approved the Assam Repealing Ordinance, 2024, for repealing the British-era marriage and divorce Act specific to Muslims. Tourism Minister and government spokesperson, Jayanta Malla Baruah told journalists after the meeting that the decision to repeal the Act was made as the State is heading towards the UCC. *"The Chief Minister (Himanta Biswa Sarma) has been clear about the UCC. So, we took the very important decision to repeal Muslim Marriage and Divorce Registration Act, 1935,... Muslim marriages and divorces will no longer be registered under this Act. We want all marriages to be registered under the Special*

Marriage Act,” Mr. Baruah said, adding the Act was being misused for marriages of minors. The opposition Congress and the minority-based All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) criticised the State’s BJP-led government for targeting Muslims through the “unconstitutional step” of repealing the Act. Congress MLA Abdur Rashid Mandal said the Cabinet nod for repealing the Act dealing with marriages and divorces of Muslims was a deliberate attempt to cater to Hindu sentiments at the expense of the Muslim community.⁶⁶



Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on 8 February 2024 that those who were forcibly converted to Islam during the Mughal period could get the status of indigenous persons if they return to their “*original identity*”. Sarma made the announcement while speaking in the state Assembly about the initiatives his government had taken to secure land rights for indigenous communities. “*Islam didn’t arrive in India that early*,” the chief minister said. “*But if you seek indigenous status based on the community before you were converted, then you will get indigenous tag. Many did not convert based on their wishes but because of [the fear of 17-century Mughal emperor] Aurangzeb’s sword and so they should return.*” Sarma said that landless migrant Muslims or Bengali-origin Muslims would not get land titles under Mission Basundhara – an Assam government initiative to update land records and make land revenue services accessible to citizens. The initiative was based on a policy from 2019 on allocating land to landless “*indigenous*” people.⁶⁷



The Uttar Pradesh Police on 31 January 2024 arrested four people, including the Moradabad district president of Bajrang Dal, for allegedly slaughtering cows to implicate a Muslim man in a false case and conspiring against the police, officials said. The accused had been identified as Shahabuddin, hailing from Chetrampur village in Moradabad district, Bajrang Dal leader Monu Bishnoi alias Sumit, and his volunteers Raman Chaudhary and Rajiv Chaudhary. According to the police, Shahabuddin took the help of the Bajrang Dal workers to put Maksud, against whom he had nursed vengeance, in jail by making it appear that he had slaughtered cows. Police said that on January 16 the head of a cow was recovered from Kanwar Path, a road that is mostly used by Hindu pilgrims during the Shravana month to go to religious sites such as Haridwar. He said in the second incident when the officers reached the spot, they found a man's trousers and a wallet that had a photo of Maksud in it. *"When Maksud was interrogated, he told that he had enmity with some people in the village, due to which an attempt was made to implicate him. The names of Shahabuddin and Jamshed came up. These people took the help of Monu Bishnoi, Rajiv Chaudhary and Raman Chaudhary to send their opponent to jail,"* Meena said.⁶⁸

On Republic Day, at a government senior secondary school in Rajasthan's Kota district, a girl student personifying Bharat Mata took center stage in a play. One by one, a Hindu, a Muslim, a Sikh and a Christian character attempted to mold her into their identity, before beginning to fight over her. Watchful citizens, also played by students, thwarted their attempts, with the

play ending with the “*religions*” uniting and the Tricolour being waved. “*It was a sarva dharma sadbhav natak, and as teachers, it is our responsibility to try and send a good message to the community, one of unity,*” said Kamlesh Bairwa, principal of the Government Senior Secondary School in Khajuri Odpur in Kota’s Sangod block. But, over the next few days, the school would find itself at the center of polarising developments, with allegations emerging of conversion and love jihad, leading to the suspension of all three Muslim teachers at the school on the orders of the state’s Education Minister. As for the play, the videos ended up been cropped and used to add fuel to the fire – specifically, the part about a “*Muslim*” student offering a prayer next to the “*nation*”. On 20 February 2024, right-wing outfits under the banner of Sarva Hindu Samaj submitted a memorandum to Education Minister Madan Dilawar, alleging “*love jihad*”, “*religious conversion*” and “*Islamic jihadi*” activities at the school. They alleged that through inducements, the Muslim teachers had made Hindu students offer namaz in school.⁶⁹

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) had strongly objected to the move of the BJP-led government in Uttarakhand to bring the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill, charging that the proposed legislation targeted the identity of the Muslim community besides inflicting damage on the country’s diversity. Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami tabled the UCC Bill in the state Assembly on 6 February 2024, which sought to bring uniformity in laws governing marriage, divorce, and inheritance, among other things, across religions. It proposed the banning of practices like polygamy and bringing in a uniform marriage age for citizens from all communities. Commenting on the Dhami government’s move, AIMPLB spokesperson Syed Qasim Rasool Ilyas said, “*We are protesting UCC. This UCC is against the diversity of the country. This is the country of different religions, culture and different languages and we have accepted that diversity. If you try to implement such a Uniform Civil Code, then you are causing a damage to that diversity.*”⁷⁰

On 22 March 2024, An Indian court had ordered a ban on Islamic schools in the country’s most populous state, asking for millions of students to be shifted to conventional schools, in a move which singled out Muslims

further ahead of national elections 2024. The Allahabad High Court in Uttar Pradesh state scrapped a 2004 law governing madrasas in the state. The court said the law on Islamic schools violates constitutional secularism. Judges Subhash Vidyarthi and Vivek Chaudhary said the state government would ensure that the children between the ages of six to 14 years were not left without admission in duly recognised institutions. This move would dislodge 2.7 million students and around 10,000 teachers across 25,000 Islamic schools, said Iftikhar Ahmed Javed, head of the board of madrasa education in the state. While the court did not give a timeline for the order, the madrasas were unlikely to be closed right away, he said. Uttar Pradesh, an Indian state in the northeastern part, was home to one-fifth of the 240 million people who are Muslims.⁷¹

On 11 March 2024, The Madhya Pradesh High Court ordered the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) to conduct within six weeks a survey of the Bhojshala Temple cum Kamal Maula Mosque complex in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar district, observing that its nature and character needed to be "*demystified and freed from the shackles of confusion*". For Hindus, the ASI-protected complex was a temple dedicated to the Goddess Vagdevi (Saraswati), while for Muslims, it was the site of the Kamal Maula Mosque. As per an arrangement in 2003, Hindus perform puja at the complex on Tuesdays while Muslims offer prayer on Fridays. The petitioners in the case, a group called the Hindu Front for Justice, had argued that Kamal Maula Mosque was constructed during the reign of Alauddin Khilji between the 13th and 14th centuries by "*destroying and dismantling ancient structures of previously constructed Hindu temples*".⁷²

The Indian government had announced rules to implement the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), weeks before Prime Minister Narendra Modi sought a third term for his Hindu nationalist government. The controversial law passed in 2019 by Modi's government allowed Indian citizenship for non-Muslim refugees from India's neighbouring countries. It declared that Hindus, Parsis, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and Christians who fled to Hindu-majority India from mainly Muslim Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan before December 31, 2014, were eligible for citizenship. The law was declared "*anti-Muslim*" by several rights groups for keeping the community out of its ambit.⁷³

In Dharchula town of district Pithoragarh of Uttarakhand, the local traders' association had asked 86 traders of the Muslim community to leave the town. The association cancelled their licenses after the police arrested a barber of the Muslim community for allegedly abducting two Hindu minor girls and taking them to his UP hometown, Bareilly, in February 2024. On 8 February 2024, Pithoragarh Superintendent of Police Lokeshwar Singh said in a statement that they arrested a man named Irfan for abducting two minor Hindu girls from Dharchula, Uttarakhand. Irfan and his associate took them to Bareilly intending to marry them. A case against the accused was filed under Sections 363 and 376 of the Indian Penal Code and appropriate Sections of the POCSO Act.⁷⁴



On 10 March 2024, Uttar Pradesh Police had arrested Hafiz Noor Ahmed Raza Azhari, the state chief of All India Muslim Personal Law Board. His arrest came after his remarks over the Yogi government's action against madrassas. The arrest of Hafiz Noor Ahmed Raza Azhari by the Uttar Pradesh Police in Pilibhit had sparked controversy and debate across the state. In a social media post two days prior to his arrest, Azhari criticized the government's actions, alleging a targeted campaign against mosques and madrassas. He accused the authorities of attempting to demolish these religious institutions and propagating fear among the Muslim community. Azhari claimed that the government's purported agenda was to discourage people from attending madrassas, thereby impeding the religious education of Muslims.⁷⁵

In China, the Chinese government had expanded the campaign of closing mosques to regions other than Xinjiang, according to a Human Rights Watch report released on 22 November 2023. Authorities have closed mosques in the northern Ningxia region as well as Gansu province, which were home to large populations of Hui Muslims, as part of a process known officially as “*consolidation*,” according to the report, which draws on public documents, satellite images and witness testimonies.⁷⁶

In Australia, the Australian parliament had united to condemn “*all forms of hate speech*” including antisemitism and Islamophobia, with the prime minister declaring that the country must not succumb to the “*forces of division*”.⁷⁷

On 24 October 2023, the world must “*stand together against Islamophobia*,” said Australia’s foreign minister. Penny Wong’s remarks came after two mosques in Adelaide, South Australia were hit by arson attacks on 19 and 23 October, a development she said left her “*appalled*.” “*All of us, including every political leader, must stand together against Islamophobia*,” Wong wrote on X. “*We all have a responsibility to call out discrimination, hate speech and prejudice wherever we see it*.”⁷⁸

FAR RIGHT

Far right refers to political beliefs and movements that are extremely conservative, nationalistic, and authoritarian. Far-right groups typically embrace anti-immigration policies, oppose multiculturalism, hold discriminatory views against minorities and marginalized groups, call for a strong, militaristic state, and some even have ties to white supremacy and neo-Nazism. Common characteristics of far-right ideologies include nativism, xenophobia, anti-globalism, traditional gender roles, and hostility towards liberal democracy.

Far-right politics—also referred to as the extreme right or right-wing extremism—are politics further than the standard political right (within the left–right political spectrum), particularly in terms of being anti-communist, authoritarian, ultranationalist, and having nativist ideologies and tendencies. Within such dynamics, anti-Islam sentiments bolstered along with debates about ‘hot issues’ such as immigrants, non-Western

foreigners, assimilation and integration, national identity etc., which was worsened by the surge of refugees fleeing the civil war in some Muslim countries, as well as terrorist attacks hitting some countries.

Overall, far-right movement is a threat to pluralistic democracy, human rights, and societal cohesion by many scholars and human rights groups due to their extreme, intolerant, and divisive views. The Observatory has monitored, presents here, the far-right extremism across the world, and encouraged countries to push back against their spread.

In the US, Donald Trump had vowed to restore a travel ban on Islamic nations, prohibiting citizens of those countries from entering the US, if he was elected president in 2024. *“I will restore my travel ban to keep radical Islamic terrorists out of our country,”* the twice-impeached former president said in New Hampshire on 27 April 2023.⁷⁹

The US former president also promised to make America xenophobic again in bringing back his travel ban, a move that media reported: *“When I return to office, the travel ban is coming back even bigger and much stronger than before,”* Trump said on 15 July 2023 during a speech to the far-right Turning Point Action conference led by Charlie Kirk.⁸⁰

In Italy, a right-wing coalition party in the Italian government led by Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni had prepared a draft law intended to ban Muslim prayer spaces outside of mosques, according to local media. The bill proposed by the Brothers of Italy (FdI) party, was been debated in parliament’s environment committee, and aimed to prohibit the use of garages and industrial warehouses as mosques, media reported on 10 June 2023. Cultural and religious organizations that had not signed an agreement with the Italian state would not be allowed to use a property as a place of worship, adding that the country’s Muslim community had not signed any such agreement with the state. The bill, according to media, was opposed by lawmakers from opposition parties in the parliament’s environment committee, who said if it were passed, it would restrict freedom of religion.⁸¹

In France, hundreds of conversation screenshots had gone viral online documenting anti-Muslims hatred and apology of terrorism by members of a far-right group in France. The conversations, attributed to the neo-Nazi

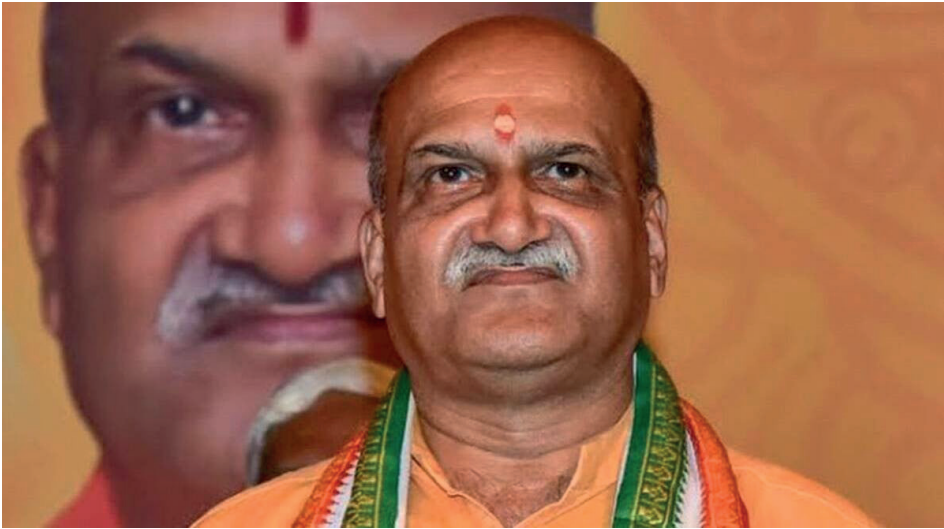
group FR Deter, included messages which incited violent actions and terror acts against the Muslim community in France, and the vandals against mosques. The conversations were tracked on encrypted chat loops on the social media application Telegram. Tajmaat, a North African collaborative platform for Diasporas, shared the screenshots, it showed heinous and violence incitement acts against Muslims.⁸²

In the UK, the Home Secretary Suella Braverman had been accused of peddling extremist far-right lies about Pakistanis after she singled out British Pakistani men over concerns about grooming gangs as she accused authorities of turning a “*blind eye*” to signs of abuse involving young people. Suella Braverman’s comments had been condemned widely and she had been urged to apologize to Pakistanis for putting their lives in danger and for increasing the threat of racist attacks on them after her unfounded allegations. Braverman’s language was condemned by Robina Qureshi, CEO of the refugee charity Positive Action in Housing (PAiH). She called on the Home Secretary to apologize for her “*gross misrepresentation*”; she described her language around British Pakistani men as “*unacceptable*”. The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) also condemned the Home Secretary and expressed its shock at her hatred towards Pakistanis and for singling out Pakistanis. The Home Secretary said that the “*systematic and institutional failure to safeguard the welfare of children when it comes to sexual abuse*” was one of the biggest scandals in British history. “*What’s clear is that what we’ve seen is a practice whereby vulnerable white English girls, sometimes in care, sometimes who are in challenging circumstances, being pursued and raped and drugged and harmed by gangs of British Pakistani men who’ve worked in child abuse rings or networks,*” she told media.⁸³

Luke Skelton, a white supremacist, plotted a terror attack on a police station to instigate a “*racial war*” was found guilty on 16 May 2023. Skelton, from the village of Kielder in Northumberland, conducted hostile reconnaissance work, posted racist hate messages online, and drafted a screed to further his violent, racist ideology after the attack. Skelton joined a growing list of men convicted of far-right terrorism offences in the UK who praised or took inspiration from the Christchurch terrorist. Skelton, who also praised other

neo-Nazi terrorists like Anders Breivik, wrote of his desire to “*accelerate the coming collapse and racial war*”. He envisioned that 93 per cent of the society would be “*native British*”, and outlaw Islam.⁸⁴

In Germany, a candidate from the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party won a local leadership post for the first time on 25 June 2023 in a victory for a group whose anti-migrant, Euroskeptic and anti-Muslim agenda was under surveillance by German authorities. The AfD’s Robert Sesselmann triumphed over incumbent Jürgen Köpper of the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party to become district administrator of Sonneberg, in Thuringia, central Germany, at the weekend. Sesselmann was elected with 52.8% of the vote, while Köpper gained 47.2%, according to the Thuringian State Office for Statistics.⁸⁵



In India, a right-wing politician had opened a new chapter of hate politics in the country, where he offered employment and security to young Hindu men as reward for ‘luring’ Muslim girls. He Spoke at a public event in Karnataka, Sri Ram Sena chief alleged that thousands of Hindu girls were been exploited in the name of “love jihad”. “*I would like to invite the youth here. If we lose one Hindu girl, we should trap 10 Muslim girls. If you do so, the Sri Ram Sena will take responsibility for you and provide every kind of security and employment,*” Indian media quoted the Hindutva leader. “*I am not saying this because elections are round the corner. My statements have always been in the interest of Hindus,*” he said.⁸⁶



Meanwhile, a suspended BJP MLA T Raja Singh had been seen attending several rallies in Maharashtra and delivering speeches full of hateful content and open calls for violence and boycott against Muslims. Media had documented hate speeches delivered by him at the Shiv Jayanti celebrations in Latur on February 19 and the Hindu Jan Akrosh Morcha in Mumbai on January 29. Several FIRs had been lodged against him for his incendiary speeches in Maharashtra. The latest was on March 19 when he and Sudarshan News editor-in-chief Suresh Chavhanke were booked for delivering communally charged speeches at a Hindu Jangarjna Rally organized by ‘Sakal Hindu Ekatrikaran Samiti’.⁸⁷



Leaders from the ruling BJP delivered Islamophobic speech in full swing at the Digital Hindu Conclave held on March 18, 2023. BJP leader Kapil Mishra, Kajal Shingala aka Kajal Hindusthani and far-right author Kshitij Patukale compared minorities, particularly those belonging to Muslim community, distorted history by calling for violence as the only way to attain Akhand Bharat besides raising the topic of Love Jihad. Kajal Shingala said that there can never be brotherhood between Hindus and Muslims and called out those who support secularism and peace between the two communities as a “*sinking ship*”. “*I want to let these people who have one leg on the Hindu boat and the other on a Muslim boat, you are going to drown,*” she said.⁸⁸

The BJP leader who was at the forefront of hate campaign against Muslim students protesting to wear hijab to college premises in Karnataka, Yashpal Suvarna, had got the party ticket from the Udupi Assembly constituency. On 11 April 2023, the party released the initial list and replaced incumbent BJP MLA Raghpathi Bhat with Suvarna, who would be making his debut in the election. The party members think that his involvement in the anti-hijab campaign, in his capacity as the Vice-President of the Development Committee of Udupi Government PU Girls’ College, further strengthened his “*qualifications*.”⁸⁹

On 30 March 2023, nearly 5,000 people poured into the streets of north Mumbai to participate in a procession celebrating the Hindu festival of Ram Navami. For about three hours, the procession passed through Muslim neighborhoods, blaring incendiary songs of Hindu supremacy, waving saffron flags and provocatively chanting “*Jai Shri Ram*” (Hail Lord Ram, the Hindu right wing’s war cry). The situation got tense when some Muslims complained about their prayers being disrupted. A row broke out between the two communities and stones were pelted. The police said they arrested nearly two dozen people for allegedly throwing stones. The official version of the incident said a Muslim man threw a stone at the participants in the Ram Navami rally after his request to lower the volume was rejected. But the residents of Malad said they were at the receiving end of aggression by the Hindu marchers.⁹⁰



On 14 May 2023, another hate event had been organised by the notorious Sakal Hindu Samaj at Amravati, Maharashtra, where Bharatanand Saraswati delivered a hate speech which he targeted the Muslim community. He addressed a crowd of “supporters”, he said that he had been advised by people to not give a hate speech, but he was not afraid of jail. He implied that “because he is a Hindu,” that was the reason why he was been targeted by the police and authorities. He went to the extent of falsely accusing the “Muslim community of spreading COVID”, and the authorities for not “punishing the Muslim community.” He also called for bringing a population control bill to stop Muslim population in the country.⁹¹

Hours after the deadly train crash in Odisha’s Balasore killed at least 288 people and wounded 1,000 others on 2 June 2023, several social media accounts insinuated that Muslims were responsible for the accident. A preliminary inquiry by the Indian Railways said a signaling error was responsible for India’s deadliest train accident in two decades. However, accounts known for spreading Hindutva and Bharatiya Janata Party propaganda swung into action to shield the government as well as Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw from criticism amidst the growing calls for the minister to resign. On 3 June, a Twitter account with the handle @randomsena posted an image of the crash site with an arrow pointing to a white structure with domes close to the tracks and captioned it “just saying...yesterday was Friday”. This seemed to suggest that the structure was a mosque and that Muslims were somehow responsible for the tragedy. Fact-checkers pointed out that the shrine was, in fact, a temple run by

the International Society for Krishna Consciousness or Iskcon. On 4 June, the tweet had garnered four million views and nearly 4,500 retweets. The account also posted a series of old news reports involving Muslim suspects in cases of previous, unrelated train incidents with comments such as “*something is fishy*” to claim a bigger “*conspiracy*” at work. The Twitter account of “*Prof.N John Camm*”, who claimed to be a senior Germany-based cardiologist, tweeted “*rail jihad*”. Several more right-wing Twitter accounts had joined the chorus alleging “*sabotage*” and a “*conspiracy*”. Hindu supremacist and journalist Suresh Chavhanke and his Sudarshan News, known for incendiary television news programmes that target Muslims, had amplified these claims of sabotage, including tweeting out the hashtag “*train accident or attack*” in Hindi.⁹²

Muslims in a north Indian town had been asked by Hindu groups to abandon their livelihoods and the homes they had lived in for generations. About a dozen families had fled Purola, a small town in northern India’s Uttarkashi district in Uttarakhand state, after notices were pasted on homes and businesses asking them to vacate the town. Threats were issued mainly by two far-right Hindu groups – the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and its youth wing, the Bajrang Dal. Both the VHP and Bajrang Dal are in turn affiliated with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).⁹³

On 9 July 2023, Delhi’s Talkatora Stadium witnessed hard-line Hindu nationalists indulge in virulent displays of hate speech at the Anarashriya Hindu Parishad. Hindu far-right leader Samiksha Singh delivered an anti-Muslim hate speech where she called for violence against India’s Muslims at the Virat Hindu Sammelan organised by Antarashtriya Hindu Parishad (AHP) in Delhi. “*Every Jihadi will lose when a Kattar (hardline) Hindi will kill. The biggest problem of Hindus is their humanity, and compassion and mercy*”. A staunch Hindu nationalist and former international president of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Praveen Togadia also spoke at the same venue. “*We will not run nor will we die we will keep our foot on your chest and remind you of your grandmother (teach you a lesson)*”. A jubilant crowd roared in return to Togadia’s “*We Hindus must not let the population of Muslims ever increase.*”⁹⁴

VERBAL AND PHYSICAL ASSAULT

Verbal assault means a threat (including written message) of an immediate harmful or offensive touching, coupled with an apparent immediate ability to commit same, and which puts a person in a reasonable apprehension of such touching; or, the use of offensive language directed at a person, where such language is likely to provoke a reasonable person. Verbal assault could be excessive taunting or teasing, bullying or other verbal harassment, a bomb threat directed at a school building, other school property, or a school event. Physical assault, meanwhile, means intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical harm to another through force or violence. On the context of Islamophobia, the target of both types of assault are Muslims on the ground of their faith or religion; or any objects associated with Islam as religion.

In the US, for the second time in the year, a University of Montana professor was under fire for racist remarks he made in personal conversations. It all started in March of 2021 when former student, Ajaysia Hill made UM officials, including the Title IX office, aware of texts and a video that showed Looney making racist comments. Looney, used the N-word, joked about Muslims wearing towel wraps and made other racist remarks in a conversation with his now ex-wife who was black. UM President, Seth Bodnar, said he was angry about the remarks and would like to have conversations about how our society could do better.⁹⁵



When Yousef Abu Jenna Mahmoud and his wife decided to visit Erie Orchards and Cider Mills in Monroe County on 13 August 2023, the Ann Arbor family was expecting a fun day picking peaches with their three daughters. But instead of a weekend trip many in Michigan enjoy, Mahmoud said he encountered bigotry from the owner, Steve Elzinga, whom he said blocked them from leaving after a dispute over peaches, telling him in an exchange captured on video: *“Every Muslim that comes in here steals from me.”* When Mahmoud said he was being racist toward Muslims, Elzinga doubled down on his remarks, replying: *“Of course I am,”* and *“I don’t want them (Muslims) here.”* Mahmoud, a Muslim and of Arab descent, uploaded videos of the encounter that showed the orchard owner making the anti-Muslim remarks. Mahmoud said he felt threatened by Elzinga, who was accusing him of not paying for peaches they picked from the orchards and then tried to block him from leaving.⁹⁶

Rep. Maryam Khan, a Connecticut lawmaker who was attacked on 28 June 2023 after the Eid prayer service accused police in Hartford of downplaying the assault and called on 6 July 2023 for a federal investigation of the department’s handling of violent crimes, especially against women. Khan described how she and her family were taking photos June 28 outside a Hartford arena where the prayer service was held. She said a man approached and said he *“intended to have sexual relations”* with one of them, including Khan’s 15-year-old daughter. He then followed them inside and Khan said he started to pursue her in particular, grabbing at her face and shirt and demanding a kiss. Khan said the man followed her back outside and tried to grab her face again but became angry when she *“dodged him”* and slapped her across the face. She said he later held her in a *“chokehold”* and held up his hand and mimicked having a gun before slamming her body into the ground. The department originally said Khan suffered *“minor injuries”* after a man, who made lewd comments and tried to kiss her, slapped her face and let go of her neck, causing her to fall to the ground. The suspect, Andrey Desmond, who was chased down and held by two bystanders, was held in lieu of \$250,000 bond at his arraignment the week before on charges which included misdemeanor assault, unlawful restraint, breach of peace and interfering with police.⁹⁷

A rider was kicked off a Hartford Line train 6 July 2023 for she made racist comments to two women wearing head scarf, a transit official said on 13 July 2023. A video of the encounter on CT Rail's Hartford Line went viral on TikTok. The rider was not arrested but was told by the conductor not to ride the train again, said Josh Morgan, spokesperson for the state Department of Transportation. Morgan said the incident happened July 6 on a train headed to Hartford. One of the women, who were wearing hijabs, recorded part of the interaction and posted it on TikTok under the heading: *"Hijabis verbally attacked on train."* The woman said she and her mother were sitting on the train when a woman sat across the aisle, looked at them and *"started shouting how (former President) Obama's to blame for letting foreign exchange students into this country"* and how they overstay their visas. Other people on the train told the woman to stop, but she did not and became increasingly more *"belligerent"* as she talked about white supremacy, the TikTok poster wrote. The woman with her mother decided to begin recording her rants. When the conductor walked up to the passenger, she repeatedly denied that she was talking to the two women. *"Every person in this car said you were talking to them that way,"* the conductor said. She shook her head and refused to get up. He repeated: *"You need to get off my train,"* He told her to get off in Hartford and never get on it again. Morgan said the conductor, watched until they got to Hartford and made sure the passenger exited the train. The women thanked him. *"Kudos to the conductor for not only stepping in to protect the passengers who were filming the video, but all of the passengers,"* Morgan said.⁹⁸

A message declaring *"Death to Palestine"* was written on a whiteboard outside of a suite in Grace Hopper College on 9 October 2023. The initial message had been replaced with three Hebrew phrases, which translate to *"death to Palestine," "children of whores"* and *"they are pussies."* At least one student reported the message later in the week to Hopper's dean and head of college. In an email to all Hopper students on 14 October, Head of College Julia Adams affirmed *"academic freedom and the expression of views and dissent"* without explicitly mentioning the whiteboard messages. *"A student writing 'Death to Palestine,' while [they share] a dining hall, classrooms, common spaces, and a campus with Palestinian students should*

be gravely concerning to everyone,” a Hopper student wrote to the News; the student requested anonymity due to personal security concerns, specifically fear of doxxing. *“It’s one of the reasons why many Arab and Muslim students feel frustrated by the lack of action or support offered to them by the university.”*⁹⁹

On 17 October 2023, a Muslim woman was verbally assaulted and spat at by a man. The alleged assault took place as the woman was walking to pick her kids up from school along a residential stretch of El Camino Real in Burlingame. The alleged victim said the attack was *“scary and unprovoked.”* She said she left her apartment to pick up her children from school when she passed a man who suddenly stopped. *“He was holding his shirt in his hands. He immediately walked up to her, covered his face with his shirt, spat on her. He was shouting, calling her derogatory names and telling her to ‘go back where she came from,’”* said Raed Atawneh, the victim’s translator.¹⁰⁰

On 20 October 2023, an Islamic day school in southwest suburban Bridgeview chose to close and switch to remote learning after receiving what its principal called a *“threatening hate letter.”* Tammie Ismail, principal of the all-girls Aqsa School, wrote to parents that the school received the letter through the mail. She said she immediately informed Bridgeview police, the Cook County Sheriff’s Office, and Illinois State Police about the letter. *“The letter itself was very violent,”* Ismail said, adding the person who wrote it referenced the hate crime and stabbing death of Wadea Al-Fayoume, in Plainfield Township. The letter was *“applauding his killing,”* Ismail said, and called the man accused of the killing a *“national treasure.”* She said it was riddled with racist, anti-Palestinian, and anti-Muslim language, and discussed killing Muslims and Palestinians.¹⁰¹



Stuart Seldowitz, a former national security adviser in the Obama administration was captured in a series of videos harassing and verbally abusing a New York City food cart vendor with Islamophobic language. The incidents came to light after a person on X, the platform formally known as Twitter, posted video of Stuart taunting the cart operator on the Upper East Side. In one clip that appeared to be shot at night, Seldowitz asked the vendor if he had raped his daughter “like Mohammed” did. The vendor politely asked Seldowitz to leave. “*Why should I go?*” Seldowitz asked. “*I’m standing here. I’m an American. I have freedom. It’s a free country. It’s not like Egypt.*” In another clip that appeared to be shot in daytime hours, Seldowitz called the vendor a terrorist and said: “*It’s not my fault you pray to a criminal... You support killing little children,*” Seldowitz told the vendor... “*You kill children, not me,*” the vendor said. New York City Council member Julie Menin, who represents the neighborhood where the incidents unfolded said she had reported Seldowitz’s verbal abuse to police as a possible hate crime. “*This is vile hate speech and harassment and truly abhorrent,*” she said in a statement. “*There is no place for hate in our community and city.*”¹⁰²

A Minneapolis mother said she became a hate crime victim after an argument at a gas station turned violent. “*I’m still feeling in pain,*” said Sabrina Yahya. Yahya said an argument over a gas pump at a Holiday Station store on Franklin Avenue escalated when a woman pulled out a small knife and began attacking her. She said a Good Samaritan and security guard intervened and the woman took off. “*At the time, Ms. Sabrina was with her mother, who’s with us today. And they both began to follow and identify who this individual was,*” said CAIR-Minnesota executive director Jaylani Hussein. They stopped in a neighborhood nearby where the confrontation continued, and Yahya said the woman began expressing anti-Muslim sentiments. “*She made it very clear that she hates Muslims and she hates the people that they are,*” Hussein said.¹⁰³

Sidra Faithullah took a TRAX train home with her seven-year-old son in the Salt Lake Valley on Friday. She said that when the two got off the train, they saw a man across the street start yelling at them. “*We were definitely targeted 100% because we’re Muslims,*” Faithullah said. Faithullah,

who practices Islam, explained that she chooses the level of modesty that she dresses as part of practicing her religion. *“From across the way, he started saying things like, ‘Go back to your country, terrorist,’”* she said. Faithullah said she tried to brush it off at first. *“I’m an American citizen. I’m a U.S. citizen, born and raised here,”* she said. With her son by her side, Faithullah watched as the man crossed the street and walked right up to them, screaming Islamophobic vulgarities and getting in her face. *“Told me to go home, and then spit in my face,”* she said. *“And as he spit on me, it went onto my son. My son started to panic.”*¹⁰⁴



On 8 December 2023, a Warner Robins teacher was arrested and accused of threatening to behead a student after she made a comment about his Israeli flag, according to the Houston County Sheriff’s Office. Benjamin Reese is a 7th-grade social studies teacher at Warner Robins Middle School. Several witnesses said they overheard Reese shouting *“You motherf*****g piece of s**t! I’ll kick your a**. I should cut your motherf*****g head off,”* around students. According to the incident report. On 7 December, a deputy was on duty when he was informed Reese threatened a child’s life. It happened in the 7th-grade technical hallway when students were on their way back to the 8th-grade hallway. The report said a student wanted to talk to Reese about the Israeli flag in his classroom and told him she found it offensive. Reese asked her if it had anything to do with Judaism. She wanted to know why it was hanging there, and Reese told the student he was Jewish and had family members who still lived in Israel. The student said she found

the flag offensive “*due to Israelis killing Palestinians.*” Reese then told the student she was being antisemitic. After that, several different witnesses independently said they heard Reese say, “*he would kick her f****g a**, slit her god***n throat and drag her a** outside and cut her head off.*”¹⁰⁵

Disturbing video captured a traveler harassing a Muslim woman wearing a hijab at a Florida airport – calling her a terrorist and snapping pictures of her for a report to the FBI. Salma Khan, told the Miami Herald she was about to board a flight to Phoenix at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport on 20 November 2023 when she noticed a man glaring at her. “*I’m a visible Muslim woman. I wanted to make him comfortable, so I introduced myself,*” Khan told the news outlet. She said the man told her he was “*happy this was happening,*” but appeared to want to remove her head covering so she asked him to leave her alone. Two strangers then rushed in and sat on both sides of the woman to shield her from the menacing man, who proceeded to call her a terrorist and claimed she and other Muslims hate the US. Video posted on TikTok shows the man pointing his camera at Khan, the two people at her side — a white woman and a black man. Khan told the Herald she was upset by how long it took authorities to help her. After 10 minutes, a Broward Sheriff’s Office deputy escorted the man away from the gate before he was booked on a later flight, according to the news outlet. Khan complained that police never took her name or a statement. “*It does hurt a bit, during such a helpless time, that people in power didn’t step in to help,*” she told the Herald, saying it was instead left to civilians to help.¹⁰⁶

Ashish Prashar, told media he was at the Brooklyn basketball court with his 18-month-old son on 20 November 2023 when an unknown woman charged at the pair and hurled slurs at them before getting physical. Prashar, who said he was wearing a Palestinian scarf known as a keffiyeh, told the media that the woman became upset after his son started to interact with the woman’s young son. “*Do you support Hamas?*” Prashar recalled the woman saying to him. “*You and your son are terrorists, and you should get away from my son.*” Hadasa Bozakkaravani, was arraigned 22 November after turning herself in, according to court documents. She pleaded not guilty to all charges.¹⁰⁷

NYPD was investigating an attack on a Muslim teenager in Brooklyn.

Officials said the suspect used anti-ethnic remarks right before the assault. The victim said she was scared to leave home alone after an encounter on 19 December 2023 “*At that moment I just really wanted my dad to be near,*” Mahak Hussain said. Mahak, who was wearing traditional hijab and abaya garb, said the suspect then pepper sprayed her in the face before running away. The teen said she saw the woman approaching, but was not paying attention. “*I see a woman coming. She has a hood on. Her neck is covered. She had some of her face covered as well, and she’s just walking with her hand in her pocket,*” Hussain said.¹⁰⁸

In Canada, Sonia Ryma Ait Kheddache, shared the incident that happened on 12 April 2023 on social media, along with a 20-second video she took on her cellphone of a man who made racist and Islamophobic comments toward her in a grocery store. Kheddache originally from Algeria and lived in Shippagan, N.B. She said the man first addressed her in English. After an exchange about her wearing a headscarf, she said he raised his voice and made several comments suggesting she was not welcome in Canada and should go back to “*her country.*” Several moments later, Kheddache and the man crossed paths again in the same store and she said he made more Islamophobic comments that she recorded on her phone. Caraquet Mayor Bernard Thériault called the incident unacceptable. RCMP Sgt. Martin Allaire of the Caraquet detachment confirmed to Radio-Canada that a complaint had been filed about the incident and an investigation was underway.¹⁰⁹

On 10 May 2023, two men were on Whyte Avenue preaching about the Muslim faith when a third individual approached. In the video of the encounter, the individual approached the two men and said, “*Why do you guys think anybody wants to hear about your f***ing prophet?*” The man then poured drink out of a can he was holding onto a table that allegedly had the Qur’an on it and walked away. The Edmonton police hate crime and violent extremism unit started an investigation.¹¹⁰

A Université de Montréal Master’s student said she was the victim of a hate incident, with a woman berating her on the street right outside campus on 10 October, just a few days after the Israel-Hamas war broke out. As Kamilla was on her way to the library, she was crossing the street between

Jean-Brillant and McKenna. *“I was walking this way and over here this lady gave me the finger, right as we were crossing the road,”* she said. *“She called me a murderer among other words and as she kept walking, she said ‘you all are going around killing people.’”*¹¹¹

In Spain. Morocco’s football team had faced heinous racist and Islamophobic acts at the Eurostars Madrid Tower hotel. The Atlas Lions traveled to Madrid on 26 March 2023 in preparation for their friendly game against Peru, which took place on 28 March. Several photos online showed employees from the hotel which made fun of Morocco’s Atlas Lions and the holy month of Ramadan. *“Damn f*** Moros. I s*** on Ramadan and it’s f*** dead,”* one of the screenshots of the insulting posts from some of the hotel employees reads. Another viral screenshot went on to insult the Moroccan football team as well as Islam. *“The Moroccan team is in the Towers, you are a f*** pain,”* one of the posts read. According to Spanish sports outlet AS, the Eurostars Madrid Towers strongly condemned the events, clarifying that they are taking legal action against the perpetrators.¹¹²

In the UK, a man had been arrested on suspicion of attempted murder after a man suffered serious burns, having been set on fire while walking home from a mosque in Birmingham. The victim, described by a local politician as a *“pillar”* of the local community was sprayed with an unknown liquid and had his jacket set on fire while walking in Edgbaston on Monday night. He was rushed to hospital, where he was treated for serious burn injuries. On 21 March, West Midlands Police said they arrested a man on Dudley Road by officers who were in the area carrying out inquiries about the attack. He remained in custody, and the police had launched a counter terrorism investigation, they said in a statement.¹¹³

On 11 December 2023, An elderly woman targeted a Muslim teacher with abuse and warned her students that she was going to *“poison you”* on the London Underground. She told Tell MAMA that it was the first time she faced any hate crime on the rail networks. She mentioned how the perpetrator had stood near the group on the Piccadilly Line, which included students under the age of ten having returned from a museum visit, before exiting the train, tapping on the window, and re-entering to begin the abuse. Abusive comments included, *“You are a teacher?! You*

shouldn't be a teacher" before they pointed aggressively at the children and claimed, *"Be careful, she's going to poison you"*. The teacher said: *"My first instinct was to make sure that I protect the children, but then I thought: who is going to protect me?"* Thankfully, two upstanders spoke up and challenged the abuse, with supportive statements like *"Actually, she is a good teacher"* and *"You should go to school and learn"*. The perpetrator soon exited the train.¹¹⁴

An MP in northeast London said there was *"rising fear"* in the Muslim community after a local school was sent a threatening letter. Wes Streeting, Labour MP for Ilford North, said a Muslim school in Redbridge was sent a letter threatening to *"kill everyone"* during the week. In Mr Streeting's letter sent on 8 December, he said parents and teachers were *"fearing for the safety of their children because of the grotesque threat"*. He added that the Redbridge school's experience was *"by no means the only example of hatred, threats and abuse directed towards Muslim community organisations"*.¹¹⁵

In Germany, a Muslim student Gulsen Kurt had been racially insulted by a university professor in Germany because she was wearing a headscarf, her lawyer said on 12 June 2023. The professor used racist slurs and even compared the Muslim woman's headscarf with the swastika symbol of neo-Nazis, lawyer Fatih Zingal said. The incident occurred during an economics class at the campus of the Bonn-Rhein-Sieg university in northwestern Germany. Kurt, who was shocked by the lecturer's use of racist slurs, said most of the students reacted and left the class in protest. *"The professor said that he will not allow a student with a headscarf to attend the class, just as he would not allow a neo-Nazi wearing a swastika. He shouted at me, saying 'you are an Islamofascist', and that he will report me to the directorate,"* she said. Kurt said the directorate had apologised over the racist slurs in class and underlined that the behaviour of the lecturer was not approved by the university administration.¹¹⁶

In India, Mohsin Khan and his wife were harassed by a crowd of over 200 people over bringing home sacrificial goats ahead of Eid-al-Adha. *"They called me a terrorist and threatened to slaughter a pig inside my house,"* said Mohsin, as he struggled to come to terms with what transpired in his housing society in Mumbai on the evening of 27 June 2023. Residents of JP North Garden City in Mira Road area, Mohsin, and his wife were in for a

shock as they returned home. Their car was stopped at the society's main gate by a crowd of approximately 200 people, allegedly over the family bringing home two goats ahead of Eid al-Adha on 29 June. *"When we reached the entrance of our society, two men approached our car and began knocking the window. They asked for my exact address. When I refused, the matter escalated and my wife intervened to stop them. Soon, the crowd started chanting 'Jai Shree Ram' slogans,"* Mohsin told The Quint. At least 300 Muslim families had been residing in JP North Garden City since 2021. Several members of these families told The Quint that JP Infra, the builder, had been providing space to Muslims to keep goats during Eid al-Adha for the last two years.¹¹⁷

Meanwhile, Police in India were investigating a teacher after a video of her encouraging students to slap their 7-year-old classmate, who was a Muslim, sparked widespread outrage in the country. The video of the incident, which took place in the Muzaffarnagar district in northern Uttar Pradesh state, showed the boy fearfully standing in front of his classmates as the teacher calls on students to hit him. The boy cried as his classmates took turns to slap him, while the teacher was heard telling the students to do it *"properly."* A man could be heard laughing as the boy wailed while the slapping continued. Muzaffarnagar's superintendent of police, Satyanarayan Prajapat, on 25 August 2023 said the teacher told students to hit the boy *"for not remembering his times tables."* The teacher also referenced the boy's religion, according to Prajapat. The boy's father told media that his son felt *"restless and scared"* after the incident on 24 August 2023. He said that, while the boy was doing much better, he *"was unable to sleep earlier and was left in shock"* afterward. He told media that his son had since been admitted to another school and attended his first day, after Neha Public School – where the incident took place – was ordered to shut down.¹¹⁸

HATE SPEECH AND ONLINE HATE

Hate speech refers to speech or expression that attacks, threatens, or insults a person or group based on attributes like race, religion, ethnic origin, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity. It can take the form of slurs, defamation, or language that incites violence or discrimination against a protected group.

Online hate takes hate speech into the digital realm across social media, websites, online videos or images, and other online platforms. The relative anonymity and broad reach of the internet allows hate speech to spread more easily and gain wider audiences. Some key characteristics of online hate include:

- Using slurs, memes, symbols or coded language to demean and dehumanize targeted groups
- Harassment and cyberbullying directed at individuals based on protected characteristics
- Conspiracy theories and disinformation scapegoating minority groups
- Incitement of violence, hatred or discrimination against vulnerable populations

In the context of Islamophobia, the target of both types of hate speech are Muslims or Islam as a religion.

In the US, Twitter was amplifying hate speech in its “*For You*” timeline, an unintended side effect of an algorithm that was supposed to show users more of what they want. According to a Washington Post analysis of Twitter’s recommendation algorithm, accounts that followed “*extremists*” — hate-promoting accounts identified in a list provided by the Southern Poverty Law Center — were subjected to a mix of other racist and incendiary speech. That included tweets from a self-proclaimed Nazi, for example, a user the account did not follow. Many were from users previously suspended by Twitter and let back on by new owner Elon Musk, who pledged to de-boost hate speech after his takeover of the site. The tweets appeared on Twitter’s new “*For You*” page, which the company unveiled in January as part of Musk’s redesigned site.¹¹⁹



The words “*No Islam*” scrawled in black spray paint appeared on the walls of businesses in downtown Brownsville in mid-October 2023. A local blogger linked the Islamophobic scribbles to Genovevo Izaguirre, the pastor of Mision Divina, whom police had charged with five counts of graffiti. As first reported on 25 October by El Rrun Rrun, a blog run by former Brownsville Herald journalist Juan Montoya, the Islamophobic graffiti started to appear on 16 October, leading business owners who did not want to fan the flames of division in their community to file police reports. But when Brownsville police checked their expensive surveillance camera system, they came up empty-handed and told at least one complainant that the system had been down at the time of the offenses. It was only after El Rrun Rrun published surveillance photos from a local business owner’s camera that police arrested Izaguirre.¹²⁰

Dearborn, a town in Michigan, U.S., had been forced to beef up security measures after it was labeled “*America’s jihad capital*” in a Wall Street Journal op-ed. The town, with just over 100,000 residents and the nation’s highest Muslim population per capita, became the target of online hate and misogyny since the publication of the opinion piece. Dearborn Mayor Abdullah Hammoud on 2 February 2024 tweeted that city police increased security at places of worship and major infrastructure points as a “*direct result*” of the Wall Street Journal piece titled, “*Welcome to Dearborn,*

America’s Jihad Capital.” Hammoud posted on the X platform, that the item published Friday “led to an alarming increase in bigoted and Islamophobic rhetoric online targeting the city of Dearborn.” Steven Stalinsky, executive director of the Middle East Media Research Institute, who authored the opinion piece, claimed in an interview with The Associated Press that he wanted to draw attention to pro-Palestinian protests in Michigan and elsewhere across the U.S.¹²¹



In Canada, on 15 August 2023, hateful messages and symbols were seen spray-painted at Annabella Street underpass, just north of Higgins Avenue. The city said the graffiti had since been removed. Members of the Jewish and Muslim communities said they were disturbed and saddened after a series of hate-related graffiti messages against Jews and Arabs were spray-painted on an underpass in Winnipeg’s Point Douglas area. The graffiti, which included a swastika and hateful messages such as “*hail Hitler*” and “*KKKCanada*,” was spotted by CBC reporters on Annabella Street, north of Higgins Avenue. It was not clear when the graffiti was originally painted.¹²²



In the UK, a viral video of a man shouting “*Islamic f***** scumbags*” at a Muslim man happened in Rossendale in Lancashire on 11 October 2023, Tell MAMA confirmed. The viral clip showed a white male in a red vehicle driving along Deardengate in Haslingden and began with a reference to Israel as he then aggressively shouts “*Wouldn’t f***** trust you*” and “*Islamic f***** scumbags*” towards a male Muslim driver.¹²³



Islamophobic graffiti had been seen plastered across bus stops amid a rise in hate crimes since the week before. The reports came after the worsening of the situation between Israel and Palestine. Hina Bokhari, a Liberal Democratic London Assembly Member, said she reported on the graffiti she spotted in her area, New Malden.¹²⁴

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Islamophobic graffiti and murals painted in Capljina in Bosnia and Herzegovina triggered a backlash from residents

4 February 2023. Threatening articles such as “*Kill Baliya* (an expression used to insult Bosnian Muslims)” and “*We will slaughter Muslim women and children,*” were written on the Franje Tudjman Bridge in Capljina, where the Croat population is concentrated. “*The murals were written by irresponsible people who aim to humiliate the Bosniak population and spread hatred, intolerance and division among the residents of Capljina. We hope that the perpetrators are found and the different institutions react.*” said City Administration spokesperson Danijela Nogolica.¹²⁵



In India, the self-styled “*cow protection*” squad led by Monu Manesar had repeatedly live-streamed its late-night missions to intercept drivers suspected of transporting and slaughtering cows — a job often done by Muslims in India. Manesar would film himself exchanging gunfire with moving cattle trucks and ramming them with his SUV. He chased cow transporters on foot and beat them on camera. In return, his fans on YouTube and Facebook left comments full of heart emojis, praising him for doing the work of God. The emerging phenomenon of cow vigilante streamers exemplifies how the BJP and allied right-wing groups have used U.S. social media platforms — including YouTube, a Google subsidiary, and Facebook and Instagram, owned by Meta — to polarize India, rally their political base and assert Hindu dominance, sometimes brutally, in one of the world’s most digitally connected countries. This effort is part

of a broader campaign by Hindu nationalists aligned with Modi to use technology to advance their ideology and consolidate their control. Despite repeated warnings from Indian activists, Silicon Valley companies gave Manesar a platform to broadcast violence — and propelled his rise to fame. In October 2022, Manesar received a “*Silver Creator*” award from YouTube for reaching 100,000 subscribers and posed with his plaque next to a cow. A cycle of soaring viewership and increasing violence followed. In January and February 2023, according to complaints filed with police and the courts, Manesar and his followers were involved in several shootings and killings. In April 2023, Instagram granted Manesar’s account a “*verified*” badge reserved for public figures and celebrities. In July 2023, Manesar was widely accused of inciting a sectarian riot that left six dead outside New Delhi, after he taunted Muslims in a WhatsApp video. In a call with media, Manesar said several weeks ago that he was “*staying underground*” and avoiding the media. He declined to comment on the allegations against him. Speaking with Indian media earlier in 2023, he denied any criminal wrongdoing in connection with the series of violent incidents. A YouTube spokesman said the platform terminated Manesar’s channel four months ago after a review of his videos. Meta said that in general the company removes from its platforms accounts that repeatedly violate a ban on violent content. Earlier in 2023, The Post began tracking Manesar’s social media and downloaded 25 gigabytes of his videos before YouTube closed the account amid a probe of his network by police in Rajasthan state. A review of these videos and other posts published by Manesar’s supporters, along with interviews with his associates and their victims and an examination of hundreds of pages of police documents and court filings, told the story of a gang leader who terrorized minority Muslim communities in two Indian states. The YouTube cache reviewed by The Post contained 10 violent videos that Manesar posted between 2020 and 2022. His social media reach, however, was much wider because he maintained several accounts on different social media platforms and his associates also disseminated videos in which he featured. Raqib Hameed Naik, the Washington-based founder of Hindutva Watch, which monitors far-right Indian social media, said violent cow vigilante videos began to surface in 2018 but skyrocketed during the pandemic, when online video consumption boomed.¹²⁶

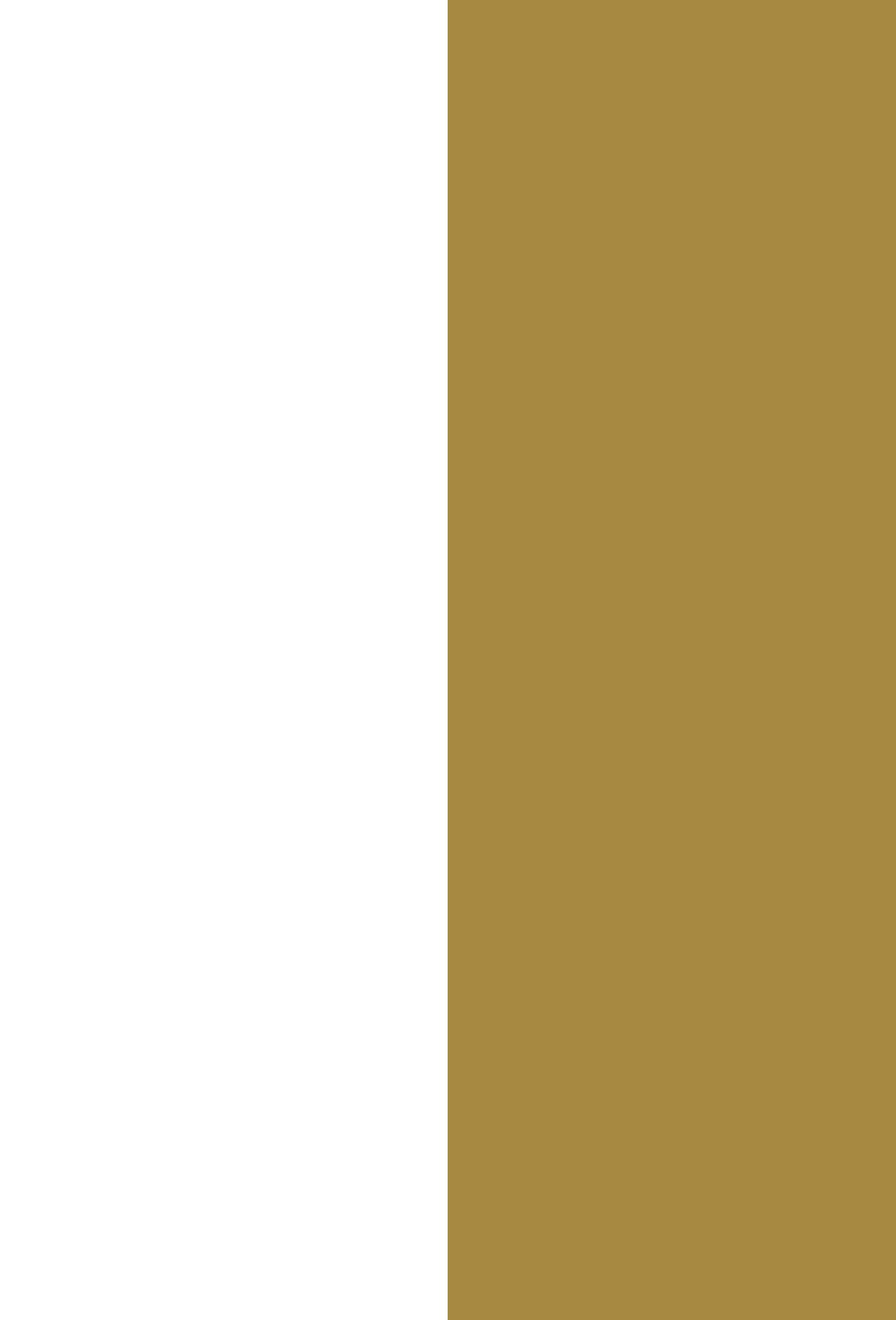
DEFAMATION OF HIJAB

Defamation means making false or unprivileged statements or representations about an individual or identifiable group of individuals that harm the reputation of the person or the identifiable group by demeaning them. The hijab is a headscarf worn by many Muslim women as part of their religious practice and modesty beliefs. It refers to a head dress, covering, or scarf that Muslim women use in such a way that no part of their hair is visible in public, which is in keeping with the regulations and faith within the Islamic teaching concerning modesty.

Unfortunately, the hijab has been the subject of defamatory rhetoric, stereotyping, and vilification in some contexts. Defamation of the hijab can take the form of making false claims that portray the hijab as inherently oppressive, a symbol of extremism, or alleging that women who wear it are being forced against their will. Such statements spread misinformation and promote harmful stereotypes about Muslim women and their choice to wear the hijab. Some defamatory narratives depict the hijab itself as a security threat or claim it prevents integration into society, despite it being a personal religious practice for millions of Muslim women globally. These portrayals defame the hijab by falsely associating it with radical ideologies. Mocking or denigrating Muslim women for wearing the hijab, for example through offensive depictions in media, can also constitute defamation by tarnishing the reputation of the religious garment and its wearers.

During the past 15-months, there were not many manifestation related to defamation of hijab fell under the radar of the Observatory. Among the few was in India, when the Karnataka Government on 18 February 2022 asserted before the Karnataka High Court that hijab was not an essential religious practice of Islam and the ban on wearing it in educational institutions didn't violate the right to religion guaranteed under Article 25 of the Constitution. *"We have taken a stand that wearing hijab is not an essential religious part of Islam,"* Advocate General Prabhuling Navadgi told a three-judge Bench led by Chief Justice RR Awasthi.¹²⁷

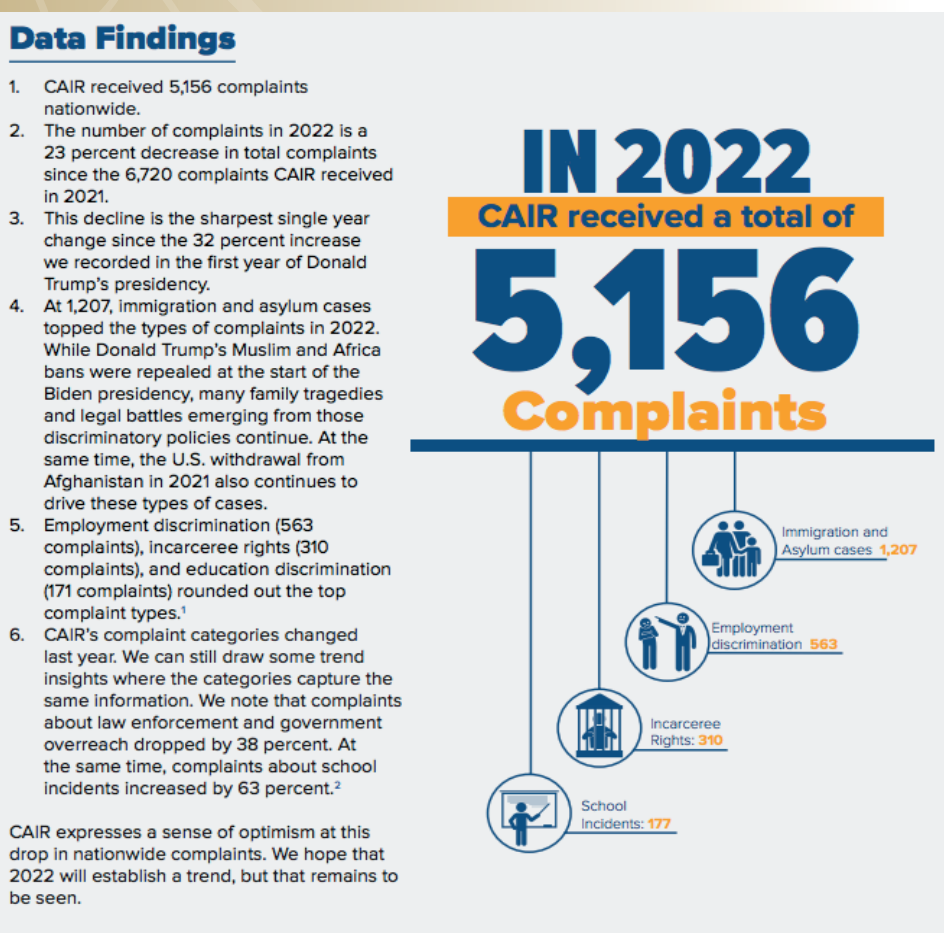
POLLING AND REPORT



POLLING AND REPORT

There have been a significant number of reports released by credible institutions in different countries, displaying the facts that anti-Islam sentiments had growth almost every corner across the world. The Observatory highlighted some of those reports, which are presented here in a brief manner, as evidence of the continuing trend of Islamophobia, as well as xenophobia, hatred, racism, discrimination, and the similar at the global level.

United States



On 11 April 2023, The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) released a report which covered nationwide incidents of civil rights complaints by Muslim Americans in 2022 which revealed a 23% decrease.

In 2022, the Muslim advocacy group received 5,156 complaints nationwide. CAIR noted that it was also the first recorded decline since they started tracking such data in 1995. The complaints involved various forms of discrimination as well as incidents related to law enforcement, education and sports. They included airline discrimination, banking discrimination, bullying, denial of service, education discrimination, employment discrimination, FBI interrogation, hate crimes and law enforcement encounters. The report also noted that complaints about law enforcement and government overreach dropped by 38%. At the same time, complaints about school incidents increased by 63%. According to CAIR National Deputy Director Edward Ahmed Mitchell, the data revealed both progress and “*significant challenges*” in the fight against anti-Muslim bigotry and discrimination. “*The massive 63% rise in school related-complaints and persistently high reports of employment discrimination, bias incidents and government abuses are deeply concerning,*” he said.¹²⁸

On 22 May 2023, The New Jersey chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-NJ), published the chapter’s annual civil rights report, *Beyond the Courts*, which showed a 46 percent increase in the number of discrimination cases. The number of cases reported to CAIR jumped from 104 in 2021 to 152 in 2022. The largest category of complaints was employment and workplace discrimination, which included hostile work environments, explicit bias, and employer retaliation. School-related complaints were a top second and included curricula with anti-Muslim undertones, teacher biases, student bullying, and lack of religious accommodations for Muslim students. Unlike previous years, the report’s findings also noted an increase in Hindutva-related incidents.¹²⁹

Meanwhile, the Massachusetts chapter of the Council of American-Islamic Relations had reported a 72 percent jump in requests for its help from parents and students experiencing an Islamophobia incident in public schools. Overall, the civil rights group received fewer requests for legal assistance in 2022, consistent with national trends reported by its Washington, D.C., office. But school-related incidents surged, which replaced the workplace as the top site for complaints of harassment, discrimination, and abuse, CAIR’s annual report found.¹³⁰

A report by a Muslim group in the US had revealed that the overwhelming majority of entries on an FBI watchlist, or more than 98%, were Muslim names. The report, titled *“Twenty Years Too Many, A Call to Stop the FBI’s Secret Watchlist,”* details the FBI’s use of the Terrorism Screening Database, which it said was targeting Muslims. It was released by Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) on 12 June 2023. After being provided with a 2019 version of the FBI’s list by a Swiss hacker who discovered it online following its accidental posting by a regional air carrier, CAIR conducted a comprehensive analysis of over 1.5 million entries. *“More than 350,000 entries alone include some transliteration of Mohamed or Ali or Mahmoud and the top 50 most frequently occurring names are all Muslim names,”* said the report. *“Of the watchlist entries we’ve reviewed, we estimate that more than 1.47 million of those entries regard Muslims—over 98 percent of the total,”* it added. The report noted that for 20 years, the FBI’s secret list has brought hardship and fear to the Muslim community.¹³¹

Throughout the US, many Palestinian and Muslim students in elementary, middle and high school were anecdotally reporting an uptick in silencing, harassment and bullying that rivals the period immediately following 9/11. Palestinian and Muslim teachers had also experienced troubling behavior such as menacing emails, threatening phone calls, shunning by colleagues. The impact of this harassment had left Palestinian and Muslim students and instructors scrambling and scared. Visibly Muslim students report been called *“terrorist,” “Osama”* and *“bomber,”* while a Connecticut teacher (who asked not to be identified) told Truthout that *“as the only Palestinian teacher in my school, I feel like I can’t speak. Zionist parents and teachers have been very vocal, and students who are Arab or Iranian feel silenced. One of them is thinking of changing her college essay from one that talked about her identity as a Middle Eastern woman to something less likely to be considered controversial.”*¹³²

Muslim and Palestinian students had reported several instances of Islamophobia on campus since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war, calling on University administrators to provide protection and support they said had been lacking. Students said they know of at least four instances of unknown people ripping hijabs off of students on campus since the outbreak

of the Israel-Hamas war. Muslim students said they reported incidents of been spat on and confronted by students on campus to the Office for Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement and said messaging from officials had exacerbated their fears as cases of Islamophobia intensify in Foggy Bottom and across the country.¹³³

Islamophobia and antisemitism were seeing sharp increases across the US after war between Israel and Hamas erupted. According to a new report by the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization received a total of 1,283 requests for help and reports of bias between 7 October and 4 November. CAIR revealed that the increase in Islamophobia and anti-Arab sentiment across the US mark a 216% increase over the previous year. In an average 29-day period in 2022, Cair received only 406 complaints. The top reported type of case was first-amendment – or free speech – issues, marking 23.39% of the anti-Arab and Islamophobia reports received by CAIR. The organization also said 20.56% of the reports involved targeting employment, and 15.32% consisted of hate crimes. CAIR said 9.2% of the anti-Arab and Islamophobia reports revolved around education and bullying.¹³⁴

A new report from the Centre for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH), a non-profit dedicated to countering online misinformation and hate speech, suggested that the social platform was falling short in the commitment to combat content “*motivated by hatred, prejudice or intolerance*”. The organisation reported 200 incidents of hate speech sent from 101 accounts on the platform X that related to the Israel-Palestine conflict and found that 96 per cent of the posts remained online a week later. According to the CCDH, the posts in question were all sent in the aftermath of 7 October 2023 attack and included those which incited violence against Muslims, Palestinians and Jewish people, promoted antisemitic conspiracy theories and described Palestinians in Gaza as animals. Researchers from the organisation identified the accounts by searching through the followings, likes and posts of known hateful accounts and stressed that the sample should not be seen as a “*representative sample of posts relating to the Israel-Gaza crisis, but rather as a means of testing X’s moderation systems*”. The posts that remained online have accumulated 24,043,693 views with only

one been suspended and a further two ‘locked’ meaning they cannot post, repost, or like content. Forty-three of the 101 accounts in question were verified accounts that benefited from the increased visibility of their posts.¹³⁵

On 7 December 2023, The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), released new civil rights data showing that it had received a “*staggering*” 2,171 complaints over the past 57 days amid an ongoing wave of anti-Muslim and anti-Palestinian hate. In the eight weeks covering 7 October to 2 December 2023, CAIR’s national headquarters and chapters received a total of 2,171 requests for help and reports of bias, which was a 172 percent increase over a similar two-month period the previous year. At the national headquarters alone, First Amendment issues (33.94%), violations of an individual’s right to free speech and expression, remain the top reported case type since the last data release and were a growth category (63 percent increase in the last four weeks of the conflict over the first four weeks). This was followed by employment (22.38% reports), hate crimes and hate speech (16.97% reports) and education and bullying (14.08% reports).¹³⁶

Open AI CEO Sam Altman said Muslim colleagues in the tech industry “*feel uncomfortable*” speaking up about recent events over fears of retaliation, in social media posts outlining concerns about the rise of Islamophobia and antisemitism at workplaces amid the war in Gaza. In a post on X, Altman wrote that in recent conversations with “*Muslim and Arab (especially Palestinian) colleagues in the tech community,*” he learned they were fearful of speaking out “*out of fear of retaliation and damaged career prospects.*” Altman called on the tech industry to be united in support of these colleagues in this “*atrocious time*” and urged empathy.¹³⁷

Temple University was the latest Philadelphia-area school to be added to a federal probe of alleged discrimination on college campuses across the nation. In November 2023, the federal government opened civil rights investigations into multiple schools and universities over allegations of antisemitism or Islamophobia since the outbreak of the Gaza conflict in October 2023. On 16 January 2024, the DOE added Temple University to their list of schools under investigation, as first reported by NBC10’s newsgathering partner KYW News radio.¹³⁸

Data released from the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) showed a 63% increase in reports of education discrimination since the beginning of the Israel-Hamas war on 7 October 2023. The data, was part of what CAIR called a “*disturbing*” increase in complaints filed with the organization since 7 October. The organization has seen a 172% increase in complaints filed during a similar time period in 2022. The data on education discrimination includes discrimination at both K-12 and higher education institutions.¹³⁹

Canada

In 2021, Canadian police services received 3,360 statements related to hate crimes, a 27 percent increase compared to 2020, according to a recent study by Statistics Canada. In 2020, 2,646 hate crimes had been reported to police. According to the federal agency, this spike in hate crimes was largely due to more incidents “*targeting religion, sexual orientation and race or ethnicity.*” The number of hate crimes aimed at religion or the faithful of a given religious group reached an all-time high in 2021, after it decreased for few years. In 2021, 884 hate crimes targeting a religion were reported. According to analyst Warren Silver, of Statistics Canada, this was an increase of 67 percent compared to 2020 figures.¹⁴⁰

Islamophobia remained a persistent problem in Canada and concrete action was required to reverse the growing tide of hate, said a Senate report released on 2 November 2023. The report, the first of its kind in Canada, took a year and involved 21 public meetings and 138 witnesses. The report said the committee “*was disturbed to hear that incidents of Islamophobia are a daily reality for many Muslims, that one in four Canadians do not trust Muslims and that Canada leads the G7 in terms of targeted killings of Muslims motivated by Islamophobia.*” The report’s finding that one in four Canadians did not trust Muslims come from a submission to the committee from Maple Lodge Farms, a supplier of Halal meat in Ontario’s Peel region, which said it gathered the information from a “*national survey*” it conducted of 1,500 Canadians. The report found that Muslim women had become the “*primary targets when it comes to violence and intimidation*” because they

were easily recognizable from their attire. As a result, many were afraid to leave their homes for work, school or other activities. The report said that as a result, Arab women had the highest unemployment rate of any demographic group in the country. *“The evidence is clear. Islamophobia is an acute threat to Canadian Muslims and urgent action is needed,”* Sen. Salma Ataullahjan, chair of the Senate human rights committee, told reporters.¹⁴¹

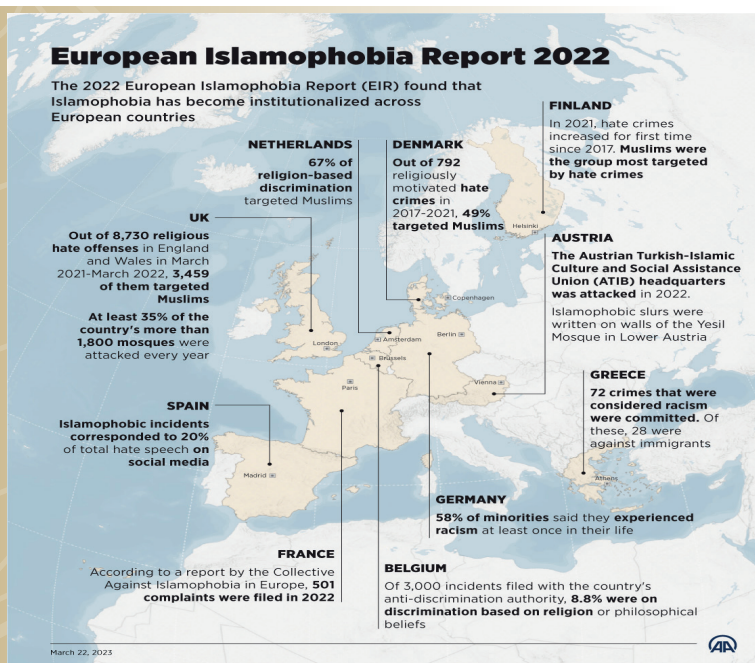
In his nearly 30 years as co-founder and then president of the Canadian Muslim Forum, Samer Majzoub said he had never seen the level of anti-Islamic hate crimes and intimidation reported since 7 October 2023. *“Honestly, it hasn’t just increased, it has skyrocketed,”* Majzoub said. *“It has even exceeded the level we saw after the 9/11 attacks. And we’re seeing new types of anti-Islamic harassment.”* People have called in to report intimidation at their places of work, at schools and at universities. They include drivers spitting at people from car windows and individuals been pushed or verbally abused. People had seen their addresses published on Facebook. Incidents were been reported across Canada, and Montreal police have tallied a growing number of hate-related crimes against both Islamic and Jewish targets in October. Montreal police received 98 reports of hate crimes or hateful incidents between 7 October and 7 November. Of those, 73 were directed against the Jewish community and 25 against the Muslim-Arab community. The police release updated figures every Wednesday. The true number was much higher because many citizens were hesitant to file reports for fear of intimidation or reprisals, or that their complaints won’t be taken seriously by police, as had been reported in the past.¹⁴²

The number of antisemitic and anti-Muslim hate crimes in Toronto, Canada’s largest city, had spiked significantly since the start of the Gaza conflict on 7 October, authorities said. Police chief Myron Demkiw said 78 hate crimes had been reported between 7 October and 20 November, compared to 37 in the same time frame in 2022. The real number was undoubtedly higher since some people were hesitant to come forward, he added.¹⁴³

Brazil

A survey released on November 2023 from the Anthropology Group on Islamic and Arab Contexts — an organisation based at the University of São Paulo — found that reports of harassment among Muslim Brazilians had been widespread since the war began. An estimated 70 percent of respondents said they knew someone who experienced religious intolerance since October 7, when the conflict started in the Middle East. The University of São Paulo’s Professor Francirosy Barbosa found that the events of October 7 resulted in incidents of religious intolerance in Brazil, as Palestinian identity was conflated with Muslim identity. She led November 2023 survey of 310 Muslim Brazilians. Respondents, she explained, reported receiving insults that reflected tensions in the Gaza war. “Many Muslim women told us they are now called things like ‘ Hamas daughter’ or ‘ Hamas terrorist’,” she told Al Jazeera. The survey, conducted online, also found that many of the respondents also had firsthand experience with religious intolerance. “About 60 percent of the respondents affirmed that they suffered some kind of offence, either on social media or in their daily lives at work, at home or in public spaces,” Barbosa said.¹⁴⁴

Europe



The year 2022, overshadowed by Russia's war on Ukraine, overlooked domestic issues including Islamophobia in some countries. It also exposed the “*stereotypical perspective*” of Europeans with regard to refugees, said a report on Islamophobia in Europe. “*The Russian invasion of Ukraine has uncovered the stereotypical perspective of many Europeans vis-à-vis different kinds of refugees, welcoming white, Christian (female) Ukrainians as opposed to the often-violent resistance and rejection of Muslim refugees,*” said the European Islamophobia Report 2022, released 21 March 2023 on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Enes Bayrakli, a co-editor of the report, who was also a professor at the Turkish-German University, said anti-Muslim statements in national media, racism in laws and policies were discussed in the publication, which covers 23 countries. The report was launched in a webinar and the panel was shared by four authors, including Farid Hafez, a professor at the Williams College in Massachusetts, US. The report celebrates the UN resolution which declared March 15 as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia. The report asserted that politics remained the essential driver of Islamophobia, the report included the effects of the ongoing war in Ukraine, the coverage of FIFA World Cup in Qatar by the European media, and how anti-Muslim legislation and measures in countries such as France and Austria developed. France continued its path of a crackdown on Muslims, and the government's “*systematic obstruction*” policy led to the control of 1,727 Muslim institutions, 118 closures and 10 million euros seized between January and August 2022, according to the analysis. In Belgium, the minister of justice pressurized the leading Imam of the Great Mosque of Brussels to resign or risk losing government funding for the mosque. In Denmark, a hijab ban in elementary schools was suggested. The country was also criticized by the European Commission for the increased discrimination and hate speech against Muslims. UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, meanwhile, ignored the fight against Islamophobia, and defended the government's Prevent counter-terrorism strategy and vowed to refocus it on the threat of so-called “*Islamic extremism.*” The official government data on religious hate offences in the UK recorded an increase of 37%, which totaled 8,730 cases, of these 42% involved Muslim victims. In Germany,

364 Islamophobic crimes were registered by the police. An NGO focused on anti-Muslim racism in Austria reported 1,000 cases of anti-Muslim hate crimes the year before.¹⁴⁵

Greek Cyprus

There had been a radical increase in the number of attacks on mosques in the Greek-run south of Cyprus, an official of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) claimed. Speaking to media, Ibrahim Benter, general manager of the Cyprus Foundations Administration (EVKAF), evaluated recent attacks against mosques on the divided island. *“Attacks have increased in recent years and pose a danger,”* Benter said, describing an incident on 26 August 2023 as *“very serious”* because the attacker attempted to burn down the mosque. Noting that a great tragedy was avoided because the mosque was empty then, Benter called on the authorities to take measures against attacks on mosques and Turkish-Islamic artifacts in cities in the Greek Cypriot administration.¹⁴⁶

France

Discrimination in France pushed many highly skilled Muslim professionals to seek better job opportunities in more tolerant societies accepting of their religious beliefs, experts said. A study by the University of Lille led by Professor Olivier Esteves revealed that highly educated Muslims were leaving France in large numbers for the UK, US, Canada and Dubai. After surveying 1,074 Muslims who left the country, Esteves argued that more than two-thirds reported that they moved to practice their religion more freely, while 70% said they left to avoid incidents of racism and discrimination. Esteves suggested that Muslim professionals with in-demand skills were fed up with the way they were treated in the country. *“What’s ironic is that France pays for these people’s education, yet the country loses that highly skilled talent because of rampant institutional Islamophobia,”* Esteves pointed out.¹⁴⁷

The fatal police shooting of 17-year-old Nahel M. on 27 June 2023 had shed light on the wider issue of systemic racism in French society, researchers said. Police and other law enforcers had systematically targeted people of color in France, particularly those of African and Middle Eastern descent, according to Emmanuel Achiri, a policy and advocacy adviser at the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), and Rayan Freschi, a researcher for the UK-based advocacy group CAGE. Citing ENAR data on police brutality in France, Achiri said a staggering 90% of all people “*killed as a result of confrontations with police over the last decade had been persons of Black and Arab descent.*” Moreover, people hailing from Northern Africa or Sub-Saharan Africa were 20 times more likely to be stopped and searched by police or likely to be victims of police violence, he said.¹⁴⁸

United Kingdom

Officials had failed to correct a false claim in a major counter-terrorism report that there had been no far-right attacks in recent years. The Independent Review of Prevent concluded that the intervention scheme should be “*recalibrated*” to focus more on Islamists, rather than other ideologies that take up a greater portion of its work. However, the report’s core conclusions omitted two far-right terror attacks carried out by men who stated their aim to kill Muslims, which were both formally declared by police and the security services. In his foreword to the report, reviewer William Shawcross wrote that Prevent should “*address all extremist ideologies proportionately according to the threat each represents.....Since this review was commissioned in 2019, six terrorist attacks have blighted our nation ... All these attacks were Islamist in nature,*” he claimed. However, there had been eight attacks in the period, and counter-terror police had only confirmed five as motivated by jihadism.¹⁴⁹

Of the same tone, the Amnesty International also strongly criticized the review of the UK’s counter-terrorism Prevent duty published on 8 February 2023. Ilyas Nagdee, Amnesty International UK’s Racial Justice Director, said: “*This review is riddled with biased thinking, errors, and plain anti-Muslim prejudice - frankly, the review has no legitimacy ... There’s mounting*

evidence that Prevent has specifically targeted Muslim communities and activists fighting for social justice and a host of crucial international issues – including topics like the climate crisis and the oppression of Palestinians ... There is growing evidence that Prevent is having disastrous consequences for many people; eroding freedom of expression, clamping down on activism, creating a compliant generation and impacting on individual rights enshrined in law.”¹⁵⁰

The government had failed to address the threat of the far-right in the UK while tacitly endorsing the violence asylum seekers were facing, according to an open letter written by prominent charities and equalities organisations. The open letter, addressed to the prime minister, home secretary and other cabinet and shadow cabinet ministers, and signed by groups including the Community Policy Form, Refugee Council, and the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, claimed that the government had continually failed to “adequately address the dangers posed by Islamophobia and racism against vulnerable people seeking protection and racialised communities in the UK”. The letter added: “With government ministers continuing to promote incendiary language labelling asylum seekers with harmful stereotypes and painting them as unworthy of sanctuary, there must be accountability for their role in normalising and tacitly endorsing the threats that asylum seekers now face .As such, the government must immediately disown such language and pledge to tackle far right rhetoric inciting hatred against minority groups.” The open letter came after the long awaited report on the government’s counter-extremism programme Prevent by William Shawcross published the controversial conclusion that the programme had focused disproportionately on the far right and not enough on Islamist extremism.¹⁵¹

Almost half of young Muslims had experienced Islamophobia at work, in shops and restaurants or in education settings, polling had suggested. The survey results had been described as “*extremely concerning*” and “*especially prescient*” because they come in the same week as Scotland’s first Muslim leader was voted in. The survey findings for Hyphen, an online publication specialising in news, culture and lifestyle about Muslims in Britain and Europe, showed “*much more needs to be done by employers and educators on tackling Islamophobia in public life*”, editor Burhan Wazir said. The

Savanta survey had 2,073 so-called Generation Z respondents in the UK aged 16-24, of which 1,002 were Muslims. Some 49% of the latter grouping said they have experienced Islamophobia in a school, university, or another education setting, 47% had done so in a social setting, while 44% of those with jobs said they had faced it in the workplace. Females were more likely to say they had experienced Islamophobia in a social setting (53%) than males (41%), while for educational settings the breakdown was 53% of females compared with 45% of males.¹⁵²

Islamophobia was been unchallenged by bystanders in Birmingham with the public turning a blind eye to hate, an academic had said. Professor Imran Awan, one of the country's leading criminologists, had called for more bystander training to raise awareness of Islamophobic hate crime. The research showed that Islamophobia was on the rise in Birmingham post-pandemic. Professor Awan's research found that media narratives that portrayed British Muslims as 'super-spreaders' of the virus had contributed to increased levels of hate against the community. Researchers interviewed over 130 Muslims across Birmingham and found that over half had felt increased levels of anxiety since the pandemic.¹⁵³

A survey in partnership between Tell MAMA and ITV News revealed that of the 117 mosques surveyed, almost 90 per cent experienced anti-Muslim hate crimes in the previous 12 months. A closer look at survey responses from mosques targeted included cases of bacon thrown at their buildings, or at their entrance. Graffiti and vandalism appeared in responses, including within prayer rooms or stones thrown at windows or broken windows. In one example, someone set fire to a bin outside the mosque. The targeted abuse towards congregants appeared in some responses from mosques as others described one case of racist chanting to slurs of "*paedo*" or "*terrorist*". Hate mail, including, as one mosque described, included an "*Islamophobic, anti-refugee leaflet*", as other respondents spoke of an online component – with some receiving violent threats over email. Nor had the far-right threat diminished, with a few mosques describing agitations. The threat increased around the holy month of Ramadan, with 29 mosques agreed that they experienced more hate crime and abuse, as a vast majority of the examples cited included increased verbal abuse, harassment, and anti-social

behaviour. Of the 117 responses, thirty mosques reported hate crimes to the police, and of that figure, thirteen mosques received satisfactory outcomes or found those responsible, with similar numbers reporting that police had not found those responsible.¹⁵⁴

Instances of anti-Muslim hate had more than doubled in a decade, according to a monitoring group which said it had produced one of the most detailed studies of such attacks in the UK. Tell MAMA, which monitors and works to tackle anti-Muslim sentiment and abuse, said verified cases of anti-Muslim hate had increased annually from 584 in 2012 to 1,212 cases in 2021. It said that while this might be partly down to Tell MAMA becoming a more recognisable organisation to make reports to and to more people feeling they can report such hate and bigotry, *“it may also indicate that greater numbers of cases of anti-Muslim hate are taking place”*. The group said the highest frequency of verified offline cases took place between the years of 2016, 2017 and 2019, which it noted corresponded to *“a cluster of terrorist attacks in the United Kingdom, the Christchurch terrorist attacks in New Zealand and to the Brexit referendum result”*. Tell MAMA said the activities of the far right, anti-Muslim attacks globally, political discourse, the Brexit referendum result, the activities of so-called Islamic State and terrorism and extremism, grooming scandals and targeted anti-Muslim campaigns *“have all led to spike points in anti-Muslim hate”*.¹⁵⁵

Recorded religious hate crime rose 9 per cent in 2022/23 across England and Wales, with Muslim and Jewish communities experiencing 56 per cent of offences, the latest Home Office figures revealed. The data revealed 3,452 recorded offences towards Muslim communities (39 per cent), representing two-fifths of the 9,387 offences logged by police forces (excluding Devon and Cornwall). The 2022/23 figures closely mirror the previous year (3,459 offences) – but the figures remained above the pre-pandemic years. The 2018/19 recorded figures of 3,530 offences (47 per cent) was slightly above the most recent data.¹⁵⁶

On 20 October 2023, London police said they had recorded a 1,353% increase in antisemitic offences this month compared to the same period 2022, while Islamophobic offences were up 140% since 7 October 2023. Officers have made 21 arrests for hate crime offences, including a

man detained for defacing posters of missing Israelis and another over Islamophobic graffiti on bus stops. *“The conflict is having a direct impact on London and Londoners, with increasing cases of abhorrent Islamophobia and antisemitism seen in the capital,”* London Mayor Sadiq Khan said.¹⁵⁷

On 5 October 2023, Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) had responded to the Home Office’s latest hate crime statistics (England and Wales), and expressed profound alarm at the 9% increase in religious hate crime offences, from 8,602 to 9,387, in the year ending March 2023 – the highest number of religious hate crimes since the time reporting began. Of particular distress was that as of March 2023, where the perceived religion of the victim was recorded, 2 in 5 of all religious hate crime offences were targeted against Muslims. As such, 39% of all religiously motivated hate crimes (3,452 offences) targeted Muslims, which made Muslims the most targeted faith group. In the year ending March 2021, 45% of all recorded religious hate crime offences in England & Wales were targeted against Muslims, and in the year ending March 2019, 47% of all recorded religious hate crime offences in England & Wales were targeted against Muslims.¹⁵⁸

Scotland's Islamophobia

Key findings from the inquiry into Islamophobia in Scotland concluded in 2021 found that:



75% of Muslims say that Islamophobia is a regular or everyday issue in Scottish society.

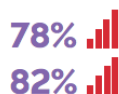
Over 80% of all Muslim respondents to the survey have a friend or family member who has experienced Islamophobia.



Muslim women are more likely to encounter Islamophobia than men: 56% of survey responses say that women are at most risk, and 58% of Glasgow residents think that women are at greater risk of experiencing Islamophobia.



78% say that Islamophobia is getting worse, and this rises to 82% of Muslim respondents with a Glasgow postcode.



79% of Muslim respondents are fearful of experiencing Islamophobia



85% believe that broadcast media promote Islamophobia, and the percentage of Muslim respondents selecting this option is 89%



Islamophobia has an impact on the educational outcomes of Muslims (and those perceived to be Muslim) in Scotland, according to 74% of survey respondents and 77% of Muslim respondents



89% of survey respondents believe that print media promote Islamophobia. Among Muslim respondents, the overall level rises to 93%



84% argue that social media increase Islamophobia

“Scotland needs to urgently introduce education reforms to combat the scourge of Islamophobia in society”, a report had recommended. This included integrating an understanding of Islamophobia into the curriculum and all

teacher training, requiring all educational institutions to create safe spaces for discussion, prayer and reflection, and adopting dress-code policies in schools that are sensitive to the needs of Muslims. Two years on from the country's first public inquiry into Islamophobia, the recommendations were included in an update on progress produced for the Scottish Parliament Cross-Party Group (CPG) on Challenging Racial and Religious Prejudice. With initial research finding that 75% of Muslims said Islamophobia was a regular or everyday issue in Scottish society, the update report had highlighted areas which need immediate reform. With Muslim women in Scotland more likely to encounter Islamophobia than men, according to the findings, the report called on the Scottish Government to fund and support organisations and initiatives that promote social cohesion and integration, particularly for Muslim women. There were also several recommendations for the Scottish media, including encouraging editors to consult regularly with the Muslim community to promote understanding and prevent misrepresentation. The new CPG on Challenging Racial and Religious Prejudice was convened by Scottish Labour MSP Foysol Choudhury, with deputy conveners Kaukab Stewart and Fulton MacGregor from the SNP and Pam Gosal from the Scottish Conservatives. Other members include Scottish Lib Dem leader Alex Cole-Hamilton and dozens of charities and organisations, including the Muslim Council of Britain. The update for the CPG was authored by Professor Peter Hopkins of Newcastle University, who had been researching issues of racism and Islamophobia in Scotland for more than two decades. The research was supported by the Economic and Social Research Council.

Urgent recommendations in the new report included:

- Integrate an understanding of Islamophobia into compulsory components of the Scottish education curricula and all teacher training education.
- Provide all teachers and lecturers in Scotland regularly with compulsory training to counter Islamophobia.
- Require all educational institutions to create safe spaces for discussion, prayer and reflection.
- Require schools to establish dress-code policies that are sensitive to the needs of Muslims.

- Encourage colleges and universities to establish links with employers with a good and/or leading record for diversity and championing ethnic diversity and anti-racist initiatives/policies.
- Require all journalists in Scotland to participate in regular and compulsory training on the role that the media play in fostering Islamophobia.
- Require all editors to consult regularly with the Muslim community in order to promote understanding and prevent misrepresentation.
- Actively promote careers in journalism to graduates within Scotland's diverse communities.
- All initiatives about Islamophobia in Scotland must pay specific attention to its gendered nature.
- The Scottish Government should fund and support organisations and initiatives that promote social cohesion and integration, particularly for Muslim women.¹⁵⁹

Schools across England were struggling with the emotional turmoil set off by the Middle East war and the impact on students, parents and teachers. Specialist organisations such as the Community Security Trust and Tell MAMA said they were seeing a big increase in reports of antisemitism and Islamophobia involving schools and pupils since the 7 October attacks and Israel's invasion of Gaza. In one case, police were called to Woodford County high school for girls, a grammar school in the London borough of Redbridge, after Islamophobic graffiti was found in a toilet on 3 November. According to images posted on social media, the graffiti said: "*Death to Gaza, death to Arabs, death to Muslims.*" Pupils at Channing school, a private girls' school in north London, reported antisemitic graffiti in their toilets, including a swastika and the words "*Kill Jews*".¹⁶⁰

Tell MAMA logged 515 anti-Muslim cases between 7 October and 29 October – a seven-fold increase over the same period last year (only 73 cases were logged). Of the 515 cases, 247 cases happened offline – with 177 cases of abusive behaviour, 25 threats, 24 assaults, 13 cases of vandalism, 11 acts of discrimination, 12 cases of hate speech and 5 examples of anti-Muslim literature. Cases occurred in areas like London (155), North West (26), Lancashire (6), South Yorkshire (7), West Yorkshire (12), East Midlands (9) and West Midlands (13), South East (4), South West (5), North East (6),

Wales (2), Scotland (2). In the online world, Tell MAMA received 268 cases.¹⁶¹

A new analysis by CAGE International revealed an alarming increase in the number and types of cases involving an attack on expressions of support and solidarity for Palestine across the UK. CAGE International noted a 455% increase in the number of cases it had handled since the last upsurge in 2021. Between October and December 2023, CAGE International handled 214 cases, spanning 118 school and college cases, 35 workplace cases, 35 protest and related cases, 13 university cases, and 13 mosque cases. This substantial rise signifies a broad and alarming clampdown of pro-Palestinian activity. The report also included five case examples that illustrate the adverse impact on individuals, including children.

The report outlined various aggressive tactics employed in the repression of Palestine solidarity, including:

- Enforcing removal of Palestine symbols or clothing in schools and workplaces.
- Holding students in isolation rooms and imposing suspensions and exclusions.
- Disciplinary actions against parents and students.
- Criminal investigations, suspensions, and immediate terminations in workplaces.
- Gross misquotations of Imams in media outlets leading to Charity Commission investigations.
- Abuse of anti-terrorism powers at protests.

Key Findings:

- An aggressive and authoritarian response from the government to legitimate activism in support of Palestine.
- A disturbing double standard compared to the government's responses to the Russia-Ukraine conflict revealing hypocrisy in public spaces, schools, and workplaces.
- The Islamophobic nature of censorship, with 209 out of the 214 cases involving Muslims.
- The weaponising of PREVENT and PREVENT referrals in suppressing support for Palestine.
- A consistent pattern nationwide across towns and cities, from Newcastle to Portsmouth.¹⁶²

A report by the children's commissioner for Wales said racist abuse happened regularly in schools and was "being normalised" by students. The

Welsh government said it would “*carefully consider*” recommendations. The report highlighted cases of a Muslim girl been told “*you’re hiding a bomb in your scarf*” and another girl been left in tears after her hijab was pulled off. Other children said they had been called a terrorist. The Welsh government said: “*Racism is unacceptable in our schools. While this report makes for difficult reading, it is vital that we listen to children and young people, and effectively address the issues they are facing.*”¹⁶³

Tell MAMA had recorded 1,202 anti-Muslim cases as of November 2023. The figures covered 7 October to 30 November 2023, demonstrating a seven-fold increase in cases from the 2022 figure of 172 cases (135 offline, 37 online). Of the 505 offline cases, 324 occurred in London, 47 in the northwest, 13 in South Yorkshire, 27 in West Yorkshire, 17 in the East Midlands and 27 in the West Midlands. In other areas, like the Southeast and Southwest of England, we recorded 11 cases in each area, respectively. The final geographic areas concern Scotland (9), Wales (2), and the Northeast (17). In terms of categories, Tell MAMA received 331 cases of abusive behaviour, 37 threats, 43 assaults, 33 acts of vandalism, 31 cases of discrimination, 23 acts of hate speech and 7 examples of anti-Muslim literature. Examples include the harassment and abuse towards Muslims in public spaces wearing clothing or colours in supported of Palestine – with some told to “*cover it up.*” Other offline reports concern abuse towards Muslims when out shopping or exiting major supermarkets – including racist slurs like the P-word. Across the online sphere, including major social media platforms to Telegram and other digital platforms, the organization received 697 cases.¹⁶⁴

There had been a 235 per cent increase in Islamophobic attacks in the UK since 7 October. According to Tell MAMA, which logs anti-Muslim incidents in Britain, 2,010 cases of online and offline abuse had been recorded, the largest number in a four month period since the organisation was founded in 2011. In contrast, over the period from 7 October 2022 to 7 February 2023, 600 incidents were recorded. The cases of anti-Muslim hate included the word “*Hamas*” been written on a family’s front door, while some Muslims were abused while travelling by public transport. In over 65% of these cases, women were the target, the organisation said.

More than a quarter of cases – 576 – were reported in London, Tell MAMA said.” *We are deeply concerned about the impacts that the Israel and Gaza war are having on hate crimes and on social cohesion in the UK,*” Iman Atta, director of Tell MAMA said.¹⁶⁵

Germany

A German government report on 11 January 2022 highlighted the problem of anti-Muslim racism in the country. Reem Alabali-Radovan, the State Minister for migration, refugees and integration, had presented the report on the state of racism in Germany at a press briefing in Berlin. According to the report, Muslims were after the Sinti and Roma among those minorities to whom Germans had the most negative attitude. Based on a survey, slightly more than one-fifth of those questioned had negative opinions toward Muslims. A third of the interviewees share the view that the number of Muslim people in Germany should be limited, and 27% believe there were too many Muslims in Germany. The report also pointed to the fact that Muslims had been subjected to hate crimes and daily attacks. In 2021, 732 Islamophobic crimes were recorded, as well as 54 attacks on Muslim institutions and representatives, according to the report.¹⁶⁶

Germany recorded 23,083 far-right crimes the year before, according to preliminary figures released by the Interior Ministry. The figures represent more than a 5% rise from 2021, when 21,964 crimes by right-wing extremists were registered. These included propaganda offences, insults on social media, threats, arson, and physical assaults. Neo-Nazis and right-wing extremists carried out at least 1,138 violent attacks last year. At least 478 people were injured in these attacks, according to official figures. Germany had registered 23,604 far-right crimes in 2020, which was the highest annual figure over the last two decades. In 2021, there was a slight decrease compared to the previous year. According to the latest data, German police registered at least 569 Islamophobic crimes in 2022 across the country. There were 45 attacks on mosques and at least 25 people were injured because of anti-Muslim violence. The figures also included dozens of hate crimes against Muslims, cases of intimidation, vandalism and property damage.¹⁶⁷

A report had once again shed light on the rise of Islamophobia in Germany, it highlighted several attacks which targeted individuals and mosques amid inaction from the authorities to tackle the situation. Turkish-Muslim group DITIB released the report, which identified at least 35 attacks against mosques in 2022. Anadolu Agency quoted the DITIB report, stressed that Islamophobic attacks and violence targeted mosques and muslims were “*closely related to social and political developments.*” Public debates about immigrants and Islam were also a direct trigger to such attacks. “*Polarizing and non objective debates, an increase in stigmatizing (especially demonization of Muslims), are leading to an increase in attacks targeting mosques,*” the report said. The attacks targeting mosques included 19 acts that were motivated by Islamophobia. Eight attacks of the total 35 acts against mosques were carried out by right-wing extremists.¹⁶⁸

Racism, hatred and sometimes violence against Muslims in Germany were widespread and often part of their everyday experience, according to a report presented at the interior ministry in Berlin on 29 June 2023. The Independent Group of Experts on Muslim Hostility worked for three years on the comprehensive report about racism and hostility toward the country’s 5.5 million Muslims. The group analyzed scientific studies, police crime statistics and documentation of anti-Muslim incidents by anti-discrimination agencies, counseling centers and nongovernmental organizations. The report concluded that at least one third of Muslims in Germany had experienced hostility due to their religion. However, the experts pointed out that the real numbers are likely vastly higher since only 10% of Muslims appeared to report hostility and hate crimes against them. German Muslims are not only exposed to blunt racism but also to daily stereotyping from kindergarten to old age, the experts said. The group found that negative prejudice toward the community included “*the attribution of widespread, largely unchangeable, backward-thinking and threatening characteristics to Muslims and people perceived as Muslim.*” The researchers found that Muslim hostility is common in basically every aspect of life from schools to the police, national, regional and municipal agencies, the private job sector, the housing market, the media and politics. As an example of anti-Muslim sentiment in education, the authors of

the study read excerpts from a political science schoolbook from 2019, which claimed that Muslims “*want to live better than they do at home, yet they insist on their identity, which includes headscarves, mosques, prayers in schools, forced marriages, oppression of women.*” The book concluded that “*for many of them, that is part of their sense of ‘us’. The problem is: It collides with our sense of ‘us’.*” “*Muslim life belongs to Germany as a matter of course ... This makes the findings of this first comprehensive report on Muslim hostility in Germany all the more bitter ... Muslims in Germany experience exclusion and discrimination in their everyday lives — right up to hatred and violence ... It is very important to make this visible and to raise awareness of resentment that is still widespread,*” Interior Minister Nancy Faeser said in a statement.¹⁶⁹

A total of 898 anti-Muslim incidents were recorded in Germany on 2022, while the number of unreported cases remained high, according to a situation report released on 26 June 2023 by the Berlin-based non-governmental organization the Alliance Against Islamophobia and Muslim Hostility. According to the study, racism was part of everyday life for Muslims in Germany, with many recorded cases involved women. Among the documented cases were 500 verbal attacks, including inflammatory statements, insults, threats and coercion. Eleven threatening letters to mosques with “*often excessive threats of violence and death*” were also recorded. The letters contained Nazi symbols or references to the Nazi era. In addition, the report mentioned 190 cases of discrimination and 167 cases of “*injurious behavior.*” The latter category included 71 cases of bodily harm, 44 cases of property damage, three arson attacks and 49 other acts of violence. In addition, racially motivated attacks on young people and children were increasing, it said. There were cases where women were attacked in the presence of their children and pregnant women were kicked or hit in the stomach. The authors of the study assume that the number of unreported cases is high because there is no broad media coverage. The first situation report included data from 10 advice centers in five German states as well as reports via the “*I-Report*” portal, statistics for politically motivated violence, and police and press reports.¹⁷⁰

Support for the AfD had reached 22%, according to an opinion poll by

the INSA, conducted for the daily newspaper Bild. The poll showed the Christian Democratic Union is currently leading the polls at 26%, with all the other parties trailing behind including Chancellor Olaf Scholz's Social Democratic Party on 18%, The Greens at 14%, the Free Democratic Party at 7%, and The Left party at 5%. Speaking to Bild on the AfD's rise, INSA Director Hermann Binkert said there was a mere 4% gap between the far-right party and the Christian Democratic Union. *"The gap has never been that minor,"* he added. The AfD was a right-wing populist party founded in 2013. It had gained significant support by positioning itself as a Eurosceptic and anti-immigration party, and had been known to use strong anti-Islam rhetoric in its political discourse.¹⁷¹

Germany's interior ministry announced that 258 anti-Muslim crimes were recorded by police in the first half of 2023. More than a dozen mosques were attacked between January and June, and dozens of Muslims were physically assaulted or verbally harassed on the street or in public places. Seventeen people were injured in these attacks. The ministry released the figures in response to a parliamentary question by the opposition Left Party. According to the information provided by the ministry, the cases included hate crimes, threatening letters, verbal and physical assaults, vandalism or property damage. Some 124 of these cases were reported between January and March this year, and 134 others were registered between April and June. Most of the crimes were committed in the eastern German states, the traditional stronghold of far-right parties, according to the figures. But scores of Islamophobic hate crimes were also registered in the capital Berlin, and the western cities of Cologne, Frankfurt and Munich.¹⁷²

More than 40% of Muslim men had experienced racism in everyday life in Germany, according to a study released on 14 November 2023. According to the report published by the German Center for Integration and Migration Research (Dezim) in Berlin, some 41.2% of Muslim men were affected by racism. More than a third of Muslim men (39%) reported about more frequent experiences of discrimination and racism in the police, while 51% referred to negative experiences in public offices and talking to authorities. Among Muslim women, 46% said that they had often experienced discrimination in offices and authorities. When it comes to contact with the

police, the corresponding proportion was 25%. CLAIM had documented 53 cases of anti-Muslim threats, violence and discrimination in the last two-and-a-half weeks alone, which included 10 attacks on mosques.¹⁷³

Professor Mathias Rohe from the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, who co-authored one of the most comprehensive reports on Islamophobia in Germany, spoke to media about the growing anti-Muslim sentiment in the country. *“Our study has revealed that Muslims in Germany encounter Islamophobic discrimination in their everyday life, for example in the education, in the labor market, while looking for accommodation, in the media, and much more,”* Rohe said. *“It’s an urgent problem, and we have to recognize that this is a problem for society as a whole. We must not leave the Muslims alone with this. This was a problem for all of us,”* he said. According to the study of independent experts, which was published in June 2023, anti-Muslim sentiment was not a marginal phenomenon, but widespread in large parts of the German population. Around every second person in Germany agreed with anti-Muslim statements. Professor Rohe said while millions of Muslims had been living in Germany for many years and become an integral part of the society, negative stereotypes and misconceptions about Muslims are still widespread. He said many Germans still believed in the stereotypes such as Muslims cannot bring any positive change or their values were completely different.¹⁷⁴

Luxembourg

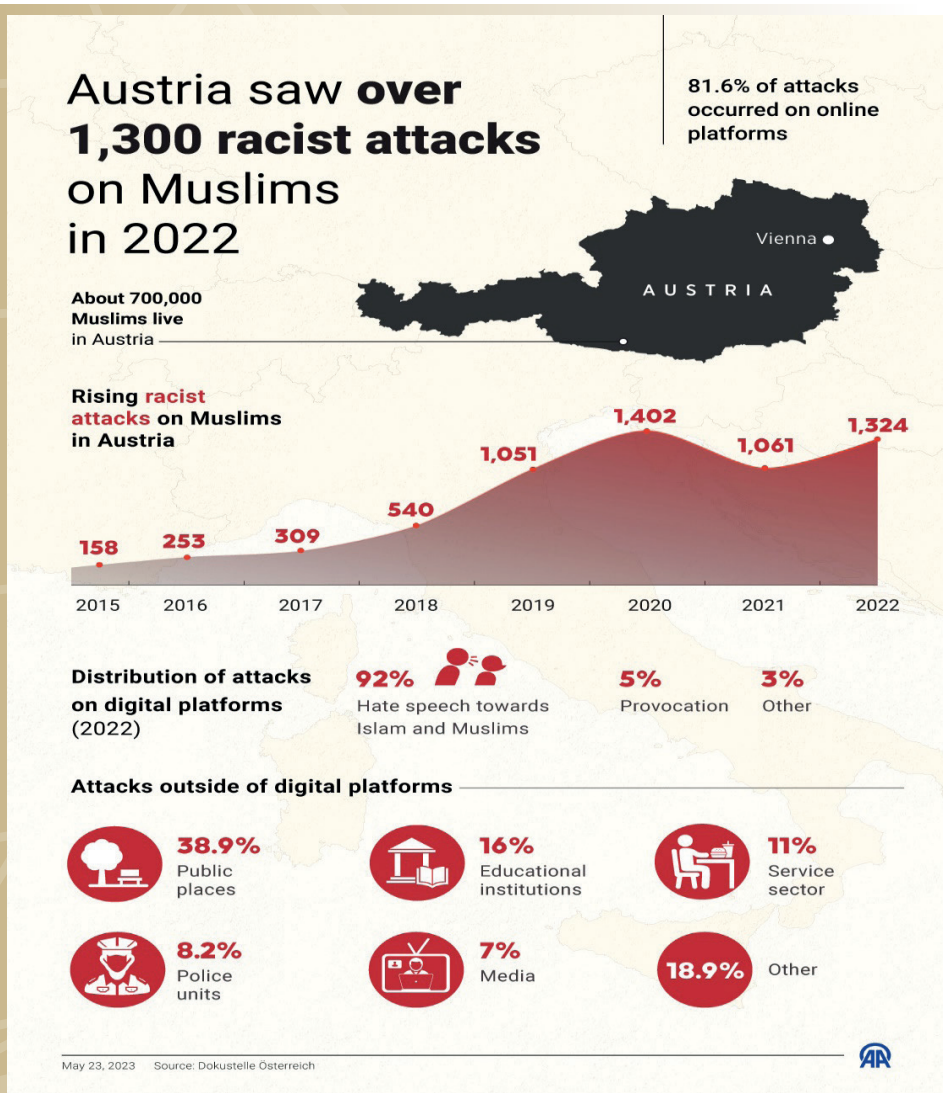
One in six Muslims faced religious discrimination in Luxembourg in 2021, according to a newly released report. The report also found that women were much more prone to face Islamophobia than men. One in five Muslims in Luxembourg said that they had witnessed incidents of Islamophobia. This represents a 9% decrease compared to 2020. Observatory president Jasmin Jahic argued that the first pandemic year had radicalized some people: *“Many people were at home and spent a lot of time online, which increased the rate of cyber-Islamophobia. The same happened to other types of discrimination, such as racism and antisemitism.”*¹⁷⁵

Norway

Been discriminated against by public institutions, feeling as if they had to hide their religious identity and harassment were some of the experiences Muslims in Norway told a report they had been through in 2022. A full 43 percent of those questioned for the survey, commissioned by the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDI) and carried out for the Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies, said that they had “often” or “sometimes” been given the feeling of not belonging. One in five respondents said they had experienced discrimination from public institutions in Norway on the basis of their religious identity, one in four said they had experienced harassment over the past 12 months, and one in three respondents said they hid their religious identity out of fear of negative attitudes. Men were more likely than women to hide their religious identity, with 37 per cent of men reporting doing so, compared to 29 percent for women. *“The experiences described to us clearly show that there is a nationalist dimension to anti-Muslim attitudes,”* said Cora Alexa Døving, one of the researchers behind the study, said in a press release. *“Many of the experiences are about being defined by a Norwegian community: ‘go back to where you come from’, ‘you Muslims are not like us’, and so on.”*¹⁷⁶

Austria

Muslim women wearing the headscarf in Austria face more anti-Muslim hate and discrimination than men, according to a local activist working against Islamophobia. *“The most victims we have are women who wear the hijab. ... Because of the hijab, because of the visibility of the hijab, a lot of women face more anti-Muslim racism,”* Munira Mohamud, an activist working at an Austrian NGO, Dokustelle, told Anadolu. According to the organization which documents anti-Muslim hate crimes and racism, over 1,000 Islamophobic incidents were reported the year before in the country, with women been the majority of victims as compared to men. The 2021 statistics showed that women, with 69.2%, were also subjected to Islamophobia more than men.¹⁷⁷



Austria saw 1,324 incidents of anti-Muslim racism and Islamophobia on 2022, according to a report released on 22 May 2023. According to the 2022 Report on Anti-Muslim Racism released by the Austrian Documentation and Counseling Center for Muslims, a majority of the attacks took place on digital platforms. The report said 15.2% of those subjected to anti-Muslim racism, verbal and physical attacks were men while well over double that, 40.2%, were women. The figures also showed that of the online attacks, 92% were hate speech against Islam and Muslims, while 5% were incitement. While 81.6% of the attacks were carried out on online platforms, 38.9% of them happened in various areas of social life in Austria, where some 700,000 Muslims live. The capital Vienna saw the largest number of racist incidents with 112, said the report.¹⁷⁸

Applicants with Muslim names received significantly more rejections and face a harder process to find housing. The Austrian housing market suffered from racist discrimination, especially for people with Muslim backgrounds, a study commissioned by the Ombud for Equal Treatment (GAW) had shown. In early 2023, 157 housing advertisements in the major Austrian cities of Graz, Vienna, Innsbruck and Linz were responded to by two fake profiles, public broadcaster ORF reported on 25 June 2023, citing the study. The first profile “*Muhammad Asif*” received an appointment in only 50 percent of the cases. The second profile with the fictitious name “*Michael Gruber*”, who always called after “*Asif*”, always received an appointment. “*People who are discriminated against outside the workplace because of their ethnicity report this to us most often in connection with the search for an apartment,*” Sandra Konstatzky, the study’s director, told ORF. According to Konstatzky, the landlords use false pretexts in the rejections, since the native-sounding applicant “*Gruber*” received a promise even two hours later in some cases for the same apartments. But also, if not directly cancelled, it was clearly more difficult for “*Asif*” to find an apartment, said Konstatzky. In 34 percent of the cases in which an appointment date was not directly given, further documents were requested from “*Asif*.” In 25 percent of cases additionally, a written application was asked for. The applicant “*Gruber*”, on the other hand, received an appointment for a visit directly in all calls.¹⁷⁹

The way the media in Austria covers protests in support of Palestine was provocative and increases polarization and Islamophobia in the country, said an activists. In an interview with Anadolu, academician-publisher Gerhard Hertenberger and activist-writer Wilhelm Langthaler evaluated the pro-Israel stance of Austria’s media and its manipulative language about demonstrations in support of Palestine. Hertenberger pointed out that reports in Austrian media predominantly frame Israel’s attacks on Gaza as legitimate self-defense. He noted that demonstrations in solidarity with Palestine were banned in European countries such as Germany and France but were allowed under certain conditions in Austria. He Noted that media reports about solidarity demonstrations with Palestine were presented with headlines such as “*Anti-Semitism is rising in Austria*” and “*Support for terrorism, not Palestine,*” Hertenberger said: “*It’s an absolutely*

propaganda-like ideologic language. I think the media on purpose mixes it up to confuse the people.” He also emphasized that the media’s use of language targeting Muslims in Austria, which had experienced an economic crisis in recent years, was dangerous because it carried the potential to blame a certain group. “The much bigger problem now is the Islamophobic movement. The Islamophobic movement is much, much stronger, and this might be the reason that the white right-wing party now isn’t anti-Semitic but is anti-Muslim because they know that they get more votes.”¹⁸⁰

Sweden

Some 51% of Swedes supported a ban on the burning of the Quran and other holy scriptures, a survey revealed on 1 April 2023. While 34% said burning holy scriptures was freedom of speech and expression, 15% did not comment, according to the poll by major research company Sipo. The survey was conducted on March 14-16 with the involvement of 1,370 responders.¹⁸¹

A survey released on 6 July 2023 revealed that majority of Swedish people supported a ban on the public burning of religious texts such as the Quran or the Bible, according to a new survey conducted on behalf of Swedish national television broadcaster SVT. The result marked a significant shift in the Scandinavian nation where a man set Islam’s holiest book on fire on 28 June 2023. In the survey, carried out by Kantar Public, 53 percent of those questioned said that burning holy scriptures of any religion in public should be prohibited, while 34 percent answered that it should be allowed, and 13 percent were undecided. This marked an 11 percent increase in those looking to forbid such acts, from February when Kantar asked the same question in a Survey for TV4, a Swedish Television network.¹⁸²

More than half of Swedish people were in favor of a ban on the burning of the Quran and other books, according to a survey published by a pollster. The percentage of Swedes who want to ban such burnings increased to 53%, two points higher than the previous poll. The latest survey was conducted by the Swedish opinion poll company SIFO. Some 37% were in favor of burning holy books within the scope of freedom of expression, while the remaining did not express an opinion. The survey was conducted with 1,291 randomly selected Swedish nationals between August 15-27.¹⁸³

A mosque in the Swedish capital of Stockholm had been the target of Islamophobic attacks for over a year, with the latest incident occurring on 21 February 2024 when Muslim faithful read graffiti on the mosque wall with a Swastika sign and the threatening message “*kill Muslims.*” The Stockholm Mosque in the capital’s Södermalm district had been subjected to hate crimes for the second time in a week. On 20 February, the perpetrator also scrawled graffiti with a Swastika mark and a threatening message, saying “*go home*” carved on a door, the mosque’s administration said in a post on its website. Mohamed Amin, a member of the Stockholm Mosque committee, told SVT TV that “*soon we will have to put bars in front of the windows to protect them, like in a prison.*” The mosque had previously been targeted by scrawled doors in November 2023.¹⁸⁴

India

THE All India Pasmanda Muslim Mahaz (AIPMM), an organisation working for backward Muslims, released a report based on the Bihar caste survey on 27 February 2024, while demanding that the Centre bring in a stringent law against mob lynching and check “*bulldozer culture*” against the accused in a crime, claiming that almost all the victims of both such excesses belong to the Pasmanda community. The report, which was released in Delhi, also seeks reservation for Pasmanda Muslims in private sectors, given their poor socio-economic conditions. While the BJP, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, had been wooing Pasmanda Muslims in a strategic move, given that the larger Muslim community remains alienated with the party, the AIPMM report is equally critical of both the party and AIMIM. “*We consider the politics of the RSS, BJP and AIMIM to be complementary to each other,*” said the report. The AIPMM report ‘Bihar Caste Survey 2022-2023 and Pasmanda Agenda’ says: “*Ninety-five per cent of the victims of mob lynching and excesses by government bulldozers belong to the Pasmanda community. Our demand is that a strict law be made against this. The Collector and SP of the district where such an incident occurs should be made accountable for it. In such incidents, compensation should be given to the family of the deceased and a government job should be given to a person from that family.*”¹⁸⁵

The Centre for Study of Society and Secularism Mumbai had come out with a report on the communal situation in India, since January 2024. The center had listed the hate crimes against Muslims and categorized them as communal riots, hate speeches, Hindu vigilantes, state funding of Hindu religious activities, demolition drives, etc. Communal riots – Five communal riots had taken place in January 2024. They were directly related to the Pran Pratisthan event held in Ayodhya on 22 January 2024. Out of the five communal riots, two were reported in Mumbai, one in Nagpur, one in Vadodara, and one in Shajapur in Madhya Pradesh. All these riots took place in the BJP-ruled states. The communal riots in Mira Road, Mumbai had origin in local tension where scuffle gave way to stone pelting resulting in Municipal Corporation stepping in to use bulldozers. The Corporation bulldozers demolish about 15 structures in the Muslim-dominated area on Mira Road. Hate Speeches: According to the CSS report, there were seven instances of hate speeches reported in January. These speeches broadly called for the demolition of mosques made baseless allegations of love jihad, boycott of halal certification meat, use of bulldozers against Muslims, and called for stricter action against Muslims. The hate speeches were made by BJP leaders, MLA T Raja and MLA Nitesh Rane in Solapur and Mumbai in Maharashtra, MLA Geeta Jain in Mumbai, and Anantkumar Hegde, BJP Member of Parliament and BJP leader KS Eshwarappa from Karnataka. Hindu Vigilante activity- There was a significant spurt in Hindu vigilante during January 2024. In Uttar Pradesh's Shahjahanpur district, there was an alleged incident of removing a green flag from a mosque and replacing it with a saffron flag on January 23. In a similar incident, eleven miscreants hoisted saffron flags atop a mosque in the Tajganj area of Agra district during a Shobha Yatra on January 22. Demolition of Muslim property: It was seen that Hindu leaders were at the forefront of inciting local tensions into a big communal riot leading to bulldozers stepping in to demolish Muslim homes using the pretext of illegal encroachments. Apart from the Mira Road demolition in Mumbai, there was a report of demands for the demolitions of Muslim properties in Panvel, where communal tension prevailed on 22 January 2024. Reclaiming Muslim Sites- An alarming trend of reclaiming Muslim places of worship had been seen after the Pran Pratisthan event. Soon after the event in Ayodhya, a Varanasi district Court ordered allowing puja inside the Gyanvapi mosque in its "*Vyas Tehkana*."

Thereafter, the Shahi Idgah case flared up in Mathura. The place had been peddled as Krishna's birthplace and was been reclaimed by the Muslims in a bid to convert it into Krishna Janamsthan. In the same vein mentioned may be made about Maharashtra, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde announced to "*liberate*" Haji Malang Dargah in Mumbai and convert it into a Hindu site.¹⁸⁶

The Indian media continued to spread Islamophobic discourse and misrepresent Muslims. To create religious animosity and demonize the minority Muslims, the mainstream media had again resorted to publishing fake news. This was a key finding of fact-check portal Boom analysis for the year 2023. The Boom did a fact check of around 2,000 stories from January to December 2023. According to its report, out of 1,190 published fact-checked stories, 183 tried to target Muslims. The important findings report media disseminating fake news and spreading misinformation about Muslims. News channels, news portals, and wire news with a large circulation were involved in targeting the Muslim community and dividing society on religious lines. According to the analysis, fake news spreads misinformation about changing demography by implicitly showing that the Muslim population was rising fast. The tone of media had been so anti-Muslim that 87% of the fact-checked contents, out of 211 stories, were related to religious groups and it targeted Muslims. Shockingly, the recent brute military exercise of Israel against the impoverished Palestinians had provided this media an opportunity to demonize Muslims. Fake and doctored graphics and videos were made viral by agent provocateurs to create an impression that Muslims were "*violent*" and they were a threat to "*peace*" and "*democracy*". In several doctored videos, the beheading of the children and execution of the prisoners had been shown. In other contexts, the media used imported videos and linked them to Indian Muslims. The aim could be nothing other than maligning the image of Muslims and provoke hostility against Muslims. They all contributed to keeping the fire of the Islamophobic narrative aflame.¹⁸⁷

Anti-Muslim hate speech in India rose by 62% in the second half of 2023 compared to the first six months of the year, a Washington-based research group, adding the Israel-Gaza war played a key role in the last three months. India Hate Lab documented 668 hate speech incidents targeting Muslims in 2023, 255 of which occurred in the first half of the year, opens new tab

while 413 took place in the last six months of 2023, the research group said in a report released on 26 February 2024. About 75%, or 498, of those incidents took place in states governed by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, according to the report. The states of Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh accounted for the most hate speech. Between Oct. 7 and Dec. 31, there were 41 incidents of hate speech against Indian Muslims that mentioned the Gaza war, the report added. It accounted for about 20% of hate speech in the last three months of 2023.¹⁸⁸

Indian authorities targeted the homes, businesses, and places of worship of Muslims using bulldozers, Amnesty International said in two reports. The Hindu-majority country had been seeing a growing pattern of what was being dubbed “*bulldozer justice*” aimed at punishing activists from minority groups, mainly Muslims, the rights organisation said, as it called for an end to the widespread and “*unlawful*” demolitions. Authorities unleashed bulldozers to crush the properties of dissenters and protesters in New Delhi and neighbouring state Uttar Pradesh, according to examples cited by the report. The aim of this brand of “*bulldozer justice*” was to destroy Muslim-owned shops, said the international human rights group which investigated 62 out of the total 128 demolitions documented in five Indian states between April and May 2022. The local governments of Delhi and Uttar Pradesh have not yet responded to Amnesty’s report. Amnesty said Muslim properties were “*discriminatorily targeted*” without any due process. This had led to forced evictions of around 600 Muslims from their residences, amid collective and arbitrary punishment among other rights violations for over 600 people, the report said.¹⁸⁹

Anti-Muslim hate speech incidents in India averaged more than one a day in the first half of 2023 and were seen most in states with upcoming elections, according to a report by Hindutva Watch, a Washington-based group monitoring attacks on minorities. There were 255 documented incidents of hate speech gatherings targeting Muslims in the first half of 2023, the report found. There was no comparative data for prior years. About 70% of the incidents took place in states scheduled to hold elections in 2023 and 2024, according to the report. Maharashtra, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Gujarat witnessed the highest number

of hate speech gatherings, with Maharashtra accounting for 29% of such incidents, the report found. The majority of the hate speech events mentioned conspiracy theories and called for violence and socio-economic boycotts against Muslims. About 80% of those events took place in areas governed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).¹⁹⁰

Japan

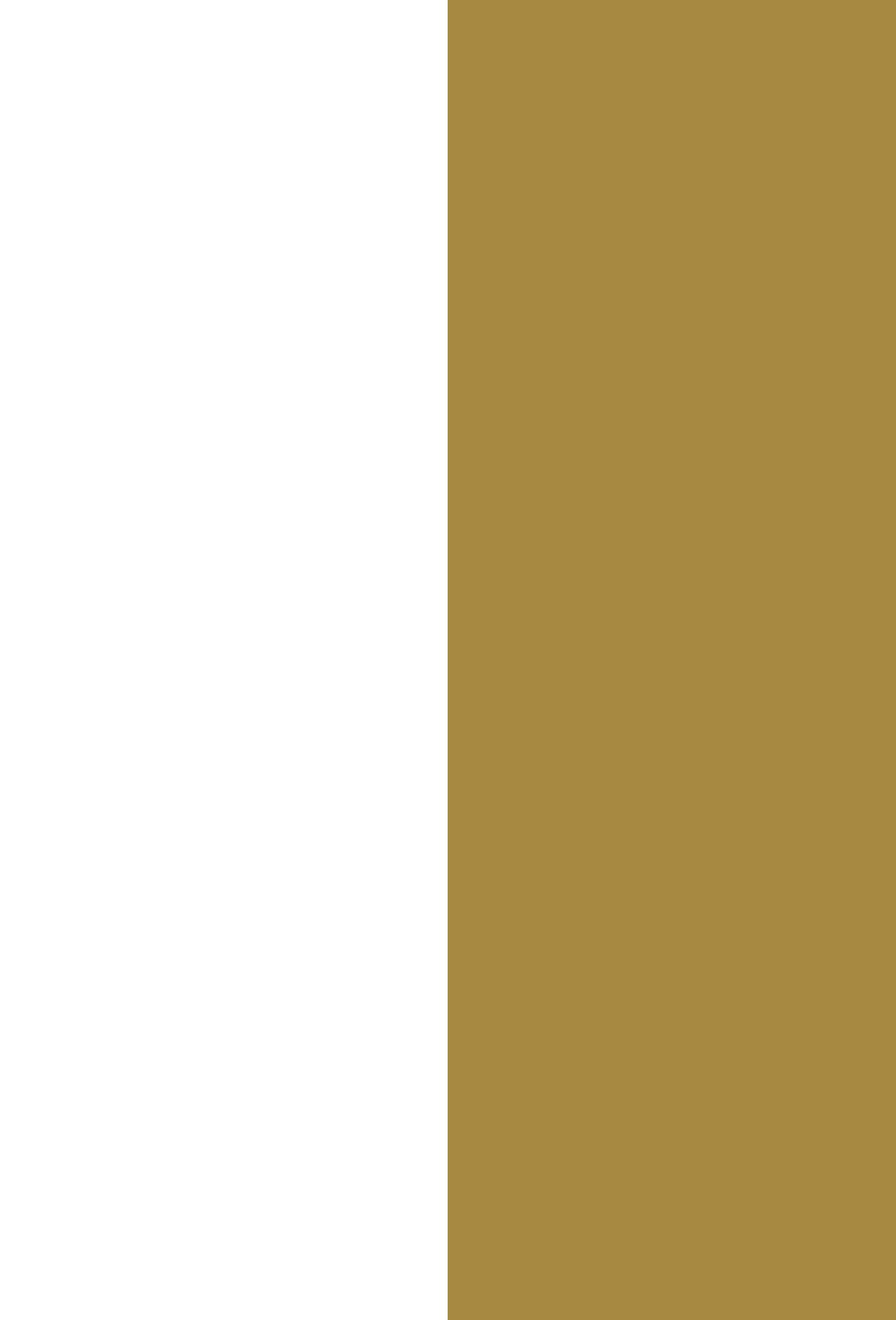
There had been a surge in anti-Muslim rhetoric in Japan after Israel's attacks on Gaza, a Japanese academic said. Karyim Naoki Yamamoto, a member of Marmara University Institute of Turkic Studies, told media that there had been an increase in the anti-Muslim and anti-Palestinian sentiments in Japan. Yamamoto, said that hate speech against Muslims had increased with the rise in the votes of far-right parties in Japan. The academic stressed that xenophobia (hatred against foreigners), which had existed in the East Asian country for many years, turned into anti-Muslim after Israel's attacks on Gaza. *"Japan is currently experiencing a negative change ... Xenophobia and anti-Muslim sentiments have increased exponentially in the last 15 years."* he said. Pointing out that Japan, which was among the countries with aging people, require a foreign labor force, Yamamoto said: *"The Japanese government's move to bring people from abroad to work has triggered xenophobia in the country."* Far-right groups in the country were trying to create public opinion by reporting the negative aspects of immigrants, the academic said, mentioning: *"Far-right groups are spreading disinformation that if foreigners come to the country, there will be no good future and economy... They say: 'We need to protect Japan from foreigners and Muslims. Japan belongs to the real Japanese, we need to do something against this invasion,'"* he stated.¹⁹¹

Australia

On 21 March 2023, The Islamophobia Register Australia's ('Register') flagship research report was released at an event attended by Minister for Multiculturalism Andrew Giles, Minister for Youth Anne Aly, Senator

Mehreen Faruqi, Senator Fatima Payman, MP Kylea Tink and MP Sally Sitou. The report, in partnership with Charles Sturt University and Islamic Science and Research Academy (ISRA), covered the 2020-2021 reporting period and compiled all incident data from the inception of the Register in September 2014 until December 2021, including 930 verified incidents of islamophobia (515 offline and 415 online). Since the inception of the Register (2014-15) until the start of the Covid-19 era (2020-21), there's been a concerning fall in witness reporting of islamophobia which dropped by about half (from 47 per cent to 24 per cent), according to the report. Findings showed most victims of islamophobia were women (78 per cent) and most perpetrators were men (70 per cent), with two in three women being harassed by male perpetrators. Principal Researcher and CSU Associate Professor Dr. Derya Iner said the islamophobic incidents in the report *"were mostly committed by men perceived to be from Anglo/European backgrounds and from older cohorts"* with the victims being *"mostly younger hijabi women from non-White ethnic backgrounds and from vulnerable cohorts, unaccompanied or with children"*. Dr. Iner said these significant characteristics of islamophobia had been seen repeatedly over the eight years of reported incidents and that incidents in guarded places reached up to 70 per cent in the last reporting period. Over the 8 year period of the recent report, verbal intimidation was the most common form of abuse (45 per cent) followed by graffiti and vandalism (12 per cent) and discrimination by authorities in official buildings, workplaces, schools (10 per cent), written material (9 per cent), physical assault (8 per cent), multiple incident types in one case (8 per cent), non-verbal intimidation (6 per cent) and other (2 per cent). In online circumstances, it was found that three quarters (75 per cent) of reporters in the period of 2014- 21 were Muslim. The ratio of non-Muslim reporters dropped significantly (from 35 per cent in 2014-15 to 2 per cent in 2020-21).¹⁹²

POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT



POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT

During the observed period, there had been encouraging efforts by governments, organizations, and communities to combat Islamophobia and promote greater understanding and inclusion of Muslim peoples. Educational campaigns, interfaith dialogues, and stronger legal protections against discrimination and hate crimes have helped raise awareness of the harmful impacts of anti-Muslim bigotry. While much work remains to be done, these initiatives represent positive steps towards building more inclusive societies that respect religious and cultural diversity. By upholding shared values of pluralism, mutual understanding, and equal rights for all, progress in addressing the root causes and manifestations of Islamophobia would be possible.

The following instances of positive trends are worth mentioning:

Counter-balance to Far Rights

In the US, the anti-Muslim hate group Understanding the Threat (UTT) was shutting down. UTT was the organization for which John Guandolo, a former FBI agent turned anti-Muslim conspiracy theorist, ran his Islamophobic training programs and other activities. In a June 5 email titled “UTT’s Farewell,” Guandolo told supporters, “We have to shut our doors.” “The assaults from our adversaries financially and legally have been withering and overwhelming,” Guandolo said via email. Guandolo was one of the leading anti-Muslim figures in the country. He claimed that the religion of Islam was at war with the U.S. and pushes conspiracy theories of Muslims being a fifth-column threat working to subvert the country from within. He also advocated against building mosques in the US, claiming them to be “where battles were planned, jihadis trained [and] weapons stored.”¹⁹³

An op-ed piece that dubbed a Detroit suburb “America’s jihad capital” was being condemned by two Democratic state lawmakers, who described it as “racist and Islamophobic” in a resolution presented on 6 February 2024. Introduced by state Rep. Alabas Farhat and House Floor Leader Abraham Aiyash, the measure calls on The Wall Street Journal to retract the piece,

which was published on 2 February, and issue a public apology to the City of Dearborn. Officials said they increased police presence in the city after the op-ed appeared.¹⁹⁴

In Canada, on 10 July 2023, Toronto launched a new public education campaign to raise awareness about Islamophobia and “remind Torontonians that acceptance comes without exceptions”. The latest ‘Toronto For All’ campaign, which called on Torontonians to both confront and eliminate Islamophobia, would appear on transit shelters as well as the city’s social media channels and website.¹⁹⁵

In France, French appeal court judges made errors when overturning an anti-Muslim hate conviction against former French far-right presidential challenger Eric Zemmour and the trial should be held again, the country’s highest court ruled on 21 February 2023. Zemmour, who won 7% in the first round of France’s 2022 election, was convicted in 2020 for public remarks in which he called Muslim women and men wearing traditional religious clothing part of an “invasion” and a “colonization”. Civil rights activists turned to the ‘Cour de Cassation’ after a 2021 ruling by an appeal court in Paris overturned the 10,000 euros (\$10,665) fine penalty against Zemmour for public insult and inciting hatred against Muslims. An appeals court would have to decide again on the case, the “Cour de Cassation” added.¹⁹⁶

In the UK, the contest to succeed outgoing Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon had proven no less historic, it delivered the country’s first ever ethnic minority and Muslim leader in Humza Yousaf. On 27 March 2023, Yousaf, was announced the Scottish National Party’s sixth leader—and, by extension, the Scottish government’s First Minister-designate—in Edinburgh, marking the end of what had become an acrimonious and unpredictable leadership contest. Of the three candidates, which included the Scottish finance secretary Kate Forbes and former junior minister Ash Regan, Yousaf was widely seen as the continuity candidate and the favorite of the SNP leadership. In the end, he secured the backing of 52.1% of the SNP’s card-carrying members, who were the only ones eligible to vote in the leadership contest.¹⁹⁷

An anti-racist community group had condemned the attack against an

elderly Muslim man who was savagely attacked by thugs as he walked home from a mosque in Kings Heath on 29 March 2023. Local residents and councilors had expressed shock at what had been described as a “racist” and “Islamophobic” attack by campaigners against hate crime. The victim, aged 73, was walking along York Road after Ramadan evening prayers, when three men got out of a black vehicle which was parked on the street. One of the men ran up to the victim and kicked him in the back, causing him to fall and hit his head on a display board. The victim was taken to hospital with a broken hand and cuts to his face after the attack.¹⁹⁸

Five Conservative councilors who were standing for the party in the local elections in England, had been suspended for alleged racism and Islamophobia in past years – which included one who suggested banning mosques and another who accused Muslims of been on a “quest to turn the world Muslim”. They were among 13 councilors identified by the Observer, drawing on research by the anti-fascist group Hope Not Hate, who had been suspended over racist comments and social media posts in the past four years before been reinstated. Among the five who were standing again was Danny Scott in Blackpool. He was one of 25 former and sitting Conservative councilors accused of making offensive comments online named in a 2019 dossier released by an anonymous Twitter account. Scott posted on Facebook at least two years earlier that “Muslims have been terrorizing anyone who isn’t Muslim for 1,000 [years],” and that “it is their quest to turn the world Muslim”. Scott was subsequently suspended from the party, but he has since been reinstated and is listed as the Tory candidate for his council ward at this week’s election. The dossier also revealed Beverley Dunlop, a counselor in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, commented on Facebook that “Until [Muslims] are more frightened of the British government (because they and their families might get deported) than they are Isis nothing will change”, and separately posted, “I hate to ban anything really but I’d suggest we start with mosques!”. After the dossier was published, the Conservatives said they had suspended anyone who was a party member, but Dunlop, who was suspended in 2019, was listed as the Tory candidate in her ward for the ballot on 4 May.¹⁹⁹

A Boston councilor was denied the role of Mayor of Boston after accusations

of hate speech against Islam on Facebook. Blue Revolution Councilor Mike Gilbert lost the vote on 22 May 2023 after posts that he made during the Qatar World Cup were brought up.²⁰⁰

Suella Braverman had been accused of “fanning the flames of hate” towards Muslims after her attacks on pro-Palestine rallies prompted a furious outcry over concerns she was fuelling “hatred and division”. The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims, a cross-party committee of MPs, hit out at the home secretary’s rhetoric, which had seen her describe the demonstrations as “hate marches”, warning she was “inspiring far-right” to engage in Islamophobia. In a statement condemning Ms Braverman’s remarks, the APPG warned that her comments risked the safety of British Muslims. They wrote: “We are deeply worried by the statement being made by the Home Secretary, especially during Islamophobia Awareness Month. Her divisive comments that fuel hatred are leaving British Muslim communities in the United Kingdom feeling unsafe. The home secretary’s main duty is to keep British citizens safe. When the home secretary herself is fanning the flames of hate, and inspiring the far-right, how can British Muslim communities expect to feel safe in Britain.” ²⁰¹



The UK’s Conservative Party has suspended one of its lawmakers, Lee Anderson, after he said the mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, was under the control of “Islamists”. Khan, the first Muslim to be mayor of London

and a member of the opposition Labour Party, was a frequent target of Conservative criticism for his handling of policing in the UK's capital, including regular pro-Palestinian marches. On 21 February 2024 hundreds of pro-Palestinian protesters gathered outside parliament, during a chaotic vote over whether to call for a ceasefire in Gaza and the exact language to use. On 23 February 2024 Anderson spoke to the television channel GB News, he said, "I don't actually believe these Islamists have got control of our country. But what I do believe is they've got control of Khan and they've got control of London. He's actually given our capital city to his mates." His remarks prompted a flood of criticism from across the political spectrum, with Labour Party chairwoman Anneliese Dodds calling them "unambiguously racist and Islamophobic". Conservative business minister Nus Ghani, senior backbencher Sajid Javid and Tory peer Gavin Barwell were among senior Tory figures to join the complaints, with Barwell calling the comments a "despicable slur". Amid growing criticism of Anderson's remarks on Saturday, the Conservative Party said it had decided he could no longer represent them in Parliament. "Following his refusal to apologise for comments made yesterday, the Chief Whip has suspended the Conservative whip from Lee Anderson MP," a spokesperson for Simon Hart, the government minister in charge of party discipline, said. Anderson, a former Conservative Party vice chairman, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.²⁰²



It took a jury less than a day to unanimously find a white supremacist guilty of spreading racist hate after creating a library of downloadable stickers for supporters to distribute in public. Samuel Melia, from Pudsey,

who organised locally for Patriotic Alternative, received a two-year prison sentence on 1 March 2024. The offences concern publishing or distributing material intending to stir up racial hatred and encouraging or assisting the commission of the offence of racially aggravated criminal damage between 2019 and 2021.²⁰³

In Germany, the surge of the far-right ideology in Germany, including the rise of support for the Alternative for Germany (AfD) party had led to a debate about the possibility of legally prohibiting the far-right party. An online petition, which called on the constitutional bodies to consider a ban on the AfD, had collected over 800,000 signatures, which were submitted to the Federal Council at the beginning of March 2024. Around 50 lawmakers, including German Parliament's Vice President Aydan Ozoguz, and senior Social Democrat politician Ralf Stegner, had already announced their support for an examination of a potential ban. ²⁰⁴

German parliamentary leader Raed Saleh was pushing for the inclusion of anti-Islamophobia laws into the state constitution. According to the news website Exberliner, Saleh wants anti-Islamophobia laws to be included alongside constitutional clauses that advocate against antisemitism. Saleh, leader of the Social Democratic Party, emphasized the need for Germany to have its constitution forcefully showcase the country's willingness and commitment to fight against antisemitism, Islamophobia, and racism. "I can well imagine us in Berlin saying that in our diverse city; we will enshrine the fight against Antisemitism, the fight against Islamophobia and against racism in the constitution," he said.²⁰⁵

In the Netherlands, on 8 January 2024 far-right Dutch political party leader Geert Wilders made a key concession to potential coalition partners, announcing that he would withdraw legislation that he proposed in 2018 that called for a ban on mosques and the Quran. The move came a day before talks to form the next government were set to resume after November's election. The abandonment of the bill could be critical in gaining the trust and support of three more mainstream parties that Wilders wants to co-opt into a coalition along with his Party for Freedom, known by its Dutch acronym PVV. During a parliamentary debate last year after the PVV won 37 seats in the 150-seat lower house of the Dutch parliament in the 22 November 2023

general election, Wilders flagged a softening of his party's strident anti-Islam stance. "Sometimes I will have to withdraw proposals and I will do that," Wilders said in the debate. "I will show the Netherlands, the legislature, Mr. Omtzigt's party — anybody who wants to hear it — that we will adapt our rules to the constitution and bring our proposals in line with it." 206

Geert Wilders, who won the most seats in the 2023 general election, said he would not become the prime minister due to a lack of support to form the government. "I can only become Prime Minister if ALL parties in the coalition support it. That was not the case," said Wilders on X on 13 March 2024. 207

In Denmark, Danish authorities banned controversial far-right politician Rasmus Paludan, infamously known for his Quran-burning demonstrations, from attending a political festival on the island of Bornholm. The local police authorities on 13 June 2023 imposed the ban on the presence of Rasmus Paludan around the Folkemodet festival area in and around the Allinge village from 14 June 2023 to 18 June 2023 on the grounds that his presence would represent both a risk to himself and to other participants.²⁰⁸

On 10 January 2024, Denmark's far-right, populist The New Right party was been dissolved. "If we are to rebuild center-right Denmark, we need to gather all the good forces — but in slightly fewer center-right parties," party founder Pernille Vermund said Wednesday as she announced the dissolution. Vermund pursued a libertarian economic agenda and stood for strict controls on migrants in Denmark, which already had some of the most stringent immigration laws in Western Europe. Her party also demanded Denmark's withdrawal from the EU, or "Dexit."²⁰⁹

In India, YouTube had confirmed that cow vigilante and self-proclaimed gau rakshak (cow protector) Monu Manesar had been "indefinitely suspended" from its "YouTube Partner Program," which meant he could no longer make money from the videos he posts. YouTube had also taken down nine videos from his channel for violating "Community Guidelines" and put age restrictions on two others. YouTube conveyed this by email on 28 February 2023, to news website, Codastory. An article on the site also records that YouTube had taken note of violation of its creator's policy by Monu Manesar, a suspect in the alleged murder of two Muslim men who

cow vigilantes had accused of smuggling cattle.²¹⁰

In a startling revelation, Gujarat bore witness to a staggering 55 attacks targeting minority communities in the year 2022, as detailed in a report by the Minority Coordination Committee (MCC). The report documented a total of 55 unsettling incidents, with 53 assaults directed towards Muslims and two incidents targeting Christians, prompting a closer examination of the challenges faced by minority groups in the state. The MCC report titled ‘TARGETED: DOCUMENTING INCIDENTS AFFECTING MINORITIES IN GUJARAT’ was released in October 2023, with seventy leaders from various areas of the state collaborating to acquire and compile material and produce the study. The committee asserted that the study was undertaken “to expose the truth” concerning how the minority population is “targeted” and “pushed” to the margins of society.²¹¹

BJP’s national council member and former Kerala BJP unit president CK Padmanabhan had expressed grave concerns over the party’s anti-Muslim stance and interpretation of Hindutva. In an interview to Media, he said the BJP’s anti-Muslim rhetoric would only foster divisiveness and not benefit the people of the country. On the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), he emphasised that no community should be excluded from consideration for citizenship. “No community should be excluded while granting citizenship. It is unfortunate that an air of anti-Muslim sentiment has been on the rise in the country lately. That won’t benefit our nation. While it may provide some fulfilment to the ‘perversion of a few emotionally-driven individuals’, it wouldn’t strengthen our social fabric or national harmony,” he warned. “We must oppose terrorism, no doubt, but the Muslim community is an integral part of India’s nationality. That’s what I have understood. My Hindutva is in line with Swami Vivekananda’s and Sree Narayana Guru’s Hindutva.” said Padmanabhan.²¹²

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin took to social media on March 15, 2024, the UN International Day to Combat Islamophobia, to urge unity in crushing “the communal fascism of the BJP regime” and “preserving India’s diverse spirit”. “On International Day to Combat Islamophobia, let’s unite to crush the communal fascism of the BJP regime and rescue INDIA’s diverse spirit from their grip,” the DMK chief posted on X. He

also contended that the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) only served to “legitimise Islamophobia”. “Since 2014, the Union BJP Government’s reign has torn apart India’s secular fabric, fostering intolerance and endorsing discrimination against our Muslim community. Their implementation of unconstitutional acts like CAA only serves to legitimise Islamophobia,” said MK Stalin.²¹³

The News Broadcasting and Digital Standards Authority (NBDSA) had penalised some television channels and ordered the removal of certain programmes from their websites, saying that they spread hatred and communal disharmony and were “not in good taste”. The self-regulatory body had also slapped a fine of Rs 1 lakh on TimesNow Navbharat and Rs 50,000 on News18 India based on complaints filed by activist Indrajeet Ghorpade for their news shows on “love jihad”. In a statement, the NBDSA said the term “love jihad” must be used with “great introspection as religious stereotyping amounts to violation of the Code of Ethics and can corrode the secular fabric of the country”. Such reportage “cause(s) irreparable harm to a community and create(s) religious intolerance or disharmony”, it added.²¹⁴

Public Policy

In the US, Whole Foods Market apologized to a Montgomery County woman who believed she was discriminated against because she was wearing a hijab. “I was so confused and shocked,” Buhite Al-Jabry told media on 23 March 2023. Al-Jabry said she had just finished paying for groceries at her neighborhood Whole Foods in Silver Spring on 20 March when she was singled out by a security guard who accused her of stealing. “I give him the receipt thinking he’s doing his job, just like if you shop at Costco ... What shocked me is that even though he had the receipt in his hand, he keeps insisting that I didn’t scan the items,” Al-Jabry explained. “He kept yelling in front of people. It was so humiliating and so many people turned around.” Al-Jabry said she called for help and another employee confirmed she hadn’t stolen a thing. “He targeted me because the way I dress,” she said. Whole Foods Market sent to media the following statement: “We’re truly sorry for the experience [Ms. Al-Jabry] had in our store. The individual

involved works for a third-party and is not a Whole Foods Market team member. His actions were unacceptable and the store leadership team immediately reported the incident. The individual no longer works in our stores.” “The response from Whole Foods, it falls short of what we’re looking for,” said Zainab Chaudry, the Maryland director for the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). They called for Whole Foods to pull security footage and launch a full, transparent investigation.²¹⁵

On 23 February 2023 meeting, Fair Lawn School’s Board of Education added Eid, a Muslim holiday, to its 2023-24 calendar. The entire board voted in favor of adding the Eid holiday, 10 April 2024 to the calendar.²¹⁶

On 11 April 2023, The Minneapolis City Council unanimously voted to pass an ordinance which allowed the public broadcast of the Islamic call to prayer five times a day year-round. Mosques were previously allowed to broadcast the adhan, or Islamic call to prayer, three to four times a day to comply with city noise ordinances. Mosques previously could not broadcast the adhan in the early mornings or in the evenings. Mayor Jacob Frey has said he would sign the ordinance into effect when it reached his desk. Three Muslim City Council Members—Chughtai, who represented Ward 10; Jamal Osman, who represented Ward 6; and Jeremiah Ellison of Ward 5—wrote the ordinance.²¹⁷

The New Jersey chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-NJ) welcomed the New Jersey Department of Corrections’ (NJDOC) policy which allowed incarcerated people to wear religious head coverings for intake mugshots that were publicly available. The department’s decision came after almost two years of advocacy spearheaded by CAIR-NJ civil rights attorney, Nina Rossi, Esq. The new policy, which would be applicable only to New Jersey prisons, states: “Incarcerated persons may request to wear their religious head coverings for intake photographs that are publicly available.”²¹⁸

President Joe Biden had appointed Mazen Basrawi as a senior adviser and White House liaison to American Muslim communities, making good on a campaign promise to fill a slot eliminated by former President Donald Trump, according to a spokesperson for the National Security Council.²¹⁹

From 2024, Derry Township School District in Hershey would become the

first in south central Pennsylvania to close schools for the Eid occasion.²²⁰ Farhan Abdi, the executive director of the Somali Community of Louisville, said Muslims in the city who follow Sharia had struggled to obtain loans that were religiously permissible. Under Islamic law, collecting or paying interest was forbidden. That meant most American loan programs were inaccessible to many Muslims. The majority of Somali immigrants in Louisville were Muslim, and according to Abdi, many were business owners as well. He said Muslim-owned small businesses struggled without more access to capital, and when COVID-19 hit, he saw many shut their doors. “I was terrified to see our small businesses closing,” Abdi said. “And that’s when I started talking to the Office of Globalization, now called the Office of Immigrant Affairs.” Now, Louisville Metro Government announced an optional modification to the city’s small business loan program, Metropolitan Business Development Corporation, or METCO. Officials consulted with experts of Islamic law and community members to ensure the modification was fully in compliance and would serve the needs of the community. Abdi, who was one of the advisors, said he was already begun receiving emails from people interested in applying for the Sharia-compliant alternative.²²¹

Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ), Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN) and Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) reintroduced the Combating International Islamophobia Act, legislation to address the rise in incidents of Islamophobia worldwide. The bill required the State Department to create a Special Envoy for Monitoring and Combating Islamophobia. It would also establish a comprehensive strategy for establishing U.S. leadership in combatting Islamophobia worldwide.²²²

The White House directed the Pentagon to probe Anti-Semitic and Islamophobic behavior across the U.S. military and offered an estimate about the prevalence of the problem by November 2023. Biden’s strategy, outlined in a 60-page document, urged Congress to pass legislation that would create new laws against bias-motivated violence, as well as held social media platforms accountable for spreading antisemitism and other hate speech. The document required the Defense Department to analyze existing research to better grasp the prevalence of Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia

across the military. The Pentagon was required by November to provide that estimate and review its current training for gaps in identifying those biases. It was the first analysis of its kind to specifically address Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia across the armed forces.²²³

On 27 June 2023, The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), welcomed a congressional letter sent by Congresswoman Katie Porter (D-CA) to President Biden that expressed “deep concern with disparity in the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s terrorism watchlists” and called on the Biden administration to “take all necessary steps to prevent the watchlist from being managed or applied in a way that disproportionately harms Muslims.” Representative Porter’s letter also reminded President Biden that while he was campaigning for office he committed to the American people that he “would review ‘watchlist’ and ‘no-fly list’ processes to ensure that they do not have an adverse impact on individuals or groups based on national origin, race, religion or ethnicity, and improve the process to remove names, when justified, from these lists ... Since you became President, what changes has the FBI made to the management and application of the watchlist to prevent the disproportionate listing of Muslims, including disproportionate listing of people of Arab and South Asian race and nationality?” ²²⁴

Montgomery County Public Schools issued a statement on 27 June 2023 which reaffirmed its “commitment to cultivating an inclusive and welcoming learning environment” by not allowing parents to opt their children out of LGBTQ+ storybooks. The statement came after months of protests, petitions and a lawsuit from parents as well as national and local organizations requesting an opt-out option. The school district would continue to not notify parents when LGBTQ+ inclusive storybooks were read in class, and it would not allow families to opt students out of such materials. MCPS first announced that it would not allow an opt-out in March—a decision met with anger and outcry from some Christian and Muslim families. In May 2023, three families filed a lawsuit against MCPS alleging the opt-out violates their constitutional right to religious expression. Dozens of residents had testified before the school board for and against an opt-out, and two large protests against the policy had

been held outside school board headquarters—most recently on 27 June 2023. On behalf of the Montgomery County Muslim Council, Outreach Director Hisham Garti said “[This school policy] shows clear bias toward one minority versus others, and that’s the heart of the problem ... In our opinion, really what MCPS is doing is dividing its community.”²²⁵

A UN human rights council had approved a resolution that urged countries to “address, prevent and prosecute acts and advocacy of religious hatred”, after incidents of Qur’an-burning in Sweden. The resolution was strongly opposed by the US, EU and other western countries, which argued that it conflicted with laws on free speech. On 12 July 2023, the resolution was passed, with 28 countries voting in favour, 12 voting against and seven abstaining. The resolution condemned all manifestations of religious hatred including “public and premeditated acts of desecration of the holy Qur’an” and urged that those responsible be held to account.²²⁶

The Fayette County Detention Center was changing its rules regarding religious clothing after a complaint from a Muslim woman who was told to remove her hijab while being processed at the jail. The new policy would allow people to wear religious clothing, including Islamic hijabs, Jewish kippas and Sikh turbans. Scott Colvin, director of the Fayette County Detention Center, developed new policies after receiving a complaint that a Muslim woman was told to remove her hijab. The Council on American-Islamic Relations asked Colvin to look at the jail’s policies after the incident. “While concluding that the current policy is religion-neutral and that corrections officers followed the policy, Colvin worked with CAIR to identify new practices that strive to better balance institutional security needs with religious practices,” the statement from the jail read.²²⁷

On 17 October 2023, a celebration was held in the South Bay over a bill that was signed into law by Gov. Gavin Newsom, protecting religious practices in prison. The law created a statewide policy that supporters said would set clear rules for inmates about religious headwear, clothing and grooming. “The beard is essential to being a man, a Muslim man. That’s part of your identity, just like it is for a Muslim woman to wear the hijab, the head cover, and that’s part of their identity,” said Sajad Shakoor. Shakoor is well-known today for his chain of restaurants named Falafel Corner. But years before

his professional success, he was in prison. State Senator Dave Cortese said there were existing policies that gave inmates the right to certain religious clothing and headwear but only at state-run facilities. But Senate Bill 309, introduced by Cortese and now signed into law, creates a widespread policy on religious clothing, headwear and grooming for inmates in California. “The U.S. Constitution has been around for a long time and the fact that we’ve had jail and prison systems that have had policies that are at odds with religious expression, needed to be changed,” Cortese said. “There’s no way that those civil rights, the Bill of Rights should stop at the entry point or the booking point into a prison or jail.”²²⁸

On 1 November 2023, the White House announced the administration would develop a National Strategy to Counter Islamophobia in the United States. “President Biden ran for office to restore the soul of our nation. He is unequivocal: There is no place for hate in America against anyone. Period,” White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said in statement. The strategy, a joint effort led by the Domestic Policy Council and the National Security Council, aimed to create a comprehensive and detailed plan to protect Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim “because of their race, national origin, ancestry, or any other reason, from discrimination, hate, bigotry, and violence,” said a White House official.²²⁹

A Democratic group of governors led by Michigan’s Gretchen Whitmer had joined national leaders in calling for an increase in funding for security at places of worship as concerns grow over threats against Jewish and Muslim communities sparked by the Israel-Hamas war. Governors of 10 states and the territory of Puerto Rico sent a letter 8 November 2023, first obtained by The Associated Press that was addressed to leaders in both chambers of the U.S. Congress. It called for an increase in funding to the federal Nonprofit Security Grant Program, which was set to give \$305 million this year to nonprofits to help secure their facilities against potential attacks. “My fellow governors and I are calling for an increase to the federal Nonprofit Security Grant Program so we can help keep people safe amid rising threats and violence targeted towards Jewish, Muslim, and Arab communities and houses of worship,” Whitmer said in a statement.²³⁰

In a gesture of inclusion and diversity, Baltimore County Public Schools

(BCPS) and Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) had introduced halal meal options for Muslim students. This initiative not only meets the dietary needs of these students but also sends a powerful message of unity and belonging. Encouraged by the Maryland office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), this move had the potential to create a more harmonious and inclusive educational environment.²³¹

A settlement was reached between CAIR-SFBA and Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office that allowed religious head coverings to be worn at county jails. On October 2023, Asia Aden was booked into the Main Jail and forced to remove her hijab while in custody until she was released. It was the second complaint in two years involving the removal of a religious head covering at a Santa Clara County jail. In addition to a \$90,000 financial settlement for Aden, CAIR-SFBA and the sheriff's office created a policy that would allow people to keep their head covering or be provided one while in custody - including in booking photos. ²³²

On 24 January 2024, University of California had committed \$7 million to address what officials called “acts of bigotry, intolerance, and intimidation,” including incidents of Islamophobia and antisemitism, that had occurred over the past several weeks on the campuses. Michael Drake, UC's systemwide president, announced the funding during the board of regents meeting Wednesday and said it would go toward emergency mental health resources, new educational programs and additional training for leadership, faculty and staff.²³³

On 11 January 2024, Bipartisan lawmakers introduced a bill to combat discrimination on college campuses amid the rise in antisemitism and Islamophobia. The Protecting Students on Campus Act would give students more information about the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in the Department of Education and their right to file a civil rights complaint if they were discriminated against on campus based on their gender or race. The bill was introduced by Democratic Pennsylvania Sens. Bob Casey and John Fetterman, along with Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.). “Diversity is our strength as a country. No student should face hostility or violence for who they are, what they look like, where they're from, or what they believe,” Fetterman said in a statement. “Amid a despicable rise in antisemitism and

Islamophobia in our country, I am proud to introduce this bill with my colleagues to empower students facing discrimination to take action and hold universities accountable in protecting students.”²³⁴

On 9 January 2024, New York Gov. Kathy Hochul (D) announced that New York’s government was stepping up its fight against online hate amid an uptick in anti-Muslim and antisemitic rhetoric since the start of the conflict in Gaza. “Across our state New Yorkers are afraid, if they have family or friends in Israel, Gaza, other places, they’re afraid for their safety,” Hochul said during a press conference. “At home, many people are wrestling with the fear for the first time ever sometimes in their lives being victim of a hate crime.” Hochul said national data shows that hate crimes had surged in the six weeks 7 October. Hochul said there had been a “400 percent increase in threats against Jews, Muslims and Arabs.” Hochul said the state launched a four-pillar plan aiming to make digital spaces and social media safer. She said the state was calling out “social media companies who have failed their responsibility to create a safe public square” and plan to create resources for parents and schools to use. State police had set up a hate and bias reporting hotline and allocated \$50 million for local law enforcement, half of which goes to protecting vulnerable locations, she said. The state created a Threat Assessment and Management (TAM) team to “identify hate at the source and prevent crimes before they occur.” As of 9 January, the state had 36 county-based TAM teams that were working on more than 50 cases of online hate.²³⁵

In a groundbreaking move aimed at fostering diversity and inclusion, the City University of New York (CUNY) had become one of the first universities in the nation to designate Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, Lunar New Year, and Diwali as official holidays on its academic calendar. This decision came after a vote by the CUNY Board of Trustees, announced today by CUNY Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez. Starting from the Spring 2025 semester, CUNY would observe these significant cultural and religious holidays. Classes would be suspended on January 29, 2025, in honor of Lunar New Year, March 31, 2025, for Eid al-Fitr, June 5, 2025, for Eid al-Adha, and October 20, 2025, for Diwali.²³⁶

On 28 February 2024, the Frederick County Board of Education voted

unanimously to approve a calendar that closes schools for students on both Islamic Eid holidays during the 2025-26 academic year, the culmination of months of advocacy led by the area’s Muslim community. Muslim students, parents and community members began pushing in November for the board to recognize Eid. At every meeting in recent months, vocal supporters — which had also included local priests and rabbis — had turned out in droves to offer public comment.²³⁷

The West Haven city’s school board approved a day off on next year’s calendar for the Eid al-Fitr holiday, a decision Superintendent of Schools Neil Cavallaro said was “long overdue.” Currently, West Haven schools do not open for the Jewish holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and the district takes a holiday break at the end of December during Christmas.²³⁸

In Canada, Canada’s National Security and Intelligence Review Agency said 14 March 2023 that it would investigate accusations of Islamophobia against the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), the federal agency that collects taxes and administers tax laws for the Canadian government. The CRA’s audit of the Muslim Association of Canada (MAC), which began in 2015, could jeopardize the charitable tax status of MAC, Canada’s largest Muslim association. MAC launched a court challenge in 2022 to stop the audit, claiming the tax agency is biased and targets itself and other Muslim charities because the agency is “tainted by systemic bias and Islamophobia.”²³⁹

The district school authority in Canada’s largest metropolis Toronto unanimously adopted a program against Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred. “We have heard directly from our communities and have the data to show that Islamophobia continues to impact our students and staff on a regular basis,” the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) Chair Rachel Chernos Lin said in a statement about the vote. The board serves approximately 235,000 students in Grades 7 to 12, and roughly one in five identify as Muslim. The Toronto board is the second to adopt a strategy to fight Islamophobia. In January, the Peel District School Board, which was just northwest of Toronto, became the first school board in Canada to vote to set up and implement an anti-Islamophobia strategy.²⁴⁰



At the UN, on 15 March 2024, The UN General Assembly overwhelmingly endorsed a resolution designed to combat Islamophobia. With a vote taking place on the International Day to Combat Islamophobia, the “Measures to combat Islamophobia” resolution passed with 115 votes in favor, 44 abstentions, and none against. Pakistan spearheaded the resolution, signaling a united front among Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states in tackling Islamophobia on the international stage. The resolution called for the appointment of a UN special envoy to combat Islamophobia. It further urged member states to take decisive action against religious intolerance, particularly targeting Islamophobia. It also requested the UN secretary-general submit a report on the implementation of the measures and efforts to combat Islamophobia at the General Assembly. 241

The United Nations human rights experts on 7 March 2024 urged the Indian government to prohibit advocacy of religious hatred, including incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, and protect the religious freedom of minorities by repealing anti-conversion and anti-blasphemy laws. The experts appealed to New Delhi to prevent vigilante violence and ensure accountability for crimes committed. A joint statement issued by the United Nations special rapporteurs, independent experts and working groups said that the Indian government should adopt anti-discriminatory laws “with the participation of all disadvantaged groups, including women and men from marginalised caste systems, such as Dalits”. The experts

appealed to the government to “prevent and punish demolitions of homes and arbitrary displacement of minorities”. “The government should also take steps to prevent arbitrary displacements that are generated by development [of] mega-projects”, the statement added.²⁴²



In the UK, the far-right Danish-Swedish politician who threatened to burn a copy of the Qur'an during a visit to Yorkshire had been barred from entering the UK, the security minister had announced. Tom Tugendhat said Rasmus Paludan, the leader of the Stram Kurs party founded in 2017, had been added to the “warnings index” and “will not be allowed access” to the country. In a Twitter video on 19 March 2023, he said that he planned to burn a copy of the Qur'an in a public square in Wakefield to coincide with the holy month of Ramadan.²⁴³

Oxford's new lord mayor was the first in the city's history to be a woman of colour and a Muslim. Labour councilor Lubna Arshad was sworn in at a ceremony in Oxford Town Hall, during which the retiring lord mayor James Fry stepped down. In a statement, Oxford City Council said: “Lubna has made history as the first woman of colour, first Muslim woman of intersectional background, and the youngest Lord Mayor representing the city ... Her achievement is ground-breaking and represents significant progress towards diversity, inclusivity, and representation in leadership roles.”²⁴⁴

A teacher who shared images of violence and wrote derogatory comments

about Muslims online has been banned from the profession. Amrik Nijran was working at Nottingham Academy when he published inappropriate comments and images online, which were seen by pupils. He shared a bestiality image with a caption about Muslims, a panel heard. He denied the allegations but a disciplinary panel found him guilty of unacceptable professional conduct. The Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) said it took place outside the education setting. However, the report found as Mr Nijran's actions led to pupils being exposed to "extreme material" - such as "serious violence and bestiality, albeit it appeared that was not Mr Nijran's intention" - the panel was satisfied it amounted to unacceptable professional conduct. In November 2020, sixth form pupils told a member of staff there were inappropriate posts on Mr Nijran's personal Twitter account. Investigations were then started by the school, local authority and police, but Mr Nijran resigned in March 2021 and police took no further action. The school referred Mr Nijran's case to the TRA after he resigned.²⁴⁵

More than £117m would be spent to protect mosques, Muslim schools and community centres in the UK from hate attacks over the next four years, the UK government said. Home Secretary James Cleverly said the investment would give "reassurance and confidence" to British Muslims. It would be spent on measures including CCTV cameras, alarms and fencing.²⁴⁶

In Germany, anyone who repeatedly spreads hate speech online in Germany could face harsher consequences. According to the Network Enforcement Act (NetzDG), tech companies themselves were responsible for deleting hate speech on social media in Germany, and face up to €50 million in fines if they don't. But it was left to their own discretion whether or not they block the often-anonymous users behind it. Germany's coalition government would be taking tighter controls of hateful and threatening content online, both by blocking users who spread hate speech through a court order, and forcing social media companies to reveal the person or group behind a perpetrator's profile. Germany's Ministry of Justice (BMJ) wrote out key points of a "law against digital violence", which were exclusively acquired by public broadcaster ARD. The proposed plan was directed against "notorious infringers of rights in the digital space" – such as an online user repeatedly making death threats or spewing racist comments – and was

intended to help especially in cases where their identity was not clear. The length of any account block would have to be “proportionate” and regard “serious violations” – yet it would be left to the respective court to decide what exactly that means. In addition, an account would only be blocked if other options – such as deleting a post – did not stymie the offender from further comments and there was a “risk of repetition”. But an account holder must first be informed that their account could be blocked – and have the chance to comment on the incident. The profile would not be permanently deleted but rather blocked “only for a reasonable period of time,” according to the plan.²⁴⁷

On 21 November 2023, Germany’s interior minister admitted that there was an Islamophobia problem in the country and pledged stronger measures to combat it, as threats and hate crimes against Muslims had spiked in recent months. “In Germany, almost every second person agrees with Islamophobic statements, and I am saying this clearly, we also have an Islamophobia problem in Germany,” Nancy Faeser said at the German Islam Conference. Faeser said the government was aware of the problem, and they were examining recommendations of the experts to take new measures. “For many Muslims in Germany, the threat of becoming victim of anti-Muslim attack has become an everyday reality. This has a catastrophic impact on people’s sense of security, we cannot accept this,” the Social Democrat politician said.²⁴⁸

Sweden: Stockholm police had refused to issue a permit for another event at which the Quran was to be burned in front of the Turkish Embassy in the city, Swedish public broadcaster SVT reported on 16 February 2023. With this rejection, two applications for Quran burnings had been denied by the Stockholm police in a short period of time.²⁴⁹

In Sweden, the government issued an arrest warrant in absentia for far-right Danish-Swedish politician Rasmus Paludan, who burned a copy of the Muslim holy book, the Quran. The Malmo Prosecutor’s Office issued an arrest warrant for Paludan on suspicion of “several crimes,” Swedish newspaper Aftonbladet reported. Paludan had been investigated a couple of months ago for “incitement against a group of people, insult and gross assault against an official,” it said. Paludan claimed that “Swedish police in

general and Malmo police, in particular, do not want to protect me, so it is dangerous for me to come to Sweden.”²⁵⁰

On 26 October 2023, Sweden’s migration agency said it had decided to deport an Iraqi man who burned copies of the Quran, the Muslim holy book, but that the order would not be carried out because the man would risk torture in his home country. “Yesterday, the Migration Agency decided to recall his status and residency permit and decided that he should be deported,” a spokesman for the Swedish Migration Agency told Reuters.²⁵¹

In Denmark, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen spoke out for the first time on the burning of the Quran in her country, she said that a potential ban on setting fire to the religious text would not limit freedom of expression. “I don’t consider it a restriction on freedom of expression that you can’t burn other people’s books,” Frederiksen said in an interview published on 03 August 2023.²⁵²

On 14 November 2023, Denmark’s parliament would debate a bill to ban Quran burnings, after a string of desecrations of Islam’s holy book sparked anger in Muslim countries. Denmark’s government said the tensions posed a threat to national security. The bill aimed to make it a criminal offence to “publicly or with the intention of dissemination in a wider circle to treat a text with strong religious significance for a religious community... inappropriately,” according to a summary on the parliament’s website.²⁵³

On 7 December 2023, Denmark’s parliament had banned the “inappropriate treatment” of religious texts - with a bill widely known in the country as the Quran law. Offenders now face a fine or up to two years in jail after a 94-77 vote. It followed a series of burnings of Islam’s holy book that led to uproar in Muslim countries. During a heated debate in Denmark’s 179-strong parliament, the Folketing, many opposition MPs argued against the bill. “History will judge us harshly for this, and with good reason... What it all comes down to is whether a restriction on freedom of speech is determined by us, or whether it is dictated from the outside,” Inger Støjberg, leader of the Denmark Democrats, was quoted as saying by Reuters news agency. But the country’s centre-right coalition government of Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen argued that criticising religion would remain legal, as

the bill would only have a marginal impact.²⁵⁴

In Norway, the authority cancelled its permission to burn the Quran, Islam's holy book, after Ankara warned against it, Türkiye's Foreign Minister said on 2 February 2023. The Minister Spoke at an event in the Turkish capital Ankara, Mevlut Cavusoglu said "You saw what happened in Sweden, the Netherlands and Denmark. The same thing was going to happen in Norway. Today, we summoned the Norwegian ambassador. And they withdrew the permission they granted."²⁵⁵

At the EU, the European Commission had appointed Marion Lalisie as its new Coordinator on combating anti-Muslim hatred. Ms. Lalisie would work with Member States, European institutions, civil society and academia to strengthen policy responses in the field of anti-Muslim hatred. In her new role, the Coordinator would be the main point of contact for organisations working in this field in the EU.²⁵⁶

In India, three Delhi Police personnel had been suspended for assaulting two meat suppliers and robbing them earlier on March 2023. The suspension came after the cops and four others had been booked in connection with the incident, PTI reported on 17 March 2023. On 7 March, a car in which the meat vendors were travelling had an accident with a scooter in Delhi's Anand Vihar area. Nawab, who worked as a meat supplier at a slaughterhouse in Ghazipur, was in his car with his cousin Shoaib when the accident took place. "We got out and the rider said he wants Rs 4,000 for repairs. A PCR [Police Control Room] van then arrived and a policeman took Rs 2,500 and gave the rider the money," Nawab said to Indian Express. However the cops then demanded Rs 15,000 from two Muslim men and threatened to take them to the police station. They were taken to an isolated area where they were confined and beaten up by the three police officials along with four others. "They tried to cut our hands with a knife...They also urinated on our faces, threatened to kill us and said they would dump our bodies in a drain. They accused us of slaughtering cows and robbed us of Rs 25,000," the complainant said, reported The Indian Express.²⁵⁷

Court Decision and Trial

In the US, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) announced on 6 April 2023, the settlement of two cases, brought on behalf of seven Muslims, who for years were forbidden from praying in groups—no matter how small—while incarcerated at Maryland’s Prince George’s County jail. In response to these cases and advocacy from CAIR and the community, the jail changed its policies in 2020 to allow Muslims to gather for prayer in groups of four or less, and allowed Muslims to freely congregate for prayer with others in their housing unit.²⁵⁸

A man sought in connection with two arsons at Minneapolis mosques had been arrested and was in custody, Police said on 30 April 2023. Authorities had charged Jackie Rahm Little of Minneapolis with second-degree arson in connection with a fire at Masjid Al Rahma mosque in Minneapolis, at the Mercy Islamic Center, which contained the mosque in the 2600 block of S. Bloomington Avenue.²⁵⁹

A suburban Indianapolis Army veteran had been convicted in the road rage shooting death of a Muslim man, after witnesses said he hurled ethnic and religious insults at the victim, which included yelling, “Go back to your country,” before he opened fire. A Marion County jury convicted Dustin E. Passarelli, of murder on 17 May 2023 after a three-day trial over the February 2019 killing of Mustafa Ayoubi. Passarelli, of Plainfield, could get up to 65 years in prison when he was sentenced on 21 June 2023 on the murder charge.²⁶⁰

Two suspects had been charged in connection to threatening phone calls allegedly made to a local Mosque on 24 May 2023. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department said officers obtained a criminal summons from the Magistrate’s Office for the threats. Police said a phone call was made to the Islamic Center of Charlotte reportedly filled with cursing and anti-Islam statements. Those included: “I’ll blow you worse than 9/11” and “Is that one of your little goats you have there?”. After the initial investigation, officers identified the callers who admitted to the calls and apologized. The victim initially communicated they did not want to pursue charges.²⁶¹

Adam Walls had pleaded guilty to vandalizing the Islamic Center of Bloomington in October 2021 in an agreement that dismissed numerous other charges of trespassing and vandalism filed since July 2021. Walls, would serve a two-year sentence, minus time already served, for one count of institutional criminal mischief, according to a plea agreement with the Monroe County Prosecutor.²⁶²



A Missouri man had been sentenced to nearly 16 years in prison for starting a fire that destroyed a mosque in 2020, according to a release from the US Department of Justice. Nicholas John Proffitt had pleaded guilty to using fire to damage religious property and to using fire in the commission of a federal felony, the release said. He had been sentenced to 191 months in prison, followed by three years of supervised release and ordered to pay \$551,217.91 in restitution, according to court documents.²⁶³

A Muslim civil rights organization reached a settlement in a federal discrimination lawsuit filed against the city of Detroit after the arrest of three Muslim men in 2020, the group announced on 26 September 2023. The Michigan chapter of the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR-MI) filed the lawsuit in 2021, alleging three Muslims were falsely arrested by two officers who were caught on body camera footage making Islamophobic statements. Before the arrest, one of the officers said, “Muslims lie a lot,” and “Muslim men are pedophiles,” according to the suit. One of the Muslim men had called 911 and reported that a woman was having a mental health crisis and had become violent. But when police arrived, the officers arrested the three men without probable cause and jailed them for three days.²⁶⁴

In two separate legal cases, the Muslim civil rights group, the Council on American-Islamic Relations, announced settlements in lawsuits alleging anti-Muslim discrimination by members of US law enforcement. The cases occurred in San Jose, California and Detroit, Michigan. Though different, they both raise concerns over the treatment of Muslims by law enforcement. In San Jose, in a case that was supported by but not represented by CAIR, Nabil Haidar, a Muslim Lebanese-American police officer, was taunted for around 15 years following the 9/11 attacks, with fellow officers often asking him, “How many infidels are you going to kill today?”, “You aren’t gonna fly an aeroplane, are you?” and “Have you lost your way to the White House?” They would routinely call him “Taliban” and “Bin Laden”. Haidar retired early in 2022 and sued the city and police department for economic and severe post-traumatic stress-related damages. The lawsuit was settled for US\$400,000. The 2021 suit in Detroit, filed by CAIR, followed a 2020 incident in which three African American and Hispanic Muslims were arrested after they called the police to assist a woman they saw experiencing a mental health crisis. Instead of assisting the woman and bringing her to a crisis centre, as they’d expected, the three men were arrested. The men then filed a Freedom of Information Act request to access body camera footage of the arresting officers. The footage revealed an officer making derogatory comments about Muslims, saying that “Muslims lie a lot,” that “Muslim men are paedophiles,” and saying that Muslim men were controlling of women. He then said he would arrest the men and allow someone else to follow up. “We litigated that lawsuit for the better part of two years. It was approved by the council this week. The city never apologised,” Amy Doukoure, CAIR-Michigan staff attorney, told TNA. “This settlement signals some kind of healing for our clients. They got justice a little bit, but their complaints were ignored for so long.”²⁶⁵

A Dallas man pleaded guilty on 12 October 2023 to federal hate crime charges arising out of a fatal shooting at a car repair shop. Anthony Paz Torres, pleaded guilty to five federal hate crime counts for killing one individual and attempting to kill four others during a shooting at Omar’s Wheels and Tires in Dallas, Texas, on Dec. 24, 2015. Torres also pleaded guilty to one count of using a firearm to commit the murder. According

to documents filed in connection with his guilty plea, Torres' shooting spree came a few days after he had gone to the business, made anti-Muslim statements and pledged that he would come back. When he returned a few days later, Torres asked customers if they were Muslim and then opened fire on the customers and employees present in the shop. Torres killed one individual and attempted to kill four other individuals with his firearm.²⁶⁶

A Farmington Hills man was facing a felony terrorism threat charge for allegedly threatening Palestinian-Americans in Dearborn. Carl Mintz was arraigned on 14 October 2023 on one count of felony threat of terrorism and a misdemeanor count of malicious use of a telecom device. Dearborn police were tipped off anonymously to his Mintz's alleged post on social media on 11 October. Dearborn Chief of Police Issa Shahin added, "We take all threats very seriously. Although we are currently unaware of any further credible threats, we have increased police patrols across Dearborn and at all places of worship in the interest of the public safety and security of our city's residents, workers, and visitors," Dearborn Police Chief Issa Shahin said in a statement.²⁶⁷

A Sunnyside man who had a long history of antagonizing residents in the condo complex where he lived had been charged with hate crimes for tagging his building with anti-Muslim slurs, authorities said. Neal Milano, scrawled hate-filled messages on the walls inside of his condo building that included "Kill Hamas Iran Condo Board" and "F\$\$k you condo board + Super Waaaah! Crybaby is Mad die pig." "Hateful and bias-motivated attacks have no place in our communities and the shameful aggression will not be tolerated," said Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz. Milano was charged in a 10-count indictment with one count of criminal mischief in the third degree as a hate crime; one count of criminal mischief in the third degree; and eight counts of making graffiti.²⁶⁸

The Edmonds Police Department on January 10, announced the arrest of Alex Matthew Waggoner, of Edmonds, for the alleged January 3rd murder of Mr. Abdikadir Gedi Shariif. On 3 January 2024, Gedi Shariif, a Muslim man from Sea-Tac, was shot and killed. Multiple callers reported the driver of a vehicle had been shot and the suspect had fled on foot at the intersection of 236th Street SW and Edmonds Way (SR104). When officers arrived,

they found the victim, Shariif, in critical condition from multiple gunshot wounds. He was transported by aid to Harborview Medical Center in Seattle, where he later succumbed to his injuries. Investigators determined that the suspect was crossing Edmonds Way, and the victim was turning left towards the suspect. There was no obvious altercation before the suspect opened fire, mortally wounding Shariif. 269

A former North Chicago police officer had settled a lawsuit for \$475,000 in a case against the department for religious and national origin discrimination. Ramtin Sabet sued the city of North Chicago and its former and current police chiefs in March 2017 — a month after he was fired from the department. Sabet joined the department in 2007 and faced harassment for his Muslim faith and Iranian origin, according to the Chicago chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations. While working at the department, Sabet filed multiple complaints alleging coworkers made Islamophobic comments and insults. The complaints included one for discrimination to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 2016. However, despite the efforts a hostile work environment continued and eventually led to Sabet’s termination in February of 2017, CAIR said.270

Two Muslim men from North Texas had settled with regional carrier for American Airlines, Mesa Airlines, after alleging the crew found them “suspicious” and referred them to law enforcement before they could fly. In 2019, Abderraof Alkhawaldeh, a motivational speaker from Irving, and Issam Abdallah, a Dallas nonprofit leader, were traveling home from Birmingham, Ala., to DFW International Airport when the incident occurred. Court documents allege that soon after the plaintiffs boarded the flight, a passenger and crew member raised concerns to the captain that the men were a “security threat,” delaying the flight. Upon arrival, the two men were trailed by law enforcement officers, interviewed by an FBI agent and had their bags searched by TSA officers. In August 2023, the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals — which included Texas — ruled that the discrimination case would move forward to a jury trial. The fifth court reversed the district court’s initial summary judgment after evidence was shown that a Mesa Airlines pilot’s actions were motivated by racial discrimination, according to the release. The decision ultimately led to a settlement with financial payments to both men.271

A man was charged on 5 February 2024 after making antisemitic and Islamophobic threats, authorities said. Two South Jersey police agencies helped the FBI investigate. Over the span of 15 months, Yaniv Gola called eight different victims and threatened to injure, rape and kill them, officials said. The Philadelphia man used a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) service to mask his phone number, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office (USAO) of Eastern Pennsylvania. Gola, was charged with eight counts of interstate communication of threats. The Cinnaminson and Haddonfield police departments assisted with the federal investigation. It was not clear whether Gola threatened anyone linked to either town.²⁷²

A teenager in California had been charged with multiple felonies for allegedly orchestrating a swatting call that led law enforcement officers to a mosque in Florida. Alan Winston Filion, of Lancaster, California, was extradited to Seminole County, Florida, on 30 January 2024 after his arrest on Jan. 18, 2024, with assistance from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.²⁷³

On 31 January 2024, CAIR Georgia chapter had announced the resolution of a significant religious accommodation case against the Dekalb County Sheriff's Office, securing a \$95,000 settlement on behalf of their client, Norman Simmonds. Simmonds, who had been detained without conviction at the Dekalb County Jail for two-and-a-half years, faced relentless and irrational denials of even the simplest requests, including requests for individual timepieces or a visible clock in the housing unit so he and other Muslims could know when to pray and fast. When Simmonds requested a certified halal or even kosher diet, the jail refused Simmonds the certified kosher meals it was already providing for Jewish detainees.²⁷⁴

In Canada, Lee Bryans, a Burlington resident had been arrested and charged after east-end Toronto mosque was vandalized. Police said a man allegedly left hateful writing on the front of a mosque in the Danforth Avenue and Donlands Avenue area. Police received a call on 12 October 2023. Lee, painted hate symbols on Madinah Masjid and was also responsible for another act of vandalism that happened on 6 October. Police said the same mosque was vandalized in both incidents. Lee, had been charged with mischief/damage property not exceeding \$5,000 and two counts of obstructs/interferes with the lawful use, enjoyment or operation of property.²⁷⁵

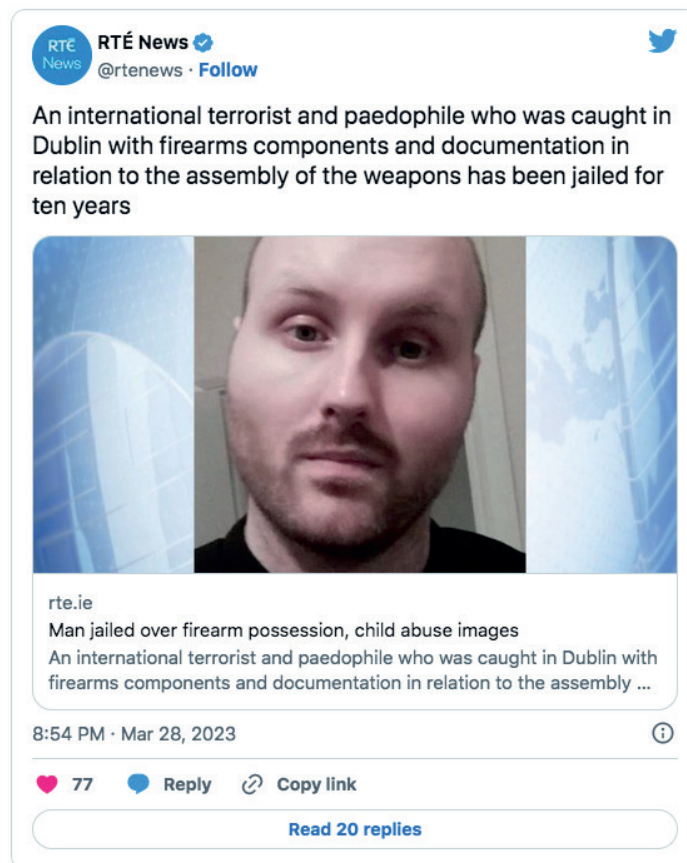
Nathaniel Veltman drove his pickup truck toward a Muslim family of five out for an evening walk in London, Ontario, killing four of them. The lone survivor was a 9-year-old boy. The jury, after less than a day of deliberating, found Veltman, guilty of four counts of first-degree murder and one count of attempted murder involving the young boy in the June 2021 attack. Mr. Veltman was also charged with terrorism and jurors heard extensive evidence about his fixation with white supremacist ideologies. But under Canadian law, jurors were not expected to deliver a verdict on that charge, which would be decided later by a judge. The case represented the first time in Canada that terrorism charges had been applied to a far-right extremism case, according to the government agency that prosecutes federal crimes. Mr. Veltman's sentencing date would be set in December where a judge will determine whether he was guilty of terrorism. A first-degree murder conviction carried an automatic sentence of life in prison with no chance for parole for 25 years.²⁷⁶

A Canadian white supremacist who deliberately ran over four members of a Muslim family had been sentenced to life in prison for the murders. Nathaniel Veltman, was convicted in November of four counts of first-degree murder and one count of attempted murder for the attack that shocked Canada. The judge in the case said Veltman's attack represented an act of terrorism, the first time that the term had been used to describe white nationalist violence. "I find that the offender's actions constitute terrorist activity," Judge Renee Pomerance of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice said at this sentencing on 22 February 2024.²⁷⁷

A man was accused of threatening to kill worshippers outside the Heaton Mosque & Islamic Centre on 6 February 2023. The ChronicleLive reported how an individual allegedly banged on doors of the mosques, chased one worshipper and shouted abuse and threats before officers from Northumbria Police attended the scene and made an arrest. In a statement given to the newspaper, police did confirm that the male, named locally as Alexander Bolam, was arrested and later charged with racially aggravated criminal damage, threats to kill, and common assault. Bolam appeared at Newcastle Magistrates Court and would appear at Newcastle Crown Court in March.²⁷⁸

In the UK, a British court had charged a man with two counts of attempted murder after his heinous attacks against two Muslim men leaving mosques in separate horrific incidents in Birmingham and London. Media reported on 23 March 2023 that the suspect allegedly sprayed a substance on two elderly men aged 70 and 82 on 27 February 2023 and on 20 March 2023 in separate attacks.²⁷⁹

On 30 March 2023, A white supremacist teen who planned a copycat attack on mosques in West Yorkshire found guilty of a terrorism offence after a three-week trial at Leeds Crown Court. The 16-year-old, who cannot be named for legal reasons due to their age, took inspiration from the Christchurch terrorist after jurors agreed that he intended to carry out an act of terrorism before counter-terror police intervened and arrested them.²⁸⁰



A racist who slashed the throat of a Muslim security guard in Braintree, Essex, received a 28-year prison sentence for attempted murder. Geoffrey Ryan, who was drinking at The Lounge in Market Square September 2022, became aggressive towards other customers, and when two security staff

approached him, he targeted them with anti-Muslim remarks. Police emphasised that the sheer level of violence almost resulted in murder. Charges against Ryan included attempted murder and racially aggravated harassment. Judge David Turner KC said: “I am completely satisfied it had a significant and disturbing anti-Muslim flavour,” the Basildon, Canvey & Southend Echo added in their sentencing coverage.²⁸¹

A right-wing extremist who was making an ‘extremely lethal and dangerous’ sub-machine gun had been jailed. Ben Styles confessed he was a ‘fanatical Nazi’ who considered Adolf Hitler his leader. In a disturbing ‘manifesto’ he wrote ‘now is the time to act’ before he admitted to a court he did not believe there was a political solution to his views on society. Styles also revered the shooter who carried out a massacre at a mosque in New Zealand in 2019. At Birmingham Crown Court on 25 June 2023 he was sentenced to seven years on top of an additional 12-month supervision period.²⁸²

A woman who punched a taxi driver in the face and shouted that they should “go back to Pakistan” will face sentencing in July 2023. The Bucks Free Press reported that Nicole Kupaza was guilty of one count of racially aggravated assault after the jury rejected her claim of self-defense. An earlier report stated that the assault occurred on Christmas Eve at Tiplow train station on 2022.²⁸³



A man who threatened to behead and blow up Muslims as they attended a family event at a mosque –including gesturing to slit the throat of a

five-year-old – has been jailed for four years. Alexander Bolam waited outside Heaton Mosque in Tyneside as families collected children from an event, abusing them and threatening them. Alexander became aggressive, threatening to ‘cut your heads off’, ‘behead you all’ and ‘blow you all up’, before pushing one man and then urinating in the door of the mosque.²⁸⁴



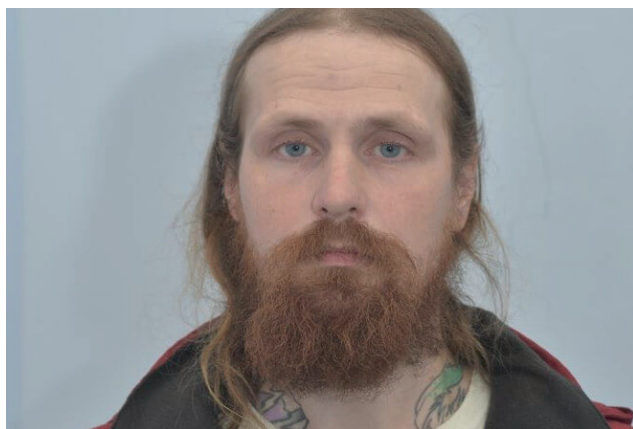
A jury found a Swindon-based neo-Nazi guilty of terrorism offences after two-week trial at Winchester Crown Court. Malakai Wheeler, shared terrorism documents and weapons manuals over Telegram. Counter-terror police arrested him in May 2021. The jury heard how Wheeler possessed a copy of the Christchurch terror attacks video on his mobile phone, dubbed over with the Queen song Don’t Stop Me Now. Tell MAMA’s research had identified over twenty individuals convicted of far-right terrorism offences in the UK (one other case involved a UK national in Ireland) who took inspiration from or possessed copies of the Christchurch terror attack footage or had copies of the terrorist screed.²⁸⁵



On 26 October 2023, a man who called a bus driver a “terrorist” and “Hamas” had pleaded guilty to a racially aggravated public order offence. Hardy Jalloh, shouted the racist insults after he started an argument with a driver of a 116 bus, while it was on Staines Road in Feltham, Hounslow. He also swore at his victim before he was arrested the same day. Jalloh, of Granville Avenue, was charged with a public order offence under Section 4A of the Public Order Act, a racially aggravated offence under Section 31 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and possession of cannabis. He admitted all offences to West London Magistrates’ Court on 28 October and was released on bail.²⁸⁶

A far-right teenager who plotted to attack a mosque while disguised as an armed police officer had been jailed. Joe Metcalfe was aged 15 when he planned a murderous assault on the mosque in Keighley, West Yorkshire. He was sentenced to 10 years for terror offences and rape at Leeds Crown Court. An order that previously banned the reporting of Metcalfe’s name because of his age was lifted at the hearing. The court heard that Metcalfe, who lived with his parents in Haworth, Bradford, was referred to the North East Counter Terrorism Prevent team in 2021 after his school raised concerns about his behaviour. He had sessions with a anti-terrorism support worker but the court was told that Metcalfe, lied to the worker and continued to share videos relating to acts of terrorism and wrote a “manifesto”. He also “idolised” Brenton Tarrant, who filmed himself as he shot 51 people in two mosques in New Zealand in 2019, and was convicted of murder and terrorism. The court heard Metcalfe conducted a scouting

trip on a mosque in Keighley after stealing his father's car on 5 June 2022, as part of a “written plan” for a terror attack. He then crashed the car into a fence, which led to his arrest on 21 June 2022. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) said he had contacted a gun seller outside the UK with the aim of having a weapon illicitly shipped to him.²⁸⁷



A Lancashire-based neo-Nazi received a prison sentence of over two years for praising the terrorist who murdered MP Jo Cox, promoting banned terror groups, and stirring up racial hatred online. Kieran Turner, re-shared the Christchurch terror attack video online on the day it happened. The BBC reported that Kieran was an army veteran. Turner used alternative social media platforms like GAB and Bitchute to spread racist and harmful propaganda – according to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), between 2016 and 2020, he “posted and re-shared material expressing antisemitic, transphobic, misogynistic, homophobic, racist and Islamophobic views.” Great Manchester Police revealed that Turner praised the banned neo-Nazi terror groups National Action and the Sonnenkrieg Division whilst possessing a copy of the white supremacist screed written by the Christchurch terrorist. On 8 February 2024 Manchester Crown Court sentenced Turner to a prison sentence of 2 years and 8 months after guilty pleas.²⁸⁸

In Ireland, Mark Wolf, a British neo-Nazi who absconded terrorism and child abuse charges by fleeing to Ireland received a ten-year sentence after Irish police (Gardai) foiled his Christchurch-influenced terror plot and possessing child abuse images. A lengthy investigation by Irish counter-terror police brought Wolf to justice after pinpointing his location to a hostel in Gardiner Street, Dublin. At that point, raiding his room,

they discovered his imported firearm components, a guide on building 3D-printed weapons and four electronic devices containing sickening child abuse images, the Christchurch terror attack video and snuff videos.²⁸⁹

In the Netherlands, Edwin Wagenveld, would appear in court on insult charges after tearing up a Qur'an outside parliament and likening Islam's holy book to Hitler's "Mein Kampf", prosecutors said 4 July 2023. Edwin, who headed the Netherlands's chapter of the German anti-Islam group Pegida, carried out the protest in The Hague in January 2023, Dutch media said. "The Public Prosecution Service has decided to summon the suspect," prosecutors said in a tweet on 4 July. "He is due to appear in court on August 10." Prosecutors noted that ripping up a Koran was not a criminal offence in the Netherlands, because of its codified tolerance of religious criticism. However, Wagenveld's words could "be qualified as group insult and is punishable under... the Dutch Penal Code which states that deliberately insulting a group of people because of their religion or belief is a crime", they said. Convictions carry a minimum one-year jail term or a 9,000 euro (\$9,800) fine.²⁹⁰

In Austria, "Terrorism" charges against an Austrian academic, Farid Hafez, had been dropped after an Al Jazeera documentary revealed the case was based on false evidence and fabricated accusations. In an interview with Al Jazeera, Hafez said he was relieved to be no longer living in "limbo" more than two years after officers barged into his two-storey home and pointed their guns at him, his wife and two children. Hafez was best known for an annual report on European Islamophobia and is one of the founders of the Austrian Muslim Youth Association. Hafez's apartment was one among some 60 homes of Muslim activists and academics raided in November 2020 as part of what Austria's interior minister called "Operation Luxor". The search warrant alleged that Hafez – who is of Egyptian origin – wanted to destroy Egypt and Israel and establish a worldwide Islamic caliphate with Jerusalem as its capital.²⁹¹



In Russia, a Russian man was sentenced to 3 1/2 years in prison for burning a Quran in the Russian region of Chechnya. He was prosecuted under a law against offending religious believers' feelings after he burned a copy of the Quran outside a mosque in Volgograd, 800 kilometers from Grozny. Russian investigators transferred his case to Chechnya. The Investigative Committee, which handled serious crimes, said this was because they received many messages from Chechnya residents asking to be designated injured parties. Media reported that Zhuravel pleaded guilty to the charges, repeatedly apologized in court, and said he had not thought about the consequences of his actions. 292

In India, the country's news regulatory body had raised objections against two private networks after they aired programmes that allegedly targeted India's minority Muslims. The News Broadcasting and Digital Standards Authority (NBDSA), which was a self-regulatory body of broadcasters and had been headed by former Supreme Court judge AK Sikri, came down heavily on Zee News, News18 India, and Times Now and passed seven orders on 27 February 2023 flagging "anti-Muslim content" aired by them. The body found Zee News had "selectively targeted" the Muslim community while broadcasting news on over population in the country, reported LiveLaw. "While it was permissible for the broadcaster to report the statistics available in the Pew Report which projected the Muslim population to be approximately 310 million by 2050. However, in order to ensure balance and neutrality in the programme, it would have been appropriate for the broadcaster to also report the complete statistics given in the said report which showed that the growth in the Hindu population,

would be approximately 1.3 billion by 2050,” it said. Zee News had been directed by the body to publicly state that the programme which was aired on World Population Day on 11 July was against its Code of Ethics and Broadcasting Standards. In another order against Times Now, the body said that the channel had “wrongfully reported” that pro-Pakistan slogans were raised during a protest in Pune by banned organization Popular Front of India. The show that aired on 24 September reported that slogans of ‘Pakistan Zindabad’ (Hail Pakistan) were allegedly raised during the protest. The other five orders by the NBDISA were in connection with shows hosted by News18 India anchor Aman Sharma which the body found to be objectionable and included religious undertones. The complainant referred to a show on 18 January 2022 in which Chopra made statements that allegedly maligned the Muslim community. “The entire premise of the show revolved around creating a negative image of the Muslim community to instigate the members of the Hindu community to develop hatred for Muslims,” the complaint said. The NBSDA order said that the show was not appropriate. “By starting the debate on the premise that 20 per cent people were ganging up against Hindus constituting 80 per cent, the anchor had given the debate a thrust, which is communal in nature and not appropriate,” the order said.²⁹³

A Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) worker from Karnataka’s Raichur had been arrested for putting up a WhatsApp status depicting Muslim women as ‘baby-making factory’. The RSS worker, Raju Thumbak, from Lingasugur town of Raichur, had put up the status on 1 June 2023. Thumbak’s post prompted widespread protests from the Muslim community. After the image on Thumbak’s WhatsApp status went viral, members of the community filed a police complaint and sought his arrest. Based on the complaint, police arrested Thumbak late on Thursday night. He was produced before the Magistrate and was later sent to judicial custody.²⁹⁴

On 5 July 2023, a court in the eastern Indian state of Jharkhand had sentenced 10 men to a decade in prison for lynching a Muslim man over theft allegations. In 2019, villagers in the Seraikela Kharsawan district tied Tabrez Ansari to a pole, tortured him for nearly 12 hours and recorded it in a 10-minute video that went viral and triggered widespread outrage.

The video showed the 24-year-old pleading with the crowd to spare his life and been forced to chant, “Jai Shri Ram,” or “Hail Lord Ram,” a religious slogan now widely used by far-right Hindu nationalists. Ansari was taken into custody after the beating and moved to a local hospital where he died of his injuries four days later.²⁹⁵

India’s top court restored life prison sentences for 11 Hindu men who raped a Muslim woman during deadly religious rioting two decades before and asked the convicts to surrender to the authorities within two weeks. The Hindu men were convicted in 2008 of rape and murder. They were released in 2022 after serving 14 years in prison.²⁹⁶

Probe and Arrest

In the US, Police had arrested a man for vandalizing a Northwest Philadelphia mosque on 24 February 2023 in what may have been a hate crime. On 28 February 2023, the District Attorney’s Office identified a man called Johnathan Boone as the alleged culprit. He was charged with criminal mischief, institutional vandalism, and related offenses. Boone had an active bench warrant for a 2014 case of criminal mischief and harassment. Security cameras at the Masjidullah Center for Human Excellence at Limekiln Pike and Washington Lane in the city’s Cedarbrook section recorded a man painting “Jesus Christ” several times and other symbols on the doors of the center. Another wall was vandalized with a Star of David with an “X” drawn over it.²⁹⁷

A man wanted for a suspected hate crime at the Islamic Center of Southern California in Koreatown had been arrested, authorities confirmed. Investigators said Carlos Moran, who was believed to be homeless, wrote anti-Islamic hate words on several pillars at the mosque on Vermont Boulevard. The incident happened on 9 April 2023, during the holy month of Ramadan. The Los Angeles Police Department on 11 April 2023 said Moran was taken into custody overnight.²⁹⁸

Waterloo regional police had arrested a Waterloo woman as part of an investigation into an alleged hate-motivated altercation at a DriveTest

Centre in Kitchener, Ont., on 17 May 2023. One of the people involved was Mifrah Abid, who co-ordinates the Together Against Islamophobia program for the Coalition of Muslim Women of K-W. A video posted to Abid’s Twitter feed showed Abid as she confronted the woman. Abid said the woman made a racial slur, something the woman denied in the video. “We are all waiting in this line, and everybody heard you here making a racist comment about brown people,” Abid said in the video. “It’s not nice.” Shortly after, the woman was seen on the video lunging toward Abid, grabbing Abid’s phone and throwing it at her. A second video taken by a bystander also showed the altercation taking place. Both videos had been circulated on social media.²⁹⁹

A man was jailed after a mosque in St. Paul was severely damaged by a fire that authorities said was deliberately set — which was the sixth attack on Muslim houses of worship in Minnesota in 2023. The fire was reported early 17 May 2023 at the Oromo American Tawhid Islamic Center. Later on the day, the suspect was arrested and booked into jail on suspicion of first-degree arson. Deputy Chief Roy Mokosso said the mosque and a community center were “extensively” damaged. No one was inside the mosque at the time and no injuries were reported.³⁰⁰



A California sex offender was arrested after allegedly trying to run down Muslim park goers and threatening to “shoot and bomb them,” police said. Families gathered at the Heron Landing Park, in Rancho Cordova, reported that Robert Avery tried to run them over on 06 August 2023, while hurling racial slurs at them, according to the Sacramento County Sheriff’s Office.³⁰¹

The NYPD hate crimes unit was investigating two assaults in Brooklyn that appeared to be over the Israel-Hamas war. In one incident, police said suspects riding in three cars were waving Israeli flags and started yelling anti-Palestinian remarks at three men walking on 86th Street near 4th Avenue in Bay Ridge. The men walking yelled something to the effect of “Free Palestine,” before the group got out of the cars and punched and kicked one of them. The suspects reportedly got back in the cars and drove off. The three men, ages 18 to 21, are of Arab or Palestinian descent, police said. They refused medical attention and are expected to be OK. It happened hours after a man holding a Palestinian flag was attacked in Williamsburg, police said. He was walking on Flushing Avenue near Classon Avenue when a man wearing Jewish clothing snatched the flag from him, tore it up and hit him with the pole that was attached to the flag, police said.³⁰²

Police and the FBI were investigating a death threat slipped under the office door of a Palestinian employee at American University. Wassim Aburakia-Einhorn has spent much of his adult life at American University — first as a student, then as an IT specialist. He found the threat earlier in the week in his office in Kerwin Hall, home to the School of Public Affairs. It read, “Go back where you came from. You might get lucky with a missile, and meet your Allah sooner! Death to all Palestinians!”³⁰³

The US federal government had opened civil rights investigations into seven schools and universities over allegations of antisemitism or Islamophobia since the outbreak of the middle east war. The list included three Ivy League institutions — Columbia, Cornell and the University of Pennsylvania — along with Wellesley College in Massachusetts, Lafayette College in Pennsylvania and Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in New York. It also included one K-12 system, the Maize Unified School District in Kansas. The Education Department announced the inquiries on 16 November 2023, calling it part of the Biden administration’s effort to take “aggressive action” against discrimination.³⁰⁴

Police in Monterey were investigating an alleged hate crime that occurred the first week of December, the department said 8 December 2023. A man reported sitting in his vehicle in the 300 block of Pine Street on Dec. 3 when a person came up and began scratching something into the

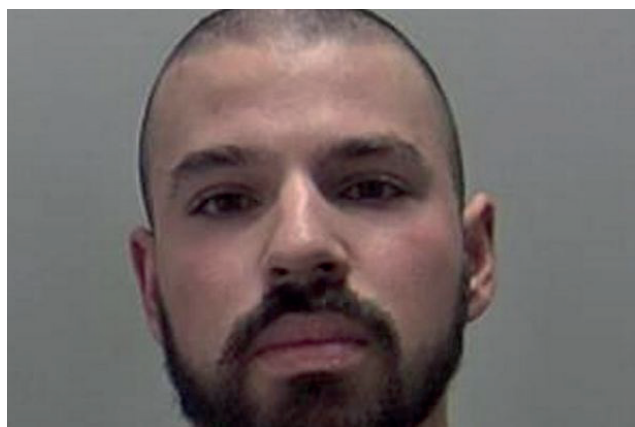
side of his vehicle. When the suspect realized there was a person sitting in the car, he fled, according to police. Police initiated an investigation, but a person matching the description of the suspect eventually drove up to the neighboring property of the victim. The suspect was identified as Mikhail Faybyshev, of Monterey. Police alleged they had Faybyshev on video footage committing the crime. They also alleged that Faybyshev admitted to scratching words into the side of the victim's car because he was Muslim.³⁰⁵



Bert James Baker, was arrested after the 4 February 2024 attack on Zacharia Doar, who was hospitalized. Baker was charged with aggravated assault with a deadly weapon. Police said on 7 February that their Hate Crimes Review Committee had determined that the stabbing met the definition of a hate crime. They have provided that information to prosecutors, who would make the final decision on whether to enhance the offense. An arrest affidavit said that Baker, who was on a bicycle, rode up to the truck Doar and three others were riding in, opened the tailgate and doors and yelled racial slurs at them. The truck was displaying support for Palestine. The group exited the truck and approached Baker, who punched Doar in the shoulders, the affidavit said. A fight ensued, with Baker eventually pulling out a knife and stabbing Doar in the rib, the affidavit said. When Baker was interviewed by police, he said he was an alcoholic and had more to drink that day than he normally did, the affidavit said. ³⁰⁶

In Canada, a man had been arrested and charged with hate crimes after tearing up a Qur'an, at a mosque in the Ontario province, police said on 9 April 2023.

The incident took place in the city of Markham while the suspect, Sharan Karunakaran, was later arrested in Toronto, the York Regional Police said in a statement. The Islamic Society of Markham (ISM) said in a statement an individual had come into the mosque in Markham, 30 kilometers north of Toronto, on 6 April 2023 and apparently tore a copy of the Qur'an, ranted at worshippers, and then tried to ram them with his vehicle.³⁰⁷



A Toronto man had been arrested in connection with multiple hate-motivated assaults throughout the city, according to police — including 18 November 2023 attack on worshippers outside Toronto Islamic Centre. Police responded to reports of an assault with a weapon outside the Centre near Yonge Street and Davenport Road. Officials said in a news release that a man allegedly confronted several people, threw a rock at them and yelled slurs, then attacked them with a bike chain. One person was believed to have sustained minor injuries. This followed two other incidents police said took place earlier in the same week. Police said a cab driver approached a man near Front Street and Yonge Street to ask whether they needed a ride early morning on 15 November 2023. The man asked the driver if he was Muslim and sprayed him in the face with an unknown substance, police said. Later that same morning, police said a woman wearing a hijab near Fort York Boulevard and Spadina Avenue was approached by a man who made derogatory statements toward her, then sprayed her in the face with an unknown substance. The woman was taken to hospital and treated for minor injuries. Police had laid charges against a man in connection with the incidents, including four counts of assault with a weapon, two counts of assault and two counts carrying a concealed weapon.³⁰⁸

In the UK, on 3 June 2023, West Midlands Police released a statement, naming three men charged. The statement read: “The men – Stephen McCallum, David Hammond, and James Bond, and all from Birmingham, were charged with violent disorder and appeared at Wolverhampton Magistrates Court on 1 June 2023.” A fourth man was released without charge. West Midlands Police arrested four males after a Muslim family faced racist abuse and violence from a group with weapons at Doe Bank Park in Walsall over the weekend, the force confirmed.³⁰⁹



Two teenage boys had been arrested over what police suspect was a racially aggravated arson at a mosque in Essex. Emergency services were called to Northbrooks Mosque in Harlow at about 21:30 BST on 8 August 2023. None was injured and firefighters contained the damage at the Harberts Road building, Essex Police said.³¹⁰



Five men were been sought by police after an alleged hate crime incident at Leeds railway station. British Transport Police (BTP) said a group of men were seen verbally abusing a man and a woman holding a Palestinian flag and placards. The incident happened on 23 December 2023, the force said.³¹¹

In India, a man accused of abducting and murdering two Muslim men over cow smuggling in India had been arrested after the victims' bodies were found in a burnt-out car. Police said the charred bodies were discovered in the car a day after the two men went missing in northern Haryana state, west of Delhi. "We have arrested one accused so far and we are searching for others," police officer Shyam Singh told media.³¹²

Positive Views on Islam

In Canada, the US President Joe Biden and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau renewed their commitment to fighting against Islamophobia during recent official messages, where they extended best wishes to Muslim communities living in the US and Canada. In his message to Muslims in Canada and around the world, Trudeau recalled the importance of Islam as an "opportunity to honour the values of compassion, gratitude, and family." Trudeau said that this opportunity was not only for Muslims but for the whole country as it served as an occasion to "recognize the invaluable contributions that Muslim Canadians have made". The White House also issued a press release, renewing the country's determination to

work against Islamophobia and hatred. “Islamophobia has absolutely no place in the United States, a country founded on freedom of worship and built on the contributions of immigrants, including Muslim immigrants,” the White House quoted Biden as saying.³¹³

In Germany, President Frank-Walter Steinmeier said on 16 September 2023 that Islam belonged to Germany amid growing racism and Islamophobia fueled by propaganda of far-right groups and parties that had exploited the refugee crisis and attempted to stoke fear of immigrants. “Islam, the Muslim religion, Muslim life, Muslim culture have taken root in our country,” Steinmeier said at the celebration of the 50th founding anniversary of the Association of Islamic Cultural Centers (VIKZ) in Cologne. “Today the diversity of Islam, the diversity of over 5 million Muslims, is also part of our country,” he said.³¹⁴

In India, on the occasion of International Day to Combat Islamophobia, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan called for a united fight against the darkness of hatred and bigotry. In a tweet, the Chief Minister said: “The UN’s International Day to Combat #Islamophobia is a solid call to action, reminding us of the disturbing rise of intolerance against Muslims and hate crimes worldwide...We must unite and ignite a flame of compassion and empathy to illuminate the darkness of hatred and bigotry,” Vijayan said.³¹⁵

On Inter-Faiths



In the US, faith, civic, and political leaders came together in Montgomery County on 4 November 2023 to stand against a hate incident that happened at a local mosque. Investigators said on 2 November at approximately 11:15 p.m., a man walked up to the door of the Khair Community Center in Upper Providence Township and wrote the word “terrorist” on the mosque door.³¹⁶

In the UK, Yorkshire County Cricket Club had signed the Muslim Athlete Charter to “demonstrate its commitment to equity, and diversity and inclusion for all”. The pledge recognises “the needs of Muslim cricketers, fans and staff” and is part of their focus “on delivering equity and diversity at all levels”. Yorkshire chief executive Stephen Vaughan said signing the charter is “an important and positive step”. The club added it is the start of the county being fully accredited with the Nujum Sports Athlete Charter and that all Yorkshire CCC and Northern Diamonds coaches and players have taken part in an educational workshop. Vaughan said “By understanding the faith and cultural needs of our Muslim players, staff and fans, we can help to create an open and inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and appreciated.”³¹⁷

Religious leaders in London, Ont., had come together to encourage Londoners to stand against rising hate crimes targeting both Jewish and Muslim communities, in the midst of ongoing violence in the Middle East. More than 60 interfaith leaders in the city signed a letter which called

for compassion, peace and an end to hatred, asking people to instead acknowledge the pain and loss that many communities were feeling. “We each have our sense of pain and suffering that we’re experiencing and we want to come together to provide a message that we do not accept the violence that is taking place where innocent lives are being taken,” said Imam Abd Alfatah Twakkal of London Council of Imams. There had been a long history of building relationships among various faith groups in London who always stood together, especially in difficult times, said Rev. Canon Kevin George of St. Aidan’s Anglican Church. “We’ve worked hard to foster that in some extremely difficult circumstances and we’re still having the conversations and trying very hard to continue to walk together,” he said.³¹⁸

Supports on Mosques

In the US, New York City issued new guidance on 29 August 2023 allowing mosques to broadcast the Muslim call to prayer on Fridays between 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. without obtaining a permit and despite sound restrictions in city neighborhoods. According to the city, the guidance also allowed the call to prayer to be broadcast in the evenings during Ramadan, a month-long period of fasting and prayer for the Muslim community. “Today we are cutting red tape and saying clearly if you are a mosque or house of worship of any kind, you do not have to apply for a permit to amplify your call to Friday prayer. You are free to live your faith in NYC,” Mayor Eric Adams said while announcing the new guidance.³¹⁹

At the EU, the European Commission had promised a €30m (£26m) fund to increase security at mosques and synagogues across the continent as it condemned a recent rise in levels of antisemitism and Islamophobia as “un-European”. The fund would mostly be used to step up security around public spaces, community centres and places of worship such as synagogues and mosques, Margaritis Schinas, the vice-president of the commission, said no European should tolerate fellow citizens feeling unsafe. He said: “If you visit a mosque or a synagogue in any European city, most likely you will see that there is a security perimeter. And this is the most un-European state, this is not part of our Europe. Europe should not look like this.”³²⁰

Positive Development on Hijab

In the US, Attorney Nadia Kahf had been appointed to the New Jersey Superior Court, she became the first hijab-wearing judge on the bench, local media reported. Kahf, who is of Syrian origin, is a law and immigration attorney from the township of Wayne. She took the oath of office on 23 March with her hand on a copy of the Quran, according to local news website North Jersey. She will serve as a Passaic County Superior Court judge after New Jersey's Governor Phil Murphy nominated her a year ago, according to local media.³²¹

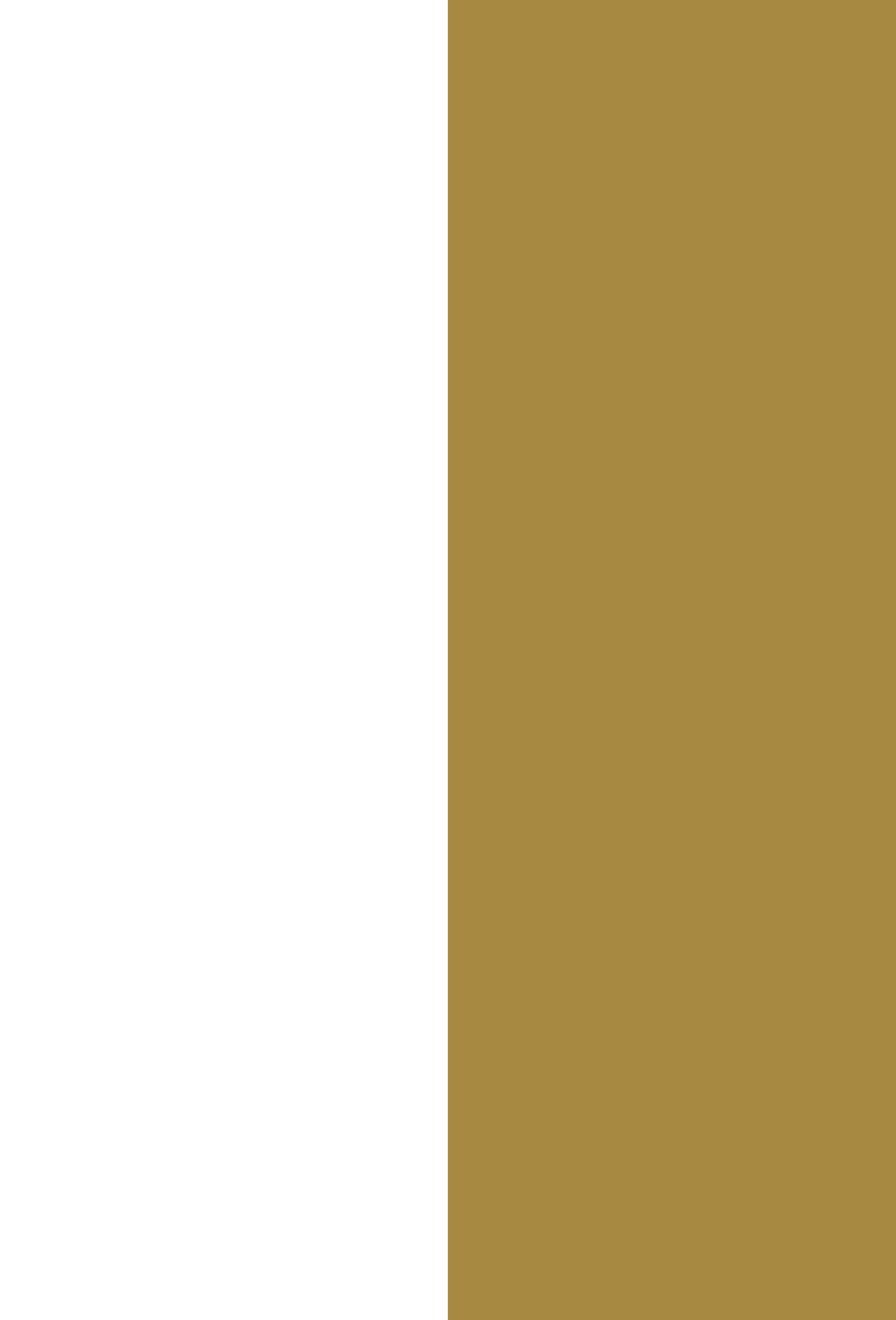
Two Milwaukee women were facing hate crime charges after cellphone video provided to CBS 58 showed two women grabbing and punching a group of Muslim women. Those victims told CBS 58 they believed they were targeted because of their appearance. According to a criminal complaint, on July 30, female victims were sitting at a picnic table at Cathedral Square Park and wearing hijabs. The complaint said two other women, accompanied by approximately 10 children, were also in the park at a nearby picnic table. One victim told investigators she heard one of the women say, "We're Black aggressive women, and we're going to defend our own kind." The victims said, at that point, the two women approached their picnic table and asked if they had a problem. "I said, 'there is no problem between us, what is the problem?' Like, I truly don't know, you know?" one of the victims said. "And she goes, 'where are you from?' And I told her it was none of her business because she clearly wasn't trying to have a conversation about where I'm truly from." The victim said, at that point, one of the women put her in a headlock and started punching her in the head. She said the other woman began punching her sister-in-law in the back of the head and neck. Two women, identified as Miracle Reed and Payton Smith, were arrested.³²²

At the UN, on 26 September 2023, The United Nations' human rights office criticized the French government for banning French athletes from wearing the hijab at the Paris Olympics in 2024. Maria Hurtado, spokeswoman for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said "In general, according to the committee on elimination of discrimination against women, any

state party of the convention, in this case France, has an obligation to take all the appropriate measures to modify any social or cultural patterns which are based on the idea of inferiority or superiority of either sexes,” Hurtado added. “Having said that, the discriminatory practices against a group can have harmful consequences. That is why according to international human right standards, restrictions of expressions of religions or beliefs such as attire choices are only acceptable under really specific circumstances that address legitimate concerns for public safety, public order or public health or morals in a necessary and proportionate fashion,” she added. Hurtado’s comments came after French Sports Minister Amélie Oudéa-Castéra said on 24 September 2023 French athletes would not be allowed to wear a hijab at the Paris Olympics next year, arguing in favor of “a strict regime of secularism, applied rigorously in the field of sport.”³²³

In New Zealand, Muslim children as young as preschool age were being bullied, and the mother of a man killed in the country’s worst mass shooting is determined to do something about it, to combat racism in schools. Dr. Maysoon Salama had seen tamariki go from the supportive environment of the Islamic preschool she co-founded in Christchurch, An-Nur Childcare Centre, to been bullied in primary school. “One of our little girls from day one, when she moved to primary school, was bullied because she was wearing a hijab... They don’t want to play with her and [say] ‘You’re not my friend’ and now she doesn’t want to go to school.” She and her centre teamed up with Tātai Aho Rau Core Education, and South Island funder Rātā Foundation to create resources to help teachers and learners understand Muslim culture, promote inclusivity and eliminate bullying, bias, and discrimination nationwide.³²⁴

LIST OF INCIDENTS



LIST OF INCIDENTS

Incident Related to Mosque and Islamic Center

UK: At least two mosques in London had received Islamophobic letters after the Turkey-Syria earthquakes. The author of a letter received by Erkin Guney, chairman of Masjid Ramadan mosque, in Hackney, said they “*could not stop smiling*” seeing the footage of the disaster. The anonymous letter wished for “*more deaths*” and said “the more Muslims that suffer the better”. It read: “*I could not stop smiling watching the people being pulled from the rubble, some dead some still sadly alive.*”³²⁵

UK: Officers from Merseyside police visited a local mosque daubed with threatening graffiti to provide reassurance as the hate crime investigation continues. The racially aggravated graffiti appeared sometime between February 2 and February 3 at the Shah Jalal Mosque on High Park Street, as officers confirmed to Tell MAMA that after local authorities became aware, they moved quickly to remove the graffiti.³²⁶

Bosnia and Herzegovina: A group of vandals desecrated a mosque in Bosnia-Herzegovina’s northwest, which sparked widespread criticism among Bosnian Muslims. According to the local Islamic Union Assembly, the Dasnica Mosque in the city of Bijeljina had its walls urinated on by persons unknown.³²⁷



UK: Lancashire Police was investigating the vandalism of two Muslim gravestones at the Scotforth Cemetery in Lancaster. The police statement added that Stars of David, daubed in black spray paint, appeared on the gravestones on February.³²⁸





India: On March 31, during the Ram Navami rally, a Hindutva mob set fire to Madrasa Azizia, which was the oldest madrasa and library in Bihar Sharif in Nalanda district of Bihar. The madrasa contained more than 4,500 books which were destroyed in the fire, Mohammad Shahabuddin, the caretaker of the madrasa and library said to Maktoob. *“All of the books have been destroyed, and none remain,”* he said. Madrasa Azizia was established by Bibi Sogra in memory of her husband, Abdul Aziz, and she is recognized as one of the most respected philanthropists in the history of Bihar. The 110-year-old library was vandalised by the armed mob of around 1,000 people. The saffron mob threw petrol bombs into the mosque and the library. *“The armed men were chanting ‘Jai Shree Ram,’”* said Mohan Bahadur, a guard at the madrasa. He also said the mob attacked him, but he managed to flee. Even though the attack took place in the afternoon, the cops did not reach the spot till 11 p.m.³²⁹

The Occupied Palestinian Territory: Israeli settlers had carried out at least 300 attacks, including shootings and arson, in a rampage through Palestinian villages in the Nablus area of the occupied West Bank, Palestinian officials said, in what had been described as a *“pogrom”*. A Palestinian man identified as Samih al-Aqtash was shot in the stomach on 26 February 2023 night by settlers protected by the Israeli army in the village of Zaatara south of Nablus. He died of his injuries.³³⁰



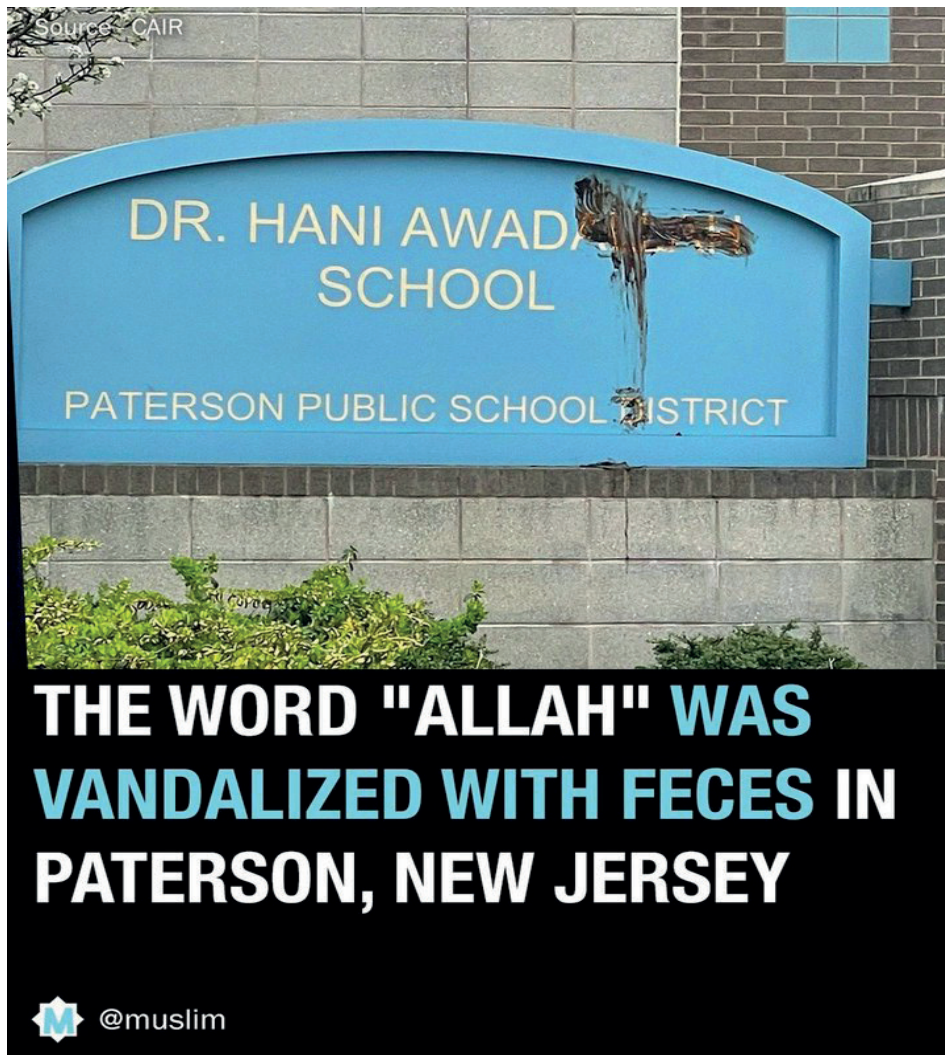
South Korea: White liquid suspected to be animal fat had been found sprayed near a mosque construction site in Daegu amid continued discord between an anti-mosque committee and the Muslim community. CCTV footage revealed by Muaz Razaq, a representative of Muslim community members who support the mosque, showed two people throwing unknown white waste on the street several times on 08 March 2023.³³¹



US: On 23 April 2023, A Minneapolis mosque (Masjid Omar Islamic Center) was the target of an alleged arson attempt when someone started a fire in a bathroom. Community members called for police to investigate whether it was an anti-Muslim bias crime. Muslim community leaders reported that a white man entered the mosque around 7 p.m. on 23 April 2023 with a container of flammable liquid before lighting the fire in the bathroom, CAIR said in its release. Worshippers at the mosque, which was in the 24 Somali Mall in the city's Ventura Village neighborhood, used a fire extinguisher to put the fire out, and police and fire officials also responded.³³²



US: One day after someone started a fire in a bathroom of a south Minneapolis mosque, another fire was set on the third floor of a different mosque less than a mile away. Dozens of Muslim community leaders and imams condemned the alleged attacks at a Tuesday news conference at the Masjid Al Rahma mosque, the site of the second mosque fire. Several raised concerns that the alleged anti-Muslim attack on 24 April 2023 could have been more tragic, given that about 50 day-care children and 50 worshippers were inside.³³³



US: The vandalism of a Passaic County public school must be investigated as a hate crime, said leaders in New Jersey’s Muslim community, as the school sign had been vandalized yet again. The Dr. Hani Awadallah School was named for a Paterson resident who “*worked tirelessly to improve the lives of children and new immigrants*” in the Arab-American community,

the school website said. Twice since 7 April 2023, someone had smeared feces and/or another substance across the last five letters of Awadallah's name ("Allah") on the school in south Paterson, said New Jersey chapter of the Council on Islamic-American Relations. The graffiti happened as Muslims were celebrating the sacred month of Ramadan worldwide.³³⁴



Canada: Toronto police were looking into a suspected hate-motivated incident after graffiti was spray painted outside a mosque in the city's west end. Police said they received a call about a reported hate crime at an Islamic Centre in the area of Oak Street and Weston Road on 30 March 2023. The words "Allah is a lie" and "Death to dictator" could be seen outside the Towfiq Islamic Centre.³³⁵

UK: A woman who made a bomb hoax about a mosque in the Lancashire town of Brierfield had avoided prison. The Lancashire Telegraph reported that Terry Chester received a one-year prison sentence, suspended for 24 months at Blackburn Magistrates Court on 6 April 2023. Ms Chester put a handwritten note through her neighbour's door that read "Bomb. Mosque. Sackville Street. Also man has gun on Guildford Street. Police." Terry Chester did not seek to alert the police, having her version of events roundly dismissed by the courts last month. Neighbour, Saiqa Bibi, alerted the authorities after he discovered the note, which referred to the Jamia Mosque Sultania.³³⁶

The Occupied Palestinian Territory: Dozens of Israeli settlers stormed on 2 April 2023 the courtyards of Al-Aqsa Mosque. The eyewitness said that the settlers carried out provocative tours and performed their racist Talmudic rituals.³³⁷



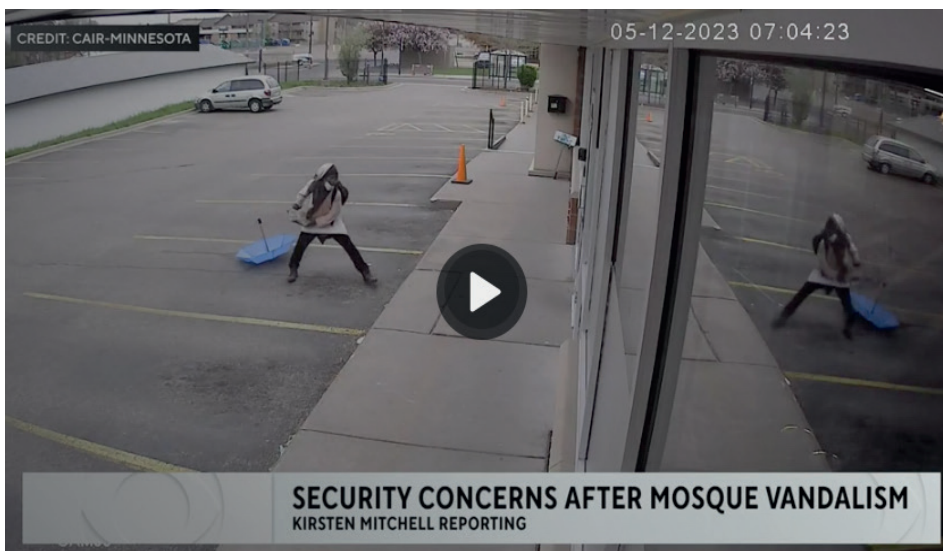
The Occupied Palestinian Territory: Israeli forces had stormed the Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied East Jerusalem, as they fired stun grenades and tear gas at Palestinian worshippers in a violent raid at Islam's third holiest site during the holy month of Ramadan. The official Palestinian news agency Wafa said dozens of worshippers who were spending the night praying were injured in the police raid at dawn on 5 April 2023. At least 400 Palestinians were arrested on Wednesday who remained in Israeli custody, according to Palestinian officials.³³⁸



US: St. Paul police and authorities with the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives were investigating a fire at a mosque on 17 May 2023 near the Minnesota Capitol. The fire was reported at the Oromo American Twhid Islamic Center, 430 Dale Street, just north of Interstate 94. The building was unoccupied and under renovation. No injuries were reported. St. Paul fire investigators described the fire as a suspected arson.³³⁹



US: On 11 May 2023, Salman Alfarisi Islamic Center located on Northwest King's Boulevard had been vandalized with spray paint. The mosque walls were found to be spray painted with the words “Jesus Loves U.” While the words by themselves were not inherently offensive or crude, the act was seen as disrespectful by neighbors like Sandra Landish. Landish said, “It’s a house of worship. You just don’t do that to a house of worship. Tag it with anything.”³⁴⁰



US: On 12 May 2023, a person wearing a hoodie and a mask was captured by a surveillance camera entering the Masjid Al Sunnah Mosque's parking lot on Pederson Street in St. Paul. The person then threw a large rock at the main doors of the mosque. *"The timing was good because nobody was hurt and nobody was here, they smashed the door... then they left,"* Masjid As-Sunnah Director Abdirizak Diis said. The shattered door didn't stop people from attending Friday prayer, though many had concerns after learning about the vandalism. It was the fifth time someone vandalized a Minnesota mosque since January 2023.³⁴¹

Germany: A mosque in Germany's central Goettingen city received a letter which contained anti-Muslim threats with a Swastika and other neo-Nazi symbols on 25 May 2023. Mehmet Ibrahimba\$, the Chairman of the mosque association, said the letter contained racist and Islamophobic language and had the neo-Nazi alias 'NSU 2.0'. *"Our mosque community and Muslims in Goettingen are worried due to the continued threats of violence,"* he said. Ibrahimba\$ said it was the second threatening letter they had received in several months. NSU 2.0. referred to the National Socialist Underground, a neo-Nazi terror group uncovered in 2011 that murdered 10 people and carried out bomb attacks targeting immigrants.³⁴²

Canada: Canadian police arrested a man who tried to crash into Muslim worshippers at two mosques in the Greater Toronto Area, and an *"anti-Muslim, hate-motivated"* probe was launched regarding the incident. Police said they were called to services at a Toronto mosque after a man allegedly drove his car into the parking lot and attempted to strike worshippers as well as other vehicles. The driver then sped away and when to another mosque and repeated the same actions. The incidents occurred on 5 April 2023 around 5:30 a.m. and 6 a.m., police said. The suspect then drove to the Scarborough shopping mall, where he entered and accosted several shoppers in a threatening way and shouted anti-Muslim comments. The man was arrested and charged with two counts of dangerous operation of a motor vehicle, five counts of criminal harassment, uttering threats of bodily harm, assault, and indecent acts in a public place and insulting others.³⁴³

Germany: A mosque in northwest Germany was vandalized by supporters of the PKK terror organization, authorities reported. The local police in Bad

Bentheim appealed on 22 May 2023 for witnesses and requested anyone with information to come forward and assist in an investigation into the incident.³⁴⁴



Germany: A mosque in Germany’s central Duisburg city received hate mail with threats against the congregation on 3 June 2023. The Duisburg Central Mosque, got the threatening letter, which included both a swastika and the word “NSU 2.0,” referring to a neo-Nazi group responsible for a string of murders.³⁴⁵

Bosnia and Herzegovina: A mosque and houses of Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina’s Surmanci town had been subjected to numerous Islamophobic attacks. City of Capljina’s Islamic Council chief Imam Adem Suta said there had been many attacks in Surmanci in the past days, targeting Muslims. *“First of all, the windows of the mosque were broken, then the windows and a door of the mosque were hit with an air gun,”* said Suta, adding that attackers also targeted houses of Muslims. According to Suta, the ugliest attack was when a dead lizard was thrown into the area where a funeral prayer was taking place.³⁴⁶



US: A New Mexico Islamic center was a target of a hate crime, after vandals broke in and left thousands in damage. The attack included ripping copies of the Qur'an, then pouring drinks on it. *"They are not coming to steal, they're coming to destroy your worship place that's what the sad part about it ... They went in to rip the Quran, Holy Quran, and poured beer on it. They went in stab like the whole entire like the drywall"* said Ahmed Benssouda. Ahmed oversaw the property but was out of the country when he said his daughter reported that the center had been broken into.³⁴⁷



Germany: Mosques across Germany were facing an increase in vandalism, harassment and threats, which was a growing cause for alarm among the country's Muslim community. More mosques had received threatening letters in last few weeks, signed with the neo-Nazi alias "NSU 2.0.," President of the Turkish-Muslim group IGMG, told media on 9 August 2023. "NSU 2.0" referred to the National Socialist Underground, a neo-Nazi terrorist group uncovered in 2011 that murdered 10 people and carried out bomb attacks targeting Turkish and Muslim immigrants.³⁴⁸

US: On 18 August 2023, A bomb threat was made against Mohammed Mosque (Masjid Muhammad) in Washington, DC as worshipers were performing prayers. A Metropolitan Police officer told Anadolu that officials went to the mosque as quickly as possible after receiving a tip and the congregation was immediately evacuated as a precautionary measure.³⁴⁹



UK: The Muslim community in west Belfast had been left “*intimidated*” by Nazi flags placed near a mosque in the Dunmurry area. Flags bearing the SS and swastika symbols were pictured outside the Iqraa mosque on 23 August 2023. They were seemingly put there overnight and reported to police by people who arrived at the mosque and community centre just after 8am.³⁵⁰



India: A mosque was set on fire and a Muslim cleric killed during religious clashes that broke out after a procession by Hindu nationalist groups in the northern Indian state of Haryana. Those killed in the violence in the state include two “*home guards*”, who assist the police in controlling riots and public disturbances, police said. The violence, which lasted for several hours,

soon spread to the neighbouring areas of Faridabad, Palwal and Gurugram (formerly Gurgaon), on the outskirts of the capital, Delhi. In Gurugram, a mosque was set ablaze by a mob. A senior official said police had been deployed at the mosque when it was attacked. *“But we were outnumbered by the attackers who opened fire suddenly,”* Nitish Agarwal, Deputy Police Commissioner (East) of Gurugram, told media.³⁵¹

India: A mosque was vandalised in Haryana’s Sohna on 1 August 2023, a day after violence erupted in different parts of the state. The mosque, Shahi Jama Masjid, was attacked at around 2 pm, just hours after a peace march was held by the police and district authorities in the area. The caretaker of the mosque, Shamim Ahmed, said that a mob of around 200 men, with their faces covered, barged in during the afternoon and began destroying *“whatever came in their path.”* *“We were about 50 people—including children who study here. We were hidden in the inner rooms of the mosque. It must have appeared to them that the mosque is empty, or they wouldn’t have spared us. We would have died today,”* Ahmed told media. Ahmed added that those who live in the mosque—caretakers, their families and children—had contemplated fleeing to their villages after Monday’s violence, but stayed back because of assurance from the authorities. *“There was a peace meeting in the morning. Locals too told us that we don’t need to leave now as everything is fine now. It is because of that assurance and trust that we stayed, but we regret it now,”* Ahmed said.³⁵²

Greece: A Turkish cemetery in Greece’s Western Thrace region had been targeted by unidentified people on 2 September 2023. Some 20 tombstones had been damaged in the cemetery of the Turkish minority in Narlikoy.³⁵³

US: On 11 September 2023, an individual urinated in front of the Masjid Al-Wadood mosque at 2520 Victory Blvd., before damaging a pair of wooden racks used to hold the shoes of those taking part in prayer services. A source told the media that a license plate number of the alleged perpetrator was captured during the vandalism.³⁵⁴



Sweden: On 25 September 2023, a fire caused heavy damage to a mosque in south-eastern Sweden, according to local media, Anadolu Agency reported. The fire in the Arby section of the city of Eskilstuna was caused by arson, Anas Deneche, the mosque’s Communication Director, told media. Police records showed the mosque had faced threats and was subjected to physical attacks, he added that they were sure that this was an arson attack.³⁵⁵



US: A picture shared by CAIR, showed the word “Nazis” was spray-painted over the sign for the Palestinian Cultural Center for Peace. That sign also features space for the Islamic Seminary of Boston. Boston police said they responded to the Palestinian Cultural Center for Peace and the Islamic Seminary of Boston and that they are increasing patrols in the area.³⁵⁶



US: On 19 October 2023, Islamophobic graffiti was written on the outside of a South Philadelphia mosque. The vandal scribbled the messages on the glass doors and windows of the United Muslim Islamic Center, on the 1200 block of Point Breeze Avenue, mosque representatives said. The perpetrator wrote that Muslim men and women are “*stupid and dumb*” and “*eat crabs*,” and “*read your Torah*” was also featured in the graffiti, said Qasim Rashad, amir of UMM, which also operates a mosque at 15th and Christian streets.³⁵⁷

US: According to CAIR’s San Diego-based office, a surveillance video from the Islamic Center of San Diego showed two vandals scouting the area before they returned and pasted 50 to 60 flyers on all of the trees on the mosque’s property.³⁵⁸



Canada: On 6 October 2023, a man painted “*hate symbols*” on the front of a mosque (Madinah Masjid) just east of Donlands Avenue in the city’s east end. Toronto Police initiated an investigation.³⁵⁹



UK: On 26 September 2023, Al-Falah institute in Hayes, West London, an Islamic centre had been targeted by vandals and was set on fire in the attack. Perpetrators broke in and ransacked the centre, which caused thousands of pounds worth of damage.³⁶⁰

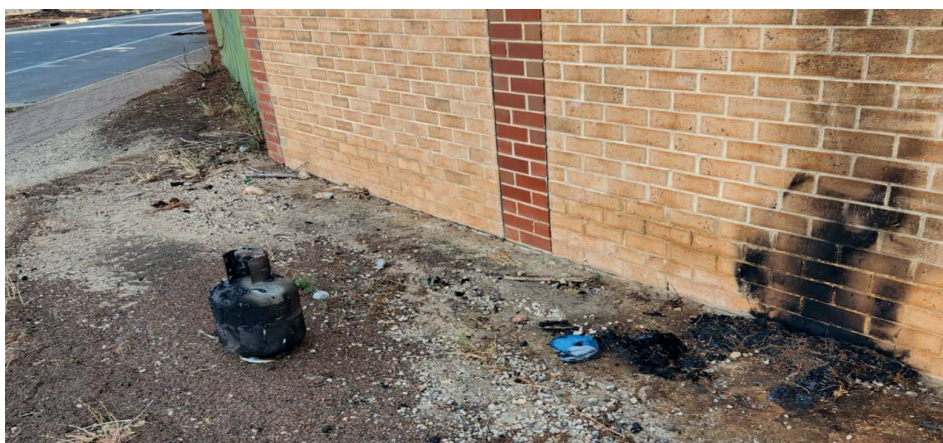


UK: A pig’s head was left outside the proposed site of a mosque was treated as a potential hate crime, police had said. Lancashire Police said officers were looking into “*a racially aggravated public order offence*” at a former Methodist church on Mosley Street, Barnoldswick, on 08 October 2023.³⁶¹



UK: On 18 October 2023, an arson attempt was made on an Islamic centre in Surrey, according to police. At about 1:45 am, a suspect approached the wooden door of Molesey Islamic Cultural Centre, near Surbiton. They then set light to what appeared to be an instant lighting BBQ bag. The fire did not take hold and there was no significant damage. Police were appealing to members of the public who may have witnessed the incident to come forward.³⁶²

Germany: The Sultan Ahmet Mosque, in Germany, was vandalized on 18 October 2023 by unknown suspects before they attempted to burn the place down. Vandalism drew symbols, including a swastika and the Star of David, on the door of the mosque in the Dahlhausen district in Bochum. The Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (DITIB), which runs the mosque, condemned the attack.³⁶³



Australia: Two suspected arson attacks hit two mosques in South Australia. On 23 October 2023, a gas cylinder was set on fire outside the Al-Khalil Mosque in Adelaide's north. The Islamic Society of South Australia

confirmed the incident and said it had been reported to the police. The Islamic representative body said an earlier attack hit the Marion Mosque on 19 October 2023 when two grass fires were lit on Condada Avenue, which ran alongside the house of worship. No one was injured in either incident. A South Australian police spokesman confirmed the police were investigating the two fires.³⁶⁴

UK: Two gasoline cans with “*Israel Defense Forces (IDF)*” written on them were thrown at the Oxford Central Mosque in the UK on 29 October 2023. According to a statement by the Council of Mosques, an individual on a bicycle approached the exterior door of the mosque and threw two red gasoline cans with the letters “*IDF*” written on them toward the mosque. “*We believe this attack was due to us showing our unwavering support for the innocent people of Palestine by displaying Palestinian flags around our mosque,*” it said.³⁶⁵

Germany: Three mosques in Germany had received packages and letters in October 2023 that contained racist threats against Muslims, officials said on 30 October 2023. The Turkish-Muslim group DITIB, which run the three mosques in northwestern Germany, condemned the racist incident and called on authorities to take action against Islamophobia. “*These heinous acts have deeply saddened us and our neighbors,*” the chairs of the DITIB mosque associations in Bochum, Castrop-Rauxel and Recklinghausen said in a joint statement.³⁶⁶



The Occupied Palestinian Territory: At least 50 Palestinians were killed and dozens of others injured on 15 November 2023 after the Israeli army targeted a mosque in the besieged Gaza Strip, media reported. The attack on the Sabra neighborhood was conducted during a congressional prayer when the mosque was full of Palestinian worshippers. Israel had conducted similar attacks on places of worship since its inception; in this war alone, multiple Mosques and churches had been leveled, including ones dating back centuries. On 20 October, the Israeli army destroyed the Grand Al-Omari Mosque in Jabalia, dating back to the 7th century; it was one of the largest mosques in Palestine.³⁶⁷

The Occupied Palestinian Territory: Israeli airstrikes on 8 November 2023 damaged two mosques in the city of Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip, bringing the total number of completely destroyed mosques in the current conflict to 59 and partially destroyed mosques to 136, according to Gaza's Interior Ministry. *"Israeli occupation aircraft bombed and completely destroyed Khalid bin al-Walid and Al-Ikhlâs mosques in Khan Yunis,"* said a ministry statement. Ikrami al-Mudallal, spokesman for the Ministry of Endowments in the Gaza Strip, added that Israel also targeted a third mosque in Gaza, Al-Sahwa Mosque, bringing the total number of completely destroyed mosques to 59.³⁶⁸

US: The Montgomery County Department of Police (MCDP) said that the Idara Jaferia Islamic Center in Burtonsville received a bomb threat and was evacuated 1 December 2023. The mosque's officials said police came to the mosque during Friday congregational prayers (Jummah) and said someone had called in a bomb threat, according to the release by CAIR. The mosque was evacuated.³⁶⁹

France: On 9 December 2023, an Islamophobic graffiti was found on the entrance of a Muslim prayer room in northwestern France. In a post on X, Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said the probe was initiated after anti-Islamic words were discovered written on a wall. *"It's racist, deplorable and scandalous,"* the France Bleu media outlet reported, citing Philippe Le Goff, the mayor of Guingamp.³⁷⁰



US: Police were investigating vandalism which targeted a mosque in West Philadelphia. It happened on 29 December 2023 on the 4200 block of Walnut Street of Masjid Al-Jamia of Philadelphia. A man in a red coat and blue jeans was captured on surveillance video.³⁷¹

UK: An alleged “bomb threat” forced London’s largest mosque to close and the evacuation of scores of people with a large police presence seen in the area. In a statement on social media, the East London Mosque & London Muslim Centre said: “Due to an emergency, the Mosque has been evacuated and unfortunately we will not be able to facilitate Salat ul Maghrib. Further update will be provided in due course, InshaAllah.” A spokesman for the Metropolitan Police said the force was called at 3.02pm on 7 December after a threatening email was sent to East London Mosque in Whitechapel. He added: “Officers carried out a search of the area and the building was evacuated as a precaution.” The Met’s spokesman said nothing suspicious was found so the incident was stood down just before 5pm, adding: “Further enquiries will take place.”³⁷²



The Occupied Palestinian Territory: Israel's far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir shared a video of soldiers performing Jewish rituals inside a mosque in the West Bank city of Jenin. The Israeli army had launched a military operation in the Jenin refugee camp in the northern West Bank, leaving at least 11 Palestinians dead since 19 December 2023, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry.³⁷³

The Occupied Palestinian Territory: At least four Palestinians were injured on 08 December 2023 by Israeli army gunfire targeting a mosque in northern Jerusalem, according to medical sources. In a statement, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) said that its crews dealt with four injuries from Israeli gunfire in the town of Hizma. *"The Israeli army opened fire at a mosque in the town of Hizma, northern Jerusalem,"* the official Palestine TV reported.³⁷⁴



The Occupied Palestinian Territory: Disturbing footage surfaces of Israeli soldiers mocking and destroying a mosque in Gaza. The soldiers were seen defecating in a makeshift toilet, spitting on the floor, and firing shots indiscriminately.³⁷⁵

The Occupied Palestinian Territory: A number of Palestinian worshippers in the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron city, southern the occupied West Bank, were assaulted by Israeli settlers on 18 December 2023 evening prayer. According to the official Palestinian news agency Wafa, the Israeli settlers used pepper spray to attack the Palestinians in the Ibrahimi Mosque, resulting in cases of suffocation and burns among the worshippers. Wafa also reported that the settlers were protected by the Israeli army during their assault.³⁷⁶

The Occupied Palestinian Territory: Israeli police on 22 December 2023 fired sound bombs and tear gas at Palestinians in East Jerusalem to prevent

them from reaching Al-Aqsa Mosque to perform Friday prayers. In a statement, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) said that its crews *“dealt with two injuries due to beating by the Israeli police in Bab al-Amoud and Bab al-Asbat in Jerusalem.”*³⁷⁷

France: A new wave of frustration and discontent has swept through the Muslim community in France after an attack on the mosque of Saint Martin des Champs, a commune in the Finistère department of Brittany in northwest France. According to media, an individual set fire to one of the mosques on 13 January 2024, sparked backlash and frustration among Muslims in the region and throughout the country. A surveillance video documented the attack when an individual set fire to the door of a mosque room. There were no casualties after the attack. Minister of Interior Gerald Darmanin expressed support for Muslims in northwest France. *“Support for Muslims in Finistere following the damage to the Morlaix mosque this morning. An investigation has been opened so that the perpetrator of these acts can be prosecuted,”* he said on X, formerly Twitter.³⁷⁸

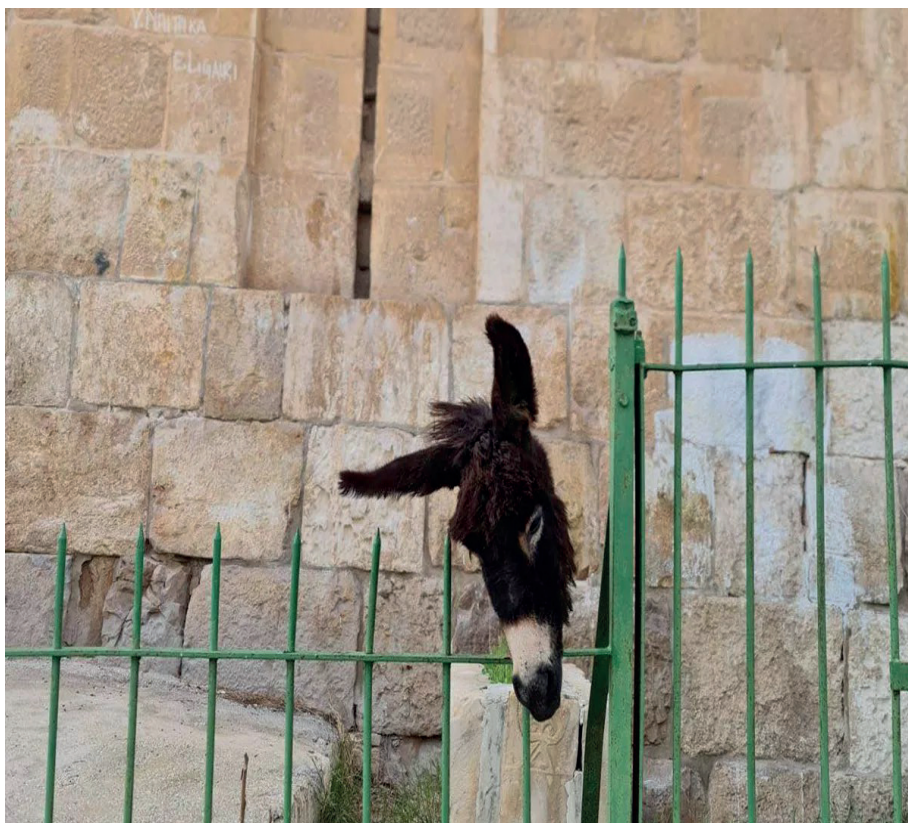
UK: The Glasgow-based Al-Farooq Education and Community Centre (AFECC) bought the former Barony St John Church in Ardrossan in 2022. They had been fundraising since then to realise their plans to turn it into North Ayrshire’s first mosque and centre for Muslims in the area. But on 6 January 2024, Alan Bell, from the neighboring Scottish Centre for Personal Safety, found a flag and excrement dumped on the former church’s doorstep. He said: *“I thought the flag had fallen off the front door. As I picked it up to pin it back on the door, I noticed as I unravelled it that it was something more sinister. “ The prayer flag had an huge pile of excrement, either human or animal, smeared in the middle of it. It has obviously been thrown over the security fence which surrounds the church and had landed at the front door.”* Bell added: *“It beggars belief that some people are so full of hatred and racism that they think it is okay to do this – especially over the Christmas period, a time for goodwill towards all men.”*³⁷⁹

India: Tension prevailed in Narketpally village of Nalgonda district on 21 January 2024 night when a mob of 200-250 right-wing outfits like VHP, Bajrang Dal, RSS and BJP assembled on an open plot admeasuring 2,840 square yards besides a mosque, which was registered as Waqf property,

and tried to construct a Hanuman Temple there. The mob was also seen performing puja on the Waqf land. According to the Amjedullah Khan, MBT spokesperson, the Muslims who were performing namaz inside the Masjid alerted Narketpally Police Station but no action was taken against them due to “*lack of personnel*”. Then, Hafeez Khan (Secretary of Peace Committee) Nalgonda, Moulana Ahsan Uddin (president of Jamiat-e-Ulema, Nalgonda) and Mufti Siddiqui informed the Nalgonda SP Chandana Deepti, who immediately rushed force to Narketpally. Despite police force reaching the spot no action was taken against the mob and Muslims, who were holed up in the masjid had to leave through an alternate door.³⁸⁰



India: A mob attempted to hoist saffron flags on the centuries’ old Diwanji Begum mosque in Uttar Pradesh’s Agra on 22 January, in celebration of the Ram Temple consecration. In videos of the incident that went viral, the mob could be seen dancing and holding saffron flags as they climb on top of the mosque, attempting to hoist them. The mosque, in Agra’s Tajganj area, was built in A.D. 1677 and was commissioned by Diwanji Begum, mother of Mumtaz Mahal. The Mughal era mosque comes under the Agra circle of the Archaeological Survey of India. The caretaker of the mosque, Zahir Uddin, filed a complaint in the Tajganj police after the incident, where he claimed that “*1000-1500 people*” were present at the gate of the mosque, trying to hoist the flags. The complainant also claimed that several slogans were being raised,” and the “*anti-social elements*” had “*desecrated the mosque*”. 12 people have been arrested for the act, so far.³⁸¹



The Occupied Palestinian Territory: Israeli settlers hung a donkey's head on a grave in occupied East Jerusalem amid growing tensions across the occupied West Bank, according to local authorities on 27 December 2023. *"A settler stormed the Bab Al-Rahma cemetery and hung a donkey's head on a grave there,"* the Jerusalem governor's office said in a statement.³⁸²



US: ON 23 February 2024, A Long Island attorney was charged with criminal trespassing and harassment for entering a mosque and chanting about freeing Israeli hostages. Staff and worshipers were alarmed when

a man entered the Islamic Center of Melville Wednesday afternoon and began chanting. *“Free Israeli hostages now! Free the Israeli hostages now,”* Jordan Endler allegedly said during the incident. *“We opened the door, open the door to talk to him, but he was not coming to talk,”* Essam Ibrahim, chairman of the Islamic Center of Melville. *“Are you praying for the Israeli Jewish women? Will you specifically you’re praying for Israeli Jewish?”* the man could be heard asking on the video. Witnesses said Endler rubbed his shoes on prayer rugs - a show of disrespect - used obscenities about a call for a ceasefire, and refused to leave. Responding police spoke with Endler, of East Northport, but didn’t arrest him until after mosque leaders met with Suffolk Police and showed them the video.³⁸³

Canada: The chairperson of the Islamic Centre of Cambridge said they were thankful for the support people had shown to them in light of a police investigation into graffiti on the centre’s building. *“This was a very small incident, someone marking a cross on the exit pillars. This is the first incident since we started work here during the 1980s,”* Mohammad Darr said in an email to CBC News. Police said they were called on 12 February 2024 to the building in the area of Dunbar and Hespeler roads in Cambridge. *“The graffiti included hate-motivated symbols,”* police said in a release. The graffiti was condemned by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as *“alarming, abhorrent, and unacceptable”* in a post on X, formerly Twitter, on 14 February.³⁸⁴

US: Police had charged a man with urinating on Chattanooga’s Islamic Center, but a police report said he was unaware the building was a mosque and did not deface the building due to his religious beliefs. On 1 March 2024 CAIR condemned the incident and said the matter should be investigated as a hate crime. *“Given the recent spike in anti-Muslim bigotry we have witnessed nationwide, it would only make sense for law enforcement authorities to consider a possible bias motive for this incident,”* said CAIR National Communications Director Ibrahim Hooper. *“Americans of all faiths must be free to worship as they wish without fear of harassment.”*³⁸⁵

Incident Targeting Muslim Individual

US: Muslim men who were praying together in their housing unit at a Missouri prison were doused with pepper spray, physically assaulted by corrections officers and then retaliated against when they complained, according to a lawsuit. The lawsuit was filed on 2 March 2023 by the Council on American-Islamic Relations-Missouri and the CAIR Legal Fund against Missouri Department of Corrections officials and several employees of the Eastern Reception, Diagnostic and Correctional Center in Bonne Terre, Missouri.³⁸⁶

India: Two Muslim men from the Rajasthan-Haryana border were allegedly attacked and abducted by a mob that later set them ablaze, alive while they were inside their car. This happened after accusations of cow smuggling were made against the victims. The dead had been identified as Junaid and Nasir, both residents of Ghatmeeka village in Rajasthan's Bharatpur district.³⁸⁷

Canada: On 9 March 2023, a man allegedly pulled a knife on a Muslim woman on a Toronto subway train the week before. In a news release on 15 March 2023, police said the incident, was been treated as a “suspected hate-motivated” offence after officers consulted the service’s specialized hate crime unit.³⁸⁸



US: On 9 April 2023, An imam was stabbed while he was leading his congregation in prayer at a mosque in Paterson, N.J. The assailant was quickly subdued by worshippers, according to local authorities. The suspect,

identified as Serif Zorba, had been arrested and charged with first-degree attempted murder and weapons charges. He was expected to appear in court on Monday afternoon, Valdes added. Imam Sayed Elnakib, was quickly transported to St. Joseph's University Medical Center. Mayor André Sayegh, who went to visit Elnakib at the hospital on Sunday afternoon, said the imam was in stable condition despite "suffering some serious wounds."³⁸⁹

Canada: The incident occurred on 9 March 2023 at Ste-Catherine St. E. and St-André St. Three women from Montreal's Muslim community were leaving a business when they were accosted by a man. He allegedly insulted them and assaulted them, which included slapping them in the face. Passersby intervened and the man left the scene on foot and was seen entering the Berri-UQAM metro station, two blocks away, police said.³⁹⁰

UK: A Muslim pensioner was assaulted by three men on his way home from a mosque in Kings Heath. The victim, aged 73, was walking along York Road, when three men got out of a black vehicle which was parked on the street. One of the men ran up to the victim and kicked him in the back, which caused him to fall and hit his head on a display board. The men then fled. The victim was taken to hospital with a broken hand and cuts to his face after the attack. Video of the incident circulating online appeared to show two men approach the elderly man from behind before jump kicking him in the back. One of the thugs was seen running up to the victim – who was walking with his back turned to the attackers – with what appears to be a motorbike helmet in his hand. Both men were heard whooping before the vicious attack as they attempt to illicit a response from the victim. In the CCTV video's audio, they can be heard shouting what appears to be the phrase "Oi, yo r*****d!", a racist slur often directed at Muslims and Sikhs – before the violent attack, which caused the victim to crash land into sandwich boards outside Fletchers Bar & Eatery.³⁹¹



UK: A violent attack took place during the Bank Holiday weekend against a Muslim family who were peacefully enjoying a picnic in a Walsall park. Police had confirmed a group of men armed with weapons hurled racial abuse and savagely attacked the Muslim family in Doe Bank Park on Sunday 28 May 2023. A police investigation had been launched into the horrific incident which saw two members of the Muslim family sustaining nasty head and facial injuries. Officers acted on information and overnight arrested four men – aged 38, 39, 55 and 58 – on suspicion of assault.³⁹²

UK: A statement on the Herts Police website said, “On Friday 5 May, at around 12.25pm, two vehicles were involved in a minor collision in Wellstones car part. It was reported that an altercation then followed between those involved, and a woman in her 30s was physically assaulted. It was alleged that the suspect pulled off her hijab and stamped on it, before making threats and using racial slurs. Several bystanders intervened, and all involved parties left the scene. The woman went to her home address where she called the police. Attending officers called the ambulance service, and she was taken to hospital for treatment.” Since the incident, Police continue to appeal for witnesses, and information.³⁹³



India: On 9 November 2021, Mohammad Altaf, a daily-wage worker, was found dead in a police station in Kasganj district. According to police in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, it was suicide. The police claimed he used the drawstring of the hood of his jacket after he tied it to a toilet's water tap, three feet above ground to hang himself. But, as photos of the scene emerged, Altaf, was 165cm tall and weighed 60kg, but the toilet tap he had supposedly hanged himself from was just 76cm off the ground and made of flimsy plastic. And why, as the police later claimed in court, was the CCTV in the police station mysteriously not working that day? Family and friends told a very different story: that Altaf, a Muslim man who lived in the town of Kasganj, was in love with and planned to marry a Hindu girl. That powerful local Hindu vigilante groups opposed to interfaith unions found out and reported him to the police. And that on 9 November 2021, Altaf was arrested and tortured to death in police custody and his family was pressured to keep quiet. *"The police murdered my son and then gave me money to say he was depressed and took his own life,"* said Altaf's father, Chand Miya, an illiterate mason who has taken the case to the state high court. *"But I will not stay quiet, I want justice."* On 18 February 2022, the courts ordered Altaf's body to be exhumed and a new postmortem examination would be carried out.³⁹⁴

India: A deputy imam had been killed after a mob of far-right Hindus torched and opened fire at a mosque in a suburb of the Indian capital, New Delhi, hours after deadly communal violence in a nearby district. Police had identified the victim as 19-year-old Maulana Saad, prayer leader of

the Anjuman Jama mosque located in sector 57 in Gurugram. The mosque came under attack by the mob early on 1 August 2023, a day after violence in neighbouring Nuh district in northern Haryana state. *“A group of 50 to 60 miscreants resorted to firing and arson at Anjum in the early hours of Tuesday, which led to the death of one person and wounded another,”* Deputy Commissioner of Police Nitish Agarwal told media.³⁹⁵



China: Kusman Rehim, was detained on 14 July 2023, after performing readings from the Quran in a melodious art form revered across the Islamic world. Chinese authorities in the northwestern region of Xinjiang had detained an ethnic Kazakh man for performing Quranic recitations – including at a Muslim wedding, Radio Free Asia had learned. Kusman Rehim, was detained on July 14 after performing readings from the Quran in a melodious art form revered across the Islamic world, the head of the Kazakhstan-based rights group Atajurt, said in an interview. *“Kusman Rehim was arrested on July 14,”* Atajurt chief Bekzat Maksutkhan said. *“The main reason was that the police found a Quran in his home. Also, he had performed Quranic recitations in people’s homes during Eid al-Adha [June 27-July 1] and taken part in a Muslim wedding,”* Bekzat said.³⁹⁶

US: The Board of Directors of the Islamic Center of Bosnia and Herzegovina in New York condemned the brutal, unprovoked attack on Imam Idriz Budimlić, which happened on 8 September 2023. The unidentified assailant brutally attacked Imam Budimlić and knocked him to the ground with a strong punch to the face, causing bleeding from the nose, swelling on the face, vision problems and multiple fractures to the bones of the face and nose. The attacker escaped, and the New York police were still searching for him.³⁹⁷



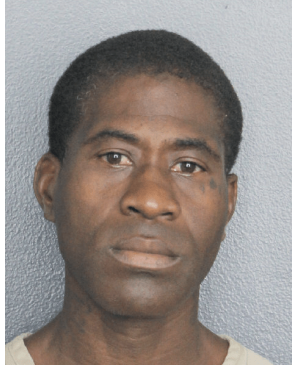
India: On 18 August 2023, an elderly Muslim couple was beaten to death in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh over their son's relationship with a Hindu woman. Abbas Ali, and his wife Kamrul Nisha, died on the spot in Sitapur, Uttar Pradesh, after they were attacked with iron rods and sticks allegedly by the members of the Hindu community, including the family members of the woman. Three people accused of killing the couple had been arrested while the search was ongoing for two other people. Sitapur superintendent of police, Chakresh Mishra told media that the couple's son had eloped with the woman, identified as Ruby, in 2020 when she was a minor. Their son, Shaukat, was arrested and sent to jail after the woman's family had lodged a complaint on charges of abduction. *"When Abbas's son was released from jail a few days back, some members of the family planned the attack on the couple,"* the police officials said. Shaukat was released from jail on 16 August 2023. The woman's family filed a complaint against him but the girl gave a statement in favour of Shaukat.³⁹⁸

India: On 26 September 2023, a disabled Muslim man was lynched in Delhi's Sundar Nagari area for allegedly consuming prasad at a temple in the area. Several people were detained in connection with the incident, police said. A video of the incident, widely shared on social media, showed the youth identified as Muhammed Israr, appealing to the crowd for help as he cried in pain. However, the mob continued to attack him. According to the complaint filed by the victim's father, Abdul Wajid, he found his son lying outside his house on the evening with injury marks all over his body.³⁹⁹



US: An Illinois landlord accused of fatally stabbing a 6-year-old Muslim boy and seriously wounding his mother was charged with a hate crime after police and relatives said he singled out the victims because of their faith and as a response to the war between Israel and Hamas. In the Chicago-area case, officers found the mother and the boy on 14 October 2023 at a home in an unincorporated area of Plainfield Township, about 40 miles (65 kilometers) southwest of Chicago, the Will County Sheriff's Office said in a statement on social media. The boy was pronounced dead at a hospital. The woman had multiple stab wounds and was expected to survive, according to the statement. An autopsy on the child showed he had been stabbed dozens of times. According to the Will County sheriff's office, the woman had called 911 to report that her landlord had attacked her with a knife, adding she then ran into a bathroom and continued to fight him off. The man suspected in the attack was found on the same day outside the home and *"sitting upright outside on the ground near the driveway of the residence"* with a cut on his forehead, authorities said. Joseph M. Czuba, 71 years old,

of Plainfield was charged with first-degree murder, attempted first-degree murder, two counts of hate crimes and aggravated battery with a deadly weapon, according to the sheriff's office.⁴⁰⁰



US: A Muslim teen girl was attacked while riding the New York City subway to school in what police were investigating as another possible hate crime attack based on the victim's faith. The 16-year-old was aboard a southbound 5 train approaching Union Square around 9:00 a.m. 23 October 2023 when a man sat down next to her, according to police. The man told the girl *"you're a terrorist, you don't belong here,"* before pulling on her hijab she was wearing. Another female passenger intervened to help the girl, a police source with direct knowledge of the investigation said. The man ran off and police were still searching for him. No arrests had yet been made.⁴⁰¹

UK: A London assembly member (AM) had said she *"won't let hatred win"* after claiming she was subjected to Islamophobic abuse from a member of the public. Liberal Democrat AM Hina Bokhari, said she received the abuse while holding her ward surgery in West Barnes, where she was also a counselor. Ms. Bokhari had previously raised the issue of Islamophobic graffiti been sprayed on a bus route in her borough of Merton. Posting on X, she wrote that while this had been resolved by Transport for London (TfL) and the Met Police, when a lady found out she was Muslim while holding her surgery *"she listed all the reasons we were evil to my face"*.⁴⁰²

UK: On 25 October 2023, a Muslim mother was struck with a concrete slab by a stranger in a broad daylight attack. Police were investigating CCTV footage as a hooded man approaches her from behind raising a loose concrete slab he had grabbed from a garden wall in South Street, Dewsbury. He got within a metre of the unsuspecting mother-of-three and hurls it at

her head. She saw him at the last moment and manages to move out of the way but was still struck by the heavy piece of concrete. Her family said they believed she was targeted because she was visibly Muslim wearing a hijab in the town centre attack. Her husband was getting lunch for his wife from a takeaway as she waited outside ahead of a crucial job interview in town. He told media: *“I went inside to get food and she chose to wait outside in the rain because she had an umbrella. Suddenly I saw people running around and this guy. He tried to run but I ran after him and grabbed him. He was shouting ‘Don’t call the police, I won’t do it again’. We were holding him down for the police to arrive. He knew he was in trouble.”*⁴⁰³

US: A Wilton Manors man ripped off a U.S Postal Service worker’s hijab and attacked her, police said. Kenneth Jerome Pinkney, was arrested on 24 October 2023 and charged with battery/second or subsequent offense and committing a second-degree felony with prejudice. The victim was walking up to a home to deliver mail, dressed in a USPS uniform, the affidavit said, when Pinkney rode by on a bicycle and made a shooting gesture at her with his hand. He then began to call her derogatory names and told her to “go back to her country,” according to the affidavit. Nervous, she tried to laugh the comments off, the affidavit said. Then, Pinkney approached her. He ripped off her hijab and began to slap and punch her in the face, scratching her and causing her to bleed from the mouth, the affidavit said. When she tried to get back into her USPS truck, he grabbed her leg. She freed herself, tearing his shirt.⁴⁰⁴

US: An Arab Muslim student at Stanford University was hospitalized by a hit-and-run incident that was been investigated as a possible hate crime, the university department of public safety said in a statement. Abdulwahab Omira suffered non-life-threatening injuries after been struck by a black SUV driven by a white male described as having short, dirty-blond hair and a short beard, wearing a gray shirt and round-framed glasses. The university said: *“The driver is reported to have made eye contact with the victim, accelerated and struck the victim, and then driven away while shouting ‘f*** you and your people’ out the lowered window of the vehicle.”*⁴⁰⁵

US: A video captured on 18 October 2023 and resurfaced this month on news sites, showed a Muslim woman been threatened by a man on

Washington, D.C. metro train. In the video, a man was heard asking the woman, *“How would you like to have your head beheaded?”* According to CAIR, the woman behind the camera was riding the train on her way to a protest in late October. *She was wearing a Kufiya, which is a traditional Palestinian scarf,* Afify said. *“She was also wearing a shirt that had the Palestinian flag on it.* The woman also claims the man flashed a gun at her, but that was not seen on the video.”⁴⁰⁶

Canada: A Toronto taxi driver spoke out after an unknown assailant asked if he was Muslim and then sprayed him with a foreign substance that caused a *“burning”* sensation in his eyes. The incident happened on 14 November 2023, as the driver was stopped at a red light at Front and Yonge streets. *“I pulled down my window a little bit and asked, ‘Do you need a cab?’”* he said during an interview on 15 November. *“He (the suspect) just looking to me and say, ‘You are Muslim?’ I say, ‘Yeah, I am Muslim.’ And he [throws] something on my eyes and using f-words.”*⁴⁰⁷

US: On 17 November 2023, a man who was selling Muslim goods outside a mosque in Rhode Island’s capital city was shot and wounded, the local police chief said. The shooting at the Islamic Center of Rhode Island in Providence occurred amid reported increases in Islamophobia and antisemitism across the US. Providence’s police chief, Oscar Perez, said the victim of the shooting was associated with the mosque and had set up a table from which to sell *“Islamic goods”* when he was shot in the lower half of his body, according to the local news station WPRI. *“At some point, as he was folding some of the items, he ended up being shot,”* Perez said in a video published by WPRI.⁴⁰⁸

US: A viral video had captured an attack against a Muslim woman on a New York City subway on November 2023. The woman, a Yemeni American and Muslim, said she was on her way to a pro-Palestinian rally in Bryant Park on Nov. 17 when the man began to glare at her. He called her a *“terrorist,”* snatched and broke the flag she was carrying, and hit her in the chest, according to both her interview and a police statement. She said this led her to take out her phone and start recording.⁴⁰⁹



US: On 3 January 2024, a Muslim imam was fatally shot outside his mosque in New Jersey, as police continued to search for the assailant. Imam Hassan Sharif was at the Masjid Muhammad, a mosque in Newark, for fajr (dawn) prayers when he was reportedly shot multiple times while in his vehicle. Sharif was rushed to a local hospital in critical condition, where he succumbed to his wounds.⁴¹⁰



India: Five policemen, including an outpost in charge, were in the dock for allegedly assaulting a Muslim youth accused of slaughtering cows in the Uttar Pradesh city of Badaun. Reports later revealed that the victim was picked up by the police in a case of mistaken identity. Social activist Kashif Arsalan exposed the incident, revealing that *“five police officers tortured a Muslim youth by inserting a stick in his faecal path and administering electric shocks.”* According to a media report, the mother of the 22-year-old victim alleged that the police, led by an assistant inspector, subjected her son to inhuman treatment that included inserting a stick into a sensitive

part of the body and administering repeated electric shocks. The victim, a vegetable vendor, residing in the Kakrala area of Alapur police station. The victim's sister-in-law claimed that her brother-in-law was beaten throughout the night. Upon realising they had detained the wrong person, the police reportedly handed him Rs 100 before releasing him after two days. Since then, the victim had been grappling with continuous seizures.⁴¹¹

India: A Muslim Auto driver was brutally beaten by a group of Hindu nationalists in the Vasna, Gupta Nagar area of Gujarat's Ahmedabad district on 14 January. Ahmed Hussain Sheikh, was transporting three passengers in his auto: two women carrying catering supplies for a wedding, and a man sitting beside the driver's seat. Sheikh was transporting his passengers as usual. While the passenger seated with the driver, a Hindu sporting a Tilak, accidentally spat the tobacco he was chewing. It landed on one of the men in the Hindutva group standing just behind the auto. The Hindutva group then stopped the vehicle and started beating Sheikh, even though the Hindu passenger confessed that it was he and not the driver who spat the tobacco outside, and his intention was not to spit on anyone. The incident turned anti-Muslim when Sheikh was beaten by the group mercilessly and let the Hindu man go away, the other two women also ran away, leaving behind the catering items in the auto.⁴¹²



India: A day after the Ram temple was inaugurated in Ayodhya, a commerce student Mohammad Tariq Chaudhary offered to help out his father, who run a tempo transport service in Mira Road, a neighbourhood in the far north of Mumbai. The regular driver was absent, so Tariq said he would

deliver a cargo of empty plastic cans and scrap metal in the area. On 23 January 2024, as he was driving through the Shanti Nagar neighbourhood along with two workers, a mob stopped the tempo and assaulted the three men, all Muslim. *“The name Rashid Tempo Service on the body of the vehicle and a sticker of the moon and stars on the window pane revealed our Muslim identity,”* said Abdul Chaudhary, Tariq’s father. Tariq, who was in the driver’s seat, was the first one to be attacked. He told his father he was slapped by the mob. They then dragged him out. He was kicked and beaten with sticks and a belt. He had blood all over his head, back and hands.⁴¹³

India: A bookseller, Irshad alias Sheru, was allegedly arrested by the Anti Terrorist Squad (ATS) police on 4 February 2024, for “selling religious books” in Gonda district, Uttar Pradesh. The shop, Makthabathool Madina Kanzul Imaan, sells different kinds of Islamic books including the holy Quran and other religious items such as prayer mats, topi etc. The shop was located in Rakabanj, near Pandey Bazar police station.⁴¹⁴



India: In north Delhi’s Inderlok locality on 8 March 2024 as Delhi police sub-inspector Manoj Kumar Tomar kicked men offering prayer on the road outside a mosque. A video of the incident went viral on social media, and Tomar was subsequently suspended. Newslaundry spoke to the locals in the area to piece together what happened. Several locals said the mosque was crowded because of which some people began praying in the parking area outside the mosque. One of the locals said the police personnel did not stop the people from praying outside at first, but eventually kicked the men,

abused them and asked them to leave.⁴¹⁵

India: On 19 March 2024, Abdul Aziz from Bihar’s Kishanganj was beaten up by a local resident named Neeraj Bhatti at his village in Noida, police said. DCP (Noida) Vidya Sagar Mishra said, “A 35-year-old man, who had come to Salarpur from Bihar to collect donations, was assaulted by a 45-year-old local resident in the afternoon. The accused also made objectionable remarks towards the victim.”⁴¹⁶

Incident Targeting Copies of the Holy Qur’an

Sweden: Three copies of the Quran were found desecrated in Sweden, media reports said on 1 February 2023. A copy of the holy book on which death threats were written was found at a bus station and two other were found at different locations in Ronneby, according to Swedish broadcaster, SVT.⁴¹⁷

Denmark: On 24 March 2023, members of the Danish far-right group Patrioterne Gar Live (The Patriots Go Live) burned copies of the Qur’an and the Turkish flag outside the Turkish embassy in Copenhagen.⁴¹⁸



Sweden: On 28 June 2023, Salwan Momika set fire to pages of the Qur’an outside Stockholm’s main mosque. Salwan, who fled to Sweden several years ago, had asked police for permission to burn the holy book “to express my opinion about the Qur’an”. Swedish police had granted a permit for the

protest in line with free-speech. In its written decision granting a permit for the protest, Stockholm police said the security risks associated with the burning “*were not of a nature that could justify, under current laws, a decision to reject the request*”. Under a heavy police presence and with around a dozen opponents shouting at him in Arabic, Momika, addressed the crowd of several dozen through a megaphone. He stomped on the Qur’an and put strips of bacon on it. He then lit a few pages on fire before slamming it shut and kicked it like a football while waving Swedish flags, AFP correspondents at the scene reported. Police later said in a statement that the protest had not caused “*disturbances to order,*” but added that an investigation had been opened regarding “*agitation against an ethnic group*” because Momika had chosen to burn the Qur’an so close to a mosque. Police added he was also being investigated for violating a temporary ban on lighting fires -- in place due to a heatwave. The police authorisation for the protest came two weeks after a Swedish appeals court rejected the police’s decision to deny permits for two demonstrations in Stockholm which were to include Qur’an burnings.⁴¹⁹





The Occupied Palestinian Territory: Newly released footage on 22 June 2023 showed Israeli settlers vandalizing a West Bank mosque in the Palestinian village of Urif during a rampage the previous day. The masked settlers, accompanied by a dog, were seen leaving the mosque; one of them tore a copy of the Qur'an on the street outside the mosque. *"The settlers' assaults continue with no effort by the army to stop them,"* The Israeli human rights organization Yesh Din said. *"The shocking footage demonstrates that the settlers' sole purpose is to incite a riot by committing organized pogroms."* During the rampage, settlers also set fire to a school and attempted to set fire to homes and the mosque as well, residents said, and indicated that the settlers had entered the village from the direction of the Yitzhar settlement.⁴²⁰

Germany: Copies of the Qur'an was burned and thrown from a moving vehicle in front of a mosque in southwestern Germany, the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (DITIB) confirmed on 10 July 2023. The incident happened in front of the Mimar Sinan Mosque in the town of Maulbronn, located in the state of Baden-Wurttemberg, from a moving vehicle. Osman Adibelli, director of the mosque association, said the incident took place on the night of 8 July 2023. *"After the incident, when we reviewed surveillance footage of our mosque, we saw that an object was thrown in front of the mosque from a vehicle on the main street. Around 4:45 a.m. (0245GMT), our congregation members who came for morning prayers noticed a burned Quran at the entrance of the mosque,"* he explained.⁴²¹



Sweden: On 20 July 2023, Sweden Standing in front of the Iraqi Embassy in the capital Stockholm, Salwan Momika, threw both the Qur'an and the Iraqi flag on the ground and stepped on them, and then wiped his feet on them.⁴²²

Denmark: On 21 July 2023, An anti-Muslim group desecrated the Quran in Denmark's capital Copenhagen. The ultranationalist group called "*Danske Patrioter*" burned the holy book in front of Iraq's Embassy in Copenhagen. They also carried a banner with insulting slogans against Islam, before stamping on the Iraqi flag and a copy of the Qur'an under police protection, as seen in the videos they shared on social media.⁴²³



Denmark: On 24 July 2023, Two protesters had set fire to a copy of the Qur'an, in front of the Iraqi embassy in Denmark's capital, Copenhagen. The duo from a group that called itself Danish Patriots stomped on the Qur'an and set it alight in a tin foil tray next to the Iraqi flag lying on the ground.⁴²⁴

Denmark: On 25 July 2023, A far-right Islamophobic group burned the Qur'an outside the Turkish and Egyptian embassies in Copenhagen. The Danske Patrioter was behind the despicable act that had drawn condemnation from across the Muslim world. Denmark condemned the burning incident and called it a "*shameful act*" that disrespects the religion of others. But authorities had not taken action against those responsible.⁴²⁵

Sweden: On 31 July 2023, Two men set fire to a copy of the Qur'an in front of the Swedish Parliament in Stockholm, in a rally similar to previous events. Salwan Momika, and Salwan Najem trampled on a copy of the Qur'an before setting fire to it, as they had done at the end of June in front of the Swedish capital's largest mosque.⁴²⁶



Sweden: The Danish leader of the far-right Stram Kurs party had burned a copy of the holy Quran in a heavily-populated Muslim area in Sweden. Rasmus Paludan, accompanied by police, went to an open public space in southern Linköping on 14 April 2022 and placed the holy book down and burned it while he ignored protests from onlookers.⁴²⁷



Netherlands: On 18 August 2023, a Dutch far-right activist trampled on and tore up a copy of the Qur'an at a demonstration outside the Turkish embassy in The Hague, infuriating dozens of counter-protesters. Edwin Wagenveld, who leads the Dutch branch of the far-right group Pegida, damaged a copy of the Qur'an, media correspondents witnessed. He was accompanied by two other people.⁴²⁸

Denmark: On 7 August 2023, members of Danske Patrioter (Danish Patriots), a Danish anti-Islam and ultranationalist group, burned copies of the holy book in front of the embassies of Turkiye, Algeria, Pakistan, Iran and Indonesia in the Danish capital. The group also carried out a similar attack in the northern city of Aalborg and chanted Islamophobic slogans.⁴²⁹

Sweden: On 14 August 2023, A copy of the Quran had been desecrated in Sweden's capital as two men kicked the Muslim holy book and burned several of its pages in front of the Royal Palace amid a heavy police presence. The incident marked the second time in a matter of weeks that Salwan Momika, and Salwan Najem, had burned the Quran, an act permitted under Sweden's freedom of speech laws, at Mynttorget, a central square surrounded by government buildings and the palace.⁴³⁰

US: An unidentified person threw a copy of the Muslims' Holy book, the Quran, to the ground and kicked it outside of the Turkish House in New York on 08 September 2023.⁴³¹

Netherlands: On 24 September 2023, a far-right Dutch extremist Edwin

Wagensveld had again torn a copy of the Quran in a new provocative Islamophobic act. Reports said that the aggressive act took place in front of the Turkish embassy in the Netherlands. Wagensveld, who was the leader of the Dutch branch of the Islamophobic Pegida movement, also stepped on the pages of the Islamic holy book, media reported.⁴³²



US: A copy of the Quran was burnt in Illinois by a 16-year-old high school student, and rights organisations said it raised concerns about the India-based Hindu nationalist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) paramilitary organisation's influence in the US. While the incident took place in June 2023 in Naperville, a suburb of Chicago, the video was posted on social media. In the video, a boy used a lighter to burn a Quran while standing in a field of grass. Once the Quran was on fire, he threw it on the ground.⁴³³



India: An alleged attempt to create communal fire was reported after burnt pages of the Holy Quran were found near Fatehpur Bazar Mosque in Jamtara district in Jharkhand. Locals found the pages lying in the fields, around 300 meters from the mosque. However, both Hindu and Muslim communities had condemned the act, media reported.⁴³⁴

Incident Targeting Most-referred Figure in Islam



US: Penn State athlete Aaron Brooks was conducting a post-match interview with ESPN when he claimed Muhammad is a false prophet. Brooks had just won his third consecutive individual NCAA title, defeating Northern Iowa's Parker Keckeisen in the 184-pound final. But when he was interviewed by ESPN after the victory, the 22-year-old decided to profess his belief in Jesus Christ, while also having a dig at Islam. *"It's everything. Christ's resurrection is everything,"* Brooks said into the microphone... *"Not just his life, his death and resurrection. You can only get that through him. The Holy Spirit only through him. No false prophets, no Muhammad or no anyone else. Only Jesus Christ himself?"* Incredibly, NCAA Wrestling's official Twitter account posted footage of the interview – before swiftly deleting it upon receiving backlash.⁴³⁵

UK: A teacher at a top grammar school had been suspended after allegedly she had used a mug with an image depicting the Prophet Muhammad. The staff member at Colchester Royal Grammar School in Essex was said to have been photographed with the item, which had a picture from a cartoon series had called Jesus And Mo on it.⁴³⁶

Incident Related to Hijab

US: An employee at a Montgomery County restaurant was allegedly put in a situation the week before where she was asked by another employee to compromise her faith for her job. A video was posted on 7 April 2013 by a restaurant employee. The employee was allegedly told by another employee who “*appeared to be her direct manager/supervisor*” to remove her hijab or leave work. In the video, the employee could be heard saying “*I’m just going to go home since I can’t wear it.*” Michael’s Family Restaurant addressed the incident in a statement on Facebook to customers as well as Philadelphia area Muslim community members: “*Michael’s Family Restaurant has been serving Glenside for over 15 years and have always taken pride in our quality of service, respect for our customers, and the diversity of our employee and customer base. A video posted online on April 7, 2023 recorded one of our employees violating the values of our establishment. Our leadership team evaluated facts of the case and we would like our community to know that, effective Friday, April 7, 2023 this employee is no longer affiliated with Michael’s Family Restaurant in Glenside.*”⁴³⁷

Canada: Winnipeg’s Muslim community was looking for answers after one of its members, an 18-year-old woman, was stabbed on the job on 6 June 2023 while working at the Olive Garden restaurant in Transcona. Muslim leaders spoke at a press conference on 18 July 2023 to call for a “*fulsome investigation*” into the attack and whether it was targeted due to the Black, hijab-wearing victim’s identity. The stabbing led to the arrest of a 27-year-old man with a lengthy rap sheet, including multiple arson charges, as well as convictions for mischief, theft and failing to comply with probation orders. He was charged with aggravated assault, possessing a weapon and failing to comply with a probation order. Aasiyah Khan, COO of the National Council of Canadian Muslims, read a statement from the victim. In it, she challenged the police assertion that the stabbing appeared to be random and unprovoked, and said police went public with the charges without first speaking to the victim, who was then in hospital recovering. The victim, in her statement, said she was the only person of colour in the restaurant at the time of the attack, and felt the accused was staring at her for a long period of time prior to the incident.⁴³⁸

US: A Muslim woman was forced to take off her hijab after been arrested by a University of Kentucky police officer and taken to the Fayette County Detention Center. The Council on American-Islamic Relations said in a news release on 21 July 2023 that the woman said she was stopped on 17 July 2023 for driving without headlights on and was arrested *“because of an issue related to a late registration from a couple years ago.”* But she told the organization no one told her she has been arrested, and she did not remember reading her rights. The organization said she told them she was *“asked several times what her religion is”* during the incident and was *“handcuffed and held for hours and forced to take her hijab off for the booking photo.”* CAIR said the woman told them that while handcuffed and *“in a public hall where everyone could see me,”* she was asked to remove her headscarf. She said she refused and asked to be taken to a private area. *“I was then brought to another room which had a window door and put on a toilet where there was a half wall which would still not cover my head,”* said a statement from the woman, released by CAIR. *“I was forced to sit bent over for a long time which I couldn’t hold very long. Then I used my dress as a headscarf to be able to sit straight and without back pain. ... I truly feel terrorized, terrified and abused by those officers.”* *“Ultimately, she was released on \$100 bond, which she said was taken out of her purse,”* the news release stated.⁴³⁹

US: On 2 October 2023, fast casual Mexican chain Chipotle was facing a lawsuit filed by a federal agency on behalf of a former employee who said she was subject *“to a barrage of harassing conduct based on her religion by her supervisor”* because she wore a hijab. The religious harassment and retaliation lawsuit was filed by the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on behalf of Areej Saifan, a Muslim woman who was employed at a Chipotle in Lenexa, Kansas. Saifan *“explained that she wore the hijab because of her religious beliefs and could not remove it,”* the federal suit said, but the *“harassment continued over several weeks, pressuring”* her to *“remove her hijab.”* An assistant manager that repeatedly harassed Saifan asked her *“approximately ten to fifteen times over the course of approximately one month,”* the suit said. On one occasion, the assistant manager *“reached out, grabbed her hijab, and yanked. As a result, part of Saifan’s hijab came*

off, exposing her hair,” the suit said. Because of the “*management’s repeated failures to address the harassment,”* Saifan resigned and put in her two weeks’ notice on August 10, 2021, the suit said.⁴⁴⁰

US: On 4 October 2023, CAIR, a Muslim civil rights organization, had sued leaders of the federal prison in Waseca, Minn. for violating a Muslim American woman’s constitutional right to religious freedom, alleging that officers forced her to remove her hijab, photographed her and made her carry an ID displaying the picture. The filed lawsuit on behalf of inmate Muna Jama, sought an order for the Federal Correctional Institution in Waseca to destroy her uncovered photographs in the system’s database and end the practice of taking and using uncovered pictures.⁴⁴¹

Canada: On 3 November 2023, a Muslim woman from Winnipeg said she was shocked, scared and in disbelief after been accosted for the way she looked. Sarwat Qureshi was driving her son to Acadia High School in Fort Richmond when she was waved down by a man who then hurled anti-Muslim and Islamophobic slurs at her. After dropping her son off and taking a different street, Qureshi crossed paths with him again and she said he tried to physically enter her van. “*That individual didn’t know me, didn’t know my name, we’ve never met before,”* said Qureshi. “*But so much hate that he had for me just because of the way I dress, I can’t understand it, it’s hard to explain.*”⁴⁴²

US: A Muslim mother of two, who was detained at a Kentucky jail earlier on 2023, said she was forced to remove her hijab and underwent “*an unnecessary full body strip search,”* which was “*filmed and projected*” on a TV screen for men and women in the jail’s lobby to see, according to a lawsuit she has filed. The woman, identified as Jane Doe in court documents, said in the lawsuit the search violated Warren County Regional Jail’s own procedures and also alleged her booking photo, which showed her without the hijab, remained online in a public inmate database, seven months after her arrest. The lawsuit alleged officers violated Doe’s constitutional rights to religious freedom, subjected her to unreasonable search and seizure and deprived her of equal protection under the law. She was seeking a jury trial, changes in jail procedures and unspecified damages.⁴⁴³

Canada: George Murray, an Oshawa man, had been charged after allegedly uttering a death threat to a woman wearing a hijab in Toronto’s east end the week before. Toronto police said the victim was in the area of Danforth and Victoria Park avenues on the morning of 1 December 2023 when the suspect approached her. He allegedly made derogatory remarks regarding the woman’s religion before threatening her. Police said the suspect shortly left the area. The woman did not sustain physical injuries. The incident was being investigated as a suspected hate-motivated offence, and members of the hate crime unit arrested the suspect, in the week.⁴⁴⁴

India: On 2 February 2024, Two Milwaukee women had pleaded guilty to hate crime charges in connection with an attack at Cathedral Square Park in July 2023. In the attack, the victims said their Hijabs were removed. Miracle Reed pleaded guilty to all three charges against her – felony substantial battery (hate crime), disorderly conduct and misdemeanor bail jumping. Payton Smith pleaded guilty to two counts of misdemeanor battery (hate crime). A third charge of disorderly conduct was dismissed but read into the court record for the purposes of sentencing. The Muslim women’s attorney said the attack was unprovoked, and the women were beaten up because of how they looked. Investigators said the two women immediately became hostile toward the victims at the park. A criminal complaint said the victims told investigators they were with family who were praying in the park and “*minding their own business*” when Smith approached and asked, “*So what’s the problem?*” Prosecutors said she followed up by asking the victims where they were from. The complaint said Smith then looked at Reed and said, “*You ready?*” The victim said Smith then put her in a headlock and punched her. Another victim said Reed began punching her in the back of the head. Both victims said their Hijabs were removed from their heads, the complaint said. A bystander eventually broke up the fight, and the victims said the two women and their 10 children walked away.⁴⁴⁵

US: On 12 February 2024, a Seattle woman was robbed of her hijab at knifepoint near the University of Washington campus. Officers responded to a report that a woman was approached from behind and placed in a “*chokehold*” by a man displaying a “*small knife*” in the University District around 9 a.m. The suspect was “*voicing disparaging remarks and general*

hatred for the victim's perceived religious beliefs and national origin," the Seattle Police said. He stole the woman's hijab before running off. The victim was not physically injured but was left emotionally shaken.⁴⁴⁶

India: In a video, which went viral on social media platforms, a student wearing hijab was seen sitting in a class and the next shot was of her classmates wearing saffron shawls, allegedly in protest. The incident took place on 6 March 2024 at Vidya Soudha College. However, the principal dismissed the hijab controversy, saying the student in question had an 'ear infection' and thus had to cover her head.⁴⁴⁷

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With the adoption of the Ten-Year Program of Action in 2005 at the historic 3rd Extraordinary Islamic Summit in Makkah, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation has pursued a vision of moderation for the Muslim World, and at the same time prescribed on the establishment of the OIC Islamophobia Observatory, in order to monitor all forms of Islamophobia, to report to all Member States, and to cooperate with Governments, and NGOs.

The Islamophobia Observatory monitors manifestations of Islamophobia on daily basis in fulfilment of such mandate, reading the trend, and drawing maps on how the situation related to Islamophobia develops from time to time, being presented in this Report to all Member States, along with policy recommendation to address the issue.



مُنَظَّمَةُ التَّعَاوُنِ الْإِسْلَامِيِّ

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ORGANISATION DE COOPÉRATION ISLAMIQUE