

HISAR SCHOOL

JUNIOR MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2017

“Confronting Extremism”

Human Rights Council

Preventing hate crimes caused by Islamophobia



**RESEARCH
REPORT**

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Issue: Preventing hate crimes caused by Islamophobia
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Introduction

The world has a long history of prejudice and discrimination that has led to a lot of struggle and adversity. Right now, there are many discriminatory and biased attitudes and, ultimately, practices towards many communities, especially minorities. A lot of these tendentious activities derive from ethnic, racial, and religious prejudices. Islamophobia is prejudice towards Islam or discrimination against Muslims due to their religious beliefs or perceived religious, national and ethnic identity associated with Islam.

As it is known for centuries, stereotypes against Muslims are present whether it be vandalism on Islamic cultural centers, or just bias against Islam. However, in the recent years, they have evolved drastically and became much more brutal under the conditions of the “war on terror”. Some of the most powerful political leaders declared that Islamophobia is a form of extremism and racism, meaning that it is dangerous and therefore highly unnecessary to hate and blame a whole community. Even though there have been many attempts to solve this issue and bring an end to Islamophobia, none has been efficient enough, considering the recent extremist attacks and current perspective of the world towards Islam.

Definition of Key Terms

Islamophobia: Unreasonable dislike or fear of, and prejudice against, Muslims or Islam.

Extremism: The holding of extreme political or religious views.

ISIS: Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. A Jihadist and extremist militant group.

Al-Qaeda: A radical Islamic group organized by Osama bin Laden in the 1990s to engage in terrorist activities.

General Overview

Hate crimes against Muslims and, ultimately, towards Islam did not occur in an instant by virtue of an event. However, they became encouraged as Muslim extremists performed attacks and similar acts. Whenever an event engaged to a Muslim individual happened, whether a terrorist attack or verbal harassment, most of the people -containing a significant amount of political leaders- believe and defend the fact that a whole community, Muslims, cannot be blamed for a single individuals’ behavior. Although others may believe the exact opposite. Also the media’s influence on these situations shouldn’t be

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underestimated. Moreover, the acts of extremist terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS cause the anticipation towards Islam to grow immensely. These extremist groups are usually the real reason behind everyone's fear and hatred. Since they claim themselves as the representatives of Islam, it should be no surprise how fast Islamophobia spreads around the world. While some political leaders try and show that behind these acts there is no connection between Islam and terrorism, some of them take advantage of these situations.

Attacks made by Muslim individuals and terrorist groups strengthened the ties of Islamophobia and caused many hate crimes aimed at Islam. For example, after the 9/11 attack, the hate crimes caused by Islamophobia spiked drastically. The statistics show that, in 2001, hate crime incidents against Muslims were the highest, even though they lowered in the following years. The aftermath of the rest of the acts that were performed by Islamist extremist groups not only caused Islamophobia to spread outrageously, it also was the real reason behind the increase of the hate crimes caused by Islamophobia. For instance, after the Manchester and London Bridge attacks, the anti-muslim hate crime incidents went up fivefold with 139 incidents reported, compared to 25 incidents the previous week.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

ORIW: This NGO fights against Islamophobia and racism in Francophone countries. ORIW organizes various events to raise awareness in society about Islamophobia and racism.

USA: The government's attitude towards Muslims is one of the most debated topics of the last few years; the much debated Muslim Ban caused controversial circumstances and caused the Muslim Americans to question their legitimate presence in the United States.

UK: The British Prime Minister and the parliament condemns anti-Muslim extremism and keeps working on various projects in order to reduce Islamophobia.

Timeline of Events

September 11, 2001	<i>Hijacked planes crashed into World Trade Center, Pentagon and Pennsylvania. Nearly killed 3000 people.</i>
September, 2001 - 2016	<i>According to FBI, the Anti Muslim hate crimes are five times more frequent then they were before 9/11.</i>
March 11, 2004	<i>Al Qaeda linked terror cell performs coordinated bomb attacks that hit four Spanish commuter trains in Madrid, killing 191 people.</i>
September 1, 2004	<i>The massacre performed by the small force of Islamic suicide attackers, leaves more than 330 people dead, around half of them were children.</i>
November 26, 2008	<i>An Islamic militant organization based in Pakistan performed a series of attacks in Mumbai that killed approximately 166 people.</i>
December 16, 2014	<i>Taliban gunmen attack a military-run school in Pakistan killing nearly 148 people.</i>
January 7, 2015	<i>Islamist extremists attack a Paris-based satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo and kill a total of 17 people.</i>

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February, 2015	<i>The hate crimes caused by Islamophobia rose drastically after the Charlie Hebdo attacks. France revealed that the acts have surged 500 percent since the incident.</i>
July 20, 2015	<i>ISIS performs a suicide bombing that kills nearly 34 people in Turkey</i>
October 10, 2015	<i>Twin suicide bombings performed by an Islamic extremist group left 102 people dead in the capital of Turkey, Ankara.</i>
October 31, 2015	<i>A jet crashes in Egypt, killing all 224 people on board. ISIS claims responsibility.</i>
November 12, 2015	<i>Suicide bombings in a Beirut suburb kills around 43 people. The attackers are linked to Al Qaeda and other extremist groups.</i>
November 13, 2015	<i>A series of attacks in Paris that killed nearly 130 people were performed by ISIS.</i>
November, 2015	<i>According to the FBI's most recent hate crime report, the hate crimes targeting Muslim-Americans showed an increase of 67 percent.</i>
March 22, 2016	<i>Bombings performed by ISIS at Brussels airport and metro station killed a total of 32 people.</i>
July 14, 2016	<i>A cargo truck was driven into crowds of people in Nice on purpose. This attack performed by ISIS killed 87 people.</i>
December 19, 2016	<i>A truck was deliberately driven into crowds of people in Berlin. This attack performed by ISIS killed 12 people.</i>
March 22, 2017	<i>A terrorist attack performed by Islamic extremist in the Manchester Arena killed 23 people.</i>
May 22, 2017	<i>A suicide bomber linked to ISIS killed 22, and injured 116 people during a concert in Manchester Arena.</i>
June, 2017	<i>Hate crimes caused by Islamophobia surged after the Manchester and London Bridge attacks. There were 139 incidents reported in the week after the attacks.</i>

Treaties and Events

In order to protest the recent Anti-Muslim hate crimes and support the victims, a group of activists held a vigil in London. They held posters condemning Islamophobia and talked about the anti-Muslim hate crimes. They strongly urged the authorities to immediately act against attacks which target innocent Muslims in the UK.

Thousands of protesters have gathered in Toronto to march against Islamophobia, specifically the Muslim travel ban and the increasing hate crimes. The protesters stated that the current events that are happening regarding Islamophobia are not acceptable and that they will fight back. One of the organizers said, "It's a call to action that has just begun."

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Barack Obama stated that increasing gun control and rejecting Islamophobia are key to combating hate crimes. "We cannot turn against each other by letting this fight be defined as a war between America and Islam," Obama said. "If we are to succeed in defeating terrorists, we must enlist Muslim

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communities as some of our strongest allies.” Even though his intentions were sincere and his leadership concerning this topic was impressive, the following attacks performed by extremists caused Islamophobia and the hate crimes to rise drastically.

Ban Ki-moon outlined a draft UN action plan to prevent violent extremism at G7 Summit. “Youth are the group most prone to radicalization and violent extremism. Most foreign terrorist fighters are young males aged between 15 and 35, but young people are also part of the solution to preventing violent extremism. We all need to do a better job of engaging them.” the Secretary General pointed out. Even though his predictions and strategies were exactly right, actions taken were ultimately not enough or efficient to reduce the hate crimes caused by Islamophobia or violent extremism.

Possible Solutions

Theresa May, the British Prime Minister, highlighted the social media platforms’ influence on Islamophobia. May proposed the giant tech firms like Facebook, Twitter and Google to fight against online extremism. She expressed in the G7 Summit that the fight against extremism is shifting from the battlefield to the Internet. She stated that the ‘war on terror’ is not working and that the world needs a smarter way to reduce the threat from countries that nurture terrorists and generate terrorism. She mentioned that the industry has a social responsibility to remove harmful content from its network and inform the authorities when it is identified.

Also, in order to tackle the hate crimes caused by Islamophobia, international and regional forums where the challenges in fighting Islamophobia are displayed and recommendations for further actions are identified can be created. Furthermore, in order to reduce the hate crimes caused by Islamophobia; the political leaders should come together and work on the awareness of their country regarding Islamophobia and Islam since most of the hate crimes occur because people believe that the brutal attacks that ISIS and the other militant groups perform are linked to Islam.

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