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FOREWORD

By Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu
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The common values of mankind must be based on a firm commitment to human rights, as well as on the recognition of the inherent dignity of all human beings. In that respect, human rights and fundamental freedoms should be recognized as essential safeguards of tolerance and non-discrimination. They are also indispensable elements of stability, security and cooperation. However, despite efforts for the promotion and protection of human rights, acts related to racism, xenophobia, discrimination, and related intolerance persist in many societies. The resurgence, especially after 9/11, of racist tendencies and Islamophobia challenges the exercise of fundamental human rights and freedoms particularly in Western countries. In spite of tangible progress achieved in eliminating institutionalized forms of discrimination, many countries still experience new and mounting waves of bias, exclusion, stigmatization, alienation, hate and racist violence. These constitute a major threat to friendly and peaceful relations among and within nations and peoples. Therefore, the need to struggle against all forms and manifestations of discrimination and intolerance has become more urgent and evident.

Islam is a religion that implies "peace" by its very nomenclature. It advocates respect for all religious beliefs and embraces the truth of the preceding Abrahamic faiths. In reaffirming the preceding prophethoods, it does not, under any circumstances and as a matter of belief, permit any attack on the prophets or other religious symbols of Christianity or Judaism. In this context it must be emphasized and understood that Islam is not a contender of Christianity or Judaism.

Islamophobia signifies the contemporary proliferation of discrimination against Muslims and distortion of Islam and is partly due to the ignorance and lack of understanding of Islam in the West. It would be an unfortunate error in judgment in believing that Islam is linked to terror; that it is intolerant of other religious beliefs, that its values and practices are not democratic; that it favors repression of freedom of expression and undermining human rights.

Religion being an integral component of every civilization and culture, the misperception and lack of understanding of Islam in the West poses a potent threat to the peace and security of the present and the future generations. Islamophobia is a manifestation of racial discrimination. It constitutes a two stranded form of racism anchored in both the different physical appearance of Muslims as well as the intolerance of their religion and cultural beliefs. It has now spread to the level of mainstream political activity and needs to be considered and addressed as one of the most serious threats to the world's stability.

It is most unfortunate that the trend towards religious polarization continues to grow on account of the increasingly scurrilous assaults against Islam. The frequency of demonic portrayal and misrepresentation of Islam and Muslims have resulted in a situation where the identity of Muslims, their self-esteem, human dignity and human rights has suffered tremendously. In short, Muslims need to be afforded protection against the social and psychological damage inflicted by the negative stereotyping and smear campaign which has wrongfully caused discrimination, bigotry, harassment and mental and physical abuse.

A section of the western media is a major factor in the formation of the collective misrepresentation about Islam and Muslims. This has been spreading in the impactful areas of information, education and the fertile grounds for the dissemination of the open hostility and the entrenchment of hatred against it.

In the present globalized world, peaceful and harmonious coexistence among diverse religions and cultures is not an option but the only means to survival. Spectacular achievements in sphere of information and communication technology that have transformed our world into a single community afford threats as well as opportunities for peaceful coexistence. They present mankind with tools to incite hatred and intolerance; discrimination; and distortions of religious and cultural beliefs that can spark violence causing loss of innocent lives and damage to property. On the other hand, they can be utilized to do the reverse if we have the collective will not to allow their use to preach hatred and intolerance of other religions and cultural beliefs.

The OIC's vision of moderation and modernization and its pro-active role in combating intolerance, extremism, and terror is enshrined in its Charter as well as in the Ten Year Program of Action. I am pleased to note that the OIC Observatory on Islamophobia has prepared its Second Annual Report, which provides an account of incidents monitored by the Observatory between June 2008 and April 2009 and a critical analysis of the developments that took place during the period. An encouraging aspect of this year's Report with special focus on Islamophobia and the imperative of engagement is the observation of awareness on the part of the international community on the dangers of intolerance and hatred on religious grounds. It signifies that the activists involved in the Islamophobia campaign are partially losing their support base. I feel encouraged to note that the Report has indicated the growing interest and commitment of various stakeholders in the international community for a focused and action-oriented dialogue in the interest of confidence building. The Report, however, underscores that, despite some encouraging developments, the racial hatred and intolerance against Islam and the Muslims continue to be a major issue of concern in the relations between the Muslim world and the West.

To effectively address the issue of interfaith intolerance, a serious engagement aimed at a historical reconciliation process between Islam and Christianity as two great Abrahamic faiths would help them set aside their deep-seated animosities and misperceptions and start a new era of mutual respect and understanding. With this vision, the OIC had pioneered the cause for Dialogue among Civilizations in 1998 and enjoyed the unanimous backing of the international community by declaring 2001 as the International Year for Dialogue among Civilizations. Today, the need for the dialogue to produce substantive outcome is more urgent than ever. On the part of the Muslim World, the outreach was crystallized through various interfaith and intercultural dialogue initiatives taken by the Member States, including Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Malaysia, Kazakhstan, Pakistan and Azerbaijan, that reflected the Muslim World's commitment to engage the West in a constructive dialogue with a view to defeating intolerance and inducing harmony among diverse religions and cultures. Through constructive initiatives such as the establishment of the UN Alliance of Civilizations, the international community appears to be paying heed to our concerns. In the same vein, the hearing conducted by the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on engagement with the Muslims on February 26, 2009 in Washington DC, and the resolution No 1605 (2008) entitled "European Muslim Communities Confronted with Extremism" passed at 13th sitting of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on April 15, 2008 constituted positive developments that need to be emulated in the interest of confidence building between Muslims and the West.

The incidents of hatred and intolerance that have been mentioned in the Second Annual Report substantiate our contention that anti Islam rhetoric and the negative stereotyping and discrimination faced by Muslims continue unabated. At the same time the Report's highlighting of the instances of a noticeable awareness among the international community on the dangers of the phenomenon upholds its objectivity. I believe that this will provide further encouragement for others to join the OIC's efforts towards finding a common ground to combat religious and cultural intolerance and racism in society. A meaningful, constructive and result oriented engagement constitutes an imperative.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Islamophobia, which constitutes discrimination against Muslims, runs contrary to the fundamental values of mankind and principles of human rights that provide safeguard against discrimination and intolerance. Acts of racism, discrimination and intolerance against Muslims that challenge the exercise of fundamental human rights and freedoms of Muslims, continue to be prevalent in many Western societies. This situation has contributed to misunderstandings and misperceptions about Islam in non-Muslim societies and resulted in the rise of discriminatory treatment, negative profiling and stereotyping of Muslims living in or visiting Western countries. The situation has been further aggravated by anti Islam publications, video productions and pronouncements by motivated individuals and groups. This has created mistrust and suspicion between the Muslim World and the West that requires urgent and common stand against all forms and manifestations of discrimination and intolerance.

The current Report, which covers the period between June 2008 and April 2009, is the 2nd Annual OIC Observatory Report on Islamophobia after its first version was submitted last year to the 11th Islamic Summit Conference in Dakar, Senegal. An updated version of the Report was submitted to the 35th CFM held in Kampala, Uganda. In providing an overview of events and occurrences that carried both positive as well as negative implications with regard to the need to combat Islamophobia, this year's Report focuses on highlighting the imperative of engagement between the Muslim world and the West aimed at combating this phenomena.

Islamophobia in all its forms and manifestations has the potential to endanger global peace and security and needs to be addressed urgently and collectively by the international community. The Observatory Report has also taken into account various incidents that support the Observatory's position that the phenomenon of Islamophobia is prevalent in different parts of the world including the Europe and the US and some other Western countries.

Founded on historical, cultural and psychological reasons, the contemporary forms of Islamophobia have also been reflected in the research works, reports, articles and writings of reputed institutions and academicians. The Report takes stock of a number of defamatory and incendiary actions through speeches, articles, books, documentaries and congregations that substantiate the prevalence of a systematic, motivated and sustained campaign against Islam and its followers during the period under review. It catalogues some worrying trends, particularly active in many parts of the Western world, inciting hatred, discrimination and intolerance against Islam and the Muslims; creating misperceptions by distorting its values; and insulting its symbols. Inspired by its principled position of moderation and modernization, the objective of the OIC Observatory in recording these practices was to raise awareness and sensitize the world of the threats posed by Islamophobia to peace, security and peaceful coexistence.

The Observatory's endeavor has already yielded some positive developments. Islamophobia as an issue of great concern and challenge for peaceful co-habitation and harmony among people of diverse religious beliefs and cultures forms a clear and present danger for the process of dialogue and understanding between civilizations and cultures. This was substantiated by decisions taken by some Western societies and governments to distance themselves from some well-known Islamophobes and their activities. The decision of the Amsterdam Court to conduct criminal proceedings against the right wing politician Mr. Geert Wilders – producer of the anti-Islam film "*Fitna*" – could be cited as a case in point. The voting in Swiss Lower House that

opposed the resolution calling for a ban on building minarets in mosques in Switzerland; the positive tone of the newly elected US President Barak Obama during his election campaign and thereafter; and the hearing held by the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee towards engaging with Muslims around the world and the subsequent constructive recommendations provide a background for constructive engagement.

Among the factors, contributing to Islamophobia is the negative and incorrect portrayal of Islam in schools and educational institutions. Institutional Islamophobia in education manifests in several ways including: i) By ignoring the correct knowledge about Islam; ii) By advancing negative images of Islam and Muslims; iii) By downplaying in-school incidents of slurs and verbal or physical abuses; iv) By denying the need to confront and address the issue of Islamophobia.

The Report also includes a brief OIC perspective on the proceedings at the Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly, during the reporting period, which formed the most important and concrete basis of engagement between Muslim world and the West. It reveals that, in the presence of a clearly defined strategy and mandate with regard to a principled position founded in international law, the OIC is willing to engage with an open mind in finding solutions based in the existing normative frameworks. The OIC's efforts to bring about consensus on the issue of defamation of religions at the UN have recently shown signs of getting more support.

OIC's position with regard to the important issue of defamation of religions has not only been used to create ripples in the Western mind and media but also confused with the existing normative framework on the freedom of expression. It needs to be appreciated that this position has over the past decade repeatedly been observed to command support by a majority of the UN member states – a support that transcended the confines of the OIC Member States. The succession of UNGA and UNHRC resolutions on the defamation of religions makes it a stand alone concept with international legitimacy. It should not be made to stand out by creating the impression that it somehow encroaches upon the freedom of expression.

The OIC's position on the issue of defamation of religions is based on the provisions of many international instruments including the UN Charter and relevant resolutions. The defamation of religions, as it manifests itself in the assault of Islamophobia in the West, is not limited to the realm of religion per se as an abstract idea that could be a legitimate target of criticism and mockery. On the contrary, the real consequences of this defamation is an outright campaign of hate speech, and negative stereotyping, targeting all the tenets and adherents of Islam, individually and collectively. It depicts them as vicious, uncivilized and terrorists. The tool used to reach this goal is concealed under the banner of the freedom of expression. In real life, the target of this campaign of defamation is every Muslim's identity, honour, self-worth, and self-confidence. The victim of this assault becomes a pariah, outcast and a target of mockery, and even subjected to physical and psychological abuse. In a nutshell, defamation of Islam profoundly jeopardizes every Muslim's essential human rights.

The OIC position on this important issue is firmly anchored in relevant provisions of international law, and mainly in a host of international legal instruments. For example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in its para 7 stipulates: *"All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination and against any incitement to such discrimination"*. Article 12: *"No one shall be subjected into attack upon his honour and reputation etc."*

Almost all international covenants, instruments and treaties clearly emphasize that freedom of expression should be exercised with responsibility.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) which enjoys universal application stipulates in Article 19: “... *the exercise of these rights [including freedom of expression] carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may be subject to certain restriction.*”

Article 20: “*Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law.*”

Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights stipulates: “*The exercise of these freedoms since it carries with it duties and responsibilities may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties.*”

In addition to all the above, the United Nations General Assembly has adopted several resolutions denouncing the defamation of religions since 1999. UNGA Resolution (A/Res/53/140) of 1999 stipulates in its operative paragraph No. 4:

“*Further urges States, in conformity with international standards and human rights, to take all appropriate measures to combat hatred, intolerance, and acts of violence motivated by religious intolerance.*”

These international instruments, covenants, treaties and UN General Assembly resolutions constitute a firm basis of the international legitimacy, and the backbone of international law. All of them denounce defamation of religions and discrimination on the basis of religion, ethnicity, race or belief.

Any denial of these facts constitutes a contradiction of the established position of the international community, the international legitimacy and above all the main provisions of international law and international humanitarian law.

At the level of the General Secretariat, the OIC was involved in various activities including its cooperation with the international organizations like the UN, EU, OSCE, AoC etc as well as many institutions, universities and think tanks. The OIC Secretary General attended and addressed many events on the subject, such as the International Conference on the Muslim world and the West, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Muslim and Western Countries' Forum in Astana, Kazakhstan, Interfaith Dialogue at the UN in New York, US; Rabat Follow-up on Fostering Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations in Copenhagen, Denmark; and OIC Inter-Institutional Forum on Universal Shared Values in Geneva, in addition to his visits to some European countries. The OIC co-sponsored some of the above conferences. The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the OIC and the AoC is another step forward in the right direction.

The OIC favors a sincere and action-oriented dialogue based on mutual understanding and respect between the West and the Muslim world at all levels including the grass roots. In order to curb the scourge of Islamophobia and promote peace and tolerance among followers of various faiths and cultures, this dialogue should be through a strong political will aimed at developing a strategy that would stress the implementation of the existing national and international laws and identifying common values and principles. The OIC Secretary General's

proposal of a historical reconciliation between Islam and Christianity provides a viable vision for a sincere and result-oriented dialogue.

To conclude, the OIC has made an honest and serious effort in highlighting the growing trend of Islamophobia that is manifest in the discrimination against and intolerance towards Muslims particularly in parts of the Western societies. In support of this contention, the Report has made a detailed compilation of incidents of discrimination and hatred against Muslims and insults and defamation of Islam and its sacred symbols. The Report also includes references to the findings and statements emanating from the political elite and other sources based in the West on the phenomenon and implications of Islamophobia. It has further underscored the importance of engagement between the Muslims and the Western world through interfaith and inter-civilizational dialogue making a set of recommendations and suggestions that could facilitate and form part of such an engagement. The Report does not shy away from expressing optimism on the gradually emerging awareness in the international community against discrimination and hatred on religious grounds including Islamophobia. It is felt that such impression would be conducive towards evolving a common position to address an issue that is of potential danger to global peace and security.

1: INTRODUCTION

Islamophobia continues to be an issue of great concern for the Muslim World. Over the past few years, the phenomenon has taken the shape of a new kind of racism as evident from a campaign of defaming Islam and incidents of discrimination, negative stereotyping and profiling experienced by Muslims in non-Muslim societies, particularly in the West.

The protagonists of Islamophobia comprise motivated individuals and groups, actively engaged in inciting violence and creating division among faiths and cultures by resorting to incendiary and inflammatory remarks, publications and broadcasts against most sacred symbols of Muslims, including Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the Holy Quran and by distorting the values of peace, tolerance and compassion embodied in Islam.

In the backdrop of the growing trend of Islamophobia and in implementation of the decisions of the 3rd Extraordinary Islamic Summit in Makkah in 2005 and the relevant resolutions adopted by the Foreign Ministers of the Member States, the OIC Islamophobia Observatory submitted its First Annual Report to the 11th Islamic Summit Conference in Dakar, Senegal on March 13-14, 2008. An updated version of the Report was subsequently submitted to the 35th Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) in Kampala, Uganda on June 17-18, 2008. The Report provided a detailed account of Islamophobia, its definition, manifestations and root causes as well as the actions taken by the OIC General Secretariat to combat Islamophobia and generate awareness of its dangers to the global community.

The concern over the rise in Islamophobia was voiced very strongly by the Heads of State and Governments at the 11th Islamic Summit and by the Foreign Ministers at the 35th CFM. Their condemnation of the campaign of hatred and intolerance against Islam and discrimination against Muslims was clearly reflected in their statements as well as the Final Declarations and Resolutions of the two conferences. Similar concerns were also expressed by various sessions of the UN General Assembly and the UN Human Rights Council through their resolutions on defamations of religions.

The OIC Islamophobia Observatory has remained vigilant in monitoring acts of Islamophobia. It issued timely rejoinders and statements to draw the attention of the international community to Islamophobic incidents. The Secretary General on his part has remained focused on highlighting the issue on the global agenda through bilateral meetings with world leaders and participation in international conferences and fora. A detailed account is provided in the Report.

The OIC General Secretariat's efforts¹ towards raising global awareness on Islamophobia made some progress in the international community. Governments and civil society in the Western world have started to express their concern over the rise in Islamophobia and religious intolerance. The Observatory also took note of the statements emanating from government and political leaders condemning or distancing from incidents spreading misperceptions and inciting intolerance and hatred against Islam and Muslims. Lately, the decision of the Amsterdam court in the Netherlands to prosecute Geert Wilders who produced the incendiary film "*Fitna*" for insulting and spreading hatred against Muslims and the British government's decision denying him entry into the United Kingdom were commendable developments and confidence building measures.

¹ For a list of OIC General Secretariat activities under the period of review, please see Annex B

Despite the above developments, the Observatory has noted that negative portrayal of Islam in Western media and internet networks as well as incidents of hatred and discriminatory treatment towards Muslims, derogatory writings about Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), attacks on mosques, etc., continue unabated. This Report has recorded many of such incidents. The Report further incorporates the views expressed by various stakeholders that supported the contention of the OIC that much more needs to be done towards addressing the issue of Islamophobia.

2: MANIFESTATIONS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

The contention that the scourge of Islamophobia prevalent in the Western mind and media is substantiated by the writings and Reports of well-known Western researchers and columnists.

2.1. Islamophobia as Reflected in Reports by Western Sources

- a) An article entitled “Islamofascism’s Ill Political Wind” by the noted US columnist James Carroll published on January 21, 2008 in two US newspapers, namely the *Boston Globe* and the *International Herald Tribune*, stated that the American society was “invaded” by narrow Christian enthusiasm to denigrate Islam and criticized some of the US Presidential candidates for their “intellectual and moral paralysis” and inability to see the larger picture that a “religiously enflamed” foreign policy would not work in Middle East and other regions.

The reputed US daily *Los Angeles Times* on April 2, 2008 carried an article in its op-ed page co-authored by scholars Prof John Esposito and Dalia Mogahed in which the authors spoke of anti Muslim feelings in American society and expressed caution that “anti Muslim bias undermines the global war on terrorism; situations are misdiagnosed, root causes are misidentified”.

- b) Noah Feldman, a fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and a noted columnist who teaches law at Harvard, in an article in *The New York Times* stated, “...But in many Western European countries today, something new and insidious seems to be happening. The familiar old arguments against immigrants - that they are criminals, that their culture makes them a bad fit, that they take jobs from natives - are mutating into an anti-Islamic bias that is becoming institutionalized in the continent’s otherwise ordinary politics.”²

During the period under review, the Observatory came across Reports on negative views that Europeans have against Islam and Muslims, such as:

- a) On May 14, 2008 BME [Black and Minority Ethnic persons or groups, the preferred umbrella term used in official circles in Britain, equivalent to the term “visible minorities” in American English] activists, educationalists and professionals working within Muslim communities and on integration issues from five European countries met to publicly discuss the findings of the Institute of Race Relations (IRR)’ pan-European research project into

² Cf. N. Feldman, *The New Pariahs?*, retrieved on June 22, 2008, in:
http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/22/magazine/22wwln-ledc-t.html?_r=1&ref=magazine&oref=slogin

*Integration, Islamophobia and civil rights in Europe*³. The IRR website presented a summary of the Report in which Liz Fekete, the Report's author said: 'The clash in Europe is not between civilisations but between those (of whatever ethnic or religious persuasion) who accept or do not accept a civil rights framework for discussing integration.'

The Report showed, inter alia, that across Europe:

- ❖ The debate on integration adversely impacted by Islamophobia;
- ❖ An assimilatory agenda was being advanced under the guise of integration;
- ❖ The positive contribution of young Muslims' greater engagement in civil society was not being regarded as part of the integration process;
- ❖ Muslims working to change institutions and traditions within their communities were hampered by the climate of Islamophobia;
- ❖ The framework for the Reporting news was often based on 'scare scenarios', promoting fear of Muslims;
- ❖ Biased Reporting had been influencing majority populations to think in terms of stereotypes and alienates young Muslims, some of whom are losing faith in society as a positive sense of identity is eroded.

The IRR Report revealed that, contrary to public perception, the challenge to multiculturalism in Europe came not from Muslim communities' unwillingness to integrate but from Islamophobia. A one-year study of six European countries (including the UK) carried out by IRR's researchers looks at the debate about integrating Muslims in Europe from the point of view of Europe's minority ethnic communities. It pinpoints the way that first economic restructuring over the past twenty years and then popular and institutionalized anti-Muslim racism over the past seven years have served to discriminate against and marginalize Muslims from many different communities within Europe.

After consultations with representatives of over fifty organizations in Norway, Netherlands, Austria, Germany, France and the UK, involved with Muslim social, economic and political affairs, the IRR concluded that it was impossible to advance the integration of Muslims in Europe when the whole debate about integration and many of EU members states' new policy initiatives were shot through with Islamophobia. Young Muslims, in particular, were influenced locally by economies, which exclude them, nationally by debates, which demonize them, and internationally by foreign policies, which alienate them.

Despite this, the research revealed that there were a multitude of new initiatives – from educational self-help schemes and anti-racist campaigns to voter registration and civil rights schemes – which involved more Muslims than ever before. But because they did not conform to government preconceptions, they are not regarded as evidence of a community's commitment to social integration.

b) In the Netherlands according to a large survey⁴ prepared by TV program *Netwerk* and newspaper *Nederlands Dagbald*, 65% of the Dutch agreed that there should be a stop to the

³ We appreciate the kind gesture of Ms. Liz Fekete for having sent a copy of the document to the OIC Islamophobia Observatory. The summary presented here is available at:

<http://www.irr.org.uk/2008/may/ha000011.html> however the full Report can be bought at

<https://www.irr.org.uk/cgi-bin/news/buy.pl?id=77>

⁴ See: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2008/06/netherlands-65-support-ban-on-large.html> retrieved on June 12, 2008

building of large mosques. Bureau *Intomart GfK* questioned 1386 people, regarding their opinion about Islam in the Netherlands. Most of the Dutch seemed concerned about the growth of Islam in the Netherlands and its influence on society. At the same time, a majority were also concerned about the negative manner in which Geert Wilders and his Party for Freedom (PVV) spoke of Islam. 59% of the Dutch thought that in 40 years Islam would be at least as an important aspect of the Netherlands as Christianity was today. 57% said the increase in the number of Muslims threatened Dutch culture, and 53% said it threatened freedom of religion. 61% did not think the radical movements in Islam in the Netherlands would disappear on their own. 56% of Labor Party voters, 65% of Socialist Party voters, 67% of Christian Union voters and 87% of Political Reformed Party (SGP) voters, supported stopping the building of large mosques. Only Green Left voters (39%) and D66 voters (39%) were less supportive, in terms of the survey.

- c) A Report, entitled *Images of Islam in the UK*⁵, set out to analyze a representative sample of newspaper articles in British tabloids and broadsheets between 2000 and 2008. In particular, the authors, the Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies, sought to engage with the 'routine, everyday coverage of British Muslims' over and above the coverage, which occurred around key events, such as 11 September 2001 attacks and 7 July 2005 London bombings. The Report found that, since 2000, two thirds of newspaper articles about Muslims in Britain portrayed British Muslims as either 'a threat' or 'problem' and increasingly utilized negative and stereotypical imagery. Coverage of British Muslims was shown to have increased significantly year on year, and by 2006 had reached a level twelve times higher than that in 2000. In both 2007 and 2008 coverage continued above 2005 rates, although it had dipped slightly from the peak in 2006.

The Report found that four of the five most common story threads associated Islam and/or Muslims 'with threats, problems or in opposition to dominant British values' whilst only 2 per cent of these stories suggested 'that Muslims supported dominant moral values'. The Report highlighted a number of stories, which framed Britain as 'becoming a place of Muslim-only, "no-go" areas, where churches were being replaced by mosques, and *Shariah* law would soon be implemented'. This insidious perception of Islam as a threat or a problem was further enhanced by the choice of descriptive language in the articles surveyed: the most common nouns employed in relation to Islam or Muslims were 'terrorist' or 'extremist' whilst the most widely used adjectives included 'fanatical', 'fundamentalist', 'radical' and 'militant'. In all, 'references to radical Muslims outnumbered references to moderate Muslims by 17 to one'. This choice of descriptive language was consistently used by both broadsheet and tabloid newspapers. In stark contrast, only 5 per cent of all stories covered 'attacks on or problems for British Muslims' and 'the notion of Islamophobia scarcely featured as a news topic'.

- d) The Report released in 2006 by the *The Gallup Center for Muslim Studies*' Executive Director of the Center Dalia Mogahed, titled *Muslims and Americans: The Way Forward*⁶, stated that relations between Muslims and Americans have deteriorated since 2001 resulting in increasingly unfavorable opinion of the United States in many predominantly Muslim nations. The Gallup Poll in the United States found that anti-Muslim sentiment is fairly common; 39% of Americans admit to feeling at least some prejudice toward Muslims. It

⁵ Available at: <http://www.irr.org.uk/2008/september/bw000009.html> retrieved on September 13, 2008

⁶ Available at:

<http://media.gallup.com/MuslimWestFacts/PDF/GALLUPMUSLIMSTUDIESIslamandWest2107FINALrev.pdf>

further stated, inter alia, that “this growing polarization has led many in the West to believe that Muslims do not admire Western values or culture and have little interest in improving relations. At the same time, Muslims feel humiliated and assume the Western world is trying to impose its principles both on their faith and through government policies inside their own countries.” The Report added results from recent Gallup surveys, conducted in some predominantly Muslim countries and in the United States, found that the increasing divide has little to do with an “irreconcilable conflict between “Islam and the West.” In reference to the assumption of Muslims hating American, the Gallup poll findings contradicted the ‘conventional wisdom among Americans that Muslims envy the Western world for its technological and economic superiority and despise Western democracy, freedom, and human rights. Within this conventional wisdom, which is still believed today, is also the assumption that many Muslims -- not just the militant fringe -- have negative attitudes toward Westerners in general, not only the policies of some Western governments.’

- e) The US based institution Human Rights *First* in its 2008 *Hate Crime Survey: Muslims: Attacks on Places of Worship and Cemeteries*⁷, emphasizes that Islamophobia is on the rise in the West, considering that it stated that mosques, religious buildings, and cemeteries were particular targets of vandalism and arson in 2007 and early 2008. In some incidents, religious texts were also desecrated and destroyed.
- f) The OIC’s concern of Islamophobic mindset in the West was further vindicated by an article published in the British newspaper *The Independent* entitled “Why should I respect these oppressive religions” by Johann Hari, on January 28, 2009 and reproduced by the Statesman newspaper of India in its issue of February 5, 2009. The article was strongly condemned by the Observatory for hurting the sentiments of the Muslims worldwide by making insulting and derogatory remarks about Prophet Muhammad.

2.2. Islamophobia in Education

Among the factors that have contributed to Islamophobia is distortion or incorrect depiction of Islam in schools and educational institutions. In this context, the Observatory took note of a study entitled, “Islamophobia in Classrooms”⁸ undertaken by Mohammed Elmasry, in which he stated that “in the West, where Muslims comprise a sizable minority in some of the world’s most affluent and ‘advanced’ countries,” institutional Islamophobia is even felt in the classroom. “The net result is an education system that is failing every student, Muslim and non-Muslim alike. Generations of students are being graduated who know very little about their fellow citizens of other faiths; and if they gain any information at all about Islam as a world religion, or about its history, civilization and culture during the entire course of their formal education, that information is most likely to be false”. Institutional Islamophobia in education manifests itself in several ways:

- (1) By the omission of key knowledge about Islamic civilization in text books and curricula from kindergarten through university;
- (2) By condoning attacks on educators and academics who urge that students become more familiar with Islam as a moral and progressive force that shaped European history over a millennium of Islamic civilization;

⁷ Available at: <http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/discrimination/Reports.aspx?s=muslims&p=attacks> retrieved on 07.10.2008

⁸ Please see: <http://usa.mediamonitors.net/content/view/full/55077> retrieved on September 24, 2008

- (3) By fueling negative images of Islam and Muslims either through disinformation, or by focusing on selective events without reference to historical context;
- (4) By denying funding for university research in the study of contemporary religious and social issues related to today's Muslims;
- (5) By cutting back teacher training in the areas of multiculturalism and social integration;
- (6) By downplaying in-school incidents of slurs, bullying, or verbal and physical abuse motivated by the victims' religion; and
- (7) By denying the need to confront and address the issue of Islamophobia in the classroom.

2.3. Main Problems Faced by Muslims

In this regard, the Observatory found the following problems as those encountered by Muslims in the West:

a) Structural problems:

- ❖ Formal relations or lack of such relations between the State and the Muslim communities;
- ❖ Lack of proper knowledge of the language of the country of residence, improper housing, improper or insufficient education, leading to unequal access to the labor market;
- ❖ Net result: sense of being rejected, stigmatization, marginalization, leading to lack of confidence in the State. (Such people are more prone to crime and illegal activities, as well as more susceptible to radical propaganda).

b) Perceptual and behavioural problems:

- ❖ Prejudice also against perceived Muslims;
- ❖ Negative sentiments and display of such sentiments;
- ❖ Media coverage –misrepresentation;
- ❖ Political discourse – especially by the far right, but recently by moderates also.

c) Discriminatory practices as such:

- ❖ No reliable monitoring (and in some countries only discrimination related to race is monitored);
- ❖ As mentioned before, housing and employment are two major areas where discrimination occurs;
- ❖ Lack of proper places of worship and burial facilities;
- ❖ Headscarf ban in restaurants and other such public places;
- ❖ Police practices –search and arrest; customs entry procedures, etc;
- ❖ Harassment, vandalism and attacks.

2.4. Some Illustrations of Islamophobic Incidents

Among some of the major Islamophobic incidents⁹ that took place during the period under review were:

- (i) *Media Reports, op-eds against Islam and Muslims – Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR)*¹⁰, the US national media watch group that has been offering well-documented criticism of media bias and censorship since 1986, Reported that “there are many varieties of Muslim-bashing on display in the media. One strain holds that Islam is inherently evil or violent--a “bloody, brutal type of religion,” as televangelist Pat Robertson put it (700 Club, 4/28/06). Robert Spencer, who has authored several derogatory publications on Islam, tried to justify Islamophobia by putting up an argument that “jihad as warfare against nonbelievers in order to institute ‘Shariah’ worldwide...is a constant element of mainstream Islamic theology. (Emory Wheel, 2/21/07)”
- (ii) *Incidents related to mosques* – e.g.: the case of closing the mosque of Milan in Italy¹¹;
- (iii) *Desecration of Muslims graves* – like the incident of Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire, UK on August 13, 2008¹²;
- (iv) *Attack against Qur’an, Prophet Muhammad and Prophet Jesus (PBUT), and other sacred symbols of Islam through caricatures, movies, etc* – for example the release of a musical – a filmed documentation of events occurring after the drawings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by Swedish cartoonist Lars Vilks¹³, the release of Lars Hedegaard’s book containing 26 derogatory cartoons by the Danish caricaturist Kurt Westergaard, the Ehsan Jami’s video “An Interview with Muhammad”, and the Tenth Israeli TV channel’s defamatory broadcast of Prophet Jesus and his Mother Mary (peace be upon them).
- (v) *Political campaigns against Islam and Muslims* – such as **a)** holding a so called Anti-Islamization Congress on September 19-21, 2008, with the participation of racists and neo-fascists from Austria (FPÖ), Belgium (Vlaams Belang), Italy (Lega Nord), the USA (Robert Taft Group), Great Britain (BNP), Spain and Hungary, initiated by “pro Köln” (pro Cologne) group; **b)** European lawmakers coalition, led by Israeli Knesset Member Arieh Eldad, geared towards those European Parliament members who somehow believe that the expansion of Islam posed a severe threat to Western civilization¹⁴ or **c)** the association of internationally famous critics of Islam created by Danish parliamentarian Naser Khader, which intends to make Copenhagen “the epicenter of the fight against Muslim fanaticism”¹⁵;
- (vi) *Attack against Muslim individuals* – like the case of supporters of an English football team, Newcastle United harassed a Muslim player, Mido, Middlesbrough’s Egypt striker, on

⁹ The Observatory has tried to keep track of major Islamophobic incidents, which are described in Annex “A”.

¹⁰ Please see: FAIR (October 2008), *Smearcasting – How Islamophobes Spread Fear, Bigotry and Misinformation*, p.5.

¹¹ For more details, please see: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7493756.stm> retrieved on July 10, 2008

¹² See: <http://www.thissscunthorpe.co.uk/displayNode.jsp?nodeId=153005&command=displayContent&sourceNode=152831&contentPk=21283362&folderPk=86735&pNodeid=152562> retrieved on August 16, 2008

¹³ For more details, please see: <http://www.thelocal.se/15878/20081123/> retrieved on November 25, 2008

¹⁴ For more details, please see: <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/127446> retrieved on September 03, 2008

¹⁵ For more details, please see:

<http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2008/10/denmark-new-anti-islam-group-might.html> retrieved on October 07, 2008

November 29, 2008 by briefly singing: “Mido, he’s got a bomb”, a song that sparked a debate last season about the line between terrace banter and racism¹⁶;

- (vii) *Discrimination against Muslims in educational institutions, work places, airports, etc.* – for example, **a)** during the week of October 13-17, 2008, David Harrowitz organized with students events related to III Islamofacism Awareness Week under the banner of “Stop the Jihad on Campus” on more than 100 US university campuses¹⁷; **b)** in Odense (Denmark), hospital workers wanted headscarf ban¹⁸; **c)** Nine Muslim passengers were ordered to get off an *AirTran Airways Corp* on January 1, 2009 as other passengers heard them discuss the safety of the aircraft¹⁹.

3: THE HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK – A CONCRETE BASIS OF ENGAGEMENT?

Discussions at the UNGA and UNHRC conducted, for the most part, within the framework of Human Rights continued to form the major exponent of the ongoing multilateral discourse on Islamophobia. Guided by the decisions taken at the 11th Summit in Dakar and the 35th Council of Foreign Ministers in Kampala, the OIC Group continued to pursue constructive engagement with the West in all the UN based processes with a view to evolving a common strategy to implement and strengthen the existing normative framework towards combating discrimination and incitement of hatred against any religion. It needs to be appreciated that defamation of religions is a part of ‘incitement to religious hatred’ which invokes permissible limitation to or an abuse of freedom of expression. This chapter, in elaborating on the international legitimacy and the legal basis of the OIC’s position, reflects the importance of the human rights framework as a concrete basis for the much needed engagement between the Muslim world and the West towards countering incitement of religious hatred in the interest of global peace and harmony.

The right to be free from discrimination, intolerance, and incitement to hatred on the basis of religion is enshrined in laws of many countries and international instruments, particularly the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the European Convention on Human Rights. The OIC's Position on Islamophobia is, therefore, entrenched in the national and international accepted legal instruments. Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulates, “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status”. Specifically with regard to discrimination based on religion, Article 4, para 1 of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, stipulates, “All States shall take effective measures to prevent and eliminate discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the recognition, exercise, and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in all fields of civil, economic, political, social, and cultural life”. It also adds that they “shall

¹⁶ For more details, please see:

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/sport/football/premier_league/article5263360.ece retrieved on 03.12.2008

¹⁷ For more details, please see: <http://frontpagemagazine.com/Articles/Read.aspx?GUID=B8C058A7-2423-4C6E-B15C-84A7ABEDEB09> retrieved on August 16, 2008

¹⁸ For more details, please see: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2009/01/odense-hospital-workers-want-headscarf.html> retrieved on January 20, 2009

¹⁹ For more details, please see: In: http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=100169 retrieved on January 01, 2009

make all efforts to enact or rescind legislation where necessary to prohibit any such discrimination and to take all appropriate measures to combat intolerance on the grounds of religion or other beliefs in this matter”.

According to Article 20, Para, 2 of the ICCPR, “any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence shall be prohibited by law” while Article 19 of the ICCPR states that freedom of expression, “carries with it special duties and responsibilities”. The Human Rights Committee on Monitoring Civil and Political Rights in its General Comment No.11 on Article 20 of ICCPR affirmed, “these required prohibitions are fully compatible with the right of freedom of expression as contained in Article 19, the exercise of which carries with it special duties and responsibilities”.²⁰ For the Article 20 to become fully enforced State parties are obliged to adopt necessary legislative measures prohibiting the actions referred to therein.

Those pronouncements are further supported by other relevant international instruments on the elimination of discrimination, including the International Covenant on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (1966), the Declaration on the Human Rights of Individuals Who Are Not Nationals of the Country in Which They Live (1985) and the Declaration of the Rights of Persons Belonging to National, Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992).

3.1. The UN Resolution on Combating Defamation of Religions

Consistent efforts to bring about a consensus on the issue of defamation of religions reflected the Member States’ resolve to develop a culture of tolerance and understanding through engagement. The lack of progress may be attributed to some Western activists campaigning to distort the image of the OIC and to stigmatize it as being “anti-Semitic”, “criminalizing Christianity” and stifling the right to “freedom of expression”. These allegations were totally unfounded and against the very principles and objectives of the OIC.

The OIC sponsored resolution on Defamation of Religions has been adopted at several sessions of Human Rights Council, as well as sessions of UNGA including the one adopted during its 63rd, on December 21, 2008. It was indeed encouraging that 35 non OIC Member States including the Russian Federation, China, Cuba, Singapore, Honduras, Jamaica, Namibia, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Bolivia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Honduras, South Africa and Zimbabwe voted in favor of the resolution.

The latest resolution adopted by the 10th Session of UNHRC in Geneva on March 26, 2009 strongly deplored all acts of psychological and physical violence and assaults, and incitement thereto, against persons on the basis of their religion or belief, and such acts directed against their businesses, properties, cultural centres and places of worship, as well as targeting of holy sites, religious symbols and venerated personalities of all religions. The Council noted with deep concern the intensification of the overall campaign of defamation of religions and incitement to religious hatred in general, including the ethnic and religious profiling of Muslim minorities in the aftermath of the tragic events of 11 September 2001. It is important to note that this resolution was passed at the Human Rights Council with a higher number of votes in favour than in the previous occasion.

²⁰ Please see : [http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/60dcfa23f32d3feac12563ed00491355?Opendocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/60dcfa23f32d3feac12563ed00491355?Opendocument)

Concerning the resolution 62/154, entitled “Combating Defamation of religions” adopted at the preceding UNGA Session, the US official response of July 11, 2008 to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights stated that the US Government maintained that the concept of defamation of religions was being used in some member states to justify “torture, imprisonment, and other forms of abuse” and that it was not supported by international law “and that efforts to combat “defamation of religions typically result in restrictions on freedoms of thought, conscience, religion, and expression”. It added that from a legal perspective, the “defamation of religions” concept was “deeply problematic” and that under existing human rights law, individuals – not religions, ideologies, or beliefs – were the holders of human rights and are protected by the law. It stated that the concept of “defamation of religions” sought to convey the idea that a religion itself can be a subject of protection under human rights law, thereby potentially undermining protections for individuals.²¹

The perceived threat to freedom of expression on the part of the US, the EU and other concerned countries constitutes an obstacle that can only be removed through sustained and constructive engagement. It is pertinent to note that despite the decision not to go along with the OIC resolution against defamation of religions, the EU has imposed stringent restrictions on hate speeches and development of specific hate speech regulations. The Additional Protocol of the Convention on Cyber Crime invites parties to enact provisions which can be broad for example on distribution of racist material through computer system (Article 3) or on the public insulting of persons because they belong to a racial or ethnic group (Article 5). The OIC group felt that the major stakeholders in the negotiations including the US would do a great service to the international community to facilitate a compromise instead of remaining firm on their positions on the resolution on defamation of religions. The OIC has shown its flexibility by joining the consensus, despite reservations, on the EU resolution on Elimination of all forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religious Belief.

The West must appreciate that, in the context of hate speech, Islamophobia could form a meeting point of EU and the OIC perceptions of defamation of religions. The UN resolution to combat defamation of religions would, therefore, be a step forward. Article 10 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms explicitly states, “The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary”.

3.2. The Durban Review Conference

The 2001 Durban World Conference mandated by the UN against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance took a number of decisions to address the issue and the 2009 Durban Review Conference took stock of the progress with regard to the implementation of those decisions. The Review Conference held from April 20-24, 2009, in Geneva, produced a consensual outcome document reached after intense negotiations that reiterated the DDPA. The outcome document awarded recognition to Islamophobia as a contemporary manifestation of racism. Leading a high level delegation of the OIC General Secretariat, the Secretary General delivered a statement at the High Level Segment highlighting

²¹ Please see : <http://geneva.usmission.gov/Press2008/July/0715DefamationReligions.html>

the need for constructive engagement with a view to seeking solutions to the threat posed by racism in all its manifestations. The positive approach and flexibility demonstrated by the OIC Group towards reaching a consensual outcome was acknowledged by all stakeholders.

The demonstrated resolve on the part of the OIC to engage all stakeholders in a substantive and meaningful dialogue geared towards seeking an end to the contemporary manifestations of racism including Islamophobia was widely acknowledged at the Review Conference. The Secretary General's statement at the Conference was highly appreciated by all stakeholders, including the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, as a visionary framework towards peace and harmony based on reconciliation. The Secretary General emphasized that defamation of Islam represented a contemporary demonstration of racism and intolerance and a threat to harmonious and cooperative relationship between and among nations. He added that the campaign of Islamophobia, had adversely impacted the image, the honour, the cultural identity and the self-esteem of Muslims the world over, eroding their fundamental human rights. Expressing regret at the decision of some countries to opt out of the Conference, he clearly pronounced preference for an inclusive and participatory approach and the willingness on the part of the OIC to engage constructively with all stakeholders in identifying problems and finding solutions.

The Secretary General warned that it would be counterproductive to speak of a contradiction between freedom of religion and freedom of expression. Emphasizing a complementarity between the two freedoms, Prof. Ihsanoglu reiterated OIC's stand on defending, upholding and protecting freedom of expression in accordance with the international law. Categorizing 'ijtihad' as an important tool available to the Muslim world to promote universal human rights norms and standards, the Secretary General briefed the Conference on the process regarding the setting up of an OIC Permanent Independent Human Rights Commission.

The OIC delegation participated actively in the side events organized by different think tanks, NGOs and the civil society during the Review Conference and established useful contacts. The events afforded a useful opportunity to articulate the OIC's position and concerns with regard to the worrying campaign of Islamophobia as well as to dispel misconceptions pertaining to Islam and the OIC harboured by some sections of the West including the media.

4: DEALING WITH NEGATIVE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE OIC

A deliberate attempt on the part of some elements in the West, to portray a negative image of OIC was discernible in the spate of verbal and written pronouncements during the period under review. The Western concern that a consensus on the OIC group's Resolution against Defamation of Religions may restrict freedom of expression, encouraged some NGOs in different European countries as well as in the US and Canada to embark on a campaign that the OIC would use Durban II as a platform to foment anti-Christianity and anti-Semitism. From an OIC standpoint, it was incumbent on the international community to discourage this false and motivated campaign aimed at misleading the public opinion, in the interest of an atmosphere conducive to engagement.

The anti-OIC campaign that has its supporters in the US, Canada and in Europe holds negative views on the UN Resolution on Defamation of Religions, has found strength by apparent threats of some Western governments to boycott the Durban II. The parties involved are active in lobbying hard to "demonize" the resolution. According to available reports, the *American*

Center for Law & Justice in an announcement made on July 18, 2008 said that the OIC resolution on Combating Defamation of Religions was “anti-Christian bigotry” and has called for putting an “immediate end to this most recent, dangerous attack on faith that attempts to criminalize Christianity” by making reference to the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam that in their words, stipulated that *Shariah* law was the only source of reference for human rights. The American Organization has sensitized its European counterpart, *The European Center for Law & Justice*, that the HRC 7 and UNGA resolutions on Defamation of religions are in direct violation of international law related to rights of freedom of religion and expression and that the OIC wants to criminalize Christianity at the UN.

Similar views were expressed in an article by Dr. Laurie Roth on July 16, 2008 in the *Canadian Free Press* under the caption: “The OIC wants to criminalize Christianity at the UN”. The virulent Islamophobe, Robert Spencer in an article “George Orwell meets the Organization of the Islamic Conference” made some sweeping comments against the OIC. A commentary by Frank J. Gaffney published by *The Washington Times* on July 29, 2008 entitled “Citizen Obama?” went on making some scathing allusions to the OIC being a “Muslim Mafia Organization”. Another disturbing development was the passing of Resolution No HR Res 1361 by the US House of Representatives that seeks to denigrate the OIC position at the forthcoming Durban Review Conference in 2009 as being “anti-Semitic and undermining the Universal Declaration of Human Rights”.

The objective of the anti-Islam activists is to motivate the Western society against the OIC by creating a negative image, contrary to what it stands for, with a view to generating pressure in Europe and the US, to take anti-OIC positions. The OIC Secretary General addressed letters to the OIC Chair and to the Foreign Ministers of the member states drawing their attention to the development and requesting them to enhance interaction with the concerned stakeholders against the negative portrayal of the OIC.

The OIC, on its part continued to sustain a positive and principled approach. In a demonstration of the respect accorded by Islam to the symbols of other religions, the OIC Secretary General, Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu expressed his grave concern over and condemned the recent killings of students in the West Jerusalem. He reiterated the position of the OIC against any act of violence and terror anywhere in the world. Similarly, on October 14, 2008 he condemned the targeting of Christians in northern Iraq, with thousands being driven out of their homes, calling for their protection, ensuring their safety and security and preservation of their rights and dignity. 'As we have consistency demanded that the rights of Muslim minorities be respected all over the world, we do emphasize the need to respect the rights of all minorities across the Islamic world out of our firm position at the OIC inspired by the teachings of Islam.' He stated. In another development, on February 22, 2009, the OIC Secretary General strongly condemned the Tenth Israeli TV channel's defamatory broadcast of Prophet Jesus and his Mother Mary. He reaffirmed the consistent position of the OIC against disrespect and defamation of the Prophets of the revealed faiths and the insult of religious symbols. Prof. Ihsanoglu expressed the OIC's solidarity with Christians, including those in Palestine denouncing the Israeli TV station's defamation of Prophet Jesus and urged all to take a common position to counter defamation of religions and beliefs and insulting symbols that are sacred to different religious faiths.

5: GOOD PRACTICES

The widespread condemnation of Islamophobic activities and the diplomatic actions taken by the OIC General Secretariat and the Member States in particular the ones in response to the reprints of the blasphemous caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad by Danish newspapers, the production of the Film “*Fitna*” by a Dutch lawmaker and other similar incidents, made some impact on the Western societies causing both public and private cycles to take cognizance of the seriousness of the issue. There are encouraging signs coming from the leaders of many European governments and institutions distancing themselves from the manifestations of Islamophobia in official statements and public speeches. During the First AoC Annual Forum in Madrid in January 2008, the Dutch Foreign Minister was reported saying that “Those in my country who call for the Koran to be banned are undermining the central principle of universal human rights. I condemn such calls in the strongest possible terms.” The US Government also showed sensitivity to the concerns of the OIC by its decision to avoid anti Islamic terminology in official record and correspondence. This chapter takes stock of some events that could form the backdrop of a constructive engagement between Islam and the West.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe passed resolution No 1605 (2008) at its 13th sitting on 15 April 2008²², warning “against any confusion between Islam as a faith and Islamic fundamentalism as an ideology”. The resolution recognized Islam as the “second religion in Europe and a constituent component of European societies”. The Parliamentary Assembly called on the CoE member states to “act strongly against discrimination in all areas and condemn and combat Islamophobia”. It further called for resolute action against hate speech and all other forms of behavior which ran counter to core human rights and democratic values, even when their authors sought to justify them on religious grounds. It further called for encouraging the promotion of fair coverage of Muslim reality and views in the media and ensuring that the voice of moderate Muslims is also reported. The Assembly recommended development of “ethical guidelines” to combat Islamophobia in the media, in favor of cultural tolerance and understanding. The CoE Ministers of Foreign Affairs at their 118th Ministerial launched *The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue* “Living Together as Equals in Dignity” in Strasbourg on May 7, 2008.

In June 2008 the *Saban Center for the Middle East Policy at Brookings* published a report entitled “*Mightier than the Sword: Arts and Culture in the US-Muslim World Relationship*”. The report, inter alia, stated that, “At the core of the US-Muslim world divide is a lack of understanding and respect. The arts have the potential to persuade and alter stereotypes through their emotional impact”.

In the Netherlands a survey of 1100 Dutch adults carried out by TNS NIPO²³ found that Dutch people were more positive about the presence of Muslims in their midst. It, however, added that there were fewer and fewer Dutch people who believed that the integration of Muslims into Dutch society will ultimately be successful. NIPO has carried out similar surveys in recent years. Particularly, in 2005 and 2006, shortly after the murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh and the attacks in London and Madrid, a large percentage of Dutch people appeared to regard Islam as a threat, and the presence of Muslims as disagreeable. The survey, commissioned by *RTL News*, appears to give some reason to modify this conclusion. The

²² The Resolution is available in the Annex C or at:

<http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta08/ERES1605.htm>.

²³ Please see: <http://www.radionetherlands.nl/currentaffairs/080807-dutch-muslims> retrieved on August 09, 2008

concern about Muslims has almost halved since 2006. Only 11 percent regarded Muslims as a threat, compared to 21 percent in 2006.

On September 24, 2008 the *U.S.–Muslim Engagement Project’s Leadership Group* released its first high-level, bi-partisan, inter-faith and multi-disciplinary Report on strategies for improving American interactions with the Muslim world, “Changing Course: A New Direction for U.S. Relations with the Muslim World”. The Leadership Group’s members include former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright; former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage; writer and speaker Stephen Covey; former AIPAC Executive Director Thomas Dine; Rockefeller Brothers Fund President Stephen Heintz; Soliya Chairman Shamil Idriss; Ingrid Mattson, President of the Islamic Society of North America; Dalia Mogahed, Executive Director of the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies; and Center for Dialogues Director Mustapha Tlili. The Report proposed a comprehensive strategy with concrete actions to reverse extremism, increase US and international security and improve U.S. relations with Muslim countries and communities.²⁴

It is significant to note that at a time of increased discussions over the place of Islam in Europe, the Holy See contributed to the discussion by acknowledging Muslims for bringing God back into the public sphere in Europe. A statement in this vein was made by Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, head of the Catholic Church’s department for interfaith contacts. Quoted by *L’Osservatore Romano*, the official daily of the Vatican, he concluded, “Muslims, having become a significant minority in Europe, were the ones who demanded space for God in society.”²⁵

Three senior clerics from the Vatican backed more European mosques provided Muslims respected local communities and adapted to host countries’ way of life. Archbishop of Budapest, Cardinal Peter Erdo (president of the European Episcopal Conference), Archbishop of Bordeaux, Cardinal Jean-Pierre Ricard (vice-president), and Archbishop Josip Bozani of Zagreb (vice-president) believed that the construction of more official mosques would boost security in Western nations²⁶.

In France, a CSA survey of Muslims²⁷ showed that the majority of Muslims in this country felt very integrated, support *laïcité* and state financing of mosques and wearing the headscarf. 14% considered themselves “French first”, 60% “as much French as Muslims” and 22% “Muslims first”, while 4% did not respond. Two-thirds (66%) felt “very strong hostility or fairly strong against Islam” in France. By contrast, 28% felt a “somewhat weak” or “very weak” hostility. Regarding *laïcité* and the separation of Church and State, 75% supported it (48% “very much” and 27 “somewhat”). Concerning Islamic law (*Shariah*), 38% answered that it should not be applied in a non-Muslim country, 37% contended that it should be partially implemented and adapted to the rules of the country where one lives. In contrast, 17% believed that *Shariah* should be fully applied regardless of the country where one lived. A large majority (78%) favored state financing for mosque construction in France. 70% favored wearing the headscarf

²⁴ For more details, please see:

http://islamwest.org/events_Islam_and_the_West/changing_course_muslim_engagement/changing_course_executive_summary.html retrieved on December 15, 2008

²⁵ Please see: <http://in.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idINIndia-36765320081128?sp=true> retrieved on November 29, 2008

²⁶ Please see: <http://www.adnkronos.com/AKI/English/Religion/?id=3.0.2829866770> retrieved on December 20, 2008

²⁷ For more details, please see: <http://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/2008/10/29/01011-20081029FILWWW00603-l-islam-de-france-bien-integre-sondage.php> retrieved on November 01, 2008

(43% and 27%), for two reasons, a sign of submission by the wife towards her husband for some; and affirmation of individual liberties in a Western society, for others.

In the United Kingdom, a study by the University of Cambridge research²⁸, based partly on in-depth interviews with 26 students at UK universities argued that British universities were not hotbeds of Islamic radicalism, despite fears about the rise of “campus extremism”. This contradicted a research published by the Centre for Social Cohesion earlier in 2008, suggesting Muslim students on British campuses believed killing in the name of religion could be justified and that guidelines were in place for university staff on how to combat the threat of violent extremists targeting campuses as potential breeding grounds for new recruits. However, the study acknowledged that there was little evidence of any threat, suggesting such fears were exaggerated, and described young Muslims as better integrated into British society than their parents-with a stronger sense of national identity. The research found young Muslims viewed restrictions on the expression of their religious identity, such as wearing the *hijab*, as an abuse of human rights rather than as obstructing a wider, political Islamic cause. The Report argued, “Attempts to ban the *hijab* were perceived as incompatible with Western and in particular British commitment to freedom of speech and multicultural practices, and a European commitment to values of freedom, choice and individuality”.

It was encouraging to note that Western governments started to take some positive initiatives. Rejection by the German Government and people on the holding of the Anti Islamization of Europe Week by the Pro Koln Group; decision of an Amsterdam court in the Netherlands to prosecute Geert Wilders for producing the “*Fitna*” film; and the British Government’s decision to deny him entry into the UK in February 2009 could be cited as some encouraging signs. On the occasion of ban on Wilder’s entering the UK, British Foreign Secretary, David Miliband told BBC’s *Hardtalk* that Wilders was guilty of “extreme anti-Muslim hate”, adding, “We have profound commitment to freedom of speech but there is no freedom to cry ‘fire’ in a crowded theater and there is no freedom to stir up hate, religious and racial hatred, according to the law of the land”.²⁹

US President Barak Obama’s remarks on tolerance and dialogue among religions and his announcement of setting up an office in the White House for interfaith understanding³⁰ at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington on February 5, 2009 were significant. His statement that “There is no religion whose central tenet is hate”, and that, “In Islam, there is a Hadith that reads ‘None of you truly believe until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself’”³¹ is noteworthy.

It was notable that Obama’s remarks and announcement fell in line with the OIC Secretary General’s vision of a historic reconciliation between Islam and Christianity. It must be mentioned here that the OIC Secretary General had addressed an open letter to President Obama on his inauguration, in which he emphasized that, “*Many myths about Islam, fostered by extremists in both the West and East, have proliferated in the last decade, and a new word – “Islamophobia”– has even entered the world’s lexicon to describe anti-Muslim acts of prejudice and violence. Despite these pernicious myths, you will find that Islam is a religion of peace. Tolerance is its*

²⁸ For more details, please see: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2008/dec/03/student-politics-islamic-radicals-cambridge> retrieved on December 06, 2008

²⁹ For details, see : http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/7885918.stm

³⁰ Later labelled "White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships"

³¹ Please see: http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog_post/this_is_my_prayer/

benchmark and borne of the very nature of Islam. Nor is Islam an exclusive religion. It is an integral part of the history of world religions. Along with Christianity and Judaism, Islam emanates from the same part of the world, comes from the same God, and holds to the same Prophets, mainly Abraham". He also addressed a formal congratulatory letter to President Obama, who, in response, expressed his willingness to work with the Secretary General in order to enhance these efforts and reinforce the relations binding the US and the OIC. He also expressed his confidence in the ability of the US and the OIC to work together for the sake of building a more secure world over the next four years.

The US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations held a hearing on the issue of "Engaging with Muslim communities around the world" in Washington DC on February 26, 2009. The US Senate Foreign Affairs Committee plays an important role in the formulation of the bipartisan US Foreign Policy and its decision on holding a special hearing on engaging with the Muslim world is therefore most certainly an event of considerable interest and importance for the OIC.

The Committee was addressed by its Chairman Senator John Kerry of the Democratic Party and the Ranking Member of the Committee, Senator Richard Lugar of the Republic Party. The Committee also heard the dispositions of top rated and internationally recognized panelists that included former US Secretary of State Madeline Albright, Admiral William Fallon, and former Commander of the US Central Command. Dr. Dalia Mogahed, Executive Director of the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies, in Washington DC and co-author of Professor John Esposito's book "Who Speaks for Islam"; Mr. Eboo Patel, Executive Director of the Interfaith Youth Core, Chicago and Zekkyno Baran, Senior Fellow of the Hudson Institute of Washington, DC.

In taking a holistic view of existing and emerging trends in the US relations with the Muslim world, the hearing was characterized by some constructive remarks that could count as reasons for optimism with regard to the engagement that the OIC advocates with a view to combating Islamophobia. Some of these remarks have been noted below:

Senator John Kerry: "today we must send a simple message to all Muslims: we share your aspirations for freedom, dignity, justice, and security. We're ready to listen, to learn, and to honor the President's commitment to approach the Muslim world with a spirit of mutual respect".

Former US Secretary of State Madeline Albright: "...if Muslims and Christians are not at peace, the world cannot be at peace. With the terrible weaponry of the modern world; with Christians and Muslims intertwined as never before, no side can unilaterally win a conflict...Thus our common future is at stake...So let our differences not cause hatred and strife...Let us vie with each other only in righteousness and good works."

Fellow of the Center for International Studies Massachusetts Institute of Technology Admiral William J. Fallon made the following recommendations for engagement with the Muslims:

- a) First would be to listen to their side of the issues and be willing to visit with them and discuss the challenges;
- b) Secondly, demonstrate US interest in peace and stability with the majority of like minded Muslims by engaging in the Middle East peace process and outreach initiatives across the world, puts action to words;

- c) Thirdly, assist the less developed countries with economic, health, education and security issues;
- d) Fourthly, fix the bureaucratic process in obtaining US visas and avoid embarrassing delays; and
- e) Fifthly, build trust by personal engagement and treating people with respect.

A segment of the society that should merit a special attention on initiatives related to interfaith dialogue is youth, one of the four main themes of the Alliance of Civilizations initiative. In this vein, the OIC took note of the January 20, 2009 initiative, in which an international group of young Muslim activists gathered in Doha, Qatar, to launch what they described as a global Muslim movement for peace, justice and the common good. More than 300 young Muslim activists from 76 countries attended the 2009 Muslim Leaders of Tomorrow³² Conference. Organizers of the Doha meeting, a nonprofit consortium of Muslim and interfaith groups, promoted it as a catalyst for social change in the Islamic world and as a signal that Muslims support political pluralism, freedom, social justice and combating extremism.

³² The Muslim Leaders of Tomorrow (MLT) is a global program, social network and grassroots movement cultivating the next generation of Muslim leaders. The MLT program generates a free and open public space where this community can vigorously debate ideas, share best practices, and help one another become better leaders. With ethnic, religious and social diversity as key strengths, the MLTs are stepping up as spokespersons and activists for peace and tolerance around our globe today. MLT is the largest global program creating a new generation of Muslim civic leadership. For more details, please visit: <http://www.muslimleadersoftomorrow.org>

6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Islamophobia implies discrimination and intolerance against Muslims. Its proliferation runs contrary to the fundamental values of mankind that must be embedded in a firm commitment to human rights and the recognition of inherent dignity of all human beings regardless of faith, color or creed. In that respect, human rights and fundamental freedoms should be recognized as essential safeguards of tolerance and non-discrimination, which are indispensable elements of stability, security and cooperation. However, despite all efforts for the promotion and protection of human rights, acts related to racism, xenophobia and discrimination, as well as related intolerance persist in many societies. The resurgence, especially after September 11, of racist tendencies and Islamophobia challenge the exercise of fundamental human rights and freedoms particularly in Western countries. In spite of tangible progress achieved in eliminating institutionalized forms of discrimination, many countries and regions continue to experience new and mounting waves of bias, exclusion and racist violence. These constitute a major threat to friendly and peaceful relations not only among states, but among peoples as well. The need, therefore, to struggle against all forms and manifestations of discrimination and intolerance has become more urgent and evident than before.

On the other hand, as the well known British journalist Claire George also underlined, "...a chief characteristic of Islamophobia is that it treats Islam as a monolith and fails to recognize the diversity within the faith. The Islamophobe finds it acceptable to say things about Islam that he or she would not dream of uttering against Judaism or a racial group."³³

The OIC proposes a frank, sincere and result oriented dialogue geared to curbing Islamophobia through promoting better understanding of different cultures and religions as well as better integration of Muslims in the West. The OIC has remained firm in its commitment towards bringing about a meaningful dialogue among civilizations and has been working closely with its international partners including the Alliance of Civilizations towards intercultural understanding and defeating the propagators of hatred and intolerance.

The OIC has undertaken a wide range of initiatives in different capitals in Europe as well as in the United States where we have exhorted the international community to promote awareness against the malaise of intolerance and racial incitement. The OIC has kept the agenda of the dialogue high on its list of priorities and the OIC Secretary General has personally raised the issue in meetings with the political leadership of Europe and the USA and in interactions with the UN Secretary General, the High Representative for Foreign Relations of the European Union, the European Council as well as scholars and members of the civil society in various meetings and workshops.

The need for a Dialogue among Civilizations has never been as urgent and important and the opportunity afforded by globalization must not be squandered. The common aspiration of the international community to peaceful co-existence in an environment of intercultural diversity has come under severe threat from a motivated group of extremists engaged in inciting intolerance and xenophobia against beliefs and civilizations other than their own. The West and the Muslim world need to be supported and encouraged on their endeavors and pursuits for a candid dialogue among beliefs, cultures and civilizations.

³³ Cf. Claire George, *Anti-Faith Prejudice at Christmas*, in: http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?no=384471&rel_no=1 retrieved on December 23, 2008.

The OIC, in this regard, calls upon all stakeholders to work towards evolving a common strategy with a view to stemming the rising trend of Islamophobia. The leadership of OIC Member States has provided clear guidance, in both strategic, as well as mandatory terms on this important issue.

The following are some recommendations that may form elements of a common strategy on the part of Muslim world and the West:

- a) The international community must recognize the problem and be ready and willing to adopt a multifaceted approach to combating Islamophobia. It is of utmost significance to take account of the importance of the intellectual front in the fight against intolerance and discrimination against Muslims and devise a sound strategy with a view to making the required adjustments in the value systems and perceptions.
- b) Political will of governments and unambiguous commitment to pursuing the dialogue openly and fairly would constitute key factors towards evolving a global strategy to combat Islamophobia.
- c) The political leadership must underline the importance of correct and unbiased discourse and refrain from hate speech and other manifestations of extremism and discrimination. A message of encouraging tolerance, non-discrimination, understanding and respect to all must be voiced on a sustained basis by the international political elite.
- d) According official recognition to Islam as given to other mainstream religions in the European states would infuse confidence and inter-faith harmony.
- e) With regard to the national legal systems, with particular reference to the countries/regions with a high incidence of Islamophobia, clear criteria for reporting and registering of hate crimes must be established and Reporting of hate crimes must be encouraged.
- f) Capacity building of Muslim communities and civil society organizations in the Western societies with a view to enabling them to work with local and national authorities is an issue that must be addressed. In that respect, community outreach programs will be of great use in confidence building and in creating community cohesion and a sense of living together.
- g) Another point that deserves utmost importance is education. Especially younger generation should be provided with a revised educational syllabus on both sides, particularly in key disciplines such as history, philosophy, social and human sciences with the aim of presenting a balanced view of other cultures and civilizations that would foster tolerance, understanding and respect to "the other." Related to education is of course training of law enforcement officials.
- h) Existing international laws on incitement to religious hatred including the International Convention on All forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion and Belief, the Declaration on the Human Rights of Individuals who are not Nationals of the country in which they live, the Declaration on the rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities and the relevant UN Resolutions must be implemented.
- i) The dialogue on tolerance and peaceful cohabitation among diverse faiths must be taken to the grassroots and the ordinary people.

- j) Common values and principles for institutionalizing and promoting a long term and sustainable process of constructive engagement must be clearly identified.
- k) Concerns of diverse communities with regard to better respect of their cultures, religions, beliefs and symbols must be addressed with a view to ensuring successful integration in the Western societies. Religious leaders should play a leading role in this regard in support of actions by governments and international organizations.
- l) Consideration must be accorded to the economic and social dimensions by addressing the negative impact of globalization and the challenges of the 21st century such as combating poverty, food crisis, endemic diseases, climate change and natural disasters, etc.
- m) Fighting terrorism and extremism based on a clear understanding of its root causes and different dimensions to avoid misinterpretation and targeting of innocent individuals or organizations.

In accordance with the mandate provided by Summits and Councils of Foreign Ministers, this Report highlights challenges and opportunities for the OIC on the important issue of Islamophobia. The Member States concrete inputs, proposals, recommendations, and initiatives aimed at improving and assisting Observatory's work would be welcomed.

ANNEXES

A: DETAILED ACCOUNT OF ISLAMOPHOBIC INCIDENTS

1. Incidents Related to Mosques

- i) **Milan Mosque “To be Closed Down”** – Italian Interior Minister Roberto Maroni announced the closure of the Jenner mosque in Milan, which had been attracting about 4.000 Muslims each week. The decision was not well received even beyond Muslim circles in Italy. A leading Roman Catholic accused Mr. Maroni of behaving like a fascist. Mr Maroni, who belonged to the anti-immigrant Northern League, had also been reported to have warned that he would press ahead with plans to close the mosque, and that anybody found praying in the street would be issued with a ticket.
In: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7493756.stm> retrieved on 10.07.2008
- ii) **Acts of Vandalism against Muslim Prayer Hall** - Acts of vandalism representing in particular a Nazi inscription and fire of the toilets were committed on August 24, 2008 in a Muslim prayer hall in Meyzieu, in the Rhone-Alpes region of France, the police and the municipality announced in the following day.
In: <http://europenews.dk/en/node/13298> retrieved on 27.08.2008
- iii) **Muslims “Not Welcome” at Interfaith Prayer Centre in Genoa** – A proposal to turn a medieval palace in Genoa founded by Crusader knights into a multi faith prayer centre for Muslims, Jews and Christians run into opposition from local politicians. Members of the anti immigrant Northern League – which was part of the centre Right government led by Silvio Berlusconi – said the Genoa council’s plan to use the Commenda di Pre for multi faith prayer was unacceptable.
In: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/faith/article4472073.ece> retrieved on 09.08.2008
- iv) **Anti-Islamic Inscriptions Sprayed on Mosque in Brno (Czech Republic)** – Unknown perpetrators sprayed anti- Islamic inscriptions, such as “Stop Islam”, on the mosque’s walls in Brno on the weekend of October 25-26, 2008. Prior to the incident, representatives of the ultra-right extra-parliamentary National Party (NS) had convoked a rally at the mosque, but in the end it did not take place due to lack of support.
In: http://www.ceskenoviny.cz/news/index_view.php?id=340883 retrieved on 29.10.2008
- v) **Online Petition against Construction of Mosque in Sofia** – A petition against construction of a Mosque in Bulgaria’s capital characterizing the construction as “political provocation” appeared online seeking support against the project. The webcounter of the webpage showed that 5200 people had supported the petition by December 2008.
In: <http://www.focus-fen.net/index.php?id=n161721> retrieved on 06.12.2008
- vi) **Mosque Burned in Bosnia on Muslim Holiday** – A mosque was set alight in the eastern Bosnian village of Fazlagica Kula, located in the southeastern part of the Serb-dominated entity of Republika Srpska, near the town of Trebinje, only hours ahead of the beginning of the Muslim holiday of Eid Al Adha (December 7, 2008),. Numerous mosques had been reportedly razed in that area during Bosnia’s 1992-1995 war.
In: <http://balkaninsight.com/en/main/news/15357/> retrieved on 13.12.2008

vii) **French Mosque Targeted in Arson Attack** – Muslim officials said that an arson attack on a mosque near Lyon in France damaged copies of the Koran and other religious books on December 20, 2008. The French Council of the Muslim Faith called on people to be alert in view of what it said was an increase in attacks on Muslim graves and places of worship.
In: http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/europe/news/article_1449566.php/French_mosque_targeted_in_arson_attack
retrieved on 21.12.2008

viii) **Anti-Muhammad Graffiti on Jaffa Mosque** – on December 21, 2008 derogatory writings were spray-painted on Jaffa mosque doors reading 'Death to Arabs' and slurs against Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Representatives of the Islamic Movement in Jaffa filed a complaint with the police, and attested that the incident was a continuation of the incitement against Muslims and Arabs, in which senior politicians had taken part. It was further reported that several years ago a pig's head was thrown into the Hassan Bek mosque's courtyard, adding that this was a message "that mosques can be desecrated".



In: <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3641724,00.html> retrieved on 22.12.2008

ix) **Cocktail Molotov Thrown into Kensington Mosque** – a Molotov cocktail was thrown into a mosque at Kensington New Road, the City (West London), in the morning of December 31, 2008. Reports indicated that someone in a white delivery truck drove onto the compound and threw a fiery plastic bottle into the only open window. It landed on the carpet, leaving the area burnt.

In: <http://www.nationnews.com/story/312495389203932.php> retrieved on 03.01.2009

x) **Vandals hit Islamic Center in Oakland (US)** – An Oakland (US) mosque was the target of a vandal when someone splashed red paint across the front steps leading to the Islamic Center of Pittsburgh hours before the traditional Muslim day of worship (*jumma* or Friday). The mosque property had also been reportedly vandalized earlier in its 15-year history.

In: <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/09002/939226-100.stm> retrieved on 03.01.2009

xi) **Police Investigate Shots Fired at Miami Mosque** – The South Florida chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations reported on January 02, 2009 that shots were fired at a Miami mosque and Islamic school. According to a news release, bullet holes were found on a wall of the Masjid An-Noor Islamic School of Miami, at 11699 SW 147th Ave.

In: <http://www.nbc6.net/news/18401619/detail.html> retrieved on 03.01.2009

xii) **“Biblical Group” Shouts Anti-Islam Slurs Outside Mosque, Frightens Children** – a “biblical group” allegedly harassed worshipers on February 1st, 2009 at a Florida mosque. More than 20 people used bullhorns to shout slurs against the faith of Islam and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) at those attending the Islamic Society of Tampa Bay Area. They

also handed out anti-Muslim literature and frightened children attending weekend school at the facility.

In: <http://news.pnnewswire.com/DisplayReleaseContent.aspx?ACCT=104&STORY=/www/story/02-01-2009/0004964031&EDATE=> retrieved on 02.02.2009

xiii) Mosques in Bosnia Vandalized – Unidentified perpetrators caused structural damage when they threw a hand grenade at a mosque still under construction in the Bosnian Serb administrative centre of Banja Luka on Saturday (January 31, 2009). In another incident in the southern town of Mostar, a mosque door was damaged on Monday (February 02, 2009). It was the 15th time since the end of Bosnia’s 1992-1995 war that the Dervis-Pasa Bajezidagic mosque had been vandalised. In previous incidents, vandals had daubed images depicting swastikas and pig heads on the walls of the 16th-century building.

In: http://www.gulf-times.com/site/topics/article.asp?cu_no=2&item_no=270735&version=%201&template_id=39&parent_id=21 retrieved on 05.02.2009

xiv) Racist Vandals Attacked Hall Leased by Muslims – vandals scrawled racist graffiti on a community sports hall which was due to be leased to a Muslim group. The slogan Muslim People Suck was daubed on the side of Woodfarm Sports Hall in Thornliebank (UK), which was to be converted into an after-school education centre.



In: http://www.eveningtimes.co.uk/news/display.var.2488278.0.racist_vandals_attack_hall_leased_by_muslims.php retrieved on 11.02.2009

xv) Israeli Extremists Stormed Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem’s Old City – A group of 30 Israeli extremist settlers stormed the courtyard of the al-Aqsa mosque in the Old City of Jerusalem midday March 9, 2009. Palestinian worshippers said that the group was disguised as tourists, and as soon as they were at the main courtyard they started to conduct prayers for the Jewish holiday Purim.

In: <http://www.imemc.org/article/59210> retrieved on 10.03.2009

xvi) Pig’s Head Placed on Fence outside Prague Mosque – a pig’s head was placed on the fence outside a mosque in the Czech capital, and someone also wrote “Stop Islam” on the fence and partially damaged the wall and entrance to the mosque in the Kyje neighborhood on the outskirts of Prague. The minor extremist National Party published the head’s pictures early Thursday (March 19, 2009) on its Web site. An Islamic community spokesman said it was planning to file a legal complaint.



In: <http://www.ihf.com/articles/ap/2009/03/19/europe/EU-Czech-Mosque-Attack.php> retrieved on 21.03.2009

xvii) No Mosque in the Burgas “Meden Rudnick” District (Bulgaria) – The Burgas municipal council repealed its decision, by which it allowed the construction of a mosque in the residential district “Meden Rudnick” in the city. Over 40 000 citizens of Burgas signed against the construction of the mosque. The decision stirred ethnic feud in the city causing the resignation of the Chair of the municipal council Valeri Simeonov in protest and was used for an incorrect campaign and manipulation of the citizens.

In: http://international.ibox.bg/news/id_769855500 and <http://www.focus-fen.net/index.php?id=n174676> retrieved on 21.03.2009

xviii) Popular Objections to Plans for a mosque in Lichfield (UK) – as of April 2009 more than 2,500 people had signed up to a *Facebook* group objecting to plans to build a mosque in the Staffordshire city. Mosque proposer Abdul Salam said the Muslim community had grown and he did not understand people's concerns.

In: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/staffordshire/8001751.stm retrieved on 18.04.2009

xix) Mosque blaze in Detroit Investigated – Detroit fire investigators were probing into an incident where in a west-side mosque was lit on fire just before morning prayers Saturday April 18, 2009. The caretaker for Tawheed Center of Detroit, 18640 W. Warren, between Evergreen and the Southfield Freeway, discovered the blaze at 5:30 a.m. as he arrived to open the mosque for the first prayers of the day. Investigators revealed that someone broke the rear window, poured what is thought to have been gasoline inside and lit the building on fire.

In: <http://www.freep.com/article/20090420/NEWS01/90420013/Mosque+blaze+in+Detroit+early+Saturday+probed> retrieved on 21.04.2009

xx) Canada: Dorval Mosque vandalized again – some graffiti were left by an unidentified vandal or two approximately in the wall which faces the mosque's parking lot. The graffiti sprayed over in black lines read the word "Koran," along with referencing its passages 8:39, 2:216, and 47:4. A question mark has also been written, along with a reference to a verse 4:74. The mosque had a first vandalism problem in June 2008, with graffiti again scrawled over with a peace sign followed by a question mark and the words "Coran 9:5."



In: <http://www.montrealxpress.ca/article-330490-Dorval-Mosque-vandalized-again.html> retrieved on 28.04.2009

- xxi) **Rutherglen mosque attacked by racist Vandals** – racist vandals have spray-painted sickening remarks on the walls of the Minhaj-ul-Quran Mosque in Greenhill Road, Rutherglen (UK), which was officially opened in February of this year. The vandals, believed to be four young men in dark clothing, plastered the walls with racial comments in lime green paint between 7am and 10am on Sunday (April 26). Rutherglen police are investigating the incident. Chief Inspector Martin Quinn of Rutherglen police office said: “The defacing of any place of worship with graffiti is a particularly offensive example of anti-social behaviour. This incident has an even greater local impact as the Minhaj-ul-Quran Mosque was only recently opened and Strathclyde Police had already made regular visits and contact with its worshippers and committee.”

In: <http://www.rutherglenreformer.co.uk/rutherglen-news/rutherglen-local-news/2009/04/29/rutherglen-mosque-attacked-by-racist-yobs-63227-23495796/> retrieved on 30.04.2009

2. Desecration of Muslim Graves

- i) **Muslim Cemeteries in Crimea Attacked** – A Muslim graveyard was desecrated in the village of Chistenko, Crimea, Ukraine, in May 2008. Muslim Tatars found more than 40 gravestones damaged as well as graffiti on the walls of the cemetery written in Russian that read, ‘Tartars, leave Crimea now!’ when they visited the cemetery at night. Other drawings showed gibbets, and the Tartar national symbol with the letter X marked through it.
In: <http://www.muslimnews.co.uk/paper/index.php?article=3504> retrieved on 10.06.2008
- ii) **Austria Vandals Deface Muslim Graves** – Authorities in Austria said on September 29, 2008 that 90 Muslim graves were vandalized over the weekend by suspected rightwing extremists. Officials said some tombstones were toppled and others sprayed with black paint in the Muslim section of a graveyard in the town of Traun, outside the Western city of Linz. Investigators reportedly found Stars of David painted on some of the stones.
In: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/sep/29/austria> retrieved on 30.09.2008
- iii) **Muslims Graves in France Defaced** – Hundreds of tombstones in the Muslim part of the Notre-Dame de Lorette (France) military cemetery near the northern town of Arras and the battlefields of World War One were found sprayed with Nazi symbols on December 8, 2008 in the third such attack on the site in less than two years. The desecration came at the start of Islam's biggest feast, the Muslim festival of Eid al-Adha. Police said that the neatly aligned white headstones, marking the graves of Muslim soldiers who died fighting for France, were spray-painted with neo-Nazi slogans such as “*Heil Hitler*”.



In: <http://www.welt.de/english-news/article2845660/Muslims-graves-in-France-defaced.html> retrieved on 09.12.2008

3. Incidents Related to *Hijab* (Veil)

- i) **Opposition in Ireland Called For Headscarf Ban** – The two main opposition parties in Ireland demanded public schools in Ireland not to allow young Muslim girls to wear the religious headscarf. Labour’s Ruairi Quinn said immigrants who came to Ireland needed to fit into Ireland’s culture. However, *The Education Act* states that school boards should respect diversity in people’s values, beliefs and traditions.
In: <http://www.muslimnews.co.uk/paper/index.php?article=3580> retrieved on 02.07.2008
- ii) **France Rejects Veiled Muslim Wife** – A French court denied citizenship to a Muslim woman from Morocco, ruling that her practice of “radical” Islam was not compatible with French values. The 32-year-old woman, known as Faiza M, had lived in France since 2000 with her husband - a French national - and their three French-born children. A statement attributed to Faiza M stated that she had never challenged the fundamental values of France. Her initial application for French citizenship was rejected in 2005 on the grounds of “insufficient assimilation” into France. She appealed, and late June 2008 the *Conseil d’Etat*, France’s highest administrative body which also acts as a high court, upheld the decision to deny her citizenship.
In: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7503757.stm> retrieved on 13.07.2008
- iii) **Muslim Woman Wearing Veil Ousted From Italy Museum** – The episode, which sparked controversy in the Italian media and rows between centre-left and centre-right politicians, occurred on August 23, 2008 in *Venice’s Ca’ Rezzonico* museum, which houses 18th century Venetian art. The woman, who was visiting the famed museum with her husband and children, had already cleared security when she entered the building and had begun her visit. When she reached the second floor, a room guard told her she had to take off her “niqab”, a veil which left only the eyes visible, or leave the premises. She refused to take off her veil and left the building. It was pertinent to note that Italian anti-terrorism laws from 1975 banning people from wearing face coverings in public had been rarely enforced in cases of Islamic veils.
In: <http://uk.reuters.com/article/lifestyleMolt/idUKLR71630120080827?sp=true> retrieved on 30.08.2008
- iv) **Veiled Faces Banned Under New School Rules** – Ronald Plasterk, the Dutch Education Minister said that the veil and the burka would be banned for those working at or visiting Dutch schools, including parents. Private Muslim schools would have to comply but universities would be exempted because the law was intended to ensure that children would be able to recognize and identify others. Muslim circles in the Netherlands had been reported to express dissatisfaction on the Education Minister's pronouncement.
In: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article4720550.ece> retrieved on 13.09.2008

- v) **Headscarves New Target For Austrian Far Right** – Heinz-Christian Strache, head of the far-right Freedom Party, said, “Headscarves are a symbol of Islamism and female oppression. They have no place in Austria”. Martin Strutz, the general secretary of the right-wing Alliance for Austria’s Future, stated, “Something that would be unthinkable in Turkey is a reality in red (left-leaning) Vienna...The (Vienna) Social Democrats don’t value the separation between church and state any more,” he added, calling for a complete ban on headscarves and veils in public office.” While Freedom and Alliance called for symbols of Islam to be removed from state schools, they did not, however, seem to object to symbols of Christianity in Austria, a state predominantly Roman Catholic.
In: <http://blogs.reuters.com/faithworld/2008/11/04/headscarves-new-target-for-austrian-far-right/> retrieved on 08.11.2008
- vi) **Muslim’s Scarf Lead to Arrest at Courthouse** – Lisa Valentine, also known by her Islamic name, Miedah, 40, was arrested on December 17, 2008 after a judge found her in contempt of court for refusing to remove her *hijab*. The Douglasville Municipal Court stated that she was violating a court policy of no headgear. Judge Keith Rollins ordered her held in jail for 10 days.
In: <http://www.ajc.com/services/content/printedition/2008/12/17/hijab.html> retrieved on 20.12.2008
- vii) **Odense: Hospital Workers Wanted Headscarf Ban** – a group of workers at Odense University Hospital (OUH), in Denmark, which included nurses, nursing assistants and healthcare assistants, stated that headscarf was a religious-political symbol that did not belong in a hospital, where the patients wanted to be met by neutral professionals. Attempts to raise the issue about the headscarf in the workplace in the hospital’s personnel journal, *Fokus*, had been reportedly earlier. It must be noted that the uniform committee at Odense University Hospital had not considered banning the headscarf.
In: <http://islamieneurope.blogspot.com/2009/01/odense-hospital-workers-want-headscarf.html> retrieved on 20.01.2009
- viii) **Muslim Denied Service at Bank Over Hijab** – CAIR on February 2, 2009 called on the U.S. Department of Justice to determine whether a California bank violated a Muslim woman’s civil rights when it denied her service because she was wearing a headscarf. According to the woman, she was denied service at a Navy Federal Credit Union in San Diego, Calif., despite telling bank officials that her headscarf was for religious reasons.
In: <http://news.pnnewswire.com/DisplayReleaseContent.aspx?ACCT=104&STORY=/www/story/02-02-2009/0004964748&EDATE=> retrieved on 03.02.2009
- ix) **Veiled Parent Ejected** – on April 03, 2009 a Muslim woman was banned from a parents’ evening because she was wearing a veil. She was turned away for arriving in *niqab* that left only her eyes showing. The school then called the police. She was reduced to tears when the school barred her on health, safety and security grounds and told her: “The faces of all visitors should be visible at all times.” Other parents backed the ruling.
In: <http://www.express.co.uk/posts/view/93135/Veiled-parent-ejected> retrieved on 05.04.2009

4. Political and Social Campaigns against Islam and Muslims

- i) **Campaign Warns Americans about Looming Shariah Code** – Detroit billboard said religious law imposed by Islam threatened rights. Members of the United American Committee (UAC) stated that *Shariah* might be spreading around the world, but it was not going to be established in the United States without opposition. Officials had reportedly erected a 48-foot-long billboard just outside of Detroit, home to one of the largest groups of Muslims in the U.S.



In: <http://worldnetdaily.com/index.php?fa=PAGE.view&pageId=82062> retrieved on 29.11.2008

- ii) **Campaign against Shariah Law in Britain Launched at the House of Lords** – The *One Law for All* campaign — supported by the National Secular Society — was launched in the House of Lords on International Human Rights Day, December 10, 2008. The campaign called on the UK government to recognize that Sharia law was arbitrary and discriminatory calling for an end to Sharia courts and all religious tribunals on the basis that they worked against equality and human rights. The campaign also called for the Arbitration Act 1996 to be amended so that all religious tribunals were banned from operating.
In: <http://www.secularism.org.uk/campaignagainstsharialawinbritai.html> retrieved on 13.12.2008
- iii) **Switzerland: Maria vs. Sharia** – The Catholic Church in Switzerland was upset at the Swiss People’s Party (SVP) because of a poster campaign with the slogan “Maria instead of Sharia”. According to the church the poster was polarizing and stirred up xenophobic emotions. The SVP had repeatedly caused commotions in the past with campaigns against Islam and foreigners. The same slogan had also been reportedly used by the Austrian People’s Party (ÖVP) three years ago.
In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2009/02/switzerland-maria-vs-shariah.html> retrieved on 16.02.2009
- iv) **Belgium: Dewinter, “Islam is a predator”** – Belgian politician Filip Dewinter, the Antwerp head of Vlaams Belang, in his book entitled *“Insha’Allah? The Islamization of Europe* stated, “Islamophobia is an obligation” had contended that Islam was a predator which was attacking the weak Europe. He called for cutting back on the structures of Islam, stopping Islamization and stopping immigration from Muslim countries.
In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2009/02/belgium-dewinter-islam-is-predator.html> retrieved on 03.03.2009

5. Intolerance against Islam and its Sacred Symbols

- i) **Islam Is Real Threat To Church, Said Synod Member** – Alison Ruoff, an evangelical lay member of the Synod and a former magistrate, told *The Daily Telegraph* that the church needed to concentrate on fighting the rise of Islam in Britain. And she believed the Government, out of politically correct sensitivities, was not preventing the growth of Muslim communities which did not integrate with those around them.
In: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/2205041/Islam-is-real-threat-to-church.-says-Synod-member.html> retrieved on 29.06.2008
- ii) **Right-Wing Terror Film Delivered To Swing-State NY Times Readers** – on September 6, 2008 in presidential-election swing states across the USA, the *New York Times* came bundled with a dvd of the documentary “*Obsession: Radical Islam’s War Against the West*,” a controversial film on the threat of Islamic terrorism.
In: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/denise-dennis/new-york-times-includes-i_b_125317.html retrieved on 13.09.2008

- iii) **German Satire Magazine suggested an “Unbelievable Competition”** – A Muhammad look-a-like competition was slated to take place during the Frankfurt Book Fair in October 2008, and it offended and outraged people far beyond Germany. The competition was later called off following reported intervention by some Muslim circles.
In: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/zeitgeist/0,1518,583132,00.html> retrieved on 11.10.2008
- iv) **Swedish Artist Presented a Musical on Prophet Muhammad** – on November 22, 2008, Lars Vilks premiered a musical based on a filmed documentation of events following the same artist's publication of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)'s caricatures in 2007.
In: <http://www.thelocal.se/15878/20081123/> retrieved on 25.11.2008
- v) **Danish Muhammad Cartoonist Returns with New Work** – Kurt Westergaard, the Danish caricaturist forced into hiding after the publication of his depiction of the Prophet Muhammad in the newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* in 2005, was set to return with a new set of potentially controversial drawings. According to a Report in the *Copenhagen Post*, Westergaard was expected to have 26 illustrations in a new book that compiled the sardonic columns by Danish writer Lars Hedegaard for the *Berlingske Tidende* newspaper.
In: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/0,1518,589954,00.html> retrieved on 12.11.2008
- vi) **Netherlands: “Islam not a religion”** – Parliament member Martin Bosma of the PVV (Party for Freedom) said on November 13, 2008 in parliament that Islam should not be considered a religion. The member of Geert Wilders’ party made his statement in a debate about religious education, arguing that religion was an important subject which should be discussed in elementary school. He contended that the same did not hold for Islam, which he did not see as a religion.
In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2008/11/netherlands-islam-not-religion.html> retrieved on 15.11.2008
- vii) **Messianic Jewish Leader Said Islam was a Threat to the World** – Asher Intrater, one of the founders of the Jewish Messianic movement, and director of Revive Israel Ministries, an organization dedicated to revival in Israel, openly identified Islam as being a threat to the world. In an online article, said he contended, “Islamic Jihad is an international movement - coordinated, planned, and well-financed. Its goal is to destroy Western civilization, kill Christian missionaries, and destroy the State of Israel. It is deeply rooted in Islamic religious indoctrination. Terror is part of Jihad, and Jihad is part of Islam.”
In: <http://journalchretien.net/breve15264.html> retrieved on 06.12.2008
- viii) **Dutch Politician Presents Another Islam Film** – a young Iranian-born Dutchman Ehsan Jami produced a film about Islam titled “*An Interview with Muhammed*”. The 15-minute film showed Mr Jami interviewing the Prophet Muhammad, played by an actor wearing a Bedouin headdress, his face covered by a paper mask. The blasphemous contents of the film constituted an affront to Muslim sentiments around the world.
In: <http://www.radionetherlands.nl/currentaffairs/region/netherlands/081209-Islam-film> retrieved on 10.12.2008
- ix) **NJ Press Group President Called Islam “Internal” Threat to U.S.** – the president of the New Jersey Press Association wrote in an editorial that he believed Islam was an “internal” threat to the United States and seemed to support the exclusion of Muslims from American society. In his editorial, headlined “Keep the Muslims Out?” and published in the *Cape May County Herald*, Art Hall wrote: “The internal-external threat is like no other we have ever faced. It is from Islam. While Christianity preaches peace, the

Quran preaches conquest by force of arms... We were and are both a democratic and Christian nation in our fundamental structure. If we desire for America to remain thus, we must first recognize the current threats, and then develop the will to stand against those who are undermining them, those who detest what we cherish.”

In: <http://www.sunherald.com/prnewswire/story/1033418.html> retrieved on 24.12.2008

- x) **Controversial Muhammad Cartoon Goes on Sale in Denmark** – the Danish Press Freedom Society announced in April 2009 that it would start selling the Danish cartoon of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that caused an international uproar in 2006. The Society's chairman Lars Hedegaard told *The Associated Press* that some 1,000 printed copies of the cartoon that depicted Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) with a bomb-shaped turban were to be sold for about \$250 each. Each cartoon was signed by Danish artist Kurt Westergaard, who drew the cartoon in 2005 and gave permission for its reproduction. Hedegaard said, “All we are doing is starting a debate, We are using our freedom of speech. [But] We have not, and are not, breaking any laws”.
- In: <http://www.christianpost.com/Intl/Overseas/2009/04/controversial-muhammad-cartoon-goes-on-sale-in-denmark-11/> retrieved on 13.04.2009

- xi) **Korans 'burned in Russian prison'** – a migrants' organization in Russia said that Russian prison officials had been accused of burning copies of the Koran and assaulting Muslim prisoners. The People's League of Tajiks said the incidents happened at a jail in the Tambov region, south-east of Moscow. The prison officials had also, reportedly, destroyed a mosque set up by inmates.
- In: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8008802.stm> retrieved on 22.04.2009

- xii) **Wilders plans second anti-Islam film** – Rightwing MP Geert Wilders has told *De Telegraaf* newspaper that he was planning to make a follow-up to his controversial anti-Islam film, *Fitna*. The new piece, expected to be released in 2010, will deal with the negative effects of what Wilders called the advance of Islam in Western countries.
- In: <http://www.radionetherlands.nl/news/zijlijn/6260473/MP-plans-second-antiIslam-film> and http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2009/04/wilders_to_make_second_fitna_f.php retrieved on 18.04.2009

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

- i) **Muslims will be searched by sniffer dogs despite religious objections** - Questions have been raised over using sniffer dogs to search Muslim passengers at train stations following complaints that it is against their religion. Some Muslims had raised objections over being searched by the explosive-detecting animals, but British Transport Police have said they will continue to use the specially trained animals. Dogs are considered to be unclean or impure in Islamic teaching.
- In: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1029887/Muslims-searched-sniffer-dogs-despite-religious-objections-say-police.html> retrieved on 02.07.2008
- ii) **Islamofascism Week III: “Stop the Jihad on Campus”** – during the week of October 13-17, students on more than 100 US university campuses held events under the banner of “Stop the Jihad on Campus,” a campaign designed to make the university community aware of the support the Muslim Students Association, Students for Justice in Palestine and other leftist groups was providing to the jihadists.
- In: <http://frontpagemagazine.com/Articles/Read.aspx?GUID=B8C058A7-2423-4C6E-B15C-84A7ABEDEB09> retrieved on 16.08.2008

- iii) **Arab Student Brutally Murdered in Britain** – Mohammed Al-Majed, a 16-year-old Qatari student in a British seaside town, who died in London’s King’s College Hospital on August 24, 2008, was beaten to death by a gang of youths in what police believed was a racist attack. His roommate, Majd Al-Ghannamah, 19, who suffered a black eye, said the assailants chanted racist abuse during the attack.
In: <http://www.arabnews.com/?page=4§ion=0&article=113428&d=27&m=8&y=2008> retrieved on 27.08.2008
- iv) **Pig’s Head Race Attack** – A pig’s head was thrown through an Asian man’s front window in a shocking racist hate attack. A sprawl of racist phrases including “Bin Laden’s Servants” and “terrorist bombers”, were also spray painted across the wall of his home. Police say they were treating the “shocking” attacks as racially motivated. The victim had been living in Shotton, UK, for 18 years.
In: <http://www.hartlepoolmail.co.uk/news/Pig39s-head-race-attack.4452369.jp> retrieved on 06.09.2008
- v) **Fans Taunt Mido Again** – supporters of an English football team, Newcastle United harassed a Muslim player, Mido, Middlesbrough’s Egypt striker, on November 29, 2008 by briefly singing: “Mido, he’s got a bomb”, a song that sparked a debate last season about the line between terrace banter and racism.
In: http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/sport/football/premier_league/article5263360.ece retrieved on 03.12.2008
- vi) **Somalis’ Holy Trip Ends at Airport** – Sheikh Abdirahman Ahmed of Abubakar As-Saddique, a large mosque in the Cedar-Riverside area of Minneapolis, and the mosque’s youth coordinator, who did not want to give his name, were not allowed to board a flight at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, but were not told why. The youth coordinator said others in a group that planned to make the trip for hajj also were not allowed to board, but he did not know how many people were involved. The FBI would not comment on the airport incident, when approached.
In: http://www.startribune.com/35292979.html?elr=KArksDyycyUtyycyUiD3aPc:_Yyc:aUU retrieved on 03.12.2008
- vii) **Norwegian Prison Served Pork to Muslim Prisoners** – Muslim prisoner at Trondheim (Norway) prison had reported for discrimination against Muslim prisoners who were served pork without being told. Muslims reacted strongly when they discovered they had eaten pork. There are no prisons in Norway that offer halal-meat and the Muslim prisoners had reportedly been served pork several times without their knowledge.
In: http://www.aftenbladet.no/english/955033/Prison_served_pork_to_muslim_prisoners_%0A.html retrieved on 06.12.2008
- viii) **LEGO-Style Islamic Militant Figurine Angers Muslims** – A LEGO-style figurine had stirred up controversy among Muslims for its resemblance to an Islamic militant. The figure, created by Will Chapman of Redmond, Washington, wore a scarf headwrap and was carrying a pistol, assault rifle and grenades, and sold on his Web site, www.briksarms.com



In: <http://www.myfoxspringfield.com/myfox/pages/News/Detail?contentId=8004798&version=1&locale=EN-US&layoutCode=TSTY&pageId=3.3.1> retrieved on 06.12.2008

- ix) **Muslims Removed from Flight in USA over Security Concerns** – *the Atlanta Business Chronicle* reported that nine Muslim passengers were ordered to get off an *AirTran Airways Corp* on January 1, 2009 as other passengers heard them discussing the safety of the aircraft. Atif Irfan, 34-year-old, an anesthesiologist in Alexandria, Virginia, was removed from the plane together with seven family members, all native born Americans, and a friend of his. He told *The Washington Post* he believed the deported group were victims of racial profiling based on their appearances as most of them wore traditional Muslim attire, and were of South Asian descent. The nine passengers, including three children, were heading from Reagan National Airport in Washington D.C. to Orlando, Florida, for a religious retreat. The plane was emptied and airport and federal authorities re-screened passengers and baggage. Ninety-five passengers were allowed back on the plane, but the nine Muslim travelers were not and were questioned by authorities. Eventually, the FBI agents at the scene categorized the incident as a “misunderstanding”.
In: http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=100169 retrieved on 03.01.2009
- x) **Portuguese Cardinal Warns About Muslim Marriages** – The head of the Catholic Church in Portugal had advised Portuguese women to think twice before marrying a Muslim. Cardinal Jose Policarpo said in the comments broadcast widely on Portuguese media on January 14, 2009: “Think twice before marrying a Muslim, think very carefully...You can get into a whole lot of trouble, and not even Allah knows where it might end.” He further contended that it was “very difficult” to engage in discussion with Muslims.
In: <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2009/01/14/europe/EU-Portugal-Muslims.php> retrieved on 17.01.2009
- xi) **Paris: Muslim Students Attacked** – Three students at the Janson-de-Sailly school (16th arrondissement in Paris) were victims of an attack, on January 8, 2009 in front of their school. The Students, aged 15-17, of North-African origins, were beaten by youth who came to distribute leaflets for the Jewish Defense League (JDL), an extremist organization banned in the United States and Israel. The families of the victims lodged a complaint for an intentional attack of a racist character.
In: <http://islamieneurope.blogspot.com/2009/01/paris-muslim-students-attacked.html> retrieved on 17.01.2009
- xii) **British Muslim Soldier in New Race-Hate Row** – A British Muslim soldier claimed he was called a P*ki by a sergeant who throttled him and threatened to kill him. The serviceman, 29, was in Afghanistan for an undercover intelligence mission when the alleged race-hate incident took place. Other troops had to urge the sergeant to let go and the soldier has told relatives he feared he would die.
In: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/top-stories/2009/02/16/british-muslim-soldier-in-new-race-hate-row-exclusive-115875-21127340/> retrieved on 17.02.2009
- xiii) **Churches unite against Islamic school in Camden** – four Christian churches have joined in an unprecedented attack on the Islamic faith in an attempt to stop a Muslim school being built. Calling the religion an ideology driven by world domination, a submission to the Land and Environment Court on April 21 said a proposed school at Camden was a “beachhead” in Islamic takeover of southwestern Sydney, threatening the Australian way of life. The attack, co-signed by local heads of Baptist, Anglican, Presbyterian and the Evangelical Sisters of Mary churches, spearhead the Camden City Council's defence to a court challenge over its rejection of a development application for the Muslim school. It is significant to note that the line of argument adopted in the letter is a turnaround from previous claims that the council's ruling was on the grounds of traffic congestion.
In: <http://www.news.com.au/story/0,27574,25366957-421,00.html> retrieved on 25.04.2009

xiv) Violence against Muslims Increased in 2008 in Netherlands – Violence against Muslims in the Netherlands rose considerably in 2008. According to the reports on racism and extremism of the Leiden University and the Anne Frank Foundation, the number of violent incidents against Muslims rose to 82 in 2007, from 62 in the preceding year. The total number of racist attacks in 2008 was 187, according to report. The Anne Frank Foundation said anti-Muslim sentiment has grown "significantly" and public opinion about Muslims has become more negative.

In: <http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/73257/violence-against-muslims-increased-in-2008-in-netherlands.html> retrieved on 22.04.2009

xv) France: 80 Islamophobic acts in 2008 – The Association against Islamophobia in France (Le Collectif contre l'islamophobie en France, CCIF) announced on April 22, 2009 that it had recorded 80 Islamophobic acts in 2008, of which 59 were against people and 21 against property (mosques, cemeteries, societies). The CCIF said in a press conference that there was an increase in Islamophobic acts in 2008.

In: <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2009/04/france-80-islamophobic-acts-in-2008.html> retrieved on 25.04.2009

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B: ACTIVITIES OF THE OIC GENERAL SECRETARIAT

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

1. UN-OIC Cooperation on Dialogue and Combating Religious Intolerance

Pursuant to UN General Assembly Resolution 61/49 of December 4, the General Meeting of the Secretariats of the UN and the OIC, and their specialized bodies took place in Geneva on July 8-10, 2008. The second biennial meeting agreed, inter alia, to enhance the dialogue through signing a Memorandum of Understanding between the OIC and Alliance of Civilizations (AoC) during the Second AoC Annual Forum, held in Istanbul, on April 6-7, 2009.

The OIC also agreed to encourage those of its Member States that have not yet joined the AoC Group of Friends (GoF) to do so, and to request all the OIC Member States that are among the GoF to develop their National Plans for the advancement of the objectives of AoC. In addition, the OIC will request all of its Member States to expeditiously appoint AoC focal points.

The OIC and the AoC would seek opportunities to facilitate an interactive and constructive dialogue between all interested parties to respond to the recent upsurge in provocative and irresponsible activities under the pretext of the freedom of expression. Both parties agreed to pay particular attention to having a balanced approach between “responsibility and freedom”.

2. Third International Conference on the Muslim World and the West – Kuala Lumpur

The OIC Secretary General attended and addressed the 3rd International Conference on the Muslim world and the West: From Definition to Action held in Kuala Lumpur on June 09-10, 2008. The event that was organized by the Malaysian Foreign Ministry in co-operation with the Cordoba Initiative aimed at considering what could and must be done collectively to close the gap and establish accord between the Muslim world and the West. Representatives from the Muslim world and the West including governmental, non-governmental, business, academia, legal, media, and religious organizations attended the event. He also addressed a panel on “Preventing Emerging Muslim-West Crises” where he made the following recommendations towards tackling the issue of the growing gap between the Muslim world and the West:

a) An open and critical dialogue between stakeholders in the West and the Muslim world with strong commitment to address the root causes of misunderstandings and conflicts to reach a Historical Reconciliation Pact between Islam and Christianity was necessary. b) Western Governments should not shy away from publicly condemning Islamophobic incidents c) Quality and fair education based on shared values and principles of peace, human rights, tolerance etc be promoted. This may involve parents, teachers, educationists and communities and may take into consideration revision of the curricula and the textbooks. d) National legislation and international normative standards or instruments should be promoted to guard against the defamation of other’s values and faiths particularly in school curricula. e)

International and regional organizations should identify, document and analyze best practice approaches at various levels in support of dialogue among cultures and civilization. f) Communication and media have to play their role in order to avoid parochialism and contribute to the creation of conditions for intercultural dialogue. g) The dialogue on tolerance and peaceful cohabitation among diverse faiths has to be taken to the grassroots. h) Efforts should be put to reduce the digital divide between the two worlds and invest on development of human resources. Youth's active involvement is of particular importance to this end.

3. Astana Forum

The Conference of Foreign Ministers of Muslim and Western Countries 'Common World: Progress through Diversity' held on October 17, 2008 in Astana, Kazakhstan. The OIC General Secretariat was involved from the preparatory stages. The OIC Secretary General in his address to the conference shared his believe that it was only through acknowledging and celebrating diversity that both the Muslim world and the West could promote reciprocal knowledge of culture, religious and ethnic diversity that will help them build a framework for commonly shared values, intercultural competencies and foster dialogue aiming at attaining sustainable understanding, peace and harmony.

The OIC Secretary General emphasized that dialogue initiatives should propose a specific path and have a well-defined ultimate goal. He regretted that the OIC's position was wrongly interpreted by some Western quadrants, which have started a campaign against the OIC, and labeling it as anti-Christian and anti-Jewish. He expressed his firm conviction that a historic reconciliation between Islam and Christianity would go a long way in finding a common goal and peaceful coexistence between the West and the Muslim world.

The meeting adopted the following **Astana Declaration**:

We, the official representatives of the countries and international organizations of the Conference of "Common World: Progress through Diversity", held on 17th October 2008, in Astana

recognizing the importance of diversity at global and national levels, within civilizations and cultures, religions as well as the multiple identities of individuals,

welcoming efforts of international, regional and sub-regional organizations, fora and states, directed to supporting dialogue and achieving harmony between cultures, religions, beliefs, civilizations, and peoples for maintenance of sustainable progress and international peace, justice security and stability,

highlighting our common aim to preserve tolerance, dialogue and cooperation based on mutual trust and understanding, accentuation of the common values of various cultures and religions and beliefs,

recognizing that international relations should be guided by fundamental principles that underpin the corpus of human rights, democracy, the rule of law, equity, participation, non-discrimination at both national and international levels,

reaffirming that all human rights are universal, interdependent and interrelated,

reaffirming that democracy is a universal value based on the freely expressed will of people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems,

recognizing that globalization, while opening up new opportunities for socio-economic development, presents a challenge to cultural and religious identities of nations,

rejecting any form of tensions, based on religious, beliefs, cultural and civilizational differences and their use for fuelling hatred, xenophobia and confrontation,

reaffirming the pivotal role of education and culture for understanding, solidarity and social cohesion ensuring the inclusion of youth and the participation of civil society in various related activities,

underlining the importance of further cooperation between governments and citizens of countries in those parts of the world that are known as the Muslim World and the West in terms of strengthening dialogue and understanding on various levels,

being aware that responsible use of the freedom of expression and access to accurate and unbiased information can promote cross-cultural and inter-civilization relationships.

welcoming the Alliance of Civilizations and other existing initiatives and considering them as an effective mechanism for promoting further understanding and respect between cultures and civilizations.

1. *stress* the need to encourage permanent contacts and dialogue within and between Muslim and Western societies at political, social, cultural, inter-religious and other levels;
2. *agree* on the need to continue and enhance dialogue between relevant international, regional and sub-regional organizations, such as the United Nations the Arab League, the Council of Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Organization of American States, the Organization of Islamic Conference, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization;
3. *call* on all states to recognize that inter and intra-religious dialogue can be used to promote understanding between civilizations;
4. *underscore* the important role and the rights of women and the application of a gender perspective as a cross-cutting issue in the process of realizing equalities and right to development;
5. *call* on countries to take appropriate measures against acts of racial, ethnic, religious discrimination and violence committed on the basis of ethnic or religious dislike in accordance with the international law, international humanitarian law and human rights;
6. *reaffirming* that each country has the primary responsibility for its own development and recognition of national efforts should be complemented by supportive global programmes, measures and policies aimed at expanding development opportunities;
7. *confirm* that education and information are key factor to avoid stereotypes and any form of prejudice and misconceptions of different cultures and encourage actors in the political sphere, educational institutions and the media to promote intercultural dialogue;

8. **encourage** the studying and teaching of the history of civilizations and the development of cultural itineraries highlighting the cultural heritage of those civilizations;
9. **uphold** the youth meetings and exchange programs to promote cross-cultural and inter-civilization dialogue, peace and democratic participation among young people;
10. **encourage** media professionals with possibility to establish a group of journalists to act as advocates for promoting the inter-civilization dialogue; taking into account the recommendations already made by related forums such as the global inter-media dialogue and alliance of civilizations, including but not limited to journalist exchange;
11. **welcome** the Second Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, to be held in Istanbul on 2-3 April 2009 and initiative of the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz to convene the Madrid Conference for interfaith and intercultural dialogue;
12. express our appreciation for the hospitality and good arrangement and warm welcome made by the Government of Kazakhstan and its people.

4. Interfaith Dialogue

Among the major developments in this field were the initiatives of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud for initiating three world conferences on dialogue among religions held in Makkah on June 4-6, 2008, in Madrid on July 16-18, 2008, and at the United Nations in New York on November 12-23 2008 with the participation of many world leaders. The OIC Secretary General attended the conference in New York. The three events were successful in raising awareness of the dangers of the growing intolerance of religious faiths and highlighting cooperation, understanding and respect among diverse faiths, condemning any insult to the respective sacred symbols as well as incitement of hatred and intolerance based on religion.

5. Copenhagen Conference

The OIC Secretary General led the OIC delegation to the “Rabat Follow-up Conference on Fostering Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations” with the theme “Education for Intercultural Understanding and Dialogue”, held in Copenhagen, Denmark, on October 21-22, 2008. The OIC General Secretariat was a co-organizer of the conference along with Danish Centre for Culture and Dialogue, Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNESCO, ISESCO, ALECSO, UN AoC, Anna Lindth Foundation and Council of Europe. In his statement, the OIC Secretary General termed the initiative of the Danish government as a constructive step in light of the caricature crisis and would serve as confidence building measure.

The Secretary General met the Danish Foreign Minister, Mr. Per Stig Moller, in which they exchanged views inter-alia, on the ways and means of cooperation to foster dialogue and mutual understanding. He also met members of the Muslim Council of Denmark (MFR) in Copenhagen.

6. OIC-ODIHR NGOs Roundtable Meeting – Vienna

The OIC co-sponsored and participated in the 3rd round of the NGOs Assessment Meeting on Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims in OSCE Member States region focusing on youth and education. The Meeting was organized on 17 December 2008 by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), an affiliate organ to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), at the latter's headquarters in Vienna, Austria. Prior to the Assessment Meeting, the OSCE ODIHR in conjunction with Personal Representative of OSCE Chairman-in-Office on Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, organized two roundtable meetings that focused on reaching out to NGOs most active in the field with special emphasis on identifying the areas of concern and bringing about good practices and recommendations.

It was also recommended that the OIC enter into partnership with the OSCE in some concrete projects related to discrimination against Muslims as well as within the framework of the Alliance of Civilizations. The OIC delegation expressed the OIC's readiness to cooperate with the OSCE on the aforementioned issues. At the meeting, representatives of Muslim communities from the OSCE region voiced concern about rising anti-Muslim attitudes among majority youth populations in some participating States. They also emphasized the importance of education in addressing many challenges young Muslims continue to face such as the need to accommodate different identities, alienation and exclusion, under-achievement in school and discrimination based on religion.

7. OIC Inter-Institutional Forum on “Universal Shared Values” – Geneva

The OIC Secretary General delivered a speech at the OIC Inter-Institutional Forum titled “Universal Shared Values: Challenges and New Paradigms” in which he touched on a variety of issues related to human rights. The Forum was held in Geneva on December 19, 2008 to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The Secretary General emphasized that the UDHR constituted a powerful statement of common standards and shared values, an extension of the UN Charter and part of the international customary law. He added that human rights in Islam were firmly rooted in the equality of all mankind, transcending the considerations of place, color, language and social status. Islam had established an exemplary code for human rights, that conferred dignity and honor on all human beings and eliminated injustice, oppression and exploitation. He made it clear that the OIC was not looking for limitation or restrictions of freedom of expression beyond those set by Articles 19 and 20 of the ICCPR.

The OIC Secretary General also drew attention towards some of the developmental challenges that obstructed the implementation of the objectives of the UDHR, including the failure of the Human Rights Council in implementing its mandates and relevant resolutions for combating the systematic violations of basic rights of the Palestinian people during the last forty-five years. He called for a reevaluation of the past performances and highlighted the need for taking concrete measures to protect and promote human rights for all and combating new manifestations of racism, discrimination and xenophobia.

8. Meeting with the President of the European Parliament - Riyadh

The OIC delegation met with the President of the European Parliament, Mr. Hans-Gert Pottering and in Riyadh on December 23, 2008 at the latter's request. The discussions between the two delegations were held in a friendly and cordial atmosphere. The two sides exchanged views on cooperation between the OIC and the European Parliament aimed at strengthening inter-civilizational and interfaith dialogue. The OIC delegation urged European Parliament President to use his good offices help raise the dialogue at the appropriate political level and make it reach the grass root constituencies with a view to effectively addressing the rising trend of religious incitement and intolerance affecting the entire global community. The two sides underscored the need to raise awareness of the dangers of incitement and encourage initiatives that promoted tolerance and understanding. The two delegations agreed to enhance cooperation through regular interactions and exchanges.

9. Visit to Finland

The OIC Secretary General paid an official visit to Finland on October 6-8, 2008 during which he had meeting with the President of the Republic of Finland, Tarja Halonen. The meeting reviewed the follow-up action on the earlier meeting, which took place in Jeddah in October 2007. They agreed to continue cooperation in strengthening international efforts to combat intolerance and incitement of hatred against religions. During his visit to Finland, the Secretary-General also met the Speaker of the Finnish Parliament, Sauli Niinisto, and the Finnish Foreign Minister, Alexander Stubb. The Secretary General also delivered a lecture entitled: "Islam in Europe" within the framework of the forum organized by the Finnish Institute of International Relations. He also met the members of the Islamic Council of Finland and with the Tatar Community in Finland.

10. Visit to Netherlands

In the framework of strengthening the cooperation between the OIC and EU Member States with a view to identifying workable remedies to the looming challenges faced by both Europe and the Muslim World the OIC Secretary General visited Netherlands on December 15, 2008. During his visit to The Hague, he made several official contacts with the Dutch authorities. The meeting with the Foreign Minister Mr. Maxime Verhagen focused on the recent developments in the international arena as well as the OIC-EU and OIC-Netherlands relations. The Secretary General also met the Dutch State Secretary for Justice Ms. Nebahat Albayrak during his visit and attended a working lunch with the OIC Ambassadors based in The Hague.

**C: CoE Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 1605 (2008)³⁴
European Muslim communities confronted with extremism³⁵**

1. The attacks in Paris in 1995, New York in 2001, the subsequent spate of bombings which hit Madrid and Istanbul in 2003 and London in 2005, and the foiling of many other terrorist plots on European soil have shown the extent and gravity of the threat of terrorism from people who invoke Islamic fundamentalism as a source of inspiration. In addition to the shock caused by the attacks, it has been disconcerting for many to realise that some young Muslims who were born and brought up in Europe had been involved in their organisation and execution.

2. The Parliamentary Assembly warns against any confusion between Islam as a faith and Islamic fundamentalism as an ideology. Islam is the second religion in Europe and a constituent component of European societies. In some Council of Europe member states, it is traditionally the religion professed by the majority of the population; in others, it is the religion of the majority of immigrants and of citizens with an immigrant background, who represent a growing proportion of the population. On the other hand, Islamic fundamentalism is an extremist ideology with a political agenda, which promotes a model of society which is not compatible with human rights values and standards of democracy, and which, in its worst form, calls for the use of violence to achieve its aims.

3. It is regrettable but undeniable that, at the moment, Islamic fundamentalism as an ideology has proved to have a power of attraction for some individuals. European governments and European Muslim communities should work in close collaboration and synergy to neutralise this power of attraction and prevent it from escalating into terrorism.

4. The Assembly congratulates those Muslim leaders, opinion-makers and organisations who have firmly and unequivocally condemned terrorism inspired by Islamic fundamentalism as well as other extremist manifestations, such as the hate speech employed by some official or self-appointed imams or other Muslim personalities. Similarly, the Assembly commends the efforts of Muslim organisations to highlight the compatibility between Islam as a religion and democratic and human rights values, as well as their work with groups that are more at risk of radicalisation, such as young people and prison detainees.

5. In parallel to these efforts, European governments bear a special responsibility to address the root causes which create a fertile ground for extremism, such as poverty, discrimination and social exclusion; to ensure full respect for the freedoms of thought, speech and religion, as laid down in the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5); and to contribute to a climate in which all religious faiths, or the absence of any faith, are equally respected. In this regard, Council of Europe member states should continue to be vigilant in their work to prevent and combat the phenomenon of Islamophobia.

³⁴ Assembly debate on 15 April 2008 (13th Sitting) (see Doc. 11540, report of the Political Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Mr João Bosco Mota Amaral; Doc. 11575, opinion of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population, rapporteur: Mr Hakki Keskin; Doc. 11570, opinion of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education, rapporteur: Mr Mehmet Tekelioğlu; and Doc. 11569, opinion of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, rapporteur: Mrs Gisela Wurm). Text adopted by the Assembly on 15 April 2008 (13th Sitting).

³⁵ The Resolution is available at:

<http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta08/ERES1605.htm>

6. Moreover, Council of Europe member states should take a range of positive steps to enable immigrants and citizens of immigrant descent, including Muslim communities, to integrate into society through non-discriminatory access to employment, education, vocational training, housing and public services. The engagement and active participation of immigrants and people with an immigrant background in society also need encouragement and support from the whole of society, which must do more to accommodate diversity and remove barriers to integration.

7. Likewise, as already recommended by the Assembly, European governments, in their aim of creating a citizenship of inclusiveness and participation, should remedy the current limited capacity of immigrants and citizens from an immigrant background to play an active role in public and political life. In the long term, this state of affairs, which is due both to legislative and social constraints, cannot but reinforce the grievances and sense of injustice of a part of the population.

8. The Assembly welcomes the initiative taken by the governments of two member states – Spain and Turkey – to create the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and its endorsement by the United Nations Secretary-General, who has designated former Portuguese President Jorge Sampaio as its High Representative. The Assembly also expresses support for the activities so far undertaken in this context.

9. In light of the above, the Assembly calls on the member states of the Council of Europe to:

9.1. act strongly against discrimination in all areas;

9.2. condemn and combat Islamophobia;

9.3. act resolutely against hate speech and all other forms of behaviour which run counter to core human rights and democratic values, even when their authors seek to justify them on religious grounds;

9.4. combat all forms of discrimination and violence (particularly forced marriages, sexual mutilation of women and so-called “honour crimes”) which, in the name of misinterpreted religious texts or customs, violate the fundamental rights of women and equality between women and men;

9.5. combat all forms of cultural or religious relativism which justify discriminatory practices and human rights violations, particularly those directed at women or other groups in society;

9.6. ensure the strictest compliance with human rights and the rule of law in the enforcement of anti-terrorist measures;

9.7. promote the social cohesion, integration, political and civic participation of immigrants and citizens with an immigrant background, both men and women, in particular by:

9.7.1. taking a range of positive steps to enable immigrants and people with an immigrant background to integrate into society through fair and non-discriminatory access to employment, education, vocational training, housing in mixed areas and public services, and eventually via democratic participation through citizenship;

9.7.2. developing specific activities to encourage integration and tolerance among young people;

9.7.3. signing and ratifying the European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers (ETS No. 93);

9.7.4. granting lawfully-residing immigrants the right to vote and to be elected, at least in local and regional elections, so as to have an impact on public administration and local government;

9.7.5. signing and ratifying the Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level (ETS No. 144);

- 9.7.6. encouraging the participation of people with an immigrant background in political parties, trade unions and non-governmental organisations;
- 9.7.7. taking all the necessary measures to eliminate the inequality of opportunity faced by immigrants, including unemployment and inadequate education;
- 9.7.8. removing unnecessary legal or administrative obstacles to the construction of a sufficient number of appropriate places of worship for the practice of Islam;
- 9.7.9. ensuring that school textbooks do not portray Islam as a hostile or threatening religion;
- 9.8. promote and support activities intended to improve the standing and role of Muslim women in Europe and overcome stereotypes confining them to subordinate and passive roles, for example, through appropriate teaching in schools and awareness-raising campaigns in the media;
- 9.9. monitor the role played by foreign states in the financing of mosques and appointment of imams, in order to ensure that these actions are not used to promote extremist views;
- 9.10. support the establishment of courses, if possible at university level, to train imams locally;
- 9.11. encourage a public and inclusive debate concerning the consequences of their foreign policy on the phenomenon of radicalisation;
- 9.12. encourage informative projects about Islam's contribution to western societies in order to overcome stereotypes on Islam.

10. The Assembly calls on leaders and opinion-makers to act responsibly to avoid encouraging discrimination and Islamophobia.

11. Furthermore, the Assembly calls on European Muslim organisations, leaders and opinion-makers to:

- 11.1. act with a high sense of responsibility in their public statements and condemn terrorism and extremism unequivocally, being aware of their influence on Muslim communities;
- 11.2. encourage Muslims to fully participate in society without questioning the secular character of the society and the institutions of the country where they live;
- 11.3. formally endorse the European Convention on Human Rights;
- 11.4. promote the transmission of core European values within Muslim communities, and among young people in particular, by highlighting their compatibility with the Muslim faith;
- 11.5. ensure the teaching of core European values in Muslim faith schools;
- 11.6. encourage young European Muslims to become imams;
- 11.7. set up projects aimed at reducing the risk of radicalisation among the young generation and in prisons, if appropriate in co-operation with other organisations, or with local or other authorities;
- 11.8. encourage the promotion of fair coverage of Muslim reality and views in the media and ensure that the voice of moderate Muslims is also reported;
- 11.9. develop ethical guidelines to combat Islamophobia in the media and in favour of cultural tolerance and understanding, in co-operation with appropriate media organisations;
- 11.10. encourage the development of a secular intelligentsia.

*Prepared by:
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