


ISLAMOPHOBIA AS A FORM OF RACISM AND INTOLERANCE

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ABSTRACT

Islamophobia is a social phenomenon. It expresses fear and hatred towards Islam and Muslims, as well as discrimination against people professing this religion. It became apparent in the early Middle Ages and went through several stages of its historical development. Currently, manifestations of Islamophobia are clearly visible in many European countries. Mainly due to the migration crisis in Europe, some politicians, even scholars and ordinary people, actively support and spread Islamophobic ideas and sentiments. They approve the rise of anti-Muslim hatred and violence in society. Moreover, some of them believe that Islamophobia, unlike anti-Semitism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination, are not a hate crime. These people also associate Islam with a religion that promotes violence and Muslims as terrorists. As a result, they believe that Islamophobia should not be punished by law as various forms of discrimination often are. Some politicians, especially those on the far right, try to capitalize on the spread of Islamophobic ideas for their own political gain, namely to obtain the support of voters in elections. The spread of Islamophobia gave rise to various anti-Muslim conspiracy theories (i.e. Eurabia, The Great Replacement), which, in turn, exacerbate the human rights situation in European countries.

In this paper, I show that Islamophobia is not only a form of hatred and violence against Muslims. But also one of the main forms of racism and intolerance we see today. Using a deductive method, I prove that Islamophobia, as we see it in European states, has the main features of racism. This means that Islamophobia, like racism, provokes the persecution of innocent people, violates their rights, and they face intolerance and violence because of their belonging to Islam. The spread of Islamophobia in European states threatens the values of democracy and human rights. Therefore, European states must resolutely fight Islamophobia.

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Introduction

The term Islamophobia comes from the combination of two words: Islam and phobia. According to the etymology of this term, Islamophobia is based on the fear of Islam and Muslims. The logical consequences of this fear are hatred, discrimination and persecution of Islam, Muslims and everything related to Islam.

The Cambridge Dictionary, defines Islamophobia as hatred, fear and discrimination against Islam and the people who profess this religion as *unreasonable*¹, and Merriam Webster Dictionary - as *irrational*².

Islamophobia cultivates hatred against Muslims and it is occasionally accompanied by hate crimes. This means that people who spread Islamophobic moods and ideas are not limited to humiliating Islam and Muslims, but they also commit acts of violence against Muslims, including killing them. In such cases, Islamophobia is classified as a *hate crime*.

A Practical Guide titled "*Hate Crime Laws*" published by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights defines hate crimes as "*criminal acts committed with a bias motive*"³. The main distinctive feature of hate crimes in relation to ordinary crimes is that they are committed with a bias motive. Speaking about the bias motive of hate crime it is meant that "the perpetrator intentionally chose the *target* of the crime because of some *protected characteristic*"⁴. The target may be one or more people, or it may be property associated with a group that shares a particular characteristic. As for a protected characteristic it is a characteristic shared by a group, such as "*race*", *language*, *religion*, *ethnicity*, *nationality*, or any other similar common factor"⁵. Hate crime is committed on the basis of one or more of these protected characteristics.

According to "*Hate Crimes Laws*", another difference of hate crimes compared to ordinary crimes is the impact on victims of crime. The perpetrator selects the victim based on the victim's affiliation with a particular group. This means that any member of this group can become the target of a crime. Unlike victims of many other criminal acts, hate crime victims are selected on the basis of *what* they represent rather than *who* they are. The message that is conveyed is intended to reach not just the

¹Cambridge Dictionary. Definition of Islamophobia. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/islamophobia>

²Merriam Webster Dictionary. Definition of Islamophobia. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/>

³ Hate Crime Laws. A Practical Guide. OSCE/ODIHR, Warsaw, 2014, p.16.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

immediate victim but also the larger community of which that victim is a member. Thus, they are sometimes described as *symbolic crimes*⁶.

In general, hate crimes aim to intimidate victims of crime and the communities to which they belong. This type of crime seems to convey to the community members that they are undesirable in the society. Furthermore, hate crimes send a signal of fear even to members of other communities who may become victims of hate crimes in the future due to certain protected characteristics. Due to these protected characteristics in terms of scope of their impact on society and on state as well as in terms of further consequences hate crimes are more dangerous and broader than ordinary crimes. Therefore, in modern times, many states rightly impose harsher penalties for hate crimes than for ordinary crimes.

In other words, if the crime was committed with a bias motive, that is, if the victim of the crime was selected on the basis of certain protected characteristics, such as, the basis of the victim's belonging to a particular ethnic or religious community, it will be punished more severely than ordinary crimes that have the same result.

Classification of hate crimes is based on motive for which they are committed, i.e. by which protected characteristics the given crime was committed. The most widespread types of hate crimes are ones committed on the basis of *race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity/national belongness, disability*⁷. Islamophobia should be classified as a hate crime committed on *religious base*.

Islamophobia is a widespread form of intolerance and discrimination. It cultivates intolerance and discrimination against Muslims. Even some researchers quite accurately consider Islamophobia to be a form of racism. For example, Tarig Modoud, a British sociologist, in his article "*Rethinking multiculturalism after 7/7*", supporting this point of view, notes: "*There is not a singular racism but multiple racisms that include colour/phenotype forms but also cultural forms building on "colour", or on a set of antagonistic or demeaning stereotypes based on alleged or real cultural traits. The most important such form of cultural racism today is anti-Muslim racism, sometimes called Islamophobia*"⁸. Farah Elahi and Omar Khan, British researchers also define Islamophobia as a form of racism. To them, with many Black and minority ethnic groups, Muslims also experience disadvantage and discrimination in a wide range of institutions and environments, from schools to the labor market to prisons and even violence on the streets. Policies to tackle Islamophobia should be developed in line

⁶ Ibid.p.17.

⁷Types of hate crime. <http://crimesofhate.weebly.com/types-of-crimes.html>

⁸ Modood, T.. "Remaking multiculturalism after 7/7", <https://www.surrey.ac.uk/cronem/files/Tariq-Modood-article.pdf>. p.3.

with policies to tackle racial discriminations and generally focus on the real effects of the people affected by it. They recommend the government to adopt their definition of Islamophobia as anti-Muslim racism⁹. Omar Khan in one of his speeches noted his disagreement with the current and dominant view of Islamophobia as anti-Muslim hatred or fanaticism¹⁰. In his opinion, this view is too narrow and, therefore, creates the false impression that Islamophobia refers only to (often violent) street clashes, and not also to direct and indirect forms of discrimination in the labor market, housing, education, and health provisions. Furthermore, portraying Islamophobia as a form of racism will encourage broader groups of the population to join the fight against Islamophobia because they support the fight against all forms of racism¹¹.

Although the term Islamophobia first appeared in literature in the 1970s, it was not until the 1980s, especially in the 1990s that the term began to be used extensively. In November 1997, *the Runnymede Trust* - the country's leading race equality think-tank published its landmark report "*Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All*" which is said to have popularized the term¹². In the aforementioned report it was noted that the term Islamophobia refers to the following three phenomena:

1. *Unfounded hostility towards Islam;*
2. *Practical consequences of such hostility in unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities;*
3. *Exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political and social affairs*¹³.

The term "Islamophobia" reached its pinnacle after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 in the United States by members of the terrorist organization Al-Qaeda. The spread of radical Islam and the growing threats posed by it led to the widespread use of the term Islamophobia both in popular fields of literature and in the speeches given by politicians.

Fear and hatred of Islam and Muslims are a negative phenomena in themselves. For the reason that, as noted above, they are unreasonable, irrational and unjust. In addition, they are subjective, biased and untrue. The fear and hatred of Islam and Muslims have certain forms of manifestation. For example, the fear of Islam manifests itself in the presentation of this religion as a religious system that opposes development, innovation, promotes intolerance towards other religions, and

⁹ Elahi, F. and O.Khan. (2018) .Introduction: What is Islamophobia? // in Elahi, F. and Khan, O. (Eds.) "*Islamophobia: Still A Challenge for Us All.*" A 20th-anniversary report. 5-12. London. p.8.

¹⁰ Khan O. Islamophobia is anti-Muslim racism.// Evidence to All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims. 2016, p.2.

¹¹ Ibid. pp.2-3.

¹² Ibid. p.1.

¹³ Ibid. p.7.

opposes science, education, and the arts. As for the fear of Muslims, this is reflected in the fact that they are presented as an aggressive, terrorist-oriented community that do not want to integrate into the society in which they live.

History of Islamophobia. Its causes, main periods, and consequences

Islamophobia as a social phenomenon expresses fear and hatred towards Islam and Muslims this opinion has been formed long ago. It has a deep and ancient historical and ideological roots.

Islamophobia was artificially put forward by people concerned with the spread of Islam as a religion with high moral values, as well as the increase in the number of Muslims around the world. The Crusades in the Middle Ages were one of the earliest manifestations of Islamophobia. As you know, in the Middle Ages, especially from VII to XIII centuries, the Muslim world surpassed the Christian world, having achieved great success in all fields of science, technology, economy, culture and society. State and religious leaders of Christian countries, envious by the achievements of the Muslim world, viewed these accomplishments as a threat to themselves and started organizing crusades against Muslim regions. Spreading the idea that Islam is against Christianity, and Muslims are the enemies of Christians, heads of European churches called on the local population to lead crusades against Muslims.

The next stage in the history of Islamophobia demonstrated itself after the Renaissance, especially in the New Age. At this stage, unlike the previous one, the spread of Islamophobia took place in the context of the weakening of positions by Muslim countries around the world. The progress of European states in the scientific, technological, educational, economic and military spheres, and the growing backwardness in these areas in the Muslim world, created favorable conditions for the launch of new attacks on Islam. The Muslim world, which had reached a high stage of development over a long period of time and had made great strides in the development of science, was gradually declining.

Some European intellectuals criticized Islam, linking this backwardness of the Muslim world to Islam. For example, *the 19th-century French orientalist Ernest Renan (1823-1892)*, in his book *"Islam and Science"*, argued that orthodox Islam which is a product of Arab thought, was contrary to science, philosophy, and social progress in general¹⁴. Islamophobic views of Renan were criticized by prominent Turkish poet

¹⁴ Рустамов, Ю.И.(1980) Ислам и общественная мысль в Турции, Баку. с.81.

and public figure *Namig Kamal (1840-1888)* and outstanding Azerbaijani thinker, theologian, and enlightener *Jamaladdin Afghani (1836-1897)*¹⁵.

In his criticism, Namik Kamal, referring to the early stages of the development of the Muslim world and referring to its great achievements in science and philosophy, noted that the Christian West owes much of its scientific development to Muslim scientists and philosophers. As for Jamaladdin Afghani, in his article "*Reply to Renan*" he also refuted the above-mentioned views of Renan on Islam, showing that with the advent of Islam, the Muslim world left Christendom behind in the field of science and art. From about 775 to the middle of the thirteenth century, approximately for 500 years, the Arabs developed the scientific achievements of the ancient Greeks, and then spread them in Europe.¹⁶

It should be noted that prominent representatives of Turkism *Ismail Gasprali (1841-1914)* and *Alibey Huseynzadeh (1864-1940)* also spoke out against Islamophobic ideas widespread in Europe and Russia.

Well-known enlightener and public figure Ismail Gasprali, through his newspaper *Tercuman*, which he published from 1883 till the end of his life, rejected the idea that the backwardness of the Muslim peoples in Europe and Russia was related to Islam and noted that Islam attached great importance to science and education¹⁷.

Alibey Huseynzadeh noted that Islam, as a progressive religion, has the power to unite people and create favorable conditions for the socio-economic development of the country. He precisely considered the division of Muslims into Shiite and Sunni sects as one of the main reasons for the backwardness of the Islamic world. Alibey Huseynzadeh said that there was no conflict between Islam and science. He noted that Islam has great potential, and stressed the need to fight against uneducated and fanatical clerics in order to realize this potential¹⁸.

The beginning of the modern era in the history of Islamophobia dates back to the late 1980s and early 1990s. It is known that it was during this period, in connection with the collapse of the world communist system and the end of the the Cold War. One of the main consequences of this event is the *growing role of culture in social development*.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Əfqanı, C.(1998) Seçilmiş əsərləri, Bakı.c. 51-52.

¹⁷Гаспринский, И.(1991) Русское мусульманство. Мысли, заметки и наблюдения, Симферополь, издательство «Таврия». 64 с.

¹⁸Наджафов, Э.А.(2000).Соотношение культуры и цивилизации в общественном развитии, Баку. с.79-82.

By its essence culture is a stable and conservative social phenomenon. These features have been identified by many researchers¹⁹. The stable and conservative nature of culture further strengthens its leading role in social development. However, some authors, exaggerating the stable and conservative nature of culture, present it as a completely permanent social phenomenon. One of such authors is *Samuel Huntington*. He believes that the fact that culture is a stable and conservative phenomenon is reflected by the idea that the distinctive features of the historical development of different people depend on their cultures.

Based on two premises - the diversity of cultures of the people of the world, as well as the stable and conservative nature of culture, Huntington put forward the *hypothesis of "clash of civilizations."* To him, in the post-communist period, the competition of superpowers is replaced by the clash of civilizations²⁰. The world civilizations based on religious, linguistic and cultural diversities will inevitably collide with each other. In his opinion, the most likely clashes will be between Western and Islamic civilizations, as well as between Western and Confucian civilizations.

Huntington's hypothesis about the "clash of civilizations" is the theoretical and ideological basis of Islamophobia in the modern period of history. Since according to the hypothesis, Islamic civilization is opposed to Western civilization and the spread of its values in the world.

As an ideologist of Western civilization, Huntington accuses Islamic civilization of impeding the socio-economic and democratic development of countries. Huntington in his book "*The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order*" gives a prognosis of the prospective socio-economic and political development of the post-communist societies of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. He notes that the development in these societies with Western Christian heritages are making progress toward economic and democratic politics; the prospects for economic and political development in the Orthodox countries are uncertain; the prospects in the Muslim republics are bleak²¹.

¹⁹Наджафов, Э.А.(2006). К вопросу об определяющей роли культуры в общественном развитии. *Elmi əsərlər. İctimai-siyasi elmlər seriyası*, Bakı Slavyan Universiteti, (1-2) с. 63-68.

²⁰Huntington, S.(1996). *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order*. New York, Simon and Schuster. p.28.

Huntington's attitude towards Islamic civilization and Islam is inherently highly biased. Without a deep understanding of Islamic civilization, its values and historical achievements, Huntington presents Islam as a religion that is anti-democratic, contributes to socio-economic underdevelopment and leads to migrant crisis. He shows Muslims as people prone to conflict and terrorism. Of course, Huntington's anti-Islamic, Islamophobic views are ideological in nature. These views reflect the interests of individual representatives of political and religious circles in the West.

Subsequent historical events, in particular the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and the recent influx of refugees from the Middle East and Africa to Western Europe as a result of the recent military conflicts in these countries created favorable conditions for the spread of Huntington's anti-Islamic, Islamophobic views. In addition, these events contributed to the strengthening of Islamophobic sentiments in Western countries.

One of the main reasons for the rise of Islamophobic views in the West today is the unfair and biased policy against Muslims in these countries. This is primarily due to the spread of certain *negative stereotypes* about Muslims in Western countries. Historically, negative stereotypes and myths about Muslims have been widespread in the West.

Doug Saunders, Canadian journalist in his book "*The Myth of the Muslim Tide: Do Immigrants Threaten the West?*" refutes the stereotypes about Muslims widespread in the West and proves them to be biased and false²². He notes the Islamophobic nature of the stereotypes.

The spread of negative stereotypes about Muslims in the Western countries has led to the emergence of various conspiracy theories. One such conspiracy theory is *the Eurabia theory*.

The term "Eurabia" was coined by British journalist *Bat Yeor* in her 2005 book titled "*Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis*". Later, the term became heavily used and took the form of a conspiracy theory.

In fact, the racist Islamophobic theory of Eurabia offers a scenario for the future development of Europe. According to this scenario Europe will Islamize in the near future. The influx of Muslims to Europe and the high birth rate among them will result in a Muslim majority here by the end of the XXI century. Muslims will rule

²²Saunders, D.(2013) *The Myth of the Muslim Tide: Do Immigrants Threaten the West?* Knopf Canada.

Europe. An islamized Europe will gradually lose its cultural values. It will weaken existing ties with the United States and Israel.

According to the theory of Eurabia, some ruling political circles in Western Europe allegedly cooperate with the Arab countries in order to strengthen Europe against the United States. Therefore, along with Islamophobia, this theory is based on Euroscepticism, which criticizes the European Union and the policy of European integration. It is no coincidence that far-right forces and populist politicians in Europe defend and propagate the theory of Eurabia, which promotes racism and discrimination. For example, Anders Breivik, a Norwegian Islamophobe who killed more than 80 innocent people in 2011 because of hatred towards Muslims, often used the term Eurabia in his speeches.

Nowadays, negative stereotypes and conspiracy theories about Muslims spread by certain groups in the West, are widely used to promote ideas of Islamophobia. In addition, such stereotypes and conspiracy theories are often used by the ruling circles for their own political purposes. Such injustice, which causes discontent and anger among Muslims, is one of the main reasons for the emergence of radical groups among Muslims. Certain organizations and forces spreading Islamophobia in the West, especially extreme right-wing populist groups, are trying to capitalize on the rise of radical groups among Muslims for their own purposes.

Organizations and forces promoting Islamophobia in Western Europe

The spread of Islamophobia in the Western European countries is carried out by certain organizations and forces. Switzerland-based "*Racism Islamophobia Watch*" organization, which fights Islamophobia and racism in the Francophone countries, has been preparing a monthly report based on its observations since October 2013. The report highlights the spread of Islamophobia in France, Belgium and Switzerland. Such facts include slogans and racist swastikas written on the walls of mosques at night, hate speech against Muslims on social networks, beheaded pigs around mosques, insults to women in hijabs, attacks on mosques by extremist groups, and etc.

According to the survey conducted in France in 2014 by the human rights group "*Defender of the Rights*", the criteria related to the ethnic origin and skin color are discriminative factors in employment. The "being of foreign origin or nationality" (71%), "having a foreign-sounding name" (70%) or "to be a person of color" (66%) is considered to be inconvenient. According to the survey, the ethnic origin is seen as a

xenophobia and other forms of discrimination, is not a hate crime. Consequently, particularly negative factor for getting a job than during the career²³.

According to “*Racism Islamophobia Watch*” organization, in countries such as France and Switzerland, Muslims face certain restrictions on their worship. Women wearing hijabs are persecuted. Muslims cannot find a suitable place to worship. They cannot build a mosque at their own expense. A report by “*Racism Islamophobia Watch*” organization says a Saudi businessman has been denied permission by the mayor of Nice to open a prayer center in his own building.²⁴ According to another report, the newly appointed mayor of Mantes-la-Ville did not allow *the Muslim Association of Mantes-South (AMMS)* to build a house of worship in the city. The mayor is a member of the ultra-right, nationalist National Front political party led by *Marine Le Pen*. The head of AMMS described the move as discrimination against Muslims.²⁵ The National Front which is known as one of the most ultra-right parties in the West is acknowledged throughout Europe for its Islamophobic propaganda and activities. For example, on October 15, 2014, a representative of this party used insulting words against Islam during the holiday of Ramadan²⁶.

Recently, in Western European countries Islamophobia, like other forms of intolerance, xenophobia and discrimination, has spread not only among radical right-wing groups, but also among ordinary people. One of the main indicators of this is the increase in votes for ultra-right parties in these countries. As a result, the positions of these parties in the political system of Western Europe are strengthening. For example, in the European Parliament elections in 2014, for the first time in French history, the National Front, led by Marine Le Pen, received the most votes. Compared to the previous elections to the European Parliament in 2009, the party received four times more votes in 2014. About a third (24 people) of the 74 members of the European Parliament elected from France were members of the National Front.²⁷ In the next elections for the European Parliament in May 2019, the National Rally* party (*in French - Rassemblement national*)), led by Marine Le Pen, again took first place in France. 23.34 percent of voters voted for the party's candidates²⁸. Currently, 23 of the 79 MPs representing France in the European Parliament are members of the National Rally party. As a logical consequence of the growing popularity of the National Rally

²³Organization Racism Islamophobia Watch Report. 10 months (from October 2013 to July 2014) report on Islamophobia and racism in the French-speaking European countries (France, Belgium and Switzerland). Geneva, 2014, p. 12.

²⁴Ibid, p.18.

²⁵Ibid, p.19.

²⁶Ibid. p.19.

²⁷Ibid. p.24.

* Until June 2018 known as the National Front.

²⁸Results by national party: 2019-2024. France - Official results

<https://europarl.europa.eu/election-results-2019/en/national-results/france/2019-2024/>

party in French society, its leader Marine Le Pen ranked third among candidates in the 2012 presidential elections (17.90% of voters) and second in the 2017 presidential elections (33.9% of voters)²⁹.

One of the organizations that deliberately spread Islamophobia in contemporary Europe is the National Council of European Resistance (*in French - Conseil national de la résistance européenne*). The Council was established on November 9, 2017 in France. The organization was founded by French writer *Renaud Camus*, known for his anti-Semitic and Islamophobic views, and *Karim Osik*, a French-born lawyer to a Muslim family of Algerian descent who later converted to Catholicism and supported Marine Le Pen in the 2017 presidential election. The members of the National Council of European Resistance are prominent politicians from France, as well as from a number of other European countries, adhering mainly to extreme right-wing views (for example, the former Czech President *Vaclav Klaus*). Council members are concerned that the influx of migrants from the Middle East, North Africa and other countries in the region, specifically Muslims to Europe is leading to a decrease in the number of Christians and an increase in the number of Muslims in the area. As a result, French culture and European civilization in general are in great danger.

It is no coincidence that the Council is called the "National Council of European Resistance". It is well known that the National Council of Resistance (*in French - Conseil National de la Résistance*) was created in mid-1943 to liberate France from German occupation during the Second World War. It would seem, the founders of the National Council of European Resistance consider the influx of migrants to France and Europe as dangerous as the French occupation by Germany.

Members of the National Council of European Resistance support the conspirative theory by its essence "*The Great Replacement*" (*in French - Le grand remplacement*) which was put forward by far-rightists. According to this theory, as a result of migration and demographic growth, non-European peoples, especially Muslims from the Middle East, North Africa and other regions, migrate to Europe and replace the local population. Proponents of this theory believe that the increase in the number of Muslims in France, as well as in other European countries, is gradually destroying French culture and Western civilization in general.

Members of the National Council of European Resistance actively promote Islamophobic views by participating in various events. For example, one of the active

²⁹French presidential elections under the Fifth Republic.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_presidential_elections_under_the_Fifth_Republic

members of the Council, the French *abbot Guy Pages*, spoke at 10 of the 17 sessions of the annual meeting of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) on September 10-21, 2018 in Warsaw and presented his Islamophobic views to the participants of the event. The main idea of his Islamophobic views can be expressed as follows: Islamophobia, unlike anti-Semitism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination, is not a hate crime. Consequently, Islamophobia is not punishable by law as various forms of discrimination³⁰. To justify his Islamophobic views, Abbot Guy Page deliberately falsifies the facts. For instance, he links Islam to the ideology and atrocities of the ISIS terrorist group.

In one of his speeches at the aforementioned OSCE meeting, abbot Guy Page made an Islamophobic proposal concerning Muslim migrants seeking asylum in Europe. He offered to exchange these migrants for non-Muslims living in Saudi Arabia who are being mistreated by the government. According to him implementing these ideas, three issues can be solved at the same time³¹. First, thousands of non-Muslims living in Saudi Arabia will be freed from slavery and violence. Second, Muslim migrants who want to move to Europe will have the opportunity to live in Sharia law in accordance with their wishes by coming to Saudi Arabia. Third, Europe will be free from the threat of Islam and the threat of a real civil war.

However, you have to wonder - how did abbot Guy Pages manage to openly declare his Islamophobic views at 10 sessions of the OSCE/ODIHR Annual Meeting? It is known that the OSCE is an organization that systematically and consistently combats all forms of discrimination and intolerance, including Islamophobia. The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights' 2018 report titled "*Hate Crime Against Muslims*," fittingly acknowledges that Muslim communities across the OSCE region are victims of rhetoric that often associates them with terrorism and extremism or portrays the presence of Muslim communities as a threat to national identity. Muslims are often portrayed as a monolithic group, whose region and culture are incompatible with the concepts of human rights and democracy³². This intolerance, if left unchecked, can enable a climate that fosters hate crime against Muslims, which is an attempt to isolate them from society. Only a strong response from all actors in society can effectively challenge discrimination, intolerance and hate crimes against Muslims³³. In addition, the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office has a Personal Representative on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against

³⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/osce.odihhr/videos/vl.522074571547216/275045440001625/?type=1>

³¹ Ibid.

³² Hate crime against Muslims. <https://www.osce.org/odihr/373441?download=true>

³³Ibid.

Muslims. In accordance with his/her mandate, the Personal Representative submits to the Chairperson proposals on the fight against intolerance and discrimination against Muslims in the OSCE countries. In other words, it is inadmissible to voice Islamophobic views from the OSCE podium. Despite this, abbot Guy Pages spoke at the OSCE meeting. Obviously, he wanted to abuse not only Muslims, but also the organization fighting Islamophobia.

Along with France, Islamophobia is on the rise in several other European countries such as Austria, the Netherlands, Denmark and Hungary. Islamophobic slogans are more vividly displayed in the propaganda campaigns of ultra-right parties advancing in the political arena of these countries. The Islamophobic slogans of these parties are one of the main reasons for the recent increase in their ratings. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the Islamophobic positions of the ultra-right parties are their distinguishing features. As for the reasons for the spread of their Islamophobic slogans in society in modern times, this is primarily due to the migrant crisis.

As a result of military conflicts, the mass influx of migrants from a number of developing countries, especially from the Middle East and Africa, to Western Europe has led to a partial increase in the number of Muslims there. The proliferation of Muslims in the Western European countries is one of the main reasons for the activation of ultra-right forces operating in these countries. Leaders of far-right parties have criticized the Western Europe's migration policy for destroying the culture of European peoples. In this regard, Marine Le Pen, speaking at a conference of European right-wing parties in December 2017 in Prague, stated: *"Migration is close to unbearable, our respective cultures are being destroyed... We like diversity. I like the Dutch to be Dutch, I like the Czech to be Czechs, I like the French to be French, I like the Italians to be Italian"*³⁴. Geert Wilders, the leader of the Dutch Party for Freedom, known for his anti-Muslim rhetoric, defended Marin Le Pen's views on migration at the conference. He called to follow the example of US President Donald Trump and put travel bans on entry to Europe from certain Muslim countries. He noted the necessity to send every boat with illegal immigrants back, as Australia has been doing for such a long time.³⁵

As we can see the right-wing forces, mainly the extreme right-wing political parties, various nationalist, neo-fascist movements, as well as individuals, are involved in the spread of Islamophobia in Western Europe. Most of these forces are in opposition to the government. They use Islamophobia as a tool to come to power.

³⁴European far-right parties seek to unify at Prague conference.

http://www.euronews.com/2017/12/16/european-far-right-parties-seek-to-unify-at-prague-conference?utm_source=spotim&utm_medium=spotim_recirculation&spotim_referrer=recirculation

³⁵Ibid.

They do not see Islamophobia as a problem. On the contrary, they believe Islamophobia to be as an effective means of preventing the destruction of Western civilization. Therefore, one of the main activities of these forces is to support and spread Islamophobia in Western Europe. However, in reality, Islamophobia is one of the main problems facing the Western European countries today. Since Islamophobia as a form of racism, discrimination and intolerance is contrary to democratic values, human rights and freedoms that are promoted and protected by these countries.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Islamophobia is one of the most widespread forms of racism, intolerance and discrimination in our lifetime. Islamophobia is directed against the integration processes in society.

Because it's spread in society causes ethnic and religious conflicts, which, in turn, seriously hinders the socio-economic development of the country. In addition, like other types of hate crimes, the impact of Islamophobia has broader, more dangerous, more destructive and long-term consequences for individuals and society compared to ordinary crimes. This is due to the fact that in addition to the person who is the direct victim of a crime motivated by Islamophobia, other members of this group, who are other Muslims, also suffer. In other words, a crime motivated by Islamophobia in a particular country causes wider confrontation in society, affecting all the Muslims living in that country. Sometimes the echo of Islamophobia spreads beyond the borders of the country.

In this case, some Muslim countries protest against the act of Islamophobia in certain countries. This means that the confrontation has already spread from a domestic to an international level. In order to prevent all these confrontations, the world communities must prevent Islamophobia, as well as all forms of racism, intolerance and discrimination.

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