



## ISLAMOPHOBIA AND MUSLIM WORLD

*Dr. Hafiz Hammad Uddin*  
*Ph.D in International Relations*  
*Federal Urdu University of Arts, Sciences & Technology*  
*Karachi – Pakistan*  
[drhafizhammaduddin@fuuast.edu.pk](mailto:drhafizhammaduddin@fuuast.edu.pk)

*Dr. Abdur Rehman Yousuf Khan*  
*Assistant Professor*  
*Department of Arabic*  
*Federal Urdu University of Arts, Sciences & Technology*  
*Karachi – Pakistan*  
[dr.arykhan@fuuast.edu.pk](mailto:dr.arykhan@fuuast.edu.pk)

*Dr. Abdul Fareed Brohi*  
*Assistant Professor*  
*International Islamic University*  
*Islamabad – Pakistan*  
[abdul.fareed@iiu.edu.pk](mailto:abdul.fareed@iiu.edu.pk)

### **Abstract**

*A generalisation about Islam as the root cause of recent acts of terror has gained traction in the media. This has resulted in Islamophobia, the fear and suspicion of Muslims, in several states. There is a correlation between Islamophobia and anti-Muslim bigotry and the creation of anti-Islamic institutions and policies. The belief that Islam is a subpar faith that poses a danger to society's established norms is at the root of much prejudice. Sociological and psychological lenses can be used to examine the roots and manifestations of Islamophobia. Due to the media's ability to provide opposing viewpoints, it has been used as a lens through which Islamophobia may be examined. It is because to them that Islamophobic sentiments begin to surface (latent functions). Islamophobia, like all types of racism, has evolved over time and across cultures. In contrast, the Muslim world is exerting greater effort and brainstorming innovative strategies to combat the alarming rise of Islamophobia, particularly in the West. The research examines the varied manifestations of Islamophobia in the present day and the responses of the Muslim world to its spread.*



**Keywords:** Islamophobia, Islam, Muslim World, Fear.

## **Introduction**

Islamophobia, a term used often in the media as well as in political and intellectual circles, has emerged as a hot topic of discussion throughout the globe. The term "Islamophobia" derives from the Greek word meaning "fear of Islam" (phobos). Afraid of Muslims or Islam is known as "Islamophobia," which is a form of racism. It's a catch-all word for a wide range of ideas, talks, and acts whose conceptual foundation is an irrational fear of Islam. Since research in this area has not yet produced a legally binding international treaty, the notion cannot be described legally. There are also people that disagree with this way of thinking. However, the concept has gained widespread acceptability because it has been incorporated into the work of major international organisations including the United Nations, the Organization for Islamic Cooperation, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe. Aggression, bigotry, and the construction of others are all symptoms of Islamophobia, as are acts of discrimination and the normalisation of violence based on false assumptions about Islam and Muslims. Islam's position in the past as a source of dread in building Western Christian identity enables the West to regard Islam and Muslims with biases stemming from their collective psyche. Negative preconceptions make it impossible to examine Islam as a religion, a civilisation, and a culture without limiting bias. Moreover, Islam and Muslims - sometimes purposely and especially for political objectives - are presented side by side with violence and terrorism. With a few notable exceptions, Western scholars struggle to approach Islam and Muslims from a purely scientific standpoint. Here is what Rumi, a 13th-century Persian universal philosopher, had to say about it: "Negative bias obscures learning. While the unprejudiced method converts the illiterate into a scholar, the biased perspective spoils and falsifies the knowledge." Due to globalisation, the Islamophobic ramifications of such a conception - have not been restricted to the West but expanded to Africa and South-East Asia, giving rise to a radicalization of adherents of other religions against Muslims. Furthermore, governments, ostensibly in the name of combating terrorism, erect barriers to the full realisation of the human rights of Muslims who constitute a minority in their own countries.

## **Concept of Islamophobia**

After the British race relations, NGO Runnymede Trust published their study "Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All" in 1997, and the topic of Islamophobia entered the mainstream of Western conversation. Since then, and notably since 2001 (Zquete 2008), it has seen widespread application in the media, among ordinary individuals, and among

---



nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), particularly in Britain, France, and the United States. Despite Islamophobia's increasing popularity, its precise definition is still debated. Some authors use Islamophobia but don't define the term (Bunzl 2007; Cole 2009). Some people try to describe it using terms that are too broad or general. Social anxiety about Muslim cultures and Islam is what Gottschalk and Greenberg (2008) name it. Geisser (2003) talks about how some people are "rejecting the religious referent"—that is, Islam—as a way to distinguish between "Us" and "Them." Specific definitions of Islamophobia are not without some room for interpretation. To paraphrase Lee et al. (2009), Islamophobia is "fear of the Islamic faith and Muslims." In a similar vein, "the terror or dread of Islam or Muslims" is what comes to mind for Abbas (2004). According to Zquete (2008) and Semati (2010), Islamophobia is characterised by a view of an essentialized Islam as incompatible with Euro-American values.

According to one of the most comprehensive definitions, offered by Stolz (2005), "Rejecting Islam, Muslim communities, and individual Muslims due to biases and generalisations about their faith is what we mean when we talk about Islamophobia. Emotional, intellectual, evaluative, and even behavioural components (such as prejudice and aggression) are possible." Both Lee et al. and Abbas agree that Islamophobia is driven solely by the irrational dread of Islam or Muslims. Both Zquete and Semati believe that it is exclusive to Islam and not to Muslims in general and that it entails more than dread or possibly eliminates fear. For Stolz, a rejection of Islam or Muslims involves more than just abstract disapproval of the religion. Some analysts have suggested not using the term Islamophobia at all due to its perceived lack of precision or political weight. Many authors have pointed out its flaws, including its indiscriminate usage (Zquete 2008), its implication of dread of Islam as a creed and the "real" problem is unfavourable stereotyping of Muslims as a people and its potential to stigmatise any critiques of Islam. Because "the phrase has come to be employed in this unduly wide fashion" and is "very polemical," employing it as an analytical term is "a bit problematic," as John Bowen (2005) notes. Meanwhile, Islamophobia has established itself in several institutional settings. It's not only a political tool; it's also an attempt to put a name to a social phenomenon: the fact that Islam and Muslims have become targets of prejudice and discrimination in modern liberal democracies. "to restrict the social scientific community of particular vocabulary, or of certain uses of popularly recognised phrases, is sure to produce confusion and also to limit the value of social science as a method of apprehending the world," argues Gerring (2001). In light of these considerations, it is crucial that the notion of Islamophobia be made accessible to social scientists and political actors.

Using the literature on idea formation (Goertz, 2006), I have recently developed a definition of Islamophobia (Bleich, 2011) that may be used in social science research. My

---



argument is that Islamophobia is best characterised as a generalised hostility toward Islam and Muslims. Despite the fact that not every criticism is Islamophobia, phrases like indiscriminate- or cognates like undifferentiated or un-nuanced- encompass occasions where unfavourable judgements are attributed to all or most Muslims or components of Islam. Like homophobia and xenophobia, Islamophobia refers to a more generalised feeling of hostility toward a certain community or religion. Looking at it this way, Islamophobia is similar to other forms of bigotry such as racism, sexism, and anti-Semitism. Islamophobia can encompass a wide range of negative attitudes and feelings, including aversion, jealousy, suspicion, scorn, anxiety, rejection, contempt, fear, disgust, rage, and hostility, to name a few. Last but not least, aimed at Islam or Muslims might mean that either the religion itself or its adherents are the intended victims (or whose ancestors have followed it, or who are believed to follow it). This acknowledges the complex nature of Islamophobia and the ways in which Islam and Muslims are perceived to be interwoven.

### **Different Looks of Islamophobia**

#### ***Islamophobia as a Type of Racism in the Light of World History***

Islamophobia, according to the heterarchical worldview assumed here, may be traced back to the 15th-century establishment of a Christian-centered theological hierarchy that has made Islam appear subaltern and less essential. What happened in 1492 is essential to comprehending modern society. Christians under the Spanish Monarchy recaptured Muslim territory and expelled Jews and Arabs from the Iberian Peninsula in 1492. At the same time, they "discovered" the Americas and started settling the native people there. Arabs and Jews who were still living on the Iberian Peninsula were forced to become Christians. At the time, these "Christianized" groups were called "Marranos" for Jews who had become Christians and "Moriscos" for Muslims who had become Christians. The Moriscos were persecuted in the Iberian Peninsula until they were finally kicked out in 1609 (Perceval, 1997), and native and African people in the Americas were forced into slavery (Dussel 1994). These external and internal conquered areas and peoples established a capitalist division of labour between core and periphery that overlapped with an ethnic/racial division of labour between Western and non-Western. They also made up the projected internal and external frontiers of Europe. This is due to the fact that those of European heritage are placed higher in the worldwide racial and ethnic hierarchy than those of other backgrounds. Jews and Arabs were deemed to be the "Others" within Europe, while indigenous people were deemed to be "Others" beyond Europe (Mignolo 2000).



One's religious beliefs were one of the first indicators of "otherness" in the "Colonial/Patriarchal Modern/Westernized Christian-Centric Capitalist World-System." Jew- and Arab hatred was rampant, while locals were thought of as "people without faith" (Maldonado-Torres 2006). After the two key events of 1492, a global racial/ethnic hierarchy emerged, with "those without religion," or "people without God," at the bottom. While those "with the wrong religion," or "the wrong God," were further down the totem pole. The Crusades kicked off a lengthy era of imperial conflict in the Mediterranean, of which Christian Spain's fight against Islam was a part. Walter Mignolo (2000) calls the conflict between Christians and Muslims the "imperial difference," while the conflict between the Spanish and Indigenous peoples in the Americas after 1492 represents the "colonial difference." In this article, we shall refer to the "imperial difference" that emerged between European and non-European empires as the byproduct of the "imperial connection" between these two sets of rulers after 1492. We shall refer to the "colonial connection" between Europeans and non-Europeans as the "colonial difference." Due to their belief in the virtue of a "purity of blood," Christians in Spain expelled Arabs and Jews by force. The term "purity of blood" was not used as an insult, but rather as a method of authority, to establish a population's religious ancestry. When extended to indigenous peoples in the Americas, however, the notion of "purity of blood" takes on its full racist connotations.

Since the Spanish colonial conquest of the Americas in the 16th century, the Dutch colonisation of Indonesia in the 17th century, the British colonisation of India in the 18th century, the British and French colonisation of the Middle East in the 19th century, and the fall of the Ottoman Empire in the 20th century), the relationship between European and Islamic empires has shifted from an "imperial relation" to a "colonial relation." This marked a significant change away from demonising non-Christian religions like Judaism, Islam, etc., and toward demonising the individuals who practised them. For example, Muslims and Jews became Semites, which means they were seen as a lower race than Europeans. This change in the way people talked was at the heart of how religion was made to seem less important and how non-European people who practised those religions were treated badly because of their race. The Christian-centered global religious hierarchy and the Eurocentric global racial/ethnic hierarchy became more and more mixed up, and there was less and less of a difference between practising a religion other than Christianity and being seen as a lesser person because of your race.

### ***Islamophobia in the guise of cultural racism***

Racist discourses have changed over the last 60 years. In the late world system, cultural racism dominated over biological racism (Grosfoguel 2003). The historical and political

---



conditions for the shift from biological to cultural racism arose with the defeat of Nazi Germany, anti-colonial activities, and civil rights campaigns of colonial minorities. White world-system elites didn't give up racism. They altered "race's" definitions and discourses in response to colonial people's struggles. Cultural racism doesn't mention "race." It emphasises a group's cultural inferiority. It's usually about a group's inferior habits, beliefs, conduct, or ideals. Through a process of cultural essentialization, racism treats the culture of a racially oppressed group as though it were a given. There is no way to change the past. New racist cultural discourses are dominated by religious tenets. Religious beliefs and practices are often singled out in today's negative generalisations about "barbarian," "uncivilised," "primitive," "savage," "authoritarian," "underdeveloped," and "terrorist" individuals. Europeans, Americans, and Israelis deflect charges of racism by focusing on the faith of their "others." Examining the vocabulary of the dominant group reveals that its tropes are recycled from older biologically racist discourses and that its "usual suspects" are the former colonial victims of Western Empires. We can only comprehend the link between Islamophobia and racism now by considering long-term historical continuities and the current hegemony of cultural racism. It's hard to separate Islamophobia from non-European racism. Islamophobia and cultural racism intersect. In the "modern/colonial capitalist/patriarchal world system," whites associate Muslims with colonial subjects of Western empires. This relates Islamophobia to colonial racism that is still present today, especially in cities.

After civil rights and independence, Islamophobia has been the most common racist cultural discourse against Arabs used on a global scale. The events of 9/11 made racism against Arabs worse by causing Islamophobic hysteria around the world, especially among the most powerful people in the US and Israel. This is not surprising, since the US and Israel had been calling Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims in general terrorists for decades before 9/11. (Said 1979; 1981). That horrible day in September 2001 has nothing to do with US foreign policy. In the 1980s, as part of the Cold War, the United States funded, assisted, and established a global network of Islamic fundamentalist terrorist groups known at the time as "Freedom Fighters." On September 11th, these so-called "Freedom Fighters" went in search of them again (Johnson 2006). The United States provided assistance to Osama bin Ladin and Al Qaeda in the 1980s as they plotted and carried out attacks against the Soviet Union. It was all a part of the CIA's global/imperial plot against the USSR. However, examining US foreign policy over the past half-century requires more effort than just blaming Arabs and resorting to racist, Islamophobic arguments. U.S. elites falsely accused Saddam Hussein of having links to Al Qaeda to justify a long-planned war against Iraq, despite the fact that Hussein had been a faithful US friend and had conducted a CIA-backed dirty war against Iran in the 1980s to achieve US imperial and global ambitions (Risen 2006). While just around a fifth of Muslims, Arabs are widely misperceived as "the



majority of Muslims in the world" in many Western nations. It's a warning indication that something is awry. This relates to the West's global/imperialist ambitions to secure a monopoly on Middle Eastern oil production for its own benefit, and the Arabs' resistance to these intentions. (Said 1981). Most Islamophobia in the West comes from racism against Arabs. This is not a coincidence. Even South Asian and African Muslims who live in the West feel the heat of racism against Arabs, especially in the United States (Salaita 2006).

### ***Islamophobia in the form of Orientalism***

"Patriarchal and sexist abuse of women" is one of the culturally racist things that people say about Muslims today. As part of the idea that Islamic people are less advanced than people in the West, the way men treat women is often used as proof that they have "uncivilised" and "violent" values and behaviours. It's funny to hear Christian conservative fundamentalists and Western patriarchalists talk about Islam as if they were feminists. George W. Bush's main reason for going into Afghanistan was that brown men were hurting brown women and they needed to be saved. When you consider that, during its eight years in office, the Bush Administration actively defended Christian patriarchal fundamentalism, was opposed to abortion and was against women's civil and social rights, and then used women's rights as an excuse to invade Afghanistan, the hypocrisy of the argument becomes obvious. The idea that "White men are the saviours of women of colour from the patriarchal abuses of men of colour" has been around since colonial times. It has been used in the past to hide the real reasons why White men colonised the rest of the world. We now know that the Bush administration invaded Afghanistan and the Obama government is still there because it's near oil and gas in South Asia. After the invasion, foreign oil and gas firms were allowed to develop pipelines through Afghanistan (Rashid 2001). Muslim barbarians need to be civilised by the West in order to cover up global/imperial military and economic goals.

Islam's patriarchal colonisation is not unique. Christian (Catholic and Protestant) and Jewish men mistreat women similarly. As with Jewish and Muslim scriptures, Christian texts contain patriarchal and sexist ideas. Press portrays Islam as sexist and patriarchal, whereas Judaism and Christianity in the West subjugate women patriarchally. Islam was the first faith to recognise women's divorce rights more than 1,000 years ago. Catholic Church and many nations still don't recognise women's divorce rights. We say this not to excuse patriarchal atrocities by certain Muslim men, but to contest the stereotype that only Muslim men mistreat women globally. False, illogical, Islamophobic argument. It serves Western global/imperial designs. Thus, today's world is a confrontation between fundamentalism and patriarchies (Ali, 2002). Bush administration endorsed Christian fundamentalist views that the "Islamic enemy" was part of the crusades, while Islamic

---



extremists employ similar rhetoric (Ibid). The former promotes a Western-style of patriarchy with the Christian monogamist family at its centre, while the latter defends a non-Western variant of patriarchy with polygamy for males (not for women). Islamic feminists claim that patriarchal aspects of Islam reveal patriarchy's colonisation of Islam. (Mernisi 1987). Throughout Islam's history, mankind hijacked the original sacred scriptures.

Jewish and Christian holy writings are similar. In these global religions, patriarchal scriptural interpretations dominated. There is no single "Patriarchy" in the world today, but several male-dominant regimes. The global patriarchy in Western Christianity. In peripheral portions of the world system, non-Western forms of patriarchy coexisted with the West, and the West was involved in colonial/imperial endeavours. Assuming patriarchy, a system of gender dominance is unknown to the West and prevalent in Islam is a racist 18th-century Orientalist misunderstanding of Islam. Christian patriarchy, militarism and capitalism spread from Europe. Orientalists have racist, exotic, essentialist views of Islam (Said 1979). Three hundred years of Occidentalism (West dominance) preceded 18th-century Orientalism. (Mignolo 2000). Occidentalism makes Orientalism possible historically and politically.

### ***Epistemic racism in the form of Islamophobia***

Occidentalism produced Western epistemic privilege and hegemonic identity politics to assess and produce knowledge about "Others." Rene Descartes' 17th-century geopolitics of knowledge replaces God as the foundation of knowledge. Descartes' ego-cogito was preceded by 150 years of ego-conquirus. Descartes' God-eye gave Westerners Christian God's attributes (the gender here is not accidental). A planet-conquering Imperial Being could achieve this.

Western/Christian critical thinkers are better than Muslims. Western epistemology allows the West to perceive Islam as inferior and static. Racism intellectualises Islam. Islamophobia is both racist and epistemologically problematic. Epistemic racism lets the West disregard Islamic global/imperial criticism. Non-Western philosophy is "primitive," "barbarian," "uncivilised," and "backward." Epistemic racism prevents intercultural communication and gives the West the power to decide what is best for Muslims. Islamophobia manifests itself in the worldwide fight against terrorism, the global economy, the labour market, education, public discourse, and the epistemological debate over the purposes of the world. These themes developed their own "identity politics" in opposition to the prevailing "identity politics" that emphasised Christian and Western aesthetics, spiritualities, traditions, knowledge, and cosmologies. It is a racial practise that minimises

---



their humanity. Identitarian affirmation has reached its limit if it results in fundamentalist declarations that reverse the binary categories of the dominant "Western" Male Eurocentric racist and sexist intellectual tradition. The basic issue with hegemonic Western racism is that it elevates certain people into the superior category while degrading others on the basis of culture or biology. (Grosfoguel, 2003) Some Islamic and Afrocentric fundamentalists subscribe into the dominant fundamentalist Eurocentric discourses that only the European heritage is fundamentally democratic, to the detriment of the non-Western world (which are distinct from Western liberal democracies). This is done by fundamentalists in the Third World who support monarchical, authoritarian, and/or dictatorial forms of political power instead of rejecting democracy because they accept the fallacious assumption of Eurocentric fundamentalism that the only democratic tradition is the Western one. Both "Third Worldist" fanaticism and Eurocentrism think that "democracy" is necessarily "Western" and that "non-democratic" forms are inevitably "non-Western." That is Eurocentrism with its wheels on backwards. The idea of "epistemic racism" serves as a crucial foundation for modern arguments regarding political Islam, democracy, and the "War on Terror." For essentialists, the "West" is synonymous with "reason" and "philosophy," while the "rest" represents "irrational" thought.

### **Countering Islamophobia in Muslim World**

The Islamic Group at the UN in New York held a series of events on March 17 to highlight the efforts of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to get March 15 declared annually as an international day to oppose Islamophobia. Dr Yousef bin Ahmed Al-Othaimeen, the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), urged all UN members and other international and regional organisations to back the declaration of March 15 as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia. During this time, he said, the worldwide community may reaffirm its dedication to combating anti-Muslim prejudice and religious discrimination while also promoting principles like tolerance, understanding, inter-faith peace, and solidarity. On the day when New Zealanders and the world pause to remember the terrorist attack in Christchurch on 15 March 2019, Al Othaimeen delivered this statement.

The former Secretary-General of the OIC released his book that year with the subtitle "Islamophobia from conflict to cooperation: the next mission." This book details the correspondence that took place between Muslim and Western powers as the crisis escalated. The former Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) defended the OIC's focus on fighting religious intolerance, faith-based discrimination, and Islamophobia as stemming from a desire to maintain peace and security across the world. The argument starts with the idea that these worries might

---



eventually lead to a global conflict because of the mutual animosity they inspire among individuals. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has maintained a resolution for combatting "defamation of faiths" since 1999, demonstrating its growing concern about the rise of new types of intolerance and hatred toward Islam and Muslims across the world. The early nature of the submission of the first draught resolution demonstrates an understanding of the significance of the problem and an ability to accurately foresee its growth. The title of the proposed resolution was changed from "defamation of Islam" to "defamation of religions" to send a more inclusive message and show respect for all faiths. When the Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) put out a document in 2001 urging Member States to "give appropriate protection against any human rights violations stemming from defamation of faiths," western countries went against the general agreement and forced a vote on the resolution. Since then, it's been signed and ratified on and off until 2010.

You might approach the problem of religious discrimination and intolerance from two different angles. The first, advocated for by Muslim nations, seeks to criminalise hate speech and incitement to hate by doing things like criminalising insults to religions and their adherents. This is in line with Articles 19 and 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and with what European nations already do in cases of anti-Semitism, Holocaust denial, Nazism promotion, etc. The second was a Western-led initiative. Its purpose was to protect people's rights to free speech, free assembly, and freedom of religion or belief. It has been the position of Muslim countries that religiously offensive speech may be prevented by imposing limitations on free speech that are backed by law enforcement. Those in the West claim such legislation is incompatible with human rights, yet, especially freedom of expression, and won't decrease religious intolerance and prejudice. Theoretical and legal considerations led to a critical stance on defaming religions. In 2006, the rapporteurs on religious freedom and racism said criminalising religious contempt would foster intolerance. 2009's freedom of expression and regional rapporteurs contested defaming faiths. They stated that it breaches the legal definition of defamation, which only applies to an individual's reputation, and that free speech cannot be restricted to defend institutions, ideas, or religious conceptions.

Despite divisions, support for the "combating defamation of faiths" draught resolution remained stable from 2001-2007. After the US joined the HRC and opposed it, support dropped. Three votes passed the 2010 resolution. This resolution's impassioned and acrimonious discussion throughout the years highlighted Islamophobia and religious discrimination. To salvage the situation and make progress, the OIC created a human rights resolution.



### ***The Istanbul Process and Resolution 16/18***

In light of Western nations' legal and conceptual hostility to defamation of religions and the rise of Islamophobia, the OIC sought a new framework to seek worldwide support and acceptability for fighting this hazardous problem. This new perspective was presented during the third Alliance of Civilizations meeting in Rio de Janeiro in May 2010. The OIC presented a paper on combatting Islamophobia to an OECD forum. First worldwide forum on Islamophobia. The OIC again raised Islamophobia at a 2010 religious tolerance meeting in Kazakhstan.

The then-Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) spoke at the Human Rights Council's 15th Session and laid forth an eight-point plan for fostering a society free from religiously motivated bigotry, prejudice, and violence. As a result of these events and diplomatic efforts, the OIC Member States and the Western bloc (led by the UK and USA) were able to reach an agreement on Resolution 16/18, which brought their respective perspectives into harmony. It was agreed upon by all parties, and the outcome was hailed as a "multilateralist triumph." It provides a detailed plan of action that, if implemented, will lessen religious prejudice, bigotry, and other forms of intolerance. Since the matter was first brought up around 50 years ago, resolutions 16/18 and 66/167 of the General Assembly are considered the two most important resolutions on intolerance and religious discrimination. When it comes to international efforts to combat religious intolerance and discrimination, the OIC considers resolution 16/18 to be a watershed moment. To ensure and speed up countries' adherence to the resolution's Plan of Action, the Istanbul Process was established. After this resolution was passed and the Istanbul Process was initiated, the OIC came under fire, especially from right-wing organisations that claimed it was imposing an Islamic perspective on the concept of fighting intolerance by stifling free speech in order to prevent incitement based on religion or belief.

In June 2011, the OIC initiated the Istanbul Process with the US, EU, and other countries. Since then, five Istanbul Process meetings have been conducted, including in Washington, London, Geneva, Doha, and Jeddah (June 2015). Some delegates at the OIC-sponsored Geneva meeting thought resolution 16/18 jeopardised the Istanbul Process. Due to the number of civil society organisations and participants in Doha, the resolution and its implementation problems were not given adequate attention. On 3 and 4 June 2015, the OIC held its 5th meeting in Jeddah to examine and analyse resolution 16/18's implementation. UN officials, academics, independent specialists, jurists, NGOs, and civil society representatives attended. The conference recognised resolution 16/18 as a key UN success in preventing incitement to hatred and violence, discrimination, and stigmatisation based on religion and belief, and urged everyone to preserve this instrument's vast



consensus. Discussions centred on a balanced and thorough implementation of the resolution, notably paragraph (5-f) on criminalising religious incitement to violence. Attacking and distorting religious rites and symbols undermines religious freedom.

Resolution 16/18 is divided into three parts. Muslim nations consider the resolution historic, but not effectively implemented. They are concerned about the resolution's use of religious freedom and minority rights against Muslim nations. Western governments and human rights groups feel the resolution and Istanbul Process are enough and no more institutions are needed. The result indicates a global consensus that must be maintained by preserving the Istanbul Process and avoiding Islamophobia and religious defamation. The third category includes right-wing political groups and secularists who oppose the resolution as an attempt to curtail free expression.

### **Recommendations**

Given these problems, the best alternative may be for the international community to maintain the efforts to counter Islamophobia in the Muslim world alive while choosing between insisting on its interpretation or focusing on its complete and successful execution. We suggest the following:

- Evaluation of the Istanbul Process' agenda, working method, character, and degree of involvement; ideas for strengthening the process; discussion of changing the process into a formal mechanism; and complete execution of all resolution paragraphs, including the incitement paragraph.
- IPHRC may send delegates to Istanbul Process meetings, give legal support to OIC member states in compiling reports and implementing resolution 16/18 responsibilities, and conduct related research. IPHRC may receive financing to assist it fulfil its mission.
- The IPHRC has organised private panel talks with leaders from human rights groups and Muslim Organizations in the United States and Europe to determine effective strategies for combating Islamophobia and to provide solutions.
- Evaluating the Islamophobia Observatory's performance, making adjustments when necessary, and sharing lessons learned with other groups working to combat Islamophobia;
- KAICID is devoted to fostering mutual understanding between people of different faiths and cultures, and they offer a wealth of resources and information that can be used to correct common misunderstandings about Islam.



- Appoint a competent scientific and legal organisation to research national legislation against hate speech in western nations, with monitoring by the Islamic Public Health and Rights Commission (IPHRC). The study will compare laws that sanction holocaust denial, anti-Semitism, and Nazism with those that prohibit insulting statements to Muslims.
- We must combine the fight against extremism in the Muslim world with the punishment of inciting hatred against Islam and Muslims in the West and other afflicted regions to bridge the breach.
- The best approach to address the problem of religiously-motivated defamation or discrimination is to insist, within the context of resolution 16/18, that incitement against hate based on faiths be criminalised.
- Conversations with the UN's Special Rapporteur on religious freedom to ensure all religions and traditions are respected and secure.
- Since the media is so influential in shaping public opinion, it is important to have a thorough plan for interacting with it. The strategy should promote cultural and religious diversity for peaceful cohabitation in multicultural communities and among various religions. (OIC, 2019)

## **Conclusion**

The OIC observatory and Western NGOs both report increases in Islamophobia, but the phenomenon is now getting the attention it deserves, and many governments in the West are eager to take action against it. The efforts of western governments and civil society to reduce prejudice and hostility against Islam and Muslims must be closely monitored. Most Western countries that joined the treaty against racial discrimination have now passed anti-hate speech laws that can be applied to combat anti-Muslim rhetoric. Dread of terrorism, however, causes even more fear of Islam, worsening the situation for Muslims, and so undermining attempts to decrease animosity towards Islam and Muslims. Incidences of Muslim terrorists being apprehended only make things worse. Fear and hatred of Islam and Muslims have been exacerbated by the rise of Daesh, which is responsible for horrific atrocities and may appeal to Muslims in the West. Some have also raised concerns about the rise of Christianophobia in reaction to the persecution of the Christian minority in Syria and Iraq. This is especially true of Russia and the Orthodox and Catholic Churches. Both defamations of faiths and prejudice against Muslims are interrelated and cannot be addressed separately, hence both must be addressed with distinct techniques. Negative stereotyping and stigmatisation of faiths or religious symbols harm their adherents' freedom of religion and lead to discrimination and violence. Understanding Islamophobia is key to determining an action plan's goals. This issue distorts Islam's image and abuses all



Muslims, regardless of geography. Islamophobia violates numerous Muslim rights in Western nations. Countering Islam defamation may need international intervention. Action Plan of Res 16/18 includes good steps like reaching out to minorities, training authorities, and intercultural conversation, as well as tougher actions like criminalising acts of provocation that lead to imminent violence. It's worth pursuing. Many nations share the Muslim world's perspective that all religions should be treated equally, and if current safeguards penalise or prohibit negative stereotyping or stigmatisation, the same may be applied to all religions. There is still the possibility and benefit of enforcing laws against religiously motivated bigotry, discrimination, and violence. Some Islamic countries may find it difficult to enact such legislation, although doing so would be consistent with Islamic objectives and international human rights law, and would help prevent negative stereotyping and discrimination against religious minorities. The ongoing war of words between the West and the Muslim world is fueled by the misrepresentation of Islam and its symbols. This not only damages the reputation of Muslim nations but also aids radicals inside Muslim communities who incite innocent Muslims to bloodshed in the name of Islam. There is no need to wait for new international legal instruments to address these big negative consequences; action may be taken now in the political, cultural, and media spheres.



## References

- Abbas, T. (2004). "After 9/11: British South Asian Muslims, Islamophobia, Multiculturalism, and the State." *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 21 (3): 26-3
- Ali, T. (2002). *The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads and Modernity*. London: Verso.
- Bleich, E. (2009). "Where do Muslims Stand on Ethno-Racial Hierarchies in Britain and France? Evidence from Public Opinion Surveys, 1988-2008." *Patterns of Prejudice* 43 (3-4)
- Bowen, J. (2005). "Commentary on Bunzl." *American Ethnologist* 32 (4): 524-5
- Bunzl, M. (2007). *Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: Hatreds Old and New in Europe*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press. Princeton: Princeton University Press
- Cole, M. (2009). "A Plethora of 'Suitable Enemies': British Racism First Century." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 32 (9): 1671-1685
- Dussel, E. (1994). *1492: El Encubrimiento del Otro. Hacia el origen del "mito de la modernidad"*. La Paz, Bolivia: Plural Editores. Ernst, Carl W. 2003. *Following Mohammad: Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World*. The University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill and London.
- Geisser, V. (2003). *La nouvelle islamophobia*. Paris: La Decouverte
- Gottschalk, P. and Greenberg, G. (2008). *Islamophobia : Making Muslims the Enemy*. Lanham Rowman & Littlefield
- Graham, M. (2006). *How Islam Created the Modern World*. Amana Publications: Beltsville, Maryland.
- Grosfoguel, R. (2003). *Colonial Subject*. Berkeley: California University Press.
- Grosfoguel, R. (2006). "World-Systems Analysis in the Context of Transmodernity, Border Thinking, and Global Coloniality." *REVIEW* Vol. XIX, No. 2: 167-187.



- Grosfoguel, R. (2008). "Para descolonizar os estudos de economia política e os estudos pós-coloniais: Transmodernidade, pensamento de fronteira e colonialidade global" *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, numero 80 (março): 115-147. English version: <http://www.eurozine.com/pdf/2008-07-04-grosfoguel-en.pdf>
- Grosfoguel, R. (2009). "Human Rights and Anti-Semitism After Gaza," *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*, Vol. VII, issue No. 2 (Spring): 89-101.
- Hills, P. (1991). *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empire*. Routledge: London.
- Huntington, S. (1997). *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Touchstone.
- Johnson, C. (2006). *Nemesis: The Last Days of the American Republic*. New York: Metropolitan Books.
- Maldonado-Torres, N. (2006). "Reconciliation as a Contested Future: Decolonization as Project or Beyond the Paradigm of War." In *Reconciliation: Nations and Churches in Latin America*, edited by Iain S. Maclean. London: Ashgate.
- Maldonado-Torres, N. (2008a). *Against War*. Duke University Press, Durham.
- Maldonado-Torres, N. (2008b). "Religion, Conquête et Race dans la Fondation. du monde Moderne/Colonial" in *Islamophobie dans le Monde Moderne*, Edited by Mohamed Mestiri, Ramon Grosfoguel y El Yamine Soum. IIIT, París; 205-238.
- Mernissi, F. (1987). *Le Harem Politique. Le Prophete et le Femme*. Paris: Albin Michel. 33
- Mignolo, W. (2000). *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Border Thinking and Subaltern Knowledge*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Moore, C. (1977). *Where Marx and Engels White Racists?: The Prolet-aryan Outlook of Marx and Engels* (Institute of Positive Education: Chicago, Illinois) [http://pdfserve.informaworld.com/411649\\_915549761\\_745946075.pdf](http://pdfserve.informaworld.com/411649_915549761_745946075.pdf)



- OIC. (2019). Countering Islamophobia: An Unfinished Business. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://oic-iphrc.org/en/data/docs/studies/388003.pdf>
- Perceval, J. M. (1997). Todos son uno. Arquetipos, xenofobia y racismo. La imagen del morisco en la monarquía española durante los siglos XVI y XVII. Almería: Instituto de Estudios Almerienses.
- Rashid, A. (2001). Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Risen, J. (2006). State of War: The Secret History of the CIA and the Bush Administration. New York: Free Press.
- Said, E. (1979). Orientalism. New York: Vintage Books.
- Said, E. (1981). Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Salaita, Steven (2006) Anti-Arab Racism in the United States: Where it Comes from and What it Means for Politics Today. London: Pluto Press.
- Saliba, G. (1997). Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance.
- Semati, M. (2010). "Islamophobia, Culture and Race in the Age of Empire." Cultural Studies 24 (2): 256-75.
- Stolz, J. (2005). "Explaining Islamophobia. A Test of Four Theories Based on the Case of a Swiss City." Swiss Journal of Sociology 31 (3): 547-66.
- Sukidi (2006). "Max Weber's remarks on Islam: The Protestant Ethic among Muslim puritans." Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, 17: 2, 195- 205. MIT Press: Boston).
- Zúquete, J. P. (2008). "The European Extreme-Right and Islam: New Directions?" Journal of Political Ideologies 13 (3): 321-344.