



# DEFENDERS

spring & summer 2013



**ISLAMOPHOBIA  
& SANCTION  
ARE  
VIOLATION OF  
HUMAN RIGHTS**

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# DEFENDERS

spring & summer 2013 - price:4 €

## C o n t e n t s

Call for Participation by Iranian NGOs:  
**International Solidarity Against Inhuman Sanctions**



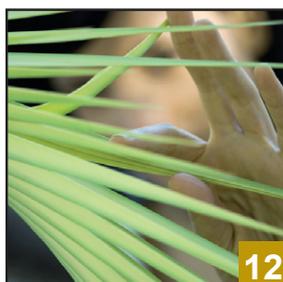
2

**Sectarian Confrontations in Middle East**



4

**Why Shiaophobia?**



12

**Panel on Islamophobia and Violation of Human Rights**



16

**United States of America UPR Mid-Term Report Submitted by the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence**



44

**ODVV Statement on the Shia Killings in Egypt**



32

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## Editor's Note

Despite the important achievements that human rights organizations have made over the years, the world however is faced with increase in violence, abuse, massacres, torture and other forms of human rights violations. Crimes that are being committed in Islamic countries such as Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Bahrain are not things that human rights activists can let go easily. The extremist use of force, murder, the use of illegal groups to crack down on protests, illegal and brutal arrests, refusing permission to send first aid are all grave human rights violations that we witness taking place every day in these countries.

As a nongovernmental organization active in the field of human rights the ODVV has always tried to set its programmes in line with national and international human rights developments. Our Defenders Newsletter too is result of some of the recent activities of the ODVV in three areas of Islamophobia and the violation of Shia minority rights, the role of sanctions in the violation of human rights, and the empowerment of NGOs for their presence in international conferences and sessions.

Aside from the studies of the last decade have shown the extent of Islamophobia, and aside from the fact that this phenomenon is categorised in the racist activities, the thing that has made us dedicate a part of our activities on this is the alarming rise in human rights violations which are the fruits of Islamophobia.

As stated above, the grave violation of human rights which is the result of Islamophobia and Shiaophobia is not something that human rights defenders can easily ignore. For this reason segments of this Defenders issue is dedicated in this regard, in the form of the abstract articles of 2 panels on Islamophobia and the Violation of Human Rights and Violation of Shia minority rights. Which are being held on the sieline of the 24<sup>th</sup> session of the HRC in september 2013.

Furthermore, Iran is faced with a huge volume of sanctions which have put immense pressures on various aspects of the lives of the Iranian people (medical and economic) that are increasing on a daily basis. For this reason the role of sanctions in the violation of human rights is another subject that segments of this issue are dedicated to.

There is also a report of the ODVV's activities towards the empowerment of NGOs for their participation in international conferences, and report formulation for the UPR mechanism in this issue.

Written and oral statements submitted and read in Human Rights Council Sessions, educational workshops and technical sittings are some of the activities of the ODVV in the recent months a summary report of which can be viewed in this issue alongside human rights news and developments from around the world.

# Editorial



Call for Participation by Iranian NGOs:

## International Solidarity Against Inhuman Sanctions

On the initiative of the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence, through releasing a statement and appeal a number of Iranian NGOs called for the removal of inhuman sanctions imposed against Iran. According to the ODVV Public Relations, this appeal is available in three Farsi, English and Arabic languages in a special website: [www.isais.org](http://www.isais.org). also a page on Facebook has been set up in the following address: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/international-solidarity-against-inhuman-sanctions/302817226529626>. Over 100 nongovernmental organizations and institutions and over 2000 Iranian human rights activists, students, researches and citizens have signed this petition in the two months that its been launched.

The appeal is as follows:

The imposition of sanctions against Iran by the West, the United States in particular over the recent months on the pretext of Iranian nuclear activities, in such way that not only economic activities, but a major part of the everyday private and social living of the people are affected. Although the US imposed sanctions on Iran go back more than thirty years, but the full support of the EU, and also forcing other countries to observe these sanctions have all brought along new and unprecedented repercussions with them.

Even though by calling these sanctions targeted, they pretend the aim of these sanctions is solely to affect the Iranian nuclear program, but the

unprecedented restrictions that have been imposed on Iran's financial transactions in the global market, turns the Iranian people into the main target of these sanctions. Now the effects of sanctions on the people are so visible that even American research institutes' reports stress on sanctions being the main reason behind many problems, such as shortage of medicine and some vital goods and commodities, which have negative effects on medical treatment, particularly specific diseases and children. Also the humanitarian activities of NGOs have been affected by these sanctions.

The general debate of the prohibition of sanctions and specific forced unilateral sanctions

in specific terms, due to the negative effects on the enjoyment of human rights, include a vast volume of international human rights documents to themselves. For example the spirit and contents of the majority of the articles of four important human rights documents and resolutions reflect the prohibition of sanctions and encouragement to dialogue, cooperation and respect to the fundamental rights of human beings:

1 - The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

2 - Declaration of Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in Accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

3 - Resolution on the Prohibition of Unilateral Coercive Measures.

4 - Resolution on the Enhancement of International Cooperation in the field of Human Rights.

And this is while US Government and Congress and EU measures in the imposition of harsh and unwise sanctions against the Iranian economy contradict all the principles of the aforementioned documents.

As a collective of nongovernmental organizations and civil society institutions active in the field of human rights, regardless of our political tendencies, warn against the violation and abuse of human rights that are resulted from these sanctions against the Iranian people.

We call upon the United States to remain committed to international human rights laws and principles, and to put an end to these unilateral sanctions against the Iranian people, and for compensation as needed.

We, the undersigned, call upon United Nations human rights bodies and mechanisms to seriously pursue this subject, so that not only to speed up the lifting of sanctions against Iran, but also to create an atmosphere where no Member State of the UN can unilaterally use sanctions as a tool to coerce another Member State into doing what it wants.

It must be said that nongovernmental organizations, associations, civil society activists and ordinary citizens can go the aforementioned website and assist us in the pursuit of the rights of the Iranian people through signing the appeal.

Organization for Defending Victims Violence - Prevention Association of Social Harms - Women's Islamic Institute - Iranian Women's Institute

for Sustainable Development - Family Health Association of Iran - Society for Chemical Weapons Victims Support - Tehran Peace Museum - Bayan Iran Association - Child Welfare Charity Institute - Women's Studies and Research Institute - Mohaimen Charity - Women Heads of Household Association - Espadan Health - Association for Protection of Child Labour - Cultural Society for the Protection of Child Labour - International Peace Institute - Bar Association Human Rights Commission - Nedaye Zeytoun Institute - Iranian Elite Research Center - Eternal Culture House - Iranian Association for United Nations Studies - Mehr Afarinan Kavir Institute - Reyhane Ardebil Charity Institute - Farhangian Meybod - Management Research and Studies Institute - International Movement for a Just Cause - Humanist Association of Hong Kong - International Movement for a Just World-Iranian - American Iranian Council

Promotion of the Lives of Iranians Institute - Clean Nature Support Institute - Family Health Association - Isfahan Bar Association - UNA-IRAN - Imam Sadegh Scientific Research Complex - Sari Red Crescent Society - Maryam Children's Education Charity Institute - Women's Islamic Association - Peymayesh Rahbord Education and Research Institute - Reyhane Alnabi Charity Institute - Dadandishi Zanan Mosalman Assembly - Justice Watch International Association - Sadighe Kobra Cultural Institute - Eternal Culture House - Women's Studies Iranian Association - Kanoon Koosha - Neda Institute - Women Entrepreneurs Association - Hami Association - Women's Cultural Social Council - Sustainable Environment Iranian Women Advocates Association - Brojerd Intellectuals and the Enlightened Society - Operation Mercy - Imam Ali Charity Institute - Rahbord Dideban Institute - E-jaz Mehr Institute - Mehrafarin Cultural Institute - Friends of Successful Families Association - Zeynab Kobra Fund - Andishmandan Bidar Association - Majma Jahani Hazrat Ali Asghar - Ersbaran Institute - Child Labour Support Cultural Society - Salman Yar Mehraban Fund - Armageddon Cultural Association - Gharib Madine Association - Khabar Online News Agency - Association for the Protection of Citizens' Civil rights - Diabetic Prevention and Control International Fund - Nokhbeگان Bibezaat Charity Association



# Sectarian Confrontations in Middle East

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As sectarian tensions keep escalating in Syria, incriminating Iran, in particular, and Shia groups in the region, in general, of making efforts to flare up sectarian confrontations among regional nations has become the main axis of regional media propaganda against the Islamic Republic. This has been especially true since the Lebanese resistance movement, Hezbollah, officially announced its involvement in the war against Syria militants in the strategic town of Al-Qusayr; a town which plays a strategically important role in keeping up Hezbollah's contacts with its regional allies in other parts of the Middle East. But has Hezbollah gotten engaged in the war in Al-Qusayr on the basis of a sectarian approach? It would be better if this question was put forth within a broader framework:

Are Iran and its allies in the region actually trying to add fuel to sectarian tensions across the region as is alleged by certain regional media and many foreign analysts? A glance at sectarian developments and tensions which have plagued the Middle East region during the past two decades will provide us with a more comprehensive image which may help us in giving an answer to this question.

Iraq has traditionally enjoyed, and still enjoys, a special position in sectarian tensions. Despite its secular nature, the former Baathist regime of Iraq [under the executed dictator Saddam Hussein] had practically marginalized the Shia community, which accounts for the majority of the Iraqi population. The discrimination against the Iraqi Shias even got worse after their botched uprising against Saddam's regime in 1991 following which the systematic repression of the Iraqi Shias started. After the fall of Saddam Hussein, the terrorist Al-Qaeda group and its regional allies focused their activities on



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Iraq. As a result, and based on the argument that the new Shia government in Iraq is cooperating with the United States, Al-Qaeda made fighting against the Iraqi government part of its agenda of anti-American struggles. As a direct consequence of that mentality, a spate of bomb attacks swept through Shia cities of Iraq. Also, the holy Shia shrines, which sometimes host hundreds and thousands of pilgrims, became a regular target for the sectarian violence stoked by Al-Qaeda and its regional allies, so that, Iraqi Shias were major victims of sectarian violence in the country. The director of As'hab Al Kisa Organization, which is in charge of counting and registering the names of people who fall victim to terrorist operations in Iraq, has recently announced that a total of 1,005,200 people have been killed as a result of one decade of terrorist operations in Iraq, adding that almost 80 percent of the victims come from Shia regions of the country.

Pakistan is another country in the region which has been witnessing gradual upsurge in sectarian tensions during the past two decades. The situation has gotten so bad that periodical massacre of Shias has become quite an ordinary event during the past few years. Killing 45 Pakistani Shias in a bomb attack in 2008, a bomb attack in the port city of Karachi in 2009 which left 46 Pakistani Shias dead, an explosion

targeting a religious ceremony in 2010 claiming 49 lives, another bomb attack targeting Quds Day ceremony in Quetta (the capital city of Pakistan's southwestern Baluchistan Province) in 2010 which left 80 people dead, and a suicide operation in Parachinar region in 2012 which killed 50 people, are just a few examples of the routine massacre of Shia Muslims in Pakistan. It goes without saying that terrorist operations against Shias, which form a big minority group in Pakistan, still continues on both daily and weekly bases and the aforesaid cases are only a few examples of major operations targeting Shias. The extremist Taliban elements play the pivotal role in the massacre of Shias in this country. They mostly rely on the financial assistance from Arab states in the region for the continuation of their anti-Shia efforts.

Shias in Saudi Arabia live in the country's biggest province, the Eastern (or Al Sharqiya) Province. The province contains almost all the country's oil wealth though the share of Shia citizens from that wealth is much less than non-Shia citizens. Shiism is among the oldest religious denominations followed in Saudi Arabia, but it is not recognized by the Saudi government even as an Islamic faith. As a result of that discrimination, Shias have been systematically deprived of the social advantages which have been even considered for the People of the Book (which include Jews and Christians). The Shias are often called infidels by member of the Board of Senior Ulema, which is the official religious establishment in Saudi Arabia and whose members are also advisors to the Saudi royal court. The Board members have so far issued many fatwas (religious decrees) in this regard. In Saudi Arabia, two forms of security and social suppression is applied to Shia people who took to the streets to demand their rights. This means that in addition to the Saudi security apparatus, the Saudi society in general has been also mobilized against the justice seeking discourse of Shias which has been introduced to the Saudi public as a sectarian discourse. The Saudi regime, therefore, takes good advantage of this public mobilization to suppress social and political demands of Shias.

Bahrain is another country in the region which has been of high importance in the spread of sectarian tensions across the region. In this tiny island state, Shias that account for an 80-percent majority of the population are under severe suppression of the Sunni regime of Al Khalifa. The discrimination against



**During the past two decades, all such cases of sectarian confrontation have been on the rise and have been further intensified through popular uprisings which have taken place since the beginning of 2011**

Shias in Bahrain has been under way in various forms. The Sunni minority in Bahrain is in control of all high-level political posts of the regime and Shias have never been allowed to occupy but inferior posts. As a result, about 90 percent of governmental posts and all the high-ranking positions of the government of Bahrain have been monopolized by the Sunni minority. The security and military forces in Bahrain are also under the effective control of the Sunni minority. Under these conditions, political repression easily changes quality and becomes a form of religious repression. As a result of this development, a group that accounts for the majority of the population in the country is easily marginalized and in addition to being deprived of the advantages that the minority enjoys, is also put under severe repression without having any right to protest. From this viewpoint, the suppression of Shias in Bahrain should be analyzed with more care and in the light of the popular uprising which began in the Persian Gulf state in 2011.

Shias in Bahrain actually started their uprising to demand social and political reforms as well as more political freedoms. They did not seek to topple the

ruling regime. The regime, however, embarked on heavy-handed suppression of the opposition and during its suppression, Manama availed itself of all-out, including military, support of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and other regional allies. In fact, the effort made by the Al Khalifa and Saudi regimes to make a distinction between the uprising of the Bahraini people and other freedom seeking movements in other regional countries, which was followed by military intervention of Saudi Arabia in Bahrain for the suppression of the uprising in an independent country, should be considered the beginning of a new round of sectarian tension in the region. As a result of violent suppression of the popular uprising in Bahrain, tens of Shias were killed while hundreds more were injured or taken into custody who were later exposed to inhumane torture by interrogators who, due to religious differences with Shias, considered torture of Shia protesters as a kind of sacred jihad.

During the past two decades, all such cases of sectarian confrontation have been on the rise and have been further intensified through popular uprisings which have taken place since the beginning of 2011. Throughout those two decades, these tensions were mostly directed against Shias and Shia Muslims were their main victims in the region. Since the beginning of the ongoing crisis in Syria, however, this crisis has been taken advantage of to fan the flames of conflicts between Shias and Sunnis. In line with this policy, accusing Iran, the Lebanese Hezbollah movement, and the Syrian government of committing massacre in Syria has been used as a tool to justify foreign intervention in Syria. The interesting point is that regional media run by Saudi Arabia have been at the helm of this propaganda campaign against Shias. On the one hand, the Saudi regime has been openly sending troops to the neighboring Bahrain in order to suppress freedom seeking forces. On the one hand, and in an effort to topple the government of the Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad, Riyadh has been willingly or unwillingly supporting the Al-Nusra Front and other extremist forces whose rising power throughout region has been a major challenge facing regional countries during the past two decades.

A comparative review of the situation of Shia Muslims under the rule of Al Khalifa in Bahrain and the situation of Sunni Muslims in Syria under the rule of Bashar Al-Assad, or a comparison

between the situation of the Sunni minority in Iran and the Shia minority in Saudi Arabia, will produce a more transparent picture. While in Syria, Sunni Muslims are present at top government posts, both administrative and military, and they have been even appointed as the prime minister, or to other ministries and high military ranks, achieving such posts for Shias in Bahrain is certainly impossible. In fact, if lack of political liberties is taken to be rampant in Assad's Syria, it is quite clear that the lack of liberties has been applied to all Syrians regardless of their religion or sect. At the same time, Shias have been under tremendous political and social pressures in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia just because they are following Shia faith. As for Shias in Saudi Arabia, it would suffice to note that Shias in that country are considered infidels by the official religious apparatus and have been deprived of the minimum degree of social and civil rights which have been conferred on the majority. The public mobilization against this Shia minority has faced them with increasing social difficulties. At the same time, in Iran, all Sunni sects are not only officially recognized, but have been represented since a long time ago at the Islamic Consultative Assembly (parliament), as well as in the city and village councils (since 2005), and have been enjoying the full extent of social and civil rights on an equal level with the rest of the population.

The above facts clearly prove that there is nothing new with the sectarian tensions in the region. At the same time, Shia Muslims, who are currently being accused of making efforts aimed at fanning the flames of sectarian war across the region, have been regularly among the main victims of sectarian tensions and discrimination in various regional countries. In fact, the recent intervention of the Lebanese Hezbollah movement in Syria war took place on the basis of political and military, not sectarian, reasons. The fall of the strategic town of Al-Qusayr, would mean that the town had fallen under the control of the enemies of Hezbollah and [anti-Israel] resistance. This situation would have a serious effect on Hezbollah's reaction to Israel in critical junctures. The fact that Hezbollah withdrew its forces from Syria after the end of the war in Al-Qusayr is further evidence to this reality.

On the whole, turning political confrontations into sectarian tensions, both in the media reports and in the real world, is a tactic used by Arab states



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**But what has been the main outcome of this situation? Obviously, the most notable outcome of the existing situation of sectarian strife has been further escalation of sectarian tensions, which on the one hand, have worked to strengthen Al-Qaeda and its allies, especially in Syria, and increased the possibility of their operations in other regional countries**

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to make up for the serious losses which have been incurred on the so-called "axis of moderation" as a result of the popular uprisings in the past few years. They have also resorted to this tactic in order to weaken the anti-Israel resistance axis in the region. But what has been the main outcome of this situation? Obviously, the most notable outcome of the existing situation of sectarian strife has been further escalation of sectarian tensions, which on the one hand, have worked to strengthen Al-Qaeda and its allies, especially in Syria, and increased the possibility of their operations in other regional countries. On the other hand, heightened sectarian tension has also diverted attention from the issue of Palestine, which has been traditionally the most important issue in the region. It has also reduced resilience of regional states which is requisite for achieving an agreement on such issues that stoke regional tensions, including the situation in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and elsewhere. In other words, escalation of sectarian tension has not only failed to help involved parties to find solutions for regional problems, but has also led to further escalation of regional tensions as a result of reduced flexibility, tolerance and cooperation, which are necessary components for the elimination of the existing misunderstandings and differences among regional states.

# Iran Policy Undermining Europe's Credibility on Health

By: Marc J. Botenga

The European Union (EU) bases much of its soft power on being a “force for good” in international relations. Promoting global health is part and parcel of this claim. However, the disastrous effect EU sanctions are having on social determinants of health and the access to medicine in Iran flagrantly contradicts the Union’s official policy, undermining its credibility as a force for good. Whatever spin you put on it, killing Iranians is no strategy for global health. The election of Hassan Rohani as Iran’s new president gives the EU an opportunity to save that credibility by giving the president all the leeway he needs to improve the country’s public health situation.

## Health determinants in the line of fire

Our health status is determined by the social and economic conditions in which we are born, grow, live, work and age. These social determinants of health include decent working conditions, food security and housing, which all determine how healthy our lives will be. Through sanctions, war or trade, foreign policy heavily influences these determinants. Not by chance, a December 2012 UN General Assembly Resolution on Global Health and Foreign Policy, reaffirming the right of every human being to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, urged states to act on social determinants of health.

Financial sanctions undoubtedly contributed to the collapse of the Iranian currency, the rial. By the end of 2012, some overenthusiastically spoke of

hyperinflation estimating monthly inflation rates of over 50%. CNN reported that the price of the popular barbari bread increased five times, that of feta cheese and meat respectively tripled and doubled. The price of yoghurt and vegetables at least doubled over 2012. The Islamic Republic apparently attempted to protect the poorest, but for some even chicken and fruit became luxuries. According to the BBC the price of one kilogram of rice increased 7,2 times between 2007 and 2013. The price of a kilogram of beef and a litre of milk were respectively 5,7 times and 4,5 times higher in 2013 compared to their 2007 equivalents. By 2013, with inflation rates apparently partly under control, even part of the middle class reportedly had difficulties purchasing popular Ahmad Tea.

The New York Times reports that sanctions also impacted other social determinants. Sanctions against Iran’s gasoline imports led to an increased use of domestically produced gasoline. As it contains more than twice the level of aromatics legally permitted, its use caused a noticeable decline in air quality, as well as cancer and “a range of health problems, from headaches and dizziness to more serious cardiac and respiratory complaints.”

## Access to medicines endangered

Price rises also affect the health system. Economist JavadSalehi-Esfahani analysed data of the Iranian Central Bank and the country’s Statistical Centre showing that price rises for food and medical services “far outpaced other items”. In October 2012, an employee of a hospital in Malayer in Hamedan



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province told the BBC the city's main hospital was encountering serious problems: "We can't buy necessary medication because prices go up by 70% a day." The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran reported that high out of pocket spending pushes Iranians suffering from incurable illnesses to not continue their treatment : "In December 2012, Hossein Ali Shahriari, the chair of the Majlis' [the Iranian Parliament] Health Committee, claimed that the cost of one phase of cancer treatment had risen from 500-600 million rials to 2 billion rials in the course of one year – 'telling [in effect] the majority of these patients to go and die.'"

Although sanctions officially exclude pharmaceuticals, the export of European pharmaceuticals to Iran still decreased by 30% over the second half of 2012. Additionally, banking sanctions make it hard for Iran to purchase and pay for life-saving drugs. By the end of 2012, drugs used for the treatment of gastroesophageal reflux (ranitidine, omeprazole), diabetes, epilepsy (Liskantin), heart problems, gastric cramps (Clinidium-C), high blood pressure (Triamterene-H) as well as certain antibiotics (azithromycin) and contraceptives (levonorgestrel) had all become hard to get. Patients suffering from muscular dystrophy, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis and nerve pains were equally at risk of remaining without the help they needed.

Nasser Naghdi, head of DaruPakhsh, Iran's main pharmaceutical company, told The Guardian: "Our biggest problem is the banking restrictions and the problem of transferring money. We have the currency but we can't transfer it. We can't pay companies outside Iran for the products." But the sanctions' impact on access to medicines go further. Nuclear medicine is an obvious issue, but the Iranian haemophilia society also warned about the negative effect on



**By early 2013, operating theatres were reportedly running out of anaesthetics like atracurium, isoflurane and sevoflurane and at risk of closing down.**

Iranian hemophiliacs relying on imported medicines and blood products. Mid-November, ManucherEsmaili-Lious, a 15-year old haemophiliac from south-western Khuzestan province, died in hospital because his family was unable to find the drug he needed. Reports from the north-eastern Golestan province confirm that dialysis and MS-patients are equally having trouble paying for or obtaining their drugs. Field missions confirmed that children are among the first victims. The US-manufactured quinidine sulfate, used to regulate electrocardiograms and prevent cardiac arrest became hard to import.

By early 2013, operating theatres were reportedly running out of anaesthetics like atracurium, isoflurane and sevoflurane and at risk of closing down. The director of Iran's Orthopedic Surgeons Society, SeyedTaqi-Nurbakhsh, claimed the price of specific medical equipment had risen a hundred times. The Guardian published troubling statistics. Sanctions endanger the chemo- and radiotherapy of 85,000 new cancer patients diagnosed each year, 8,000 hemophiliacs are having difficulties finding blood clotting agents and 23,000 HIV/Aids patients saw their access to antiretroviral drugs restricted, and 8,000 Iranians suffering from the inherited blood disorder thalassaemia risk death because deferoxamine, used to control the iron in their blood, is no longer available.

Until recently, Iran's vibrant domestic pharmaceutical industry might have been able to compensate these losses. However, sanctions also limit the import of those basic ingredients needed for domestic drug production. Even when financial sanctions do not impede international payments for raw materials, the rial's devaluation makes their import a lot more expensive. At the end of the first semester of 2013, the economic newspaper Donya-e Eqtesad reported shortages for over 100 drugs.

### Sanctions or incompetence?

There is no denying the impact of sanctions on international payment difficulties, low-quality gasoline and the decreasing availability of imported drugs, but several reports have argued that the more general deterioration in living conditions is not just or principally due to sanctions, but rather to gross economic mismanagement by the Ahmadinejad administration. This narrative is strongly supported by US strategic communications as it fits neatly in the sanctions' ultimate objective: regime change. In his 18 April 2013 appearance before the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, James Clapper, current US Director of National Intelligence, explicitly admitted that sanctions are intended to create "sufficient restiveness in the street" in order to "jeopardize the regime". The US hopes Iranians will blame their own government for their economic hardship and therefore rise against the Islamic Republic.

Aligned to this strategy, US strategic communications have started to convey the message that the economic woes of Iranians are all their government's fault. Former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton led the way. In an effort to appease critics of Obama's Iran policy, she had been touting the "biting sanctions" bringing "significant pressure to bear on the Iranian regime". But she quickly shifted rhetoric when on 3 October 2012 disgruntled Iranians took the streets against economic hardship. Clinton immediately downplayed the impact of sanctions, asserting instead that the Iranian government "should be held accountable" for the economic crisis, as they had made "their own government decisions, having nothing to do with the sanctions". Victoria Nuland, then spokesperson of the State Department, followed suit and spoke of the "gross mismanagement of the economy"



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saying "the Iranian Government bears responsibility for the bad choices that it is making."

The Iranian government's mistakes are undoubtedly many, but even the Ahmadinejad administration lacked the gross incompetence needed to unleash a humanitarian disaster on its people. Economic mismanagement is unable to explain the speed and depth of the recent deterioration. Ahmadinejad's structural reform policies even received praise from the International Monetary Fund and The Economist. Other reports claimed the government's economic subsidy reform had a positive impact on income inequality and poverty. The Washington Post observed how policy-makers quickly adjusted to sanctions by attempting to boost domestic production.

### Do European sanctions matter?

The impact of European sanctions is qualitatively different from that of their US counterparts. Contrary to the US, the European Union (EU) has indeed long been the Islamic Republic's most important trade partner. EU sanctions even surpass UN sanctions included in Resolution 1929 of June 2010. In July 2010 the Council of the European Union (the Council) hit Iran with what was then "the most far-reaching set of sanctions" it ever imposed on a country. New investments in industries vital to Iranian economy, like oil and gas, were banned. Shipping and air freight activities, but even banking relations as well as so-called "dual use" items, unrelated to nuclear or missile programs, were sanctioned. The European Court of Justice has since annulled sanctions against two major Iranian banks, Bank Saderat and Bank Mellat, as their link to the nuclear program had not been proven. Several weeks later the British Supreme Court also quashed sanctions on Bank Mellat.

In January 2012 the Union imposed an oil, gold, and precious metal embargo. The US Congressional Research Service assessed Iran would be unable to indefinitely sustain the level of lost oil sales caused by the EU embargo, hence acknowledging the fundamental role EU sanctions are playing. The EU clearly plays a decisive role in a US-coordinated attempt at regime change based on harming ordinary Iranians.

A March 2012 Council Regulation forced Belgium-based international payment system SWIFT to cut Iranian banks off, making international payments next to impossible for Iranian banks and businesses. Council Decision 635 of 15 October 2012 went further still by imposing a gas embargo and forbidding all transactions with the Iranian Central Bank. The decision even made financial transfers “due on transactions regarding foodstuffs, healthcare, medical equipment, or for agricultural or humanitarian purposes above EUR 100 000, as well as transfers regarding personal remittances” subject to prior authorization (art. 10.3b). It also targeted the supply of aluminium and graphite. During the Iraq sanctions period, a similar ban came to symbolize the limits of the “dual use” concept as it excluded the export of rather harmless, but graphite-containing, pencils.

### What to do?

Health is part and parcel of the EU’s claim of being a force for good. The fundamental Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union promises to ensure a high level of human health protection in the definition and implementation of all Union policies. The European consensus on development gives prominence to health as a Millennium Development Goal objective. A 2010 Communication by the European Commission insists all relevant internal or external policies



**In order to right these wrongs, the EU should simultaneously implement three policy steps. Firstly, lift all sanctions with a proven direct impact on health, prioritizing those on financial transactions impeding the purchase of medicine**

should contribute to equitable and universal coverage of quality health care, as non-development and non-health policies often have a significant impact on global health.

Yet, EU financial and banking sanctions are designed to complicate international payments. Such cannot but have an impact on Iran’s ability to purchase medical equipment and medicine. Sanctions also limit financial resources available to the government, reducing policy space. The unceremonious dismissal of former Health Minister Marzieh Vahid-Dastjerdi, after she complained about her department lacking sufficient foreign currency for medicine imports, potentially indicated budget constraints. The stress put on the government’s budget might also endanger the further implementation of the Family Physician Plan, essential to both preventive medicine and an efficient health care delivery system.

In order to right these wrongs, the EU should simultaneously implement three policy steps. Firstly, lift all sanctions with a proven direct impact on health, prioritizing those on financial transactions impeding the purchase of medicine. Secondly, conduct an independent health impact assessment of all other sanctions, including those on dual use technologies and amend policy accordingly. Thirdly, consider offering specific support mechanisms to the Iranian health sector. Failing to do so when Iranians elected a moderate president would mean losing all credibility as a force for good.

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Source: <http://www.iranreview.org>



# Why Shiaophobia?

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**By: Khadijeh Barzegar**  
**MS in International Relations & Religious Studies**

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Islamophobia is one of the important debates which in the current era has made the international political literature and political intellectuals to deliberate, and alongside that human rights monitoring organizations have once in a while paid attention to this away from the political noises. It is said that the current era is in fact the result of the 9/11 attacks which was the first spark to this huge fire. It was after these inhuman events that the international dialogue became aggressive, and the West began an all out war against Muslims. This time it was the West that wore its sword on the outside to throw division among Muslims, and with the assumption of wrong interpretations, prepared the ladder of their ascend and the fall of Muslims.

The foundation of the spreaders of Islamophobia is built on the argument that Islamic culture and civilization is at a standstill and lacks the right reaction

towards changes, and also lacks common values with other cultures, and in their view [Islamophobes] neither does Islamic get influenced from them, nor does it influence them. In their evaluation they have reached the belief that the Islamic civilization with a 1400 year history is substandard in comparison with the West's civilization. Barbarism, genderism, violence, defending terrorism, confrontation with symbols of civilization and advancement are all indexes that have assisted Islam's enemies in their one-sided evaluation of Islam and the Shia.

In spite of this evaluation trend, today the world is witness to numerous development and changes such as the Islamic Awakening in Islamic countries, inflation and unemployment, economic, social and political crises, regime changes, natural disasters, killing of Muslims and Islamophobia. A clear example of this claim is the killing of Muslims in Myanmar, the Shia in Iraq, Syria, Bahrain,



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**I don't know about your behind the curtains behaviour and reactions, but the more neutral I think about your behaviour the more I discover that you have not been fair in your interaction with the Shia and Muslims. You did not adopt human rights for mankind and civilization, but you adopted it to come to your aid when needed.**

Afghanistan, Pakistan and Egypt by dominant systems such as Salafi, Wahabi, extremists elements and governments in the region.

Overall it can be said that a combination of historical reasons and a change in the text of international politics in the last two decades have resulted in the appearance and intensification of Shiaophobia as a strategic and security phenomenon, and has found an important place in the security mentality of the West, and although along with security definition we have been witness to the conflicting strategic behaviours of the west. In this brief opportunity my addressee is both with the West and those that claim to Islam and all their might scream violence of Islam.

#### **My word with the West**

Regardless of whether your evaluation of Islamic civilization and accusation of barbarism and violence is right or wrong, the main question that remains is

why do you, who claim to have pure human culture and civilization, easily kill and slaughter human beings who are individuals that have committed no crimes? Is it not you who always speak of culture, conciliation, and dialogue? So what's happened that at times in practice you ignore your factors? Do you think today's advanced mankind and culture will tolerate this human indignity where no action is taken against the genocide of innocent human beings? Do you always fire the last bullet first? If so, exactly how can it be called civilization and make mankind proud of it?

I don't know about your behind the curtains behaviour and reactions, but the more neutral I think about your behaviour the more I discover that you have not been fair in your interaction with the Shia and Muslims. You did not adopt human rights for mankind and civilization, but you adopted it to come to your aid when needed. I don't know what you

mean by equality, freedom and the right to security in your universal pride (Universal Declaration of Human Rights)? You have made a mistake in your contextual analysis of these teachings, and therefore as international actors you could not reach the content that you had in mind. If you supported mankind you would discover that the thing that you have introduced in your Universal Declaration of Human Rights are in fact are the same but in much higher and unique definitions in Islam that are taught as social and citizen's rights in Islam. I think the analysis of your content has not superseded your security mentality, and because of this you have had more of a view of defending the content, and not as opposed to in the position of analysis.

The thing that however seems to be a logical and appropriate solution is for us to get together and analyse the human and social teaching content, so that we do not witness bloodshed and killing. Let us respect cultures so that all cultures can be presented to the worlds as mankind's works. Let us build the humanity's content in such way that the will and demand of every human being is respected by others, and no one gets threatened for choosing a particular belief and culture. Let us define security in such way that all benefit from it

#### **My word with those who claim to Islam**

History is proof to the claim that when Islam was presented to mankind as the most complete and final religion, the first and most important social principle that was introduced by the final prophet was the principle of brotherhood and equality; with the introduction and application of this principle dampened the hope of the enemies to entice and encourage Muslims from humbling to Islam and obeying the prophet.

In the society of the day 1400 years ago, no one had the right to insult or punish a Muslim, or in other words no one had the right to insult human and social values. No one had a right to insult or punish someone for their beliefs, be they Jews or Christians. Yes, our prophet taught us in those days that the principle is humanity and the only supreme point with God is virtuosity and righteousness.

But I don't know what's happened today, that the pupils of the school of the same prophet and the Book have given themselves a higher status and

right, and even at times exceed this and do not deem anyone that is not like them worthy of living. What has happened that our religious brothers and sisters today, deprive us of our fundamental human rights on the charges of being Shia - to an extent that they behead the fathers in front of their children's eyes? What has happened that the killing of Shias has turned into a ticket to heaven for a group of people? The question is important enough so that the 1400 year old life of Islam to be studied for mankind and Muslims so that it is proven to all that Islam's history preconditions heaven to other things.

Before being a Shia, I am a human being, from your same world and community which you claim to civilization, advancement and morality, from your same neighbourhood, who has been nothing but an observer of bitter incidents and did not misstep for the preservation of humanity. I am from your neighbourhood who until yesterday accused the Shia of heresy and prevented them from conducting their prayers, whereas no one prevented you from expressing your beliefs? But today with accusations of heresy you have put yourself in the position of God and have put your hand on humanity and ever so hurriedly are destroying not only the Shia but also mankind, civilization and even God.

You said why resort to violence in today's world, when there is conciliation? So what's happened now that you take inhuman measures against unarmed individuals and film them and proudly produce them as documents of mankind. I don't know whether mankind's gone to sleep or humanity has fallen, and we are going back to the pagan society of 1400 years ago, who do nothing even in protest against all the oppression.

I am not a Shia, but an individual from a world intertwined by you that when saw the heart of a human being as a toy in the hands of your friends, found it hard to breathe, and I thought that the heart of humanity has stopped beating, and human rights does not exist.

I am not a Shia, but a witness to the raised fists of your friends which they easily bring down to any oppressed, and this is while we are in the middle of the peak of the advancement of human civilization, and plenty of international organizations claim to the protection of human rights and combating genocide. Isn't the smallest and yet the most important right



of each individual freedom of belief? Isn't the smallest part of human rights for security to exist for all human beings, and no one hangs him from the scaffold for his belief?

Maybe I am wrong. You tell me what is human rights? Incidentally those who are the flag bearers of human rights, what message do they have in the killing of Shias and Muslims? Even if I was not a Muslim, I couldn't put my awake conscience to a deep sleep and show no reaction.

I don't know where all this hatred and animosity originated from, and those that claim to Islam created a deep divide, a divide for the amendment of which we need to reconsider our beliefs. In none of the monotheist religions do we see a thought that preaches the killing of human beings. All religions respect blood and humanity and they have presented them as part of the golden rule of mankind. So what has happened that from Islam a group has arisen who see those that are not with them as unworthy of living, and deem the shedding of their blood as worthy for their religion. The more I studied monotheist religions history and beliefs, and even non-monotheist ones, I did not reach this mentality. Whatever you call yourself is not important, what is important is your thought which has targeted Islam and mankind like a cancerous tumour. If you are from the school of Islam and the final prophet, just study the history Islam once without your mental presumptions and away from enmity and hatred. Islam is a religion of dignity and not aberration.



**The thing that however seems to be a logical and appropriate solution is for us to get together and analyse the human and social teaching content, so that we do not witness bloodshed and killing. Let us respect cultures so that all cultures can be presented to the worlds as mankind's works. Let us build the humanity's content in such way that the will and demand of every human being is respected by others, and no one gets threatened for choosing a particular belief and culture.**

#### **Final word**

The thing that is clear and obvious for the world is that mankind is trying to find the path to justice and truth, at times this path is fulfilled with Islam, and at times under another name, but what is important is for the right to be able to fulfil with all its criteria, in such way that where people do not get punished or insulted for being Shia. In other words the awakening of mankind is on its way to close the way to any form of oppression and bloodshed. Those that are flag bearers of the defense of mankind, have a heavy duty and mission on their shoulders. Let us hope that international organizations speed up the awakening of mankind and human rights becomes real from the texts of laws and documents.

## ODVV Panels at the 24<sup>th</sup> Session Human Rights Council

Although Islamophobia is not a new phenomenon, but the visible expansion and extent of Islamophobia over the recent years, and also Shiaophobia has resulted in countless number of cases of human rights violations across the world. As stated earlier in this narrative, the grave violation of human rights which is result of Islamophobia and Shiaophobia, is not something that human rights advocates can easily put aside. For this purpose the ODVV has dedicated part of its activities on Islamophobia and Shiaophobia, and to this aim 2 panels on the subjects of Islamophobia and Human Rights and Violation of the Rights of Shia Minorities have been foreseen as 24th Session of the Human Rights Council sideline events.

### **1** Panel on Islamophobia and Violation of Human Rights

At the same time as the 24th Session of the Human Rights Council, the ODVV is holding a sideline panel on Islamophobia and the violation of human rights. This panel will be chaired by Dr. Alireza Deihim on 19 September 2013 in Geneva. Below is a summary of the speeches of the panel:



# Islamophobia: A View of the Facts, Concepts and Expected Roles

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By: Dr. Walid Hammoud

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The Islamophobia phenomenon or discrimination against Muslims is in no way a transitional development in macro and micro proportions in relation to Muslims, particularly in western societies.

This phenomenon which touches the daily lives of Muslims in the West, deprives women because of hijab and insulting women that wear the hijab, racial slurs, death threats, disrespect to mosques and Islamic centres, in individual and group forms through systematic and planned campaigns in directly producing animosity towards Muslims and Islam; and all this is in the framework of the views of a lot of the intellectuals towards Islam and the religious appearances in the lives of Muslims, and see them as a threat to the spirit of the French Republic. Furthermore there is this ambiguity that many believe the Islamophobia phenomenon is nothing but a clash of concepts and terms, concepts that in their subconscious include historical, cultural, social and social contradictions, and have resulted in the formation of the Arabic Islamic culture; a viewpoint which many intellectuals look at Islam from, and this is why they reduce it to an evil, wrongdoing warmongering creature and at the same time they forget the numerous forms of Islam in historic and geographic expanse dimensions and different cultural levels.

The production of concepts process often observes the history of ancestors, and influential thought frameworks such as the influence of culture on religion or history on politics, and ultimately in various proportions and in view of different reasons, other aspects come about and appear. The root of this word originates from the Greek word "phobos" which means subconscious fear without reason. Therefore it can be said that Islamophobia is a baseless subconscious fear from Islam. The refusal to accept Islam (subconscious fear), where in most cases are fed from old beliefs and their renewal and the chaotic impressions that are resulted from. - is an effort to link concepts such as Islam, Arab, Mus-

lim, Islamic, terrorist, regressive etc.

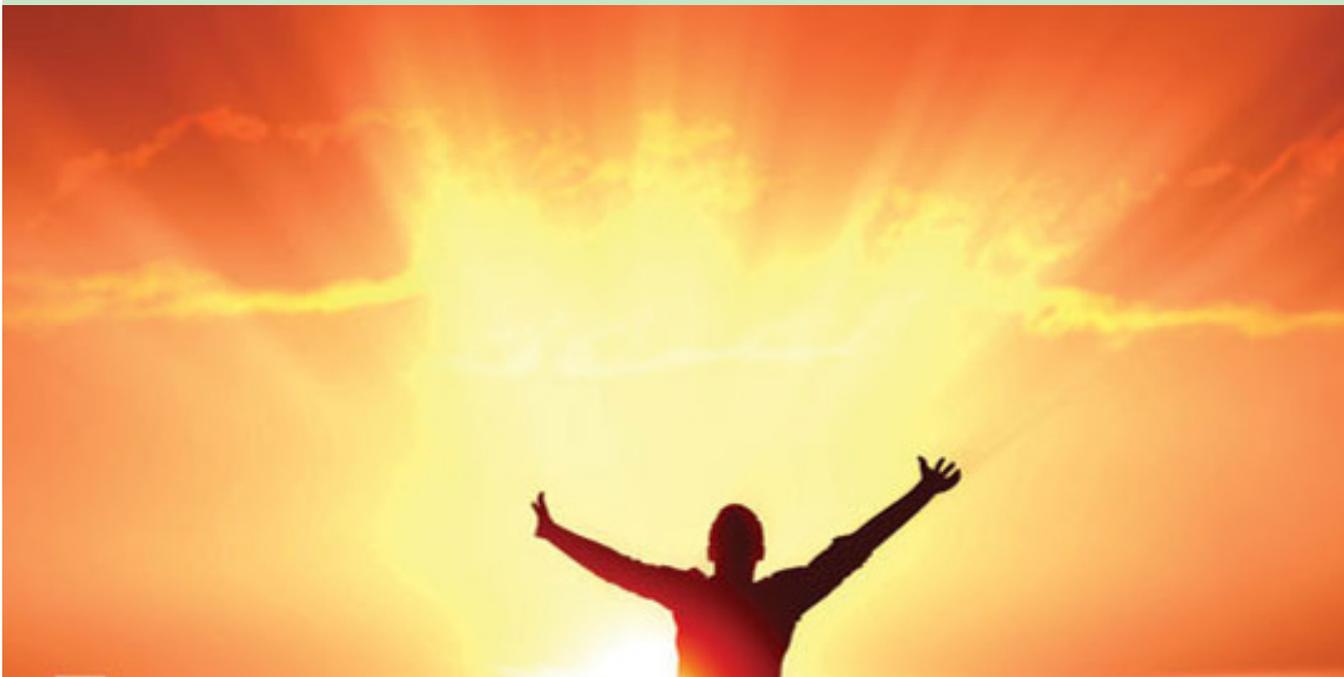
The Islamophobia phenomenon sees close connections between Islam and violence, Islam and democracy, and Islam in civil societies, therefore it assumes some of the asserted issues as a domestic threat for Europe on the basis of which parts can be institutionalised away from society where enmity on an extensive level can start from.

Islamophobia in the interactions of a group that is powerless to improvement and change, and overall leans on Islam being violent and aggressive, barbaric, backwards, and Islam gives birth to terrorism and the clash of civilizations, in such way that he or she is deemed as "other" who do not have any common values with other cultures, and have no influence on or influence from them, suffice to say that deem them political ideologies that are for the realisation of political and military interests away from the individual and social needs of human communities.

In fact it is not possible for us to exonerate Muslims from the occurrence of unpleasant acts; particularly when considering various forms of Islam pursue terrorism, extremism and murder inside and outside these communities. These elements support the growing religious Salafist tendencies, groups that have closed identities that cannot tolerate interaction and conciliation and improvement of societies, something that portrays Islam as negative. In fact no single Islamic mentality and belief has total copyright and legitimacy, An example of moderate and conciliatory and living Islam, comes with moderate appearances and religious improvements. This is while some of these Islamic tenancies through confrontation with Western societies or various tendencies and different Islamic sects, adopt killing as legitimate tools to reach their goals.

Throughout history racist insults have seen many term changes, therefore this process has evolved from "dirty immigrant" or "dirty Arab" which were used in the 1960s to "dirty Muslim" which is used nowadays.

Most often the past and the reasons behind this



animosity are questioned, but this question of animosity is followed by the question whether Islamophobia is as a result of the individuals or groups of minorities are second class citizens or rooted in religion, and credited to changing to an identity subject? Meaning the same subject that has turned Islam into an imported religion of migrants.

The message that this media campaign has, treats Islam with prejudice and humiliation without doing an unbiased and scientific research on the religion. Furthermore these media campaigns while working towards the establishment of their methodical frameworks, they also place Islam and Muslims in the way of the positions that threaten the civil values of civilization cultures.

This phenomenon in its various definitions and proportions raises this question in the mind that what exactly is the satisfactory example of Islam for the West? Is the satisfactory point in France where Islam in France is defined as the identity of Muslims that do not contradict with the societies values? Or is it that many see French Islam as estranged from past cultural and identity heritage as the satisfactory point in France?

Many questions are raised by researchers on the proportions and concept that help the growth of this phenomenon in the thought and sentiments of the addressees in the Western societies; from the en-

larging of this culture regarding Islam as an identity which are notably intertwined in the democratic collective of the Western societies, so that values and attentions that attempt on their basis for defining Muslims, to create the "citizens" or "migrants towards the West". The pivotal question is that the sociological dimensions that what are the sociological dimensions that may help the details of the daily lives of the Muslim citizen and his power to improve and solidify with his surrounding society?

This review tries to recall variables that derive from the existence of this phenomenon and its individual and collective effects on the lives of Muslims as newcomers or citizens that are part of the fiber of Western society, and then the study tries to for the reconstruction of this concept on the basis of real and scientific variables away from double standards.

And finally the important question which we might be in search of is what is the expected role of Muslims in the elimination of chaotic and wrong beliefs that are the product of many others on the basis of culture and religion? What is the role that intellectuals and cultural community for the presentation of a balanced and real image of Islam with various aspects?| What is their role in the presentation of "moderate examples of an Islam which is based on the respect to the dignity of mankind?



# Religiophobia

## Fear of Religion, Fear of the Religious

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By: **Dr. Issa Diab**

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Islamophobia is the term used, and widely known, for “Fear of Islam” or, put in another way, “the fear that people, mainly in the West, have and see coming from Islam”; and people expressed their fear by rejecting Islam altogether and describing it as a religion of terrorism and violence. This attitude toward Islam applies on the attitude towards Muslims, the fact that gives place to see in this attitude a behavioral abnormality: racism, discrimination, Prejudices against Islam and its followers.

What is written above about Islamophobia applies also on Christianity and, thus, we can also speak about Christianophobia, and let me say also “Religiophobia”.

I will deal, in this lecture, first, with the circumstances that led to what I call “Religiophobia” in the western world. Then I will highlight cases of racial discrimination and violation of human rights because of Religiophobia.

In a second step, I will deal with “Religious Pluralism”; I will show that it is the result of multiplicity of cultures and societies, and is, indeed a fact of history, and the inhabitants of the globe should accept it as a fact of existence. But

within religious pluralism there is the unity of good intent when there is homogeneity between religion and humanism and human rights.

In a third step, I will show how and when Religion Turns from Restoring Faith to Slaying Ideology of Violent Religious Takfir”; religion turns then from its good intent to different ideologies that abuse the human rights by a terrorist and violent behavior.

In a forth step, I will attempt to make suggestions that help to purge the religious thought of extremism and fanaticism.

I would suggest the following outline:

1. The circumstances that led to the emergence of the “fear of Religion”
  - a. The Emergence of Islamophobia
  - b. The Emergence of Christianophobia
  - c. The Emergence of Religiophobia
2. When Religion Turns from Restoring Faith to Slaying Ideology or “Intervention of Violent Religious Takfir”
3. Religious Pluralism and the Unity of Faith intent
4. Save the Religion from Wrong Religious

This lecture is treated according to the discipline of History of Religions, Philosophy of Religion and Religious Sciences.



## Islam and the West: Communications Nature

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By: **Dr. Abdollah El-Seid**

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Islamophobia or enmity with Islam, or fear from Islam is not a new phenomenon, which over the recent years has escalated through improper behaviour for the establishment of hate towards Muslims, particularly following the 9/11 terror attacks.

In studying the changes in the link between Islam and the West, researchers and analysts have tapped on the Islamophobia phenomenon and have entered this term into the scientific environment in a noticeable way, and see it away from the truth, and deem it as a disease in the West, and some others deem these definitions as a Western method that is with the aim of enmity with everything that is defined to them as Islamic.

Naturally Islam does not call for violence, and extremists are not all Muslims, and many of these extremists live in safety in Europe, and they spread the accusation which the West spreads as Islamo-

phobia only targets confrontation with Islam and there are no limitations in its publication, especially when Islam forbids violence and Islamic scholars and clergy deem it inappropriate.

### **1. Historical experiences**

One of the cause of the spread of this phenomenon can be named as the military conflict between the West and Islam, which throughout history with the Islamic victories and the expansion of boundaries and horizons over successive centuries and the domination of Muslims over the most important bases of the Roman Empire in the East and Islam's and Islam's creeping advances towards the West. All these have remained in West's memories and brought with it fear, hate and human animosity.

And these painful historic experiences in the Western minds did not end in the boundaries of the Battle of Yarmouk, but resulted in a hue chain of



scenes of violent confrontations that have been recorded in history, and continued on in many crisis fields; such as the victory of Andalusia in 91 HجريGhamari and The Battle of Tours (October 732), also called the Battle of Poitiers, where if Muslims had won, Islam would have entered France too. And the Ottoman's Victory in Constantinople and many more examples of the constant battles between the two sides.

## **2 - Lack of understanding of Islam**

As well as what's been said above, the failure to understand Islam is also seen as one of the reasons for this phenomenon, because there is grave lack of understanding of the truth about Islam, particularly in the Western world where their knowledge on Islam is taken from sources that are void of scientific principles, neutrality, personal feelings and independence of the author, and also the educational culture and methods in the Western schools and universities are full of a vast volume of misinformation. All this alongside a lot of Muslims' dishonouring of Islam must be studied.

## **3 - The role of orientologists**

Just as the orientology process has played a highlighted role as one of the tools of colonialism for the domination of the East, and most orientologists have been advisors and consultants and allies of the West's colonialism, and this has resulted in most orientological studies and researches to be of colonial nature.

## **4 - Islam and the reality**

Deeming Islam and the reality of Muslims as one and the same has a fair share in the spread of the Islamophobia concept. The Islamic and Arabic world is from the return civilization and culture is heading towards the worst political, economic, social and cultural conditions, and this has resulted in the Islamic world to fall behind the levels of civilization production and participation in the promotion of human conditions and development from the rest of the world. Politically, wars and armed conflicts continue to hit the children of the Islamic

world (Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, Algeria, Syria, Libya, Tunisia and even Egypt).

And on the economic scale statistics show that despite the states in the region being rich in human and natural resources, more than half a billion Muslims live below the poverty line. Corruption, mismanagement and the unequal distribution of income and wealth and famine is strife in most parts of the Islamic world.

At the society's levels, huge class differences which increase year by year, women's dignity and honour is violated, young people's rights and roles are ignored, and the neglect of children, all these tell you that the western values and mechanisms do not work for you and you avoid them.

The Western world assumes its culture to be in the shadows of cultural globalization over the Islamic world, and continue to produce and impose their single clichés on food, clothes, family and sexual relations, and everything to do with individual and social life of people, particularly consumer values; and all this is deemed as one of the most important economic necessities of globalization.

## **5 - Defamation and insults**

And finally it's the turn of the enticing efforts which are made with the aim of bringing about suspicion towards the Divine Message of Islam and its Great Prophet, which is committed in the form of Islamophobia. The thing that is alarming to you is the continued efforts to tarnish the image of Islam and Muslims in the West. From the publishing cartoons to an opinion in history we discover that a famous 18th Century French playwright Voltaire writes a play called Fanaticism, or Mahomet the Prophet, in which the Prophet is insulted in the same obnoxious ways as done later by Indian author Salman Rushdie in his 1988 book Satanic Verses, a book that was supported by the West, and deemed as the victory of the freedom of expression principle, which pained the inner layers of the Islamic world.

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## **Panel on: Violation of the Human Rights of Shia Minorities**



At the same time as the 24th Session of the Human Rights Council, the ODVV is holding a sideline panel on the violation of the human rights of Shia minorities. In this panel speakers from various countries and different religions will be discussing the violation of the human rights of Shia minorities. Panel on Islamophobia and Violation of Human Rights. This panel will be chaired by Dr. Alireza Dehim. Below is a summary of the speeches of the panel:

# A GENOCIDE IN THE MAKING AGAINST SHI'A MUSLIMS

By: Dr. Bashar Baghdadi

Syria represents a unique complexity and mixture of ethnicities, religions and sects. This mixture has learnt to collaborate throughout history, and have co-existed for a long time. In the spring of 2011, an alleged uprising began with the advertised aim of instilling freedoms and democracy. Many Syrians perceived the 'uprising' as welcomed and long-awaited winds of change that would propel the country politically, economically, and socially into the 21st century. But soon after the country slid into uncharted territory. These events put this long-lived coexistence in jeopardy. Causing the most damage to minorities and local communities. At less than 1%, Twelver/Imami Shias constitute one of the smallest fractions among all the sects amongst the country's 25 million population. Shi'as have been directly and outspokenly targeted by the Takfiries, who have come from near and far and been infiltrating the country since the unrest began. These Takfir groups are strange to Syrian people, and are backed up by invested regional forces. This report will explain in details, backed up with evidence; the extension of human rights violation against this minority, examining both the width and depth of these violations.

This report will classify these violations into dimensions in light of the Human Rights Act. The dimensions are:

- Human rights charter violations: including, the right to live/exist, freedom of religion practice, freedom of speech (through media outlets and the internet)

- The Shi'as have been a subject to forced displacement from their cities and villages; this is done as a result of direct threats of their lives and

their livelihoods

- Shrines of religious and historic figures, who are treasured and cherished by the majority of Muslims but mistakenly are attributed as exclusive to Shi'as are being under brutal attacks

- All Shia prominent figures are being targeted openly, actions are being taken against all of them to different extents; such as directly addressing threat letters, kidnapping and holding hostage for ransom, or even publicly shooting them dead

- The most disturbing and horrific acts of violence against Shi'a in Syria come in two forms that collectively, over time, have started to resemble an act of genocide against this minority: besieging towns and mass killings. Several Shi'a towns have now been under siege for months whereby the Takfiries (who, for various reasons, are so far unable to break into those towns) have chosen to trap people in depriving them from their basic needs of food, water, medicine, or even baby milk in a clear bid for mass extermination. In other towns and villages, Takfiries have committed brutal mass killings storming houses door-to-door seeking Shi'a people and carrying out executions of entire families; accounting for some of the most gruesome details of point blank executions, slaughtering, and beheadings of men, women, children, and the elderly alike...

Syria is home to Damascus, which is the oldest continuously inhabited capital in the world. Throughout history, members of all sects and religions had lived harmoniously and peacefully in Syria. Syria is now under threat of losing its unique identity by an alien group that is doesn't have any respect or consideration to Human Rights and want to impose their ideology against all Syrians until make them clones in their barbaric image.

# SHIA MUSLIM GENOCIDE

Shia Muslim genocide and its roots in Pakistan's legal system and constitution system

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By: Hassnain Naqvi

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In Pakistan there is a genocide being perpetrated against the minority Shia Muslim population. At the core, this article seeks to examine the possible roots for this violence in Pakistan's legal and constitutional system, as well as examine international obligations that may be relevant to the prevention of this violence. With particular emphasis on the obligation to prevent genocide contained within Article 1 of the United Nations Convention of the Punishment and Prevention of the Crime of Genocide 1948, and further provide an analysis on the failure of the state in its responsibility to protect the Shia Muslims.

The Shia Muslim population in Pakistan is in the minority (at around 15%-20% of the population), with Sunni Muslim constituting the majority. There are, however, further sub-sects of Islam within each group.

It must be noted, that there are socio-historical factors which have contributed strongly to the forms of violence currently seen in Pakistan. Though there is a legacy of violence, the targeting of the minority Shia in recent years must lead to an examination of the state itself.

The move toward altering and converting Pakistan into an extreme orthodox Islamic State intensified during the control of General Muhammad Zia ul-Haq (governing between 1977-88), who usurped power through a military coup on July 5, 1977 by unconstitutionally overthrowing the popularly-elected government of Bhutto (1971-77). Zia was known as a one who sympathised with hard-line religious groups. General Zia ul-Haq began a program of legalised penalties against minorities, politically entrenching extremist views. Under Zia, a close alliance emerged between the military and extreme orthodox Sunnis.

Other Islamic nations were also heavily influential. The conflict between Iran and Saudi Arabia saw them exercising a “proxy war for religio-political influence and clout” in Pakistan through Shia-Sunni divisions.<sup>14</sup> Thereafter, the Iran-Iraq war saw Saddam Hussein’s Sunni dominated regime in direct conflict with the Shiite state of Iran in the 1980s, and both sides sought to influence support from factions in Pakistan.

It is believed that the constitutional structure could be considered as the root of the state failings to prevent Shia violence. The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973 has been subject to many amendments.

The criminal justice also has a role to play in violence against the Shia. The criminal justice

system fails to arrest and prosecute militants, with significantly low conviction rates.<sup>52</sup> Many link these failings to the politicisation of the police force (amongst other contributing factors).

However, the positive obligation to prevent genocide was expressed most clearly in the 2007 judgment of the International Court of Justice Case *Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro*. Though it limited its scope, it reflected on one key factor in the determination of the obligation to protect as being capacity of the State to effectively influence the actions of persons likely to commit genocide. When we consider this within the context of all the various socio-political factors we have identified as intervention points, it implicates the Pakistani government strongly. The court looked for instance at the links between the state and the main actors – which in the case of Pakistan, is historically strong with increasing media reports directly implicating specific ties to militant organisations.

The present article, discussing the above mentioned issues in further detail, elaborates on the fact that in Pakistan violence against the Shia is particularly profound and there is violent clashes between the Shia and Sunni populations, it studies the socio-historical roots of this violence, discusses the roles Pakistan governments have played so far, how they have dealt with the problem; their success and failures. More over, there are discussions of the legal factors influencing the problem, the constitutional factors and Pakistan criminal justice system which have a role to play in violence against the Shia. The present article tries to provide answers for questions such as the following: Why genocide needs to be prevented and what are the obligations for such preventions?, Why Pakistan government has failed to prevent genocide so far? And Why there is request for international interventions on genocide in Pakistan

# Islamophobia

By: **Nikolas Anastasiadis**

When Christianity's consolidation as official religion of the Roman empire took place, the Ecumenical Councils, conferences, of theological experts, assembled by the Roman Christian emperors, undertook the delineation of the doctrine and the settlement of faith issues. The central authority was holding the jurisdiction to apply their decisions within the empire. Therefore the central authority emerged as the guardian or the executive representative of the doctrine.

The central authorities of Islamic empires, in a similar trend were encouraging the legal scholars and theologians to define an Islamic orthodoxy, insomuch they were in need for credentials ensuring their control, in vast territories where the tribal identity, or the labyrinthine blood relations and spiritual chains that were going back to the era of the Prophet Muhammad(s), his family(a) and companions were considered the main sources of legitimacy.

In that context any dissatisfaction, with the current policies, or criticism on them was equivalent to denial of religion, polytheism or heresy. The Shiite populations of the empire, due to their structural opposition in any random seizure of Islam's leadership, were charged many times as such and so they found themselves subjected to every kind of arbitrary authoritarian practices.

Shiites were representing the "other" in relation to which, the central government was constructing roles and identities. In many times of crisis (external invasions, popular discontent) the central government was activating the scapegoat mechanism against Shiites, aiming to the restoration of social order and the psychological relief of the majority. Shiites eventually were killed or burned alive and just like the ancient times, such fascinating spectacle of a sacrifice, was serving the concealment of the inconsistencies in governments narrative, and was guaranteeing that there is a "divine command" in behalf of whom the authority acts.

Shiites therefore were forced to conduct a

double life, compliant with the external commands of the each time re-defined Islamic Orthodoxy in public space on one hand, and the practicing of their traditions in the shadow on the other. This life condition which is known as Taqiyya, stoke the fire of imagination among the first Orientalists and some extremist Ulema of the Hanbalischool of law, who attributed outrageous accusations to the Shiite populations. The second ones gave to the exclusion of Shiites a strict theological shape. In their apocalyptic perception of time, stigmatization of Shiites is a "religious duty" in the most literal sense of the term.

Syria witnessed many times massacres, plunders and pogroms against the various Shiite populations especially Under the Ayyubid, Burid, Mamluk and occasionally Ottoman dynasties, thing that possibly explains the allocation of religious space in the northern Levant. Shiite populations of Syria and Lebanon were scattered in mountainous, rough areas with some kind of natural fortification or/and coastlines (Latakia, Beqaa Valley, Nabatieh, Sidon, Tyre, Tartous, Golan etc.).

Today Shiites of various nuances are the second largest religious community in Syria (13-15%), and they can be found in the most important urban areas (Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, Hama), their provinces and villages, and although their population was in gradual decline during the previous centuries, the last 50 years this trend changed. Many conversions to Twelver Shiism took place and, the political situation in the wider area contributed to the increase of the number of Shiites as well. A wave of Iranian emigres, mainly dissidents to Shah Pahlavis governance fled to Syria, followed by a large number of Iraqi Shiites that were forced to leave their country due to Saddam Hussein's regime persecution of Twelvers, a number further boosted after 2003's Invasion of Iraq. These populations, unlike native Syrian Shiites mainly reside in the areas around the holy shrines of Sayyida Zeynab, Sayyida Ruqayya and Sayyida Sukayna.

The second largest minority in Syria are the Christians(10%).Most of them adherents of the Greek Orthodox Church, adherents of the Melikite Greek Catholic Church and the Syriac Orthodox Church constitute a considerable amount of the Christian population as well.

Syria is also home of the largest Druze community in the world(3% of the total population).

Fragments of ancestral religions and cults(Judaism, Gnosticismetc) can also be found, but their followers do not exceed the 1% of the total population.

Sunni Muslims, including the members of Naqshbandiyya and Qadiriyya Sufi orders constitute the overwhelming majority of the Syrian population(74%).

As we said before, Shiite populations in Syria were in a continuous state of discrimination, perhaps with the sole exemptions, the Fatimid and Uqaylid periods .

The Collapse of Ottoman rule marked the end of prejudice and hatred.

In the wake of Arab Nationalism, Arab scholars from every confession, started to work together for the formation of a common Identity, based on language, culture, historical heritage, and an inclusive Islam. Resistance to the waning Ottoman rule at first and the European colonialism later, were now the priorities of the Arab Populations. Furthermore the creation of an independent, modern, powerful nation state for the Arab people, according to the European standards-as envisioned by Pan-Arabists, presupposed the overcoming of sectarianism, tribalism, regionalism, and the divisions of whatever nature the Arab Nation has been subjected to. In light of these developments Sunni and Shiite populations started to live harmonically and to cooperate against what they were viewing as a common threat to their customs and traditions, i.e. the cultural expansionism of Europe and the secularist tendencies within the Arab Nationalism itself.

In that context Mahmud Shaltut, the Grand Imam

Of Al-Azhar University restated the Ottoman recognition of Twelver Shiism as the fifth school of Sunni Islamic law(1958).

This climate was about to change with the fade of European Colonialism, and the Decline of Arabic Secularism. The old differences between Shiites and Sunnis instigated once by the governments started now to colonize the religious communities themselves. Excluded from a process of modernization that was always privilege of some wealthy elites a large part of the youth in Islamic World, found in the strict, puritanical and literalist interpretations of Islam, by the aforementioned extremist Hanbali medieval scholars an oracle of revolution against what they perceived as alienation of Islam and a source for an imaginary reconstruction of the authentic first Muslim community. In the point of view of these medieval Ulema, the notion of bidah (innovation) has central role, actually is the one and only idea around which their system evolves. The categorization of Shiites as "innovators", an accusation worse from disbelief(kufr) in their narrative, makes the Shiite a bare life or a nonperson within the Muslim community, justifying thus any kind of abuse committed against him.

The followers of this doctrine, known as Salafis, vary from peaceful puritans to violent jihadists. Suppressed and under close surveillance from the secular dictatorships of Libya, Egypt and Tunisia, they became essentially emancipated during the Arab Spring, in which they saw a opportunity to revive a Khilafa government, encompassing the whole Islamic world. Exploiting the Syrian unrest, Salafi jihadists both of Syrian and non-Syrian origin are conducting a war, not against the Syrian government anymore but against whatever they perceive as un-Islamic. In many Zones under their control, they have established terror regimes, and death squads, are proceeding to Unlawful killings, Hostage Takings, Rapes, Torturing, Brutal Murders, targeting mainly-as we ll analyse thoroughly-The Shia populations.

**طرح «پیشگیری از خشونت خانگی و آموزش مهارت‌های زندگی»**  
**Prevention of Domestic Violence and life skills training**

مجری:	انجمن دفاع از قربانیان خشونت Organization for Defending Victims of Violence
سازمانهای همکار:	اداره کل امور اتباع و مهاجرین خارجی وزارت کشور کمیسیاری عالی سازمان ملل متحد در امور پناهندگان Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants' Affairs (BAFIA) United Nation High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR)
محل اجرای طرح:	کن / Kan
بهره وران طرح:	۶۰ نفر اعم از ۳۰ زن و ۳۰ مرد افغان 60 Afghan men and women Refugees
زمان اجرای طرح:	سال ۱۳۹۲ / ۲۰۱۳
مراحل اجرای طرح:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ تدوین بسته آموزشی</li> <li>■ برگزاری دوره آموزشی «آشنایی با مهارت‌های زندگی» آموزش خود آگاهی و همدلی آموزش روش‌های ارتباط مؤثر فردی و بین فردی آموزش مهارت حل مسأله آموزش مهارت تفکر خلاق آموزش مهارت تصمیم‌گیری آموزش مهارت تفکر انتقادی آموزش روش‌های سازگاری با هیجانات و مقابله با فشارهای روانی</li> <li>■ پابلیت دوره آموزش مهارت‌های زندگی توسط آموزشگران دوره</li> <li>■ اعزام کارشناسان ارزیاب برای پاسخگویی به سؤالات</li> <li>■ ارزشیابی روند آموزشی و تدوین گزارش نهایی</li> </ul>

## Prevention of Domestic Violence and Life Skills Education Workshop for Afghan Refugees Residing in Kan - 2013

Through signing of a tripartite agreement between the ODVV, BAFIA and the UNHCR, this project began in seven stages from March 2013 for 60 Afghan refugees - that included 30 men and 30 women - with the aim of reducing domestic violence. The project is still ongoing.

Stage one: the project began with the initial drafting and studying of resources, preparation of an educational package, the determination of evaluation method, determination of education methods, coordination with trainers, preparation of a guidebook and invitation of the addressees.

In this stage while conducting library resource studies, searches were done in resources on the internet, and at the same time for each skill 1 training guide book (ten in total) for peer trainers were prepared as training aid. These guide books were given to the trainers after learning each skill. A booklet that included introduction to life skills in general was prepared for the trainers. A CD that included all the educational subjects were given to the trainers at the end of the first stage of the course. Also the training method of the course training of peers in workshop method were also determined. Evaluation method in the form of pre and post tests and a general survey were selected for the end of the stage.

At first the addresses of the course were identified by one of the Afghan refugees residing in Kan (90 individuals altogether: 45 women and 45 men) and 60 individuals out of the total were selected through a written test and evaluation.

Stage two: this stage included the determination of the trainees according to the educational and criteria variables that had been considered that were selected on the basis of an evaluation form. While reviewing the general characteristics of individuals such as age, gender, education levels and so on in this form, also questions on the ability of individuals to understand the education materials and the transfer of these materials to others had been foreseen.

Stage three: in this stage the training of peer edu-

cators and the holding of pre and post tests and the documentations were done. This stage of the project concentrated on the ten life skills education via the workshop method. These trainings took place from 8 till 30 May, 2013.

The subjects of discussion in this course were:

- Self awareness education
- Sympathizing education
- Effective individual communication concepts and methods education
- Effective between individuals communication with emphasis on nonviolent communication education

by the facilitators via the workshop method, group plays and workgroups were also held. The number of participants on the basis of gender were 30 men and 30 women.

Stage four: In this stage a life skills pilot course was held for peer educators which had commenced in the final sessions of the education course by the educators. In order to prevent from the learned stuff being forgotten, while learning themselves, the educators started teaching others. These trainings took place in the homes or schools of the educators, and each individual according to commitment to the project was obligated



- Problem solving skills education
- Creative thinking skills education
- Decision making skills education
- Coming to terms with anxieties methods education
- Confronting mental pressures and stress reduction methods education

This stage of the project began with doing a pretest and then the definition of life skills. In the next workshops the 10 skills were taught and ended with holding a post test and completion of a general survey of the course.

Through the presentation of the education subjects

to train 5 peers (this stage has not finished yet).

Stage five: in this stage the evaluation expert was sent to get answers to question and to evaluate the education process. Four observation and evaluation visits with trainers have been conducted to date in individual and group forms. In these visits, the trainers discussed their opportunities, threats and their needs for the better advancement of the project. Also questions that they had come across during the training and were not able to answer were raised by the trainers and suitable answers were provided by the observation and evaluation expert. (This stage began in June and has not completed yet)



## Raising Capacity and Effectiveness of NGOs in the UPR on Iran

Following the formation of a new mechanisms in 2007 at the Human Rights Council called "Universal Periodic Review", the ODVV compiled a project on the basis of the raising capacity and effectiveness of Iranian NGOs in the UPR on Iran and subsequently with the planning and organizing a vast range educational, research and information dissemination activities for the presence of Iranian NGOs in the UPR.

In the first round of the UPR, while conducting extensive thematic research on countries under the UPR and submission relevant reports, the ODVV held capacity building and empowerment and the role of NGOs in the UPR mechanism education courses and prepared the basis for a

large number of Iranian NGOs' participation in this mechanism.

The ODVV consequently draw a programme for the second round of the UPR for raising capacity and effectiveness of NGOs in the second round of the UPR. Since the second round of the reviews are based on the recommendations given in the first round, the ODVV's research and education activities were also based on the recommendations from the first round.

One of these activities was the holding of education courses on the "introduction to UN human rights mechanisms" and "report writing for the UPR on Iran" for nongovernmental organizations.

These courses were held with the aim of

capacity building Iranian NGOs and their introduction to the UPR mechanism, and how they can play a role in this mechanism. While introduction of NGOs to UN human rights mechanisms such as covenants, declarations and conventions, and the Human Rights Council and especially the UPR mechanism, then review in the second round with a stress on the recommendations were taught. In the next stage UPR report writing methods were taught, how reports were collected and submitted and the role of NGOs.

Following these courses participating organizations through writing independent reports acquired the ability to play their roles in the UPR mechanism.

These courses were foreseen for 30 NGOs, and due to the overwhelming reception the courses increased to two courses for 80 NGOs representatives.

The education method in these courses were workshop and participation methods in the form of 2+1, meaning in the first 2 days the participants were introduced to UN human rights mechanisms and report writing method, and approximately after 2 months and writing their reports, in 1 day the participants exchanged views and made corrections for their final reports.

The courses were held in August and September 2012.

Promotion of the Lives of Iranians Institute - Imam Khomeini Aid Committee - Clean Nature Support Institute - Family Health Association - Isfahan Bar Association - UNA-IRAN - Imam Sadegh Scientific Research Complex - Sari Red Crescent Society - Maryam Children's Education Charity Institute - Women's Islamic Association - Peymayesh Rahbord Education and Research Institute - Reyhane Alnabi Charity Institute - Dadandishi Zanan Mosalman Assembly - Justice

Watch International Association - Sadighe Kobra Cultural Institute - Eternal Culture House - Women's Studies Iranian Association - Kanoon Koosha - Association for Preventing Social Harms - Neda Institute - Women Entrepreneurs Association - Hami Association - Women's Cultural Social Council - Sustainable Environment Iranian Women Advocates Association - Brojerd Intellectuals and the Enlightened Society - Child Labour Protection Association - Operation Mercy - Tavalod Dobareh Charity Society - Imam Ali Charity Institute - Rahbord Dideban Institute - E-jaz Mehr Institute - Mehrafarin Cultural Institute - Friends of Successful Families Association - Zeynab Kobra Fund - Andishmandan Bidar Association - Majma Jahani Hazrat Ali Asghar



- Ersbaran Institute - Child Labour Support Cultural Society - Salman Yar Mehraban Fund - Armageddon Cultural Association - Gharib Madine Association - Khabar Online News Agency - Association for the Protection of Citizens' Civil rights - Diabetic Prevention and Control International Fund - Nokhbegan Bibezaat Charity Association - Iranian Red Crescent Society - Iranian Lawyer

# ODVV Statement on the Shia Killings in Egypt



Rise in discrimination against minorities and hatemongering among different sects once again showed its evil face in the most despicable way in the violation of the rights of the Shia. The brutal attack on the home of one of the Shia residents in the Abu Moslem village in Egypt left 4 members of the Shia minority dead, among the dead was Egypt's Shia leader Hassan Shahateh, a blatant human rights violation.

Today the Islamic World is witness to extremism which is the result of the spreading of enmity by the enemies of Islam, which through strengthening moral deviations

against Islamic principles result in the most horrendous crimes being committed in the holiest of times and places. A clear example of this is not only the killing of 4 members of the Shia community on the birthday of Imam Mahdi (12th Imam), but also the killings in mosques in Pakistan, Lebanon, Iraq, Syria and other parts of the Islamic World. All these show the violation of the Shia minority across the world.

Sadly that these days is called Sunni-Shia conflict of the region in fact is not conflict between the Shia and Sunni communities. These two sects have lived alongside each other for



centuries, and while criticising each other, they have respected each other as brothers in religion. The present reality is in the flowing of "takfiri" thought and behaviour; a mentality that today has no mercy on the Shia, and tomorrow will also cut down may of its Sunni opponents. This kind of mentality itself and no other as just, and sees the shedding of blood as a right to reach its inhuman and un-Islamic objectives. While condemning these heinous crimes, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence calls upon the UN and the international

community to condemn actions that are threats against human security and peace.

The responsibility of the Egyptian government and president Morsi is very important in all of this. As a human rights NGO, while expressing its deepest sympathies with the Islamic World, the ODVV calls upon the Egyptian government and authorities to deal with the perpetrators of this horrific crime strongly and by fighting against religious discrimination and spreading hate, to prevent similar crimes from being committed in the future. The ODVV also asks scholars in the Islamic World not to remain silent towards



these tragedies and in one voice to condemn them.

Our organization seriously asks the great wise, knowledgeable and great Shia and Sunni scholars to unite and stand against "takfiri" approaches realise the compassion of Islam which unfortunately over the recent yeas has been extensively attacked by enemies and ignorant friends. The events and images that were seen in the behaviour of these alleged Muslim groups in Syria, Pakistan, and now in Egypt, leaves us with no doubt on the understanding of the facts and the evil nature of these groups.

## Oral Statements for the 23rd Session of Human Rights Council

### Item 3: Right to Development

In 1986 the “Declaration on the Right to Development” was ratified by the UN General Assembly which deems the right to development as an undeniable human right.

International sanctions against Iran over the recent months on the pretext of nuclear activities and with a concentration on the economic and financial aspects, have reached an unprecedented intensity, in a way that not only economic activities, but all social lives of the people have been affected.

The majority of UN declarations and resolutions stress on realisation of human rights. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action reaffirms “the right to development, as established in the Declaration on the Right to Development, as a universal and inalienable right and an integral part of fundamental human rights.” The Declaration also states that it is an “inalienable human right according to which each and every person has a right to economic, social, cultural and political development where all human rights and fundamental freedoms are fully realised, to participate and cooperate and enjoy these developments.”

The “Human Rights and Unilateral Coercive Measures resolution” clearly states that trade, blockade, prevention from transaction and blocking assets are deemed criminal from human rights aspects.

ODVV believes that for the purpose of the enjoyment of the right to development a study on the influence of sanctions on the violation of the human rights, and the prevention of access to development and international information dissemination in this regard and the expansion of legal frameworks and improvement of existing international mechanisms for the elimination of problems as a result of, are all some of the necessary solutions that the Council must consider.



#### **Item 4: Islamophobia**

Islamophobia in today's world is not necessarily a phenomenon associated to the subject of religion, but on the contrary it's a purposeful attack against human rights and peace.

In Myanmar, the phenomena resulted in a series of bloody attacks last year.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar has pointed out, in the last two years we have witnessed a rise in violence between Muslim and Buddhist communities, as a result of which many people have been made homeless, and killed.

The ODVV deems the recent incidents in Myanmar as examples of genocide and ethnic cleansing, and calls upon the Human Rights Council to take effective measures through the holding of a special session. Also, ethnic and religious clashes in countries such as Syria, Iraq, Bahrain and Pakistan are also causes for concern of the ODVV. Now a lot of Christian and Kurdish minorities are getting attacked and killed in Iraq and Syria by extremist elements who might in appearance be Muslims, but deep inside they ignore the most basic teachings of Islam.

We expresses its strong opposition to any forms of extremism, particularly religious and ethnic extremism. While stressing on the need for the sensitization of UN human rights institutions towards Shia-phobia, the ODVV calls upon the international community to intervene and prevent the growth of Salafi extremism in the region. We recommend the Special Rapporteur on religious intolerance to prepare a report on the religious minorities conditions in Syria, Myanmar, Iraq, Bahrain and Pakistan; and to find the root causes of the existing violence, and to present member states solutions for ending the sufferings of Muslim (Shia and Sunni) minorities in these countries.

#### **Item 6: Israel's Ignoring of the UPR Mechanism**

Reiterating the importance and the practicality of the UPR mechanism, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence believes that now is the right time to conduct pathology on this process.

The aim of this mechanism is monitoring and protection of human rights, based on equal treatment of all countries. Undoubtedly the strength of the UPR is in its universality, which is the foundation of this mechanism and it cannot allow countries be absent from the second round.

Now, without any given explanation and in a unilateral decision, Israel has failed to cooperate with the UPR mechanism which can bring about a dangerous precedent for the UPR and respect of

human rights throughout the world. The ODVV believes that Israel's refusal to participate in the UPR process is a hefty blow to the universality of this mechanism. Unfortunately Israel is the founder of a process where if serious measures are not adopted, the UPR mechanism will very easily lose its credibility within a few years. The 29 January 2013 decision of the Council to postpone the second round of Israel's UPR is not satisfactory and there is a fear that it will be the basis for future non-cooperation. This NGO strongly stresses that while the Council must define examples of continued noncooperation, it must create a strong mechanism for the confrontation with "failure in continued cooperation" such as referral to other international credible bodies like the UN General Assembly for violating nations. Also the ODVV recommends that a resolution that stresses on the necessity for positive full cooperation between states and the UPR mechanism be adopted.



### **Item7: Violation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Occupied Territories**

Half way into 2013, and the world is still witness to the continuation of Israel's violation of human rights in the Palestinian Occupied Territories. I would like to highlight only a few of these violations. Israel continues to demolish Palestinian homes and properties. More than 200 Palestinian structures have been demolished, displacing almost 400 Palestinians from their homes and affecting more than 500 others.

“The Israeli policy of settling civilians in occupied territories constitutes a war crime under the Rome Statute

Israel continues to seriously ignore and violate the right to life of Palestinians. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs documented more than 1,000 injuries and Amnesty International reported 8 protesting Palestinian civilians killed by Israeli fire in the West Bank in 2013. Among the most serious and alarming human rights violations of Israel is the violation of Palestinian children's rights. A report by the International Solidarity Movement in Hebron documents 47 detentions or arrests of children age fifteen and under by Israel soldiers in 2013.

The Israeli prison administration authorities manifested their policies of medical negligence and torture against Palestinian prisoners which resulted in the death of two prisoners (Abu Hamdiya and Jaradat) in Israel Hospitals. The systematic violations of Palestinian prisoners also include subjecting the prisoners to cruel, inhumane conditions like solitary confinement, deprivation of family visits and academic education.

The ODVV believes that more effective mechanisms must be created at the international level to prevent the violation of the rights of the Palestinians, and to force Israel to observe international commitments.



### **Item 9: Religious Intolerance**

Regretfully nowadays, a new wave of anti-Muslim intolerance and antagonism, intensified by economic recession is sweeping US and Europe. Unfortunately, as we had mentioned before in our previous statements, in a blinkered world of “us and them” some extremists have found in Muslim citizens the “others”.

While considering the importance of dialogue among civilizations and expansion of relations and cooperation between the Islamic World and other cultures and civilizations, ODVV reiterate its commitment to continue efforts in engaging with the other US and European counterparts in projecting the true tenets of Islam, and countering common challenges.

We are of the view that the culture of peaceful coexistence and inter-communal and interreligious tolerance that the international community is trying to achieve, is under threat from marginal and extremist fanatics and from the pervasive xenophobic discourse of a minority of extremist politicians.

ODVV reject all acts and attempts of distortion to associate Islam with terrorism. Nothing could have been farther from the truth. Islam is a religion that implies peace by its very nomenclature. Such stereotyping leads to discrimination and poses grave and multidimensional challenges to global as well as regional peace, security and stability.

ODVV, alongside with all Muslims, calls upon the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to set up an observatory at her office aimed at monitoring and documenting acts that led to incitement to religious hatred, hostility and violence.

# Human Rights News

Selection of Human Rights News over the Recent Months

## Myanmar

### RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE IN MYANMAR, THE CONSEQUENCES OF GOVERNMENT INACTION IN TACKLING PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION – UN EXPERT

2 April 2013



The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Myanmar, Tomás Ojea Quintana, today expressed serious concerns over the spread of violence between Muslim and Buddhist communities in Myanmar and urged bold steps by the Government to counteract this frightening trend.

“The Government must take immediate action to stop the violence from spreading to other parts of the country and undermining the reform process,” the Special Rapporteur said.

Last week saw violence between Muslim and Buddhist communities in Mandalay region in central Myanmar that left 12,000 persons displaced and unconfirmed numbers dead. There are reports of violence spreading to Bago and Yangon. In June and October last year, inter-communal violence in Rakhine State, Northwest Myanmar, left 120,000 internally displaced and, according to Government figures, nearly 200 dead.

Mr. Ojea Quintana welcomed calls from Government leaders, including the President’s televised address to the nation earlier today, for compassion, tolerance, understanding and empathy amongst people of all faiths in Myanmar.

In addition, Mr. Ojea Quintana revealed, “I have received reports of State involvement in

some of the acts of violence, and of instances where the military, police and other civilian law enforcement forces have been standing by while atrocities have been committed before their very eyes, including by well organised ultra-nationalist Buddhist mobs.

“Tackling discrimination is fundamental to establishing the rule of law, and impunity for acts of violence and discrimination must no longer be tolerated,” he said. “The military and police must now be held to account for human rights violations committed against ethnic and religious minorities.”

While acknowledging the strong stance taken by the President’s Office, the Rapporteur called on other institutions such as Parliament, the Supreme Court and the National Human Rights Commission to play their role in protecting constitutionally guaranteed rights, including freedom of religion.

[http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news\\_media.nsf/\(http-NewsByYear\\_en\)/71D446ACB9A794B6C1257B4100347E15?](http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/(http-NewsByYear_en)/71D446ACB9A794B6C1257B4100347E15?)

## BAHRAIN BAHRAIN’S GOVERNMENT EFFECTIVELY CANCELS VISIT BY UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON TORTURE

24 April 2013



GENEVA (24 April 2013) – The United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture, Juan E. Méndez, today expressed his deep disappoint-

# Human Rights News

ment with the decision taken by the Government of Bahrain to postpone his visit to the country, which was scheduled to take place from 8 to 15 May 2013.

“This is the second time that my visit has been postponed, at very short notice. It is effectively a cancellation as no alternative dates were proposed nor is there a future road map to discuss,” Mr. Méndez stressed.

In a letter handed to the Special Rapporteur on 22 April 2013, during a meeting in Washington DC, the Government said that the ongoing National Dialogue has unexpectedly taken much longer than envisaged and that a visit could be immensely damaging to the chances of the Dialogue’s success.

In his view, an independent assessment of whether torture and ill-treatment indeed continues, despite the implementation of some reforms, and whether obligations towards the rehabilitation of victims have been met could have contributed to the National Dialogue and strengthened a culture of human rights.

“I can understand that this postponement could be perceived as if there is something to hide,” said the independent expert. “At least it does not enhance transparency with regard to the situation in the country nor demonstrate a commitment to redress impunity regarding any violations. Rather, the authorities seem to view my visit as an obstacle rather than a positive factor to the reform process.”

The Special Rapporteur urged the Government of Bahrain to honour its commitments made to the United Nations Universal Periodic Review process in September 2012, among which was the acceptance of a recommendation to welcome a visit by the mandate on torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=13261&LangID=E>

## United States

### GUANTÁNAMO/HUMAN RIGHTS: “INDEFINITE DETENTION – WILL IT EVER END?”

1 May 2013



WASHINGTON/GENEVA (1 May 2013) – “The United States must respect and guarantee the life, health and personal integrity of detainees at the Guantánamo Naval Base, particularly in the context of the current hunger strike,” \*a group of international experts on human rights, arbitrary detention, torture, counter-terrorism and health said today.

“We have received specific information regarding the severe and prolonged physiological and psychological damage caused by the detainees’ high degree of uncertainty over basic aspects of their lives, ... said the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, which has been following closely the situation in Guantanamo.

“At Guantánamo, the indefinite detention of individuals, ... constitutes a form of cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment,” stressed the United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture, Juan E. Méndez.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on countering terrorism, Ben Emmerson, noted that there are at least 86 prisoners who have been cleared for transfer and “all relevant security-related government agencies or authorities have expressly certified that those detainees do not

represent a threat to U.S. security.”

“Of those, 56 are Yemeni nationals who have been denied release based solely on their nationality that ... renders their detention arbitrary and constitutes a flagrant violation of international law,” explained El Hadji Malick Sow, the head of the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.

In the context of the ongoing hunger strike, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on health, Anand Grover, stressed that “it [is not] acceptable to use threats of forced feeding or other types of physical or psychological coercion against individuals who have voluntarily decided to go on a hunger strike.”

Over the past decade, there have been numerous requests by these and other experts to access the Guantánamo detention center and to hold private, confidential interviews with detainees - with no success.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=13279&LangID=E>

## INDIA

### INDIA MUST TACKLE ROOT CAUSES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, SAYS UNITED NATIONS RIGHTS EXPERT

3 May 2013



NEW DELHI / GENEVA (3 May 2013) – New laws against rape passed in India in the wake of the fatal gang rape of a female student in Delhi last December do not go far enough, the United Nations expert on violence against women has

said. United Nations Special Rapporteur Rashida Manjoo\* said that while the legislative reform was to be commended, it did not fully reflect the recommendations of a panel set up by the Government to review laws on sex crimes.

“My mandate has consistently voiced the view that the failure in response and prevention measures stems from a Government’s inability and/or unwillingness to acknowledge and address the core structural causes of violence against women,” said Ms. Manjoo. Violence against women and girls in India manifests itself in numerous ways, the Special Rapporteur said. These include domestic violence, caste-based discrimination, dowry-related deaths, witch-hunting, sexual violence, conflict-related sexual violence, and forced marriages. The Special Rapporteur noted that the Indian Government had adopted numerous progressive laws but despite positive developments “the unfortunate reality is that the rights of many women in India continue to be violated, with impunity as the norm.

[http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news\\_media.nsf/\(httpNewsByYear\\_en\)/80DF7E7CEC1C2B62C1257B6000438FD2?](http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/(httpNewsByYear_en)/80DF7E7CEC1C2B62C1257B6000438FD2?)

## PALESTINE

### ISRAEL: UNITED NATIONS EXPERT WARNS AGAINST ISRAEL’S PLANS FOR A SIX-LANE SETTLEMENT HIGHWAY IN EAST JERUSALEM

13 May 2013

GENEVA (13 May 2013) – United Nations Special Rapporteur Richard Falk today called for an immediate halt to the construction of a settlement highway in Beit Safafa (East Jerusalem), also known as the ‘Begin Highway.’ Mr. Falk urged the Israeli Government, in particular the Ministry of Transport, to order a stop to the construction, which if completed, would cut through the community of BeitSafafa and ruin the livelihoods of the 9,300 Palestinian

# Human Rights News

residents. “The projected six-lane highway extending 1.5km will do irreparable damage to the community, cutting off local roads and blocking access to kindergartens, schools, health clinics, offices, and places of worship,” warned the independent expert designated by the UN Human Rights Council to monitor and report on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967.

“The residents of BeitSafafa, who were not consulted at any stage of the planning, will be placed in an absurd situation where places within their own community – previously accessible within ten minutes’ walk – would require travel by car on bypass roads and a bridge,” he said.

The Special Rapporteur noted that the highway purpose is to annex the Gush Etzion settlement bloc and pave the way for further expansion of Israel’s illegal settlements around East Jerusalem.

The Special Rapporteur noted that the road project, which began in September 2012, was



challenged in the Jerusalem District Court last December, but the residents’ petition to stop construction was rejected. An appeal filed with the Israeli High Court against the District Court’s decision was also rejected in March 2013. An appeal hearing as to the petition has been scheduled in the High Court for 26 June 2013.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=13318&LangID=E>

## PALESTINE

**“IN OCCUPIED PALESTINE, THERE’S NO DISTORTING THE FACTS ON THE GROUND” – UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR**



GENEVA (6 June 2013) – “Neither Israel nor its proxies can justify the facts on the ground in occupied Palestine,” said United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories, Richard Falk, “so they distract, distort and defame to allow the violations to go on.”

For the Special Rapporteur, the facts on the ground today are plain to see: “Israel continues to annex Palestinian territory; Israel persists in demolishing Palestinians’ homes and populating Palestine with Israeli citizens; Israel routinely detains Palestinians without charges; Israel maintains a policy of collectively punishing 1.75 million Palestinians through its imposition of a blockade on the Gaza Strip; and Israel prosecutes its occupation with impunity, refusing to accept the world’s calls to respect international law.”

“The Israeli population registry confirms that around 650,000 Israelis had settled in the occupied Palestinian territory by the end of 2012,” Mr. Falk recalled.

“In the first three months of 2013, Israel demolished 204 Palestinian homes,” the Special Rapporteur noted, “and violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinians is an everyday occur-

rence, with 146 incidents documented through April.”

According to the independent expert designated by the UN Human Rights Council, Israel is actively confiscating Palestinian water and land, having seized an additional 60,000 square meters of land near Nablus just this week.

6 June 2013

[http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news\\_media.nsf/\(httpNewsByYear\\_en\)/329C0F3CEE9D4EB8C1257B820048042F?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/(httpNewsByYear_en)/329C0F3CEE9D4EB8C1257B820048042F?OpenDocument)

## India

### India cracks down on foreign funding of NGOs

11 June 2013



Food not thought ... the Indian government wants NGOs to use foreign funding for development work, not criticising national policy. Photograph: Amit Dave/Reuters

Amid an intensifying crackdown on non-governmental groups that receive foreign funding, Indian activists are accusing the government of stifling their right to dissent in the world's largest democracy.

India has tightened the rules on non-governmental organisations over the past two years, following protests that delayed several important industrial projects. About a dozen NGOs that the government said engaged in activities that harm

the public interest have seen their permission to receive foreign donations revoked, as have nearly 4,000 small NGOs for what officials said was inadequate compliance with reporting requirements.

The government stepped up its campaign recently, suspending the permission that Indian Social Action Forum (Insaf), a network of more than 700 NGOs across India, had to receive foreign funds.

The US is the top donor nation to Indian NGOs, followed by Britain and Germany. In the year ending in March 2011, the most recent period for which data is available, about 22,000 NGOs received a total of more than \$2bn from abroad, of which \$650m came from the US.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jun/11/india-crackdown-foreign-funded-ngos>

## Saudi Arabia

### Saudi Arabia: 7 Convicted for Facebook Postings About Protests (Human Rights Watch)

June 30, 2013

(Beirut) – Saudi Arabia sentenced seven government critics to prison on June 24, 2013, for allegedly inciting protests and harming public order, largely by using Facebook. The Specialized Criminal Court sentenced the men, all from the Kingdom's Eastern Province, to prison terms



# Human Rights News

ranging from five to 10 years and barred them from traveling abroad for additional periods.

The European Union's High Representative Catherine Ashton and EU member states' representatives, who are meeting with their Gulf region counterparts in Bahrain on June 30, should condemn the convictions, Human Rights Watch said.

All seven were also convicted of violating article 6 of the Anti-Cyber Crime Law, which prohibits producing, sending, or storing any material via an information network that "harms public order."

None of the charges accused the seven of using or advocating violence, as the presiding judge confirmed in the judgment, saying, "Breaking allegiance [with the king] comes by ... writing articles and publications ... the behavior of the [second] course ... is sometimes the more dangerous and more malicious method."

The prosecution, however, produced confessions that each of the seven had signed in pre-trial custody, which ... the defendants said intelligence officers had tortured them into signing the confessions.

Saudi Arabia has no written penal code and prosecutors and judges have discretion to criminalize acts based on their own interpretation of Islamic law. Article 32 of the Arab Charter guarantees the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and to impart news to others by any means.

<http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/06/29/saudi-arabia-7-convicted-facebook-postings-about-protests>

## Beirut

### Beirut car bomb rips through Hezbollah stronghold

15 August 2013

Sunni group claims responsibility for attack that killed 20 people in overwhelmingly Shia area of south Beirut. The car bomb went off in the Rweiss district, setting ablaze cars and build-



ings. Photograph: Hussein Malla/AP

A powerful car bomb struck the southern Beirut stronghold of Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group on Thursday, killing 20 people, wounding 120 and trapping many others inside damaged buildings, witnesses and emergency officials said. A Sunni group calling itself the Brigades of Aisha claimed responsibility for the attack and promised more operations against Hezbollah. It was not immediately possible to verify the statement, which was made in an internet video.

Health minister Ali Hassan Khalil said hospitals across the capital had taken in 16 bodies and 226 wounded people. Caretaker prime minister Najib Mikati declared Friday a day of mourning for the victims of the Beirut blast.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/15/beirut-car-bomb-hezbollah-stronghold>

## Egypt

### There has been international urgent requests to put an end to the crisis in Egypt:

15 August 2013

On 15 August 2013, the UN's human-rights chief, Navi Pillay, demanded a wide-ranging investigation into the crackdown by Egyptian security forces on Muslim Brotherhood protesters.

According to government figures, more than 500 people were killed, during 14 August's assaults on two Cairo protest camps set up by supporters of the ousted Islamist president, Mohammed Morsi. It was the worst violence in the country for decades. "There must be an independent, impartial, effective and credible investigation of the



conduct of the security forces," MsPillay said and urged the Egyptian authorities and security forces "to act with the utmost restraint", saying they were "bound by the rule of law and must act with full respect for human rights".

On 16 August 2013, a group of independent United Nations human rights experts called for restraint and an immediate end to violent confrontations that have seen hundreds killed and thousands injured in the Egyptian capital in recent days.

"Egypt is facing an escalating and deeply worrying human rights crisis," they stressed in a news release, while urging all parties to take immediate steps towards political reconciliation.

However, the crisis have continued to take tolls on people: On 17 August 2013 tens of thousands of opponents of Egypt's military-backed government poured into the streets of central Cairo, sparking clashes with security forces that left dozens dead.

On 18 August 2013 Dozens of members of the Muslim Brotherhood were reported killed , during what the Egyptian interior ministry said was an attempt by more than 600 members of the group to escape from prison.

<http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/middle-east/un-rights-chief-calls-for-investigation-into-egypt-violence>

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=45636&Cr=egypt&Cr1=>

<http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/middle-east/dozens-die-as-a-fresh-round-of-clashes-batters-cairo>

<http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/middle-east/islamists-killed-as-el-sisi-asks-them-to-help-us-to-save-egypt>

## Syria

17 August 2013

### Thousands of Syrian refugees pour into Iraq Saturday

UN reports surge in numbers of refugees fleeing Syria via newly constructed pontoon bridge over Tigris river.

"The factors allowing this sudden movement are not fully clear to us," UNHCR spokesperson Adrian Edwards told reporters in Geneva. Some of the Syrians had reportedly been waiting near the Tigris river for two to three days, camped at a makeshift site. UNHCR monitors at the border saw scores of buses arriving on the Syrian side dropping off more people seeking to cross. Edwards added that both the Syrian and Iraqi sides of the frontier at the Peshkhabour crossing are normally tightly controlled.

And, inside the country, the so called civil war goes on, the Syria crisis is entering its third year



– and the death toll is at more than 100,000, with no prospect of a peace deal.

From 1 million people needing assistance in April 2012, the number has soared to 6.8 million. This includes 4.25 million Syrians who are internally displaced, and more than 1.9 million refugees who have fled to Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Turkey.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/17/thousands-syrian-refugees-pour-iraq>

<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/aug/15/syria-crisis-aid-pledges-justine-greening>

# DDVV

## Activities

### **United States of America UPR Mid-Term Report Submitted by the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence**

#### **1. Personal Safety: Life and Property**

The high number of crimes, violation of the lives of individuals, the high statistics of arrests and the possession of firearms are all examples of human rights violations in the United States of America. Over these last few years we have witnessed several instances of gun related violent crimes in America which is indicative of the lack of enough protection of the lives of the citizens and problems with personal safety in the country.

(According to figures published by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in September 2012, in 2011, approximately 386.3 crimes took place in every 100,000 population of the country).

In January 2013, President Obama proposed a 23 stage plan for gun control, but in April the Senate voted against this proposal.

#### **2. Civil and Political Rights**

Despite accepting recommendations based on the adoption of appropriate laws for the prevention of the violation of individual privacy,

the US Government is on a daily basis increasing the monitoring of the internet and telephone conversations by intelligence agencies, and also the surveillance and body search of individuals is on the increase.

Documents that have been published by American civil society organizations warn that police related agencies have notably increased the monitoring of digital communications of Americans, and even use military drones to spy on citizens. (ACLU 27 September 2012).

Between 2009 and 2011 the numbers of Justice Department warrants for the use of phone tapping equipment have increased by 60 percent. American journalists are also worried about the tightening of laws regarding the mass media.

The prohibition of torture in all prisons and detention centres and the closing of Guantanamo and other secret detention centres around the world was another recommendation which the US Government accepted in the first round of the UPR on the USA, but serious steps have not taken in this regard.



### 3. Racial and Religious Discrimination

Discrimination against racial and religious minorities and systematic actions against Muslims following the 9/11 attacks are some of the instances of serious human rights violations in America

Ethnic minorities in America do not enjoy equal political, social and economic rights. One example can be seen in the voting system, in such way that the right to vote for different races in America is limited.

In the November 2012 presidential elections in America, some Asian-Americans were prevented from casting votes. The UN Human Rights Council special report strongly criticizes the United States for failing to guarantee the right to vote for African and Hispanic Americans of the country.

A report in the Boston Review stated that by 2010 over 5,850 thousand American citizens will be denied the right to vote due criminal records, and over 2 million African-Americans due to a

law that confirms their identity have had some restrictions in voting, and in fact some people were completely denied this right.

Despite America's commitment to the recommendations on reviewing the court sentences to remove all signs of discrimination against racial and ethnic minorities, and to conduct a study on the relations of race with capital punishment so that possible discriminatory approaches are avoided, and also take measures to ensure there is no discrimination in the criminal justice system, however racial discrimination is strife in the application of law and carrying out of justice in America.

(On 3 July 2012, Reuters News Agency's website reported that the police in the United States treated white people more gently. Out of 685 thousand police stops made in New York in 2011, over 85 percent that were stopped were blacks and Hispanics).

Muslims make up less than one percent of the population of the country, but 14 percent of religious discrimination and 5 percent of job

discrimination is against Muslims in the country. Overall turning against some religions such as Islam – Islamophobia in other words – have been on the increase particularly following the 9/11 attacks. Council for Islam and America Relations (CAIR) recently announced that Islamophobia has escalated across America, and mosques in different States are under surveillance and pressure. Although the United States has accepted the recommendations on fighting Islamophobia and Xenophobia, but insulting Islam and opposition with women Muslim women’s Islamic dress at work are some of the job discriminations imposed on American Muslims.

Also suspicious looks, insults, physical attacks and reasonless arrests are the repercussions of the 9/11 attacks which make conditions for Muslims more and more difficult on a daily basis. According to a Gallop poll, 48 percent of Muslims in America say that they have personally experienced racial and religious discrimination over the last year. American Muslims also have negative views of the US military and Federal Police, and believe that the war on terror extensively is concentrated on a war on Muslims. (Shahram Mir Gholikhan, an Iranian citizen has been in detention in America since 2007.

While claiming innocence, he has declared that he has been tortured in jail. Dr. Ali Amir Nazmi Afshar who has been residing in the United States for over 30 years, and is a top expert in the field of chemistry, wanted to return to Iran, and in an inhuman manner was arrested by American security services.

His family are worried about his treatment in jail. Recently New York police arrested 13



Iranians on charges of photographing public places, and claimed that it was possible that the arrested individuals may be collecting information for a possible attack by Iran. The police released this individuals due to lack of evidence).

#### **4 – Violation of Human Rights in Other Countries**

Using its huge military might for the purpose of hegemony and domination of the international order, the United States continues to violate the sovereignty of countries.

The violation of international law and conventions, particularly humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions, abuse of citizens, detainees and prisoners of war, can be seen in Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib and Bagram as clear examples, and also supporting of inhuman actions of countries are other examples of human rights violations in other countries.

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has often started wars against other countries,



The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq both were initiated by America, both of which had huge numbers of civilian casualties. (According to an article published in July 2012 in [www.stopwar.org.uk](http://www.stopwar.org.uk), the US led “War on Terror” claimed between 14,000 and 110,000 lives from 2001 till 2001. The article continues on and refers to a UNAMA report and wrote that from 2007 till July 2011 at least 10,200 civilians were killed in Afghanistan. Also according to the same article, the number of civilians killed in clashes in Iraq from 2003 till 2011 is approximately 115 thousand).

As well as the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan the “War on Terror” has been dragged to neighbouring countries such as Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia, and resulted in the death of a large number of civilians in these countries. At least 480 civilians that included 68 children were killed in military operations in Pakistan from 2004 till 2012. Quoting the media, the article also stated that at least 56 civilians were killed in military operations in Yemen.

This is while the United States has accepted the recommendations on ending human rights violations committed by US forces in Afghanistan and other countries, and also the suspension of extrajudicial and supranational laws and restraint from adoption of unilateral measures against other countries.)

Invitation of UN Special Rapporteurs to visit Guantanamo and other secret detention centres, and the closure of these centres and a review of the opportunity for invitation of relevant mandate holders following the study of the 5 special procedures in 2005 to decide on the closure of Guantanamo are some of the commitments of the US Government according to the first round of the UPR on the country. This is while UN human rights officials clearly state American government’s shortcoming in the closure of the Guantanamo detention centre. (Navi Pelly)

### **5 - Joining International Conventions**

Joining conventions and relevant protocols without reservations are some of the accepted recommendations that to-date we have not seen any moves towards their realisation.

- The CEDAW, ICESCR, Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention on the Rights of the Disabled, International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families, International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Individuals against Forced Disappearances, the ICC Statute, ILO, UN Declaration on Indigenous People, and also according to the American Commission on Human Rights Declaration, the United States has not joined any regional human rights document. In instances where they have been stated in a convention, the Congress does not pass human rights laws.



## 6 - Women and Children's Rights

The United States is one of the few countries that has not joined the CEDAW and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. And this causes notable problems in the protection of women and children's rights in this country even though according to the accepted recommendations from the first UPR, the United States has been committed unconditionally to join these conventions, but to-date we have not seen any efforts in this regard.

American women are faced with discrimination in employment and income. (According to Employment Department information and statistics women make up approximately two thirds of the work force in America, who in 2011 received only 61 percent of the minimum full time work wages).

This is while increasing activities towards the promotion of women and minorities' economic and social rights, bringing about equal decent employment opportunities, and the reduction of the number of the homeless and putting an end to child prostitution, violation against women, and armed aggression are all

commitments made by America in its first UPR.

Nonetheless, the number of homeless children in America is sharply increasing and many children live in poverty. (A report published by the Education Department on 27 June 2012, for the first time state schools announced that over one million school children in America are homeless. In 44 States the number of homeless school children is on the increase each year, to an extent where 15 States report a twenty percent increase in the number of such children).

According to the report of the National Centre for Disappeared and Exploited Children, each year at least 100,000 children are trafficked across America. Sexual exploitation of children is another public health issue in America. (According to a 5 November 2012 [www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org) report, researches announced that 20 percent of adult women and between five and fifteen percent of men in America had experienced sexual abuse during childhood adolescence. In 2012 67,527 children fell victim to sexual abuse.)

## Participation in the 22nd Session of the Human Rights Council

Just as all previous Sessions, the ODVV took an active and extensive part in the 22nd Session of the HRC. The Session was held from 25 February to 22 March 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland. With consideration of the Session agenda, particularly the presence of the Special Rapporteur, and the submission of his report, the ODVV planned a programme through the holding of sidelines panels, meeting with those involved and submission of written and oral statements. Also in line with the empowerment of nongovernmental organizations at the international level, the ODVV facilitated the participation of 5 Iranian NGOs, and for the enjoyment of the existing capacities, the ODVV took responsibility for representation of 2 NGOs in consultative status to ECOSOC.

### ■ Oral and Written Statements

Two weeks prior to the start of the Session the ODVV submitted via email 5 written statements on the following Items of the Agenda and subjects: Item 3 on violence against women; Item 4 on the removal of the MKO terror group from the terror groups list in the west; Item 6 the UPR mechanism; Item 7 violation of human rights in

the Palestinian Occupied Territories; and Item 9 Islamophobia. These statements are registered and can be views in the Human Rights Council website.

### ■ Sidelines Panel on Terrorism and Violation of Human Rights

This panel was held on 7 March in Room XXII of the Council with the cooperation of the Defending Victims of Terrorism Association. The panel was chaired by Dr. Alireza Deihim, and the speeches of Dr. Sajadi the executive director of the Defending Victims of Terrorism Association, Nader Ganji board member of the association and the son of a terror victim, and Ms. Eskandari daughter of a terror victim. The subjects discussed in the panel were the definition of terrorism in the view of the association, how to support victims of terror, and the transformation of terror groups to destructive cults.

Two films about how family members were assassinated and the assassination of the mother of Ms. Eskandari were played in the panel.

In the end the floor was opened to questions from the participants.



## Participation in the 23rd Session of the Human Rights Council

The Session was held from 27 May till 14 June 2013. Prior to the holding of the Session the ODVV had submitted 5 written statements, and read 5 oral statements during the session on: the right to development, violation of Muslims' rights, Israel's failure in cooperating with Human Rights mechanisms, violation of human rights in

Palestinian Occupied Territories and the violation of Shia minorities.

Other activities of the ODVV included establishing links with other NGOs, distribution of information packs such as annual reports and Defenders, and also participation in the UNHCR Annual Meeting with NGOs.

## Exhibit on ODVV's Accomplishments Regarding Refugees



Since participation and interaction has always been the ODVV's moral covenant, we have therefore we have tried to have a colourful presence in participatory activities. The holding of and participation in numerous exhibits, as one of the participation areas, brings about a good opportunity to provide information on ODVV's objectives, activities and programmes. For this purpose the ODVV includes the participation in these exhibits in its collective of activities, one of which was "An Aspect of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Services to Refugees"

exhibit on 20 May 2013. Some of the achievements of the ODVV in the field presented in the exhibit were videos produced on the Promotion Socio-Psychological Health of Afghan Refugees in Shahr-Rey, 2012; Strengthening of the Family Institution and Prevention of Violence for Afghan Refugees in Semnan Refugee Camp, 2011, and the Community Based Awareness Raising on the Prevention of GBV for Afghan Refugees in Shahr-Rey in 1990; multimedia CDs on the activities of the ODVV, booklets on activities on refugees and various projects.

## Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture Education Workshop

On the occasion of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture (26 June) with the cooperation of UNIC in Iran, the ODVV held this workshop. The participants of the workshop included a group of mental health experts, and following the reading of the UN Secretary General's message for the day, behavioural interventions, anxiety interventions and cognitive intervention of torture victims were discussed and reviewed in group form.



## Filling in the International Questionnaire on Violence

This questionnaire has been compiled with the aim of studying the violence situation of different countries. It's a review of the examples of between individuals violence, violence against living partner, violence against the elderly, children and youth, and questions the existence of national or at lower levels programmes with regards to different types of violence. The questionnaire also reviews the situation of the law on

violence and the performance of relevant bodies and organizations are assessed.

In Iran this questionnaire has been completed by the Judiciary, the Health Ministry, Education and Training, the Welfare Organization, Office of the Presidency's Women and Family Affairs Office, Foreign Affairs Ministry, and the ODVV through a number of group participation meetings.

## Cooperation in the Draft of the National Document on Prevention of Domestic Violence

This National Document is being compiled since 2012 with the cooperation of the Health and Treatment Ministry, Tehran Medical Sciences University and a collective of thematic governmental organizations. As the sole non-governmental organization the ODVV has been a member of the technical-consultative com-

mittee and has also helped in the drafting of the National Document. It must be said that in 2012 one of Tehran's districts was selected as a sample for the implementation of the prevention of violence project, and the responsibility for guiding some of the projects activities is with the ODVV.



### Translation of the Istanbul Protocol to Farsi

Following the publication of the Farsi and digital version of the Istanbul Protocol in the ODVV website in 2012 the Protocol began at the end of 2012. The Farsi Istanbul Protocol was translated into Farsi in 2013 and with the joint signatures of the ODVV and the Coroner's Organization of the Judiciary of the Islamic Republic of Iran, was published in 294 pages.



### 2012 Annual Report

As every year, the 2012 ODVV Annual Report was published in Farsi and English. It includes a review of its activities in four sections of the Research and Education Department, the International Relations Department, the Communications Department and the Rehabilitation Department.

The holding of education workshops such as: Acquiring of Consultative Status from ECOSOC, Project Writing in Line with the UPR Accepted Recommendations, Promotion of Socio-Psychological Health of Afghan Refugees Project, Interactive Colloquium between GOs and NGOs, participation in Project Writing for the UPR of countries, reports on the participation in the 20th, 21st and 22nd Sessions of the Human Rights Council, participation in the IRCT meeting in Budapest-Hungary, Annual Consultation Sitting of the UNHCR with NGOs in Geneva, International Nelson Mandela Day, Human Rights Day, International Day of the Family, visual documentations and publications and etc.



### Multimedia CD

ODVV products that include books, Defenders Newsletter, photo galleries, annual reports, documentaries, videos of ODVV projects were published in multimedia CD in 2013.



### A Collective of ODVV Articles for the 24th Session of the Human Rights Council Side Events

This book was published in September 2013 by the ODVV in approximately 120 pages with articles presented in 2 sideline panels on Islamophobia and Violation of Human Rights, and the Violation of the Rights of Shia Minorities. These panels are being held in the 24th Session of the Human Rights Council and this book will be distributed among the participants.

**Organization for Defending Victims of Violence is  
Holding the Following Sidelines Events During the  
24<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council:**

**Panel on**

**Islamophobia  
and the Violation of Human Rights**

Wednesday 18 September - 17:00 - 19:00  
Palais De Nations at Geneva - Room:XXIII

Moderator : Dr .Alireza Deihim

**Panelists:**

Dr. Walid Hammond

Dr. Issa Diab

Dr. Abdollah El-Seid

**Panel on**

**Violation of the Rights  
of Shia Minorities**

Thursday 19 September - 14:00 - 16:00  
Palais De Nations at Geneva - Room:XXIV

Moderator : Dr .Alireza Deihim

**Panelists:**

Dr. Bashr Baghdadi

Hassnain Naqvi

Nikolas Anastasiadis

Sheikh Maytham Al Salman

**Geneva September 2013**

[www.odvv.org](http://www.odvv.org)



Organization for Defending  
Victims of Violence