



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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Agenda item 9

**Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action**

## **Written statement\* submitted by Organization for Defending Victims of Violence, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[28 January 2020]

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\* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



## Islamophobia

Islamophobia is a concept that indicates illogical fear, prejudice and prejudice towards Muslims. In this narrative the reason given is that Islam is a violent and intolerant religion and this definition results in violence against Muslims.

Almost six decades since the adoption of the Declaration of the Elimination of all forms of Racism (1963) which stresses on important points such as condemnation of racial prejudice as a human rights violation and threat to international peace and security, the Durban Declaration and Plan of Action (2001) was adopted stressing on governments to eliminate racial discrimination by the end of the second decade. Also the Durban 2 Conference (2009) which reminded governments' commitments and actions in the elimination of discrimination, all show Mankind's efforts to be free of this ugly and evil phenomenon.

There is hardly any State in the world who does not clearly stress on the necessity to eliminate racial discrimination, and yet we are witness to the daily rise in various forms of discrimination and xenophobia, such as the Islamophobia phenomenon and its terrible and uncontrollable impact.

Even though fear of foreigners especially Muslims, has existed for years, but following the 9/11 attacks, this type of phobia has exasperated in a way that 9/11 can be seen as a turning point in the spread of Islamophobia. Following the establishment of Trump's Administration in the United States of America (the US), a renewed beginning in the rise of Islamophobia can be seen.

In fact, the role of a power such as the US, in influencing the world through spread of discrimination, official hate speeches of leaders, adoption of racist laws on the border issue, undermining multilateralism and rising unilateralism cannot be ignored.

Currently according to experts, the chasm between the United States and Muslims is getting bigger and through the policies that he has adopted, such as travel ban imposed on a number of Muslim majority countries, the US President is collectively punishing all Muslims.

In this regard, the recent report of Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) can be noted.

From 2014 to June of 2019, CAIR recorded a total of 10,015 anti-Muslim bias incidents across the country. The trend in data shows a steady increase in the number of bias incidents targeting American Muslims over time, with the initial jump occurring after the 2015 entry of Donald Trump into the presidential elections.

Not only did the number of bias incidents increase, the violent nature of the incidents also raised. From 2014 through June of 2019, CAIR recorded a total of 1,164 anti-Muslim hate crimes across the country, including physical assault and property damage. In the first half of 2019, CAIR recorded 75 hate crimes.

From 2014 through June of 2019, CAIR reported a total of 2,783 incidents that involved federal government agencies. The highest number of cases occurred in 2017, at 919 reported incidents. This can be attributed to the Muslim Ban Executive Order signed in January of 2017.

The highest spike in bias incidents occurred in 2017 with 2,599 incidents, a 94% jump over 2014 levels. This can be attributed to the Muslim Ban Executive Order, which was signed within the first 10 days of the Trump presidency.

In the first half of 2019, CAIR recorded 759 anti-Muslim bias incidents.

The most frequent type of abuse, aggregated from 2014 through June of 2019, was harassment, defined as unwanted, unwelcomed and uninvited conduct which annoys, demeans, or offends the target and results in a hostile environment for the target.

The overall trend in federal agency-instigated incidents demonstrates that the FBI is the most common type of federal government agency for which American Muslims report acts of bias, accounting for almost half of the total number of cases: 1,177 total bias incidents.

CAIR chapters recorded 506 anti-mosque incidents from 2014 through June of 2019. Of this total, the highest recorded type of incidents – at 148 - were a result of damage, destruction, or vandalism to mosque property.

In the intertwined world which with the expansion of communications and social media geographical borders are becoming less prominent on a daily basis, humans continue living alongside each other influenced by each other's conditions. In a world where news of incidents in one corner of the world quickly reaches the other parts of the world, the violence and abuse that takes place in a part of the society quickly spreads to the other parts.

Knowing that violence and discrimination are the roots of Islamophobia, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) draws the Human Rights Council's attention to this grave human rights violation.

As a nongovernmental organization, the ODVV believes that the fight against racism and Islamophobia as one of its examples, must be a common fight among all members of the international community, be they governments, international organizations or nongovernmental organizations.

Meanwhile, as forum for dialogue, the Human Rights Council is a forerunner for dialogue among religions for better understanding and raising tolerance. Also by presenting an accurate definition for Islamophobia and its examples, the Council can take positive steps in reducing Islamophobia.

ODVV also believes that when countries such as the United States take numerous measures towards the spread of global violence, unilateralism, discrimination, xenophobia and Islamophobia and impose unilateral sanctions on other countries, their measures need to be confronted through human rights mechanisms, and preventing such measures must be put in the working agenda of the Council.

This NGO expects the Human Rights Council to encourage the United Nations' member states to be committed to international treaties and conventions, consider Islamophobia as one of the instances of human rights violations, through holding HRC panels, adoption of preparation of reports of examples of Islamophobia, and other mechanisms at its hand.